

Blake Kolesa

Associate

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Committed to resolving and prevailing in simple and complex disputes for his clients, Blake Kolesa represents individuals and businesses facing high-stakes litigation and investigations. Blake is an advocate for others and is committed to pro bono representation of non-profit organizations and the wrongfully convicted. Blake's legal practice is informed by his commitment to and thorough understanding of his clients' industries and the technological and legal developments they face.



With experience in mass torts and class actions, Blake continues to practice in courts across the country. In Illinois, he has experience in chambers and as an advocate in the trial and appellate courts.

Blake is an alumnus of Northwestern University, where he serves as president of the marching band alumni association, as well as Loyola University Chicago School of Law, where he was a fellow of the Institute for Consumer Antitrust Studies and welcomed prospective students as an admissions representative. Before his legal career, Blake's work as a community organizer in rural, downstate Illinois shaped his dedication to community development.

EXPERIENCE

Clerkships

Judicial Extern, Hon. Michael Hyman, Illinois Appellate Court, First District (2020)
Judicial Extern, Hon. Celia Gamrath, Circuit Court of Cook County, Chancery Division (2019)

Representative Engagements – Real Estate & Construction Litigation

- Obtained partial summary judgment and total jury verdict in a Cook County action in favor of a federally qualified non-profit health care and counseling provider that had purchased real estate later found to be critically structurally unsound and sold through fraud.
- Represented community college in complex construction arbitration and litigation alleging architectural, construction, and project management negligence, resulting in favorable award and settlement for client.
- Counsel international utility, infrastructure, and construction engineering firm regarding compliance as non-party with discovery requests.
- Recommended course of action under Illinois Mechanics Lien Act for Chicago-based structural and professional engineering firm following general contractor's failure to compensate client
- Initiated breach of contract and fraud suit on behalf of investors in Manhattan real estate after managing members of company wrongfully diluted investors' interests

Representative Engagements – Commercial Disputes & Litigation

- Represented a global insurance brokerage in litigation against former employees, alleging breaches of restrictive covenants and fiduciary duties, tortious interference, and related claims.
- Defend leading consumer insurer in commercial litigation alleging breach of contract and associated business torts stemming from termination of franchise agreements
- Won dismissal, with prejudice, of putative class action alleging leading consumer insurer's ill-motivated claim denial, breach of contract, violation of the Illinois Insurance Code, and violation of the Fair Housing Act.
- Brought and mutually resolved action against on-air broadcast talent to obtain payment for services rendered by media management client.

Representative Engagements – Product Liability & Mass Torts

- Represented variety of clients including international transportation fleet corporation, agricultural implement manufacturer, and home improvement retailer in product liability matters alleging wrongful death and serious injury.
- Litigated case alleging wrongful death stemming from injuries sustained at a collegiate sporting event that was mutually resolved through mediation.
- Facilitated settlement for inventor-designer of security device alleged to have collected sensitive personal information in violation of the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act in a putative class action.
- Defended genetic sampling and testing entity in putative class action alleging client and tech conglomerates caused disclosure of genetic history in violation of the Illinois Genetic Information Privacy Act.

Representative Engagements – White Collar Defense, Investigations & Compliance

- Counseled international health care device manufacturer regarding their relationships with foreign import-export firms to ensure compliance with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.
- Represented a construction transportation company in a U.S. Department of Justice investigation into bribery of municipal officials and representations concerning underrepresented business enterprise involvement in public and private projects.
- Represented whistleblower physician in investigation and *qui tam* suit alleging misrepresentations violative of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the False Claims Act by international surgical equipment manufacturer.

Representative Engagements – Wrongful Convictions & Pro Bono Service

- Enforced \$25.2 million jury verdict for a client who was wrongfully convicted and incarcerated for 22 years for a crime he did not commit and defended on appeal district court's award of prejudgment interest, creating valuable precedent for future Section 1983 claimants alleging non-economic damages.
- Counseled the family of a fallen Chicago Fire Fighter in conjunction with an investigation into the department's shortcomings contributing to abnormal line of duty death.

- Represent several individuals convicted of serious crimes in Cook County in appeals of wrongfully denied successive post-conviction petitions presenting new, exculpatory evidence.

CREDENTIALS

Education

Loyola University Chicago School of Law, J.D., 2021, *cum laude*
Executive Editor, *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*
Teaching Assistant, Torts, Contracts, & Criminal Law
Northwestern University, B.S., Education and Social Policy

Bar Admissions

Illinois

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
U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania

Professional Memberships

American Bar Association

Chicago Bar Association

Young Lawyers Section, Director (2023-2025)

Young Lawyers Section, Chair, Commercial Litigation Committee (2025-2026)

Illinois State Bar Association

Cook County Representative to ISBA Assembly (2024-2027)

Civil Practice & Procedure Section Council (2022-2024)

Young Lawyers Division Section Council (2024-2025)

Federal Civil Practice Section Council (2025-2026)

Honors & Awards

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch (Product Liability Litigation-Defendants, 2025-2026),
Best Lawyers®

Illinois Rising Star in Business Litigation, Products Liability, and Class Action & Mass Torts,
Thomson Reuters' Illinois Super Lawyers (2025-2026)

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

“Financial Experts in Commercial Disputes,” (moderator) Chicago Bar Association (December 22, 2025)

“New Ways to Think About Wellness in 2025,” (panelist) Chicago Bar Association (January 21, 2025)

“Client Update on BIPA,” (co-author) *RSHC Client Alert* (May 20, 2024)

“Tag You’re @It: Creative Service with #SocialMedia”, (co-author) Illinois State Bar Association’s *Young Lawyers Division Newsletter* (February 2024, vol. 68, no.7)

"*Snyder v. U.S.* and Gratuities under 18 USC § 666," (presenter) RSHC White Collar Practice Team (January 18, 2024)

"October 2023 RSHC Client Update on GIPA," (co-author) *RSHC Client Alert* (October 13, 2023)

"The State of Snap Removal in Illinois District Courts," (author) *Illinois State Bar Association's Trial Briefs Newsletter Section on Civil Practice & Procedure* (August 2023, vol. 70, no. 2)

"GIPA: The Next Front for Illinois Privacy Litigation?" (co-author) *Illinois State Bar Association's Bench & Bar Section Council Newsletter* (April 2023, vol. 53, no. 5)

"First-Generation Attorney Panel," (co-panelist) UIC First-Generation Law Student Association (FGLSA) General Body Zoom Meeting (October 5, 2022)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Legal Aid Chicago, Ambassadors Board & Pro Bono Panel (2022-2024)

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Associate Board (2022)

ACLU of Illinois Next Generation Society

Board (2025-Present)

Northwestern University Marching and Band Alumni Association

Executive Vice President (2021-2024)

President (2023-2027)