



Denise Baker-Seal

Principal

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Denise counsels clients inside and outside the courtroom on employment and complex litigation matters.

Denise's employment law practice is a mix of litigation and client counseling. She regularly defends employers in state and federal cases alleging harassment, discrimination and retaliation claims and offers guidance and training to help employers minimize the risk of workplace misconduct.

Denise also handles cases involving catastrophic injuries, primarily in premises liability, product liability and transportation matters. She frequently represents businesses of all sizes, including product manufacturers, truck lines, property owners, and real estate agencies. Denise is a valued business partner for every client. She is an aggressive litigator, but takes a cost-effective approach and understands when disputes are best suited to compromise.

In addition to her skills as a litigator, Denise is experienced in effective dispute resolution alternatives and regularly represents clients in mediations and arbitrations. A lifelong resident of central Illinois, Denise serves as an arbitrator in the St. Clair County and Madison County, Illinois, mandatory arbitration programs. She is on the firm's employee and personnel committee and is the co-founder of the Fifth Friday Initiative to increase retention and promotion of women in the firm.

Successful Recent Case Results

- Obtained summary judgment in favor of employer correctional healthcare company in lawsuit brought by physician alleging racial discrimination and retaliation.
- Obtained summary judgment for employer for retaliation claims under Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act.
- Secured defense jury verdict in auto accident wrongful death case involving commercial motor vehicle owned

by a pool installation company.

- Obtained dismissal of a putative class action lawsuit filed against automobile dealership under the Illinois Consumer Fraud Act.
- Obtained defense arbitration award in professional liability real estate matter in favor of agent and broker based on alleged failure to disclose mine subsidence.

Prior Legal Experience

Law Clerk, Hon. Lewis M. Blanton, U.S. Magistrate Judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri (1998-2000)

Practice Areas

Employment Law
Premises and Retail Liability
Business and Commercial
Litigation
Education Law
Insurance Law
Product Liability
Transportation

More About Denise

Education & Bar Admissions

Education

- Northeastern University School of Law (J.D., 1998)
- Millikin University (B.A., Political Science, Sociology, summa cum laude, 1995)

Bar Admissions

- Illinois
- Missouri
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

Recent Achievements

- Super Lawyers - Personal Injury: General, Illinois Super Lawyers (2014-2020)
- Leading Lawyer, Law Bulletin Publishing Company (2019)
- Volunteer of the Year, Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel (IADC) (2017)

Professional Affiliations

- Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel, Secretary/Treasurer (2020 - present)
- Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel, Board of Directors (2016 - present)
- Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel, Employment Law Committee Chair (2014- 2017)
- ALFA International Labor & Employment Law Steering Committee
- ALFA International Retail & Hospitality Steering Committee

- ALFA Women's Initiative
- Southern District of Illinois Chapter of Federal Bar Association, Second Vice President
- Claims and Litigation Management Alliance
- Defense Research Institute
- Illinois State Bar Association
- St. Clair County Bar Association, Board Member

Publications

- 2019 IDC Survey of Law (Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel) - Managing Editor
- "Up in Smoke: The Impact of Marijuana Use on Illinois Employers," Monograph, Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel Quarterly, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2020)
- "Supreme Court Declines to Answer Certified Question in Case Involving Interplay between Tort Immunity Act and Human Rights Act," Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel Defense Update, March 2018
- 2017 IDC Survey of Law (Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel) - Managing Editor
- 2016 IDC Survey of Law (Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel) - Managing Editor
- 2015 IDC Survey of Law (Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel) - Contributor
- 2014 IDC Survey of Law (Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel) - Contributor
- 2013 IDC Survey of Law (Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel) - Contributor
- 2012 IDC Survey of Law (Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel) - Contributor
- 2011 IDC Survey of Law (Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel) - Contributor
- For Your Consideration: The Current State of Post-Employment Restrictive Covenants in Illinois and National Trends Beyond Continued Employment as Adequate Consideration, Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel, Quarterly, First Quarter 2015
- EEOC Trends from 2013, IDC Defense Update, May 2014
- From Retaliatory Discharge to Retaliation by Association: The Expanding Scope of Viable Retaliation Claims Against Employers, Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel, Quarterly, Second Quarter 2013
- EEOC Updates Enforcement Guidance on Use of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions, IDC Defense Update, December 2012
- On the Horizon: New EEOC Regulation that Redefines an Available Defense in Disparate Impact Age Claims, IDC Defense Update, April 2012
- Illinois Supreme Court Expands Strict Liability Rule, November 2009

Speaking

- "Access Denied! ADA Accessibility Claims," ALFA International Labor & Employment Pittsburgh Regional Seminar, September 2019
- "Case Law Update: 'The Times They Are A-Changin,'" Brown & James General Defense & Insurance Law Symposium, January 2018
- "Who's the Boss? Understanding Employment Relationships in the Contemporary Legal Landscape," Illinois Society of Association Executives, April 2016
- "Defending the Plaintiff's Blackboard of Special Damages," Brown & James Law Symposium, January 2016

