

Patricia Brown Holmes

Managing Partner

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Patricia Brown Holmes is the first African-American woman to lead and have her name on the door of a major law firm that is not women- or minority-owned. She is a highly respected and accomplished lawyer who focuses her practice on the areas of high-stakes commercial litigation, crisis management, white collar crime, and legal client counseling. As a former state court judge and experienced prosecutor and defense lawyer, she brings a unique variety of capabilities to her practice. Patricia's comprehensive trial experience, coupled with her deft management abilities, position her as a valuable advocate and trusted adviser to her clients.



Prior to serving as an associate judge in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Patricia was an Assistant U.S. Attorney and an Assistant State's Attorney. She is one of only a handful of attorneys in the State of Illinois who has tried cases in state, city, and federal court as well as state appellate, federal appellate, and state supreme courts.

Patricia has practiced in courtrooms from all sides of the bench – as a prosecutor, defense attorney, and as a judge. Given her familiarity with sensitive legal matters, she is also especially qualified to conduct internal investigations and assist clients in managing their most critical “bet-the-company” crises. She is keen on business continuity, media and public relations, risk assessment, conflict resolution and recovery, and recurrence prevention. Every matter ends with lessons learned. Applying sound judgment, creative strategies, and common sense, Patricia navigates complicated and delicate legal matters with appropriate discretion and poise.

Patricia is widely recognized as an engaging speaker having presented to both corporations and law firms on a variety of continuing legal education topics, including ethics and diversity and inclusion. She has won many awards and accolades for her involvement in the legal community, mentoring successes, and efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

EXPERIENCE

Litigation and Crisis Management

With her experience as a counselor and trial lawyer, as well as her familiarity with both sides of the bench, Patricia is frequently called upon to guide her clients through high-stakes matters, from initial alert to board presentations of lessons learned.

She has been a member of the litigation teams in several major, high-stakes commercial trials and served as lead counsel in multiple class action litigations. In the courtroom, Patricia's down-to-earth style readily connects with judges and juries. She credits her success with being able to tell her clients' stories and communicate their objectives with sincerity and confidence. Although she is

typically successful in resolving matters to the client's satisfaction prior to trial, Patricia's representative trials include:

- *In re the Special Prosecution in the matter of Laquan McDonald*. Patricia was appointed by the Circuit Court of Cook County to investigate the alleged police cover-up in the shooting of teenager, Laquan McDonald, which led to a first-in-the-nation prosecution of several officers of the Chicago Police Department.
- *United States v. Conrad M. Black et. al.* Ron Safer and Patricia co-led the trial team that successfully defended former Hollinger International Inc. executive and corporate counsel Mark S. Kipnis against charges of federal mail, wire, and tax fraud in a case that went to the Supreme Court of the United States, where Patricia and her trial team prevailed. In the end, Mr. Kipnis was totally vindicated.
- *United States v. Mohammad Mohammed, et al.* Patricia successfully tried this complicated and multi-layered "bankruptcy bust-out" case, a first of its kind in the country, involving the prosecution of a complex financial scheme to defraud creditors and violate income tax laws.
- *United States v. Castellanos, et al.* Patricia successfully tried this series of cases in Rockford, Illinois, involving a complex narcotics trafficking conspiracy, money laundering, and other federal violations. Castellanos was one of the largest multiple-defendant interstate narcotics conspiracy trials ever prosecuted in that district.
- *United States v. Charles Emenogha*. Patricia successfully tried this Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force case, involving multiple defendants, complex conspiracy allegations, and the first-ever money-structuring charge brought by the Internal Revenue Service.

Patricia has also litigated multiple bet-the-company cases in federal court and in state court. Patricia has successfully defended numerous companies against claims of commercial fraud, civil conspiracy, strict liability, and negligence. For example, Patricia teamed up with fellow RSHC partner Sondra Hemeryck to successfully defend United Airlines, Inc. in more than a dozen putative consumer class actions, litigating a wide range of issues such as breach of contract, consumer fraud, violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act, and violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). Recently, in *Hammarquist, et al. v. United Continental Holdings, Inc. et al.*, Patricia and Sondra won summary judgment in favor of United Airlines against breach of contract claims in a class-action lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Patricia also leads the firm's Risk, Reputation, and Crisis Management practice area. Public and private entities routinely call on her to counsel them through their most significant crises, from high-profile allegations of misconduct by senior executives to dawn raids of companies for violations of federal law. She has worked with clients to develop incident response plans before a crisis hits and frequently collaborates with public affairs professionals to develop communications strategies. With her years of experience handling multidimensional and complex matters, she has the knowledge and the judgment necessary to manage the contingencies and assess the legal and reputational risk of any crisis. She has performed board-level crisis management round tables as well as presented findings and suggestions for recurrence prevention.

Internal Investigations and White Collar Crime

Patricia successfully conducts internal investigations at public and private corporations, governmental entities, and nonprofit organizations. Her comprehensive experience includes matters involving financial and accounting fraud, drugs and other conspiracies, corporate

whistleblower allegations, contract disputes, mail and wire fraud, and other criminal matters. Companies and government officials frequently task Patricia to assist in investigating, defending, and resolving sensitive matters. Her representative experience includes:

- Multiple representations of various governmental organizations in response to subpoenas, both national and international, including Russia, Mexico, Africa, India, China, Hong Kong, and Europe.
- Multiple representations of various individuals and corporations under investigation by various government agencies for alleged company conduct violating federal mail fraud, wire fraud, RICO, bribery, bank fraud, and Medicaid/Medicare fraud, and environmental laws.
- Multiple representations of companies under investigation for alleged violations of the Federal Corrupt Practices Act.
- Representation of numerous corporations and individuals serving as key witnesses in various government investigations.
- An appointment by Judge LeRoy K. Martin, Jr., Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County, to investigate wrongdoing by Chicago Police officers in the shooting incident which resulted in the death of Laquan McDonald.
- The completion of the investigation of the City of Chicago's fire commissioner, who was charged with allegations of sexual harassment, and the alleged cover-up by the executive director of the Office of Compliance.
- Service as the chair of the governor's Cemetery Oversight Task Force. Patricia led the investigation surrounding the tragic incidents alleged to have occurred at Burr Oak Cemetery in Alsip, IL. The investigation led to new legislation regarding cemetery oversight and the funeral industry, as well as her appointment as sole trustee of the cemetery.
- An appointment by Illinois governor Pat Quinn as the inaugural chair of the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission, which promulgated rules and regulations and investigated claims of torture.
- Service as a member of Senator Dick Durbin's judicial commission to review candidates and make recommendations for federal judgeships in the Northern District of Illinois.

Legal Counseling

Patricia is a trusted counselor to high-profile clients and corporations. Her understanding of her clients' business continuity needs helps her to identify and achieve their desired results. Her sophisticated and intelligent approach to legal counseling has been honed through years of successful partnerships in the public sector as well as high-level private corporations. She provides strategic and tactical advice to help her clients continue to do business legally and effectively. Patricia also knows how to communicate productively with government officials using credibility, clarity, and tact. She has presented to boards of directors of several companies as well as to executive leadership teams nationwide.

Previous Experience

Patricia served as an associate judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County for nine years. She previously served the City of Chicago as its Chief Assistant Corporation Counsel for Municipal Prosecutions, supervising a staff of attorneys practicing in chancery and municipal courts. Earlier, Patricia honed her skills in federal court, having tried more than 26 complex felony cases and argued numerous times before the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the

Northern District of Illinois. She also gained significant trial and appellate experience as an Assistant State's Attorney for Cook County, IL, arguing twice before the Illinois Supreme Court.

CREDENTIALS

Education

University of Illinois College of Law, J.D., 1986
University of Illinois, B.S., 1983
Board of Trustees, Member (2011-2016, 2019-2025)

Bar Admissions

Illinois
U.S. Supreme Court
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (Trial Bar)
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois

Professional Memberships

American Bar Association
Section of Litigation
Section of Business Law, White Collar Crime Committee
Section of State and Local Government Law
Black Women Lawyers' Association of Greater Chicago, Inc., Past President (1997-1998) and
Founding Member (1987)
Visionary Award (2005)
Vanguard Award (2017)
The Chicago American Inn of Court
Chicago Bar Association, Past President (2015-2016); Board of Managers (2011-2017)
Dickerson Award Recipient (2013)
Blue Ribbon Committee on Juvenile Justice, Chair
Chicago Lawyer Magazine/Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Women's Advisory Board (2018)
The Cook County Bar Association
Centennial Presidential Award for Dedication to the Bar (2014)
Judicial Award (1998)
Just The Beginning – A Pipeline Organization, Chair of the Board of Directors
Leadership Council on Legal Diversity
Illinois Judges Association, Former Co-Chair, Retired Judges Committee
Illinois Judicial Council Foundation, Former Chair
Distinguished Service Award (2005)
Illinois State Bar Association
Leadership Greater Chicago, Fellow, Class of '93
Distinguished Fellow Award (2012)
Women's White Collar Defense Association (WWCDA)

Special Appointments

Appointed to the Illinois Judicial Conference COVID-19 Task Force
Appointed Special Prosecutor in the Matter of Laquan McDonald
Appointed Trustee of the Burr Oak Cemetery Oversight Task Force
Appointed Inaugural Chair of the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission by Illinois Governor Pat Quinn
Appointed Co-Chair of the Judicial Selection Commission for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
Appointed to the American Jury Project Commission for the Seventh Circuit Bar Association

Teaching Appointments

Adjunct Professor of Law, Northwestern University School of Law
Adjunct Professor of Law, Loyola Institute for Paralegal Studies
Instructor, Attorney General's Advocacy Institute
Criminal Trial Advocacy Section of the U.S. Department of Justice

Honors & Awards

The Best Lawyers in America

Best Lawyers® (Commercial Litigation, 2011-2021); *Criminal Defense: White-Collar*, 2020-2021)

Chambers USA

Chambers & Partners (2013-2020)

Chicago's Notable Minorities in Accounting, Consulting & Law

Crain's Chicago Business (2019)

Chicago's Notable Women Lawyers

Crain's Chicago Business (2018)

Ida B. Platt Award

Cook County Bar Association (2018)

Illinois Leading Lawyer

Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers (2009-2010, 2012-2020)

Top 10 Leading Women Business Lawyers

Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers (2012-2020)

Top 10 Leading Women Criminal Defense Lawyers

Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers (2012-2020)

Top 100 Leading Business Lawyers

Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers (2018-2020)

Top 100 Leading Women Business Lawyers

Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers (2012-2020)

Illinois Super Lawyers

Thomson Reuters (2007-2020)

Top 50 Women Illinois Super Lawyers

Thomson Reuters (2009-2014, 2017-2020)

Top 100 Illinois Super Lawyers

Thomson Reuters (2019-2020)

Lawdragon 500 Leading Lawyers in America

Lawdragon Inc. (2019-2020)

Litigation Trailblazers

National Law Journal (2019)

Who's Who Legal

Law Business Research Ltd. (Investigations, 2019)

Most Influential Black Lawyers

Savoy Magazine (2018)

Outstanding Women in Business Award

Rainbow PUSH Coalition & Citizenship Education Fund (2018)

Top Rated Litigators

Martindale-Hubbell and ALM (2018-2020)

Chicago Defender 2017 Newsmaker

Chicago Defender Magazine, Real Times Media

Most Influential Minority Lawyers in Chicago

Crain's Chicago Business (2017)

CHICAGO LAWYER PERSON OF THE YEAR 2016

Chicago Lawyer Magazine, Law Bulletin Media

Top 10 Women Criminal Defense Lawyers

Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers (2011, 2015)

'Award for Excellence in Pro Bono Service' from the United States District Court (2014)

One of the Most Powerful and Influential Women in Illinois

National Diversity Council (2011, 2014)

Posse Power of 10 Award for Commitment to Diversity in Education and the Workforce

The Posse Foundation, Inc. (Chicago) (2014)

Chicago United Business Leader of Color (2013)

Litigation Star

Euromoney's Benchmark Litigation (2009, 2012, 2013)

Client Service All-Star

BTI Consulting Group (2012)

Top 250 Women in Litigation

Euromoney's Benchmark Litigation (2012)

2011 Advocate for Diversity Award, Diversity Scholarship Foundation

Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service Award

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (2011)

One of Twelve “2011 Chicago Women in Law” by Chicago Lawyer Magazine

Outstanding Alumna Award for Public Service

University of Illinois (2010)

National Bar Association Judicial Council Special Chair Award

National Bar Association Judicial Council (2009)

Peer Reviewed AV® Preeminent™

Martindale-Hubbell (Since 2008)

Who’s Who in Black Chicago – Inaugural Edition

News Communications’ Marquis Who’s Who (2006)

Outstanding Alumni Seaberry Award for Service to the Legal Community

University of Illinois (1998, 2005)

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

“Talent Opportunities and Challenges, Changing Culture and Addressing Racial Equity,”
(moderator) Ninth Annual Chicago Legal Market Conference 2020 (October 14, 2020)

“Women Leaders — Taking Charge After Leaning In,” (speaker to Class of 2020 Fellows)
Leadership Illinois “Power of the Marketplace” Virtual Conference (September 23, 2020)

“BigLaw Cannot Reap Diversity Rewards Without Inclusion,” (author) Law360 Diversity
Snapshot Series of Essays by Black law firm Leaders on improving diversity in BigLaw
(September 1, 2020)

“Diversity Snapshot: As Told by Black Law Firm Leaders,” (video co-narrator) Law360 Diversity
Snapshot (September 1, 2020)

American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) 45th Annual Training Institute – Value and
Vision: A Virtual Experience, (opening session keynote) (August 24, 2020)

“Tips For Protecting Privilege In Remote Internal Investigations,” (co-author) *Law360*
Commentary (August 20, 2020)

“Leadership, Careers, and Women in Law Roundtable,” (panelist) *Law Practice Today* (June 15,
2020)

“#SelfiesWithSonya,” Q&A with Sonya Olds Som, *High Performance Counsel Cyber*
(May 13, 2020)

Lawyer Limelight: Patricia Brown Holmes, 2020 *Lawdragon 500 Leading Lawyers in America*
Guide (March 20, 2020)

“Learning Your Leadership Language,” (co-panelist) CBA Women’s Summit, Chicago, IL
(March 6, 2020)

Lawyer Limelight: Patricia Brown Holmes, *Lawdragon* (December 29, 2019)

“ALL ABOARD, What effect is California’s new law mandating more women in corporate
boardrooms likely to have?,” (author) *Best Lawyers “Women in the Law” Business Edition*
(Spring 2019)

“Drop-the-Mic Talk,” (speaker) Grit+Grace Day by Cheryle Jackson, Chicago, IL (March 22, 2019)

- “30 Feminist Hit Singles Before Their Time,” (interviewee) Rare & Scratchy Rock ‘N Roll retrospective podcast (March 15, 2019) discussed female hit music and how it inspired and empowered Judge Holmes
- “Sexual Harassment, Lying and the #MeToo Movement,” (panelist) Sixth Annual Managing Partner & General Counsel Forum, Coalition of Women’s Initiatives in Law, Chicago, IL (February 20, 2019)
- WVON1690AM, The Talk of Chicago Live Radio, Chicago, IL (February 13, 2019) discussed proposed legislation to use “El Chapo” Guzman gains to build border wall.
- Adtalem EDGE Fireside Chat, (co-panelist) Adtalem Global Education, Chicago, IL (February 12, 2019) discussed the responsibility of being the first and only in corporate America and how to give back in that role.
- Closing Keynote Address, The Quorum Initiative 2018 HOW Forum, New York, NY (November 1-2, 2018)
- Words of Wisdom from Kick-Ass Women, Vol. III*, (quote) CBD Marketing e-book (October 2018)
- “The Year of the Yes,” (speaker) Corporate Counsel Women of Color (CCWC) Fourteenth Annual Career Strategies Conference, New York, NY (October 11, 2018)
- “The Profit in Nonprofits,” (author) *Best Lawyers* “Women in the Law” Summer Business Edition (June 2018)
- “Crisis Management for Today’s General Counsel,” (moderator) RSHC, Major, Lindsey & Africa, and PwC CLE Program, Chicago, IL (June 21, 2018)
- “Uncovering Talent: A New Model of Inclusion,” (co-panelist) The Future of Law Firm Leadership and Management Conference, New York, NY (June 19, 2018)
- “Business Development Strategies for Diverse Lawyers,” (panelist) Mendelsohn Legal, Inc. CLE panel, Chicago, IL (May 16, 2018)
- “May it Please the Court: Symposium on Women Lawyers in the Courtroom,” (panelist) The United States District Court, Chicago Bar Association, Women’s Bar Association of Illinois, and Black Women Lawyers’ Association, Chicago, IL (April 12, 2018)
- General Counsel Roundtable, (moderator) National Bar Association (NBA) Corporate Law Section Seventh Gateway to Success Conference, Nashville, TN (March 23, 2018)
- “Power in the Boardroom, Strategies to Achieve Diversity on Corporate Boards,” (moderator) Black Women Lawyers’ Association (BWLA) 2018 Spring Fundraiser, Chicago, IL (March 13, 2018)
- “Be Direct: Legal Conversations Demonstrating the Art of Direct Examination,” (took the stand) Cook County Bar Association CLE Series, University of Chicago Law School, Chicago, IL (March 6, 2018)
- “The Fierce Urgency of Now,” (co-panelist) JPMorgan Chase and Co. BOLD Illinois, MLK Celebration, Chicago, IL (January 8, 2018)
- “Chicago Special Prosecutor’s Career Nearly Came to a Premature End,” *ABA Journal Magazine* Feature (December 2017)
- “Using the Media to Litigate,” (co-panelist) National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) 13th General Counsel Institute, New York, NY (November 9-10, 2017)
- “Yield No More” 2017 Women’s Leadership Forum, The Executive Leadership Council, Chicago, IL (July 19, 2017)
- “Corporate Monitorships, The Nuts and Bolts,” (co-moderator) ABA Criminal Justice Section CLE Program, The Women in White Collar Subcommittee, Chicago, IL (June 15, 2017)

- CCBA & BWLA Newly Admitted Attorney Reception, (guest speaker) Chicago, IL (May 15, 2017)
discussed the importance of civility, honor, and mentoring in the profession.
- “Benefits and Mechanics of Diverse Partner Integration,” (co-author) *Best Lawyers “Women in the Law”* Spring Business Edition (April 2017)
- “Navigating Your Firm,” (panelist) The Chicago Committee 2017 Law Firm Boot Camp Program for Junior Associates, Chicago, IL (February 10, 2017)
- “Attire: Your Most Overlooked Secret Weapon,” (Chapter 4 Author) in *From the Trenches: Strategies and Tips from 21 of the Nation’s Top Trial Lawyers* (2015)
- “Be a Perry Mason, Not a Denny Crane,” *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin – Law Day 2013* (May 2013)
- “China’s New Anti-Corruption Laws: Paper Tiger or Pouncing Dragon,” (co-presenter) MCCA 11th Annual CLE Expo, Chicago, IL (March 22, 2012)
- “What You Don’t Know CAN Hurt You: Using Investigations to Protect Your Organization From Loss,” Schiff Hardin Labor & Employment Breakfast Briefing, Chicago, IL (October 19, 2011)
- “When It Gets Personal: Advice to In-house Counsel on Avoiding Criminal and Civil Liability,” ECOA’s 19th Annual Ethics and Compliance Conference, Bellevue, Wash. (September 21, 2011)
- “Environmental Criminal Prosecutions: Avoid Being One of the EPA’s Next Victories,” *Governance & Executive Compensation 2011, Financier Worldwide* (June 30, 2011)
- “Protecting Your Company’s Valuable Trade Secret Assets: Lessons Learned from Recent Federal Prosecutions of Criminal Trade Secrets Theft,” Illinois MCLE Marathon 2011, *Practicing Law Institute* (May 16, 2011)
- “Litigation: Guilty Pleas Preview Testimony in Galleon Insider Trading Case,” *Inside Counsel* (February 17, 2011)
- “Corporate Officials Beware: Knowledge May No Longer Be Required for FCPA Liability,” (co-author) *Bloomberg Law Reports – Risk and Compliance* (April 2010); *Republished in Bloomberg Law Reports – Corporate Counsel* (May 2010)
- “Grease Payments are a Thing of the Past as the Reach of the FCPA Continues to Expand,” (co-author) *Bloomberg Law Reports – Risk and Compliance* (March 2010)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Civic and Charitable Memberships

- Chief Judge Ruben Castillo’s Magistrate Judge Selection Committee, Chairperson
Chief Judge James F. Holderman’s Magistrate Judge Merit Review Panel, Chairperson
Harriet’s Daughters, Board of Directors, Chair
Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism-Mentoring Advisory Committee
LaRabida Children’s Hospital, Board of Trustees
Senator Dick Durbin’s Judicial Screening Committee, Co-Chair
University of Illinois, Board of Trustees, Member