RILEY SAFER HOLMES & CANCILA LLP

Christopher L. Schaeffer



Partner

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While Christopher Schaeffer counsels his clients, including leading financial services firms and educational institutions, on high-stakes and often contentious matters, his focus is on finding positive resolutions that enable both sides to move past their disputes and achieve their strategic goals. An experienced first chair trial lawyer who has also represented clients before administrative agencies and regulatory bodies as well as at the bargaining table, Chris takes a clear and straightforward approach to advancing his clients' interests.

With strong writing and oral communication skills informed by his clerkship experience, Chris is adept at crafting litigation strategy, writing dispositive motions, drafting discovery requests, taking and defending depositions, and conducting oral arguments or witness examinations in a range of complex commercial litigation matters, including conflicts surrounding mergers & acquisitions, derivative lawsuits, shareholder disputes, defamation, breach of contract, fiduciary duties, intellectual property, and trade secrets. Chris also has particular experience in helping employers navigate issues regarding restrictive covenants, including handling litigation around their applicability.

He also applies the insights gained in litigation to offer counsel to businesses seeking to mitigate risk and avoid conflict, advising them on policies and procedures around labor and employment practices such as hiring, terminations, union organization efforts, and compensation plans.

In addition to his trial and advisory work, Chris has drafted appellate briefs in both state and federal appeals throughout the country. He is an adjunct professor at Loyola University Chicago School of Law, where he teaches a class on civil appeals.

EXPERIENCE

Clerkships

Hon. Kathryn E. Zenoff, Illinois Appellate Court (2015-2017)
Judicial Extern, Hon. Michael B. Hyman, Illinois Appellate Court (2014-2015)

Representative Engagements

- Represented financial services firm in FINRA arbitration hearing against former financial advisor who sought damages in excess of $23 million; defeated all claims brought by former financial advisor and secured award and judgment in favor of financial services firm for $2.3 million.
- Represented financial services firm in FINRA arbitration hearing against former financial advisor who sought to invalidate portions of firm's compensation program and sought damages in excess of $10 million; defeated all claims brought by former financial advisor and secured award and judgment in favor of financial services firm for $1.89 million.

- Represented financial services firm in FINRA arbitration hearing against former financial advisor who sought damages in excess of $382 million; defeated all claims brought by former financial advisor and secured award and judgment in favor of financial services firm in excess of $662,000.
- Represented a registered individual in FINRA arbitration hearing against former brokerage employer and secured award and judgment in favor of financial advisor and expungement of FINRA Form U-5.
- Represented hospital system in emergency litigation proceedings and defeated requests for temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctive relief concerning employment-related disputes.
- Obtained dismissal with prejudice on behalf of a client with respect to claims by former employee seeking reinstatement into former employment position.
- Successfully represented multiple clients in preliminary injunction proceedings and evidentiary hearings before federal and state courts throughout the country.
- Successfully represented multiple educational institutions in administrative proceedings before the Illinois State Board of Education and other agencies.
- Represented multiple educational institutions in collective bargaining negotiations with teachers union that led to execution of full multi-year collective bargaining agreements.
- Conducted internal investigations into claims of improper behavior by employees and inappropriate behavior by student athletes at educational institution.
- Authored appellate brief that led to a published opinion in client's favor before the Illinois Appellate Court. *Stimeling v. Peoria Public School District 150*, 2018 IL App (3d) 170567.

CREDENTIALS

Education

Loyola University Chicago School of Law, J.D., 2015, *cum laude*
Managing Editor, *Loyola Consumer Law Review*, Vol. 27
Research Assistant to Professor Matthew Sag (May 2013-January 2014)
Illinois Wesleyan University, B.A., Political Science, 2012, *cum laude*

Bar Admissions

Illinois
U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

Teaching Appointments

Adjunct Professor, Loyola University of Chicago School of Law (2018-Present)

Honors & Awards

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch (Commercial Litigation, 2024-2027), *Best Lawyers®*
Illinois Emerging Lawyer in Emerging Commercial Litigation Lawyers, *Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers* (2023-2026)
Illinois Rising Star in Employment & Labor and Business Litigation, *Illinois Super Lawyers* (2025)

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

"EEOC Scrutiny of DEI Programs: What Companies Need to Know (co-author), *RSHC Client Alert* (June 12, 2026)

"2026 Employment Discrimination 2026 Edition: Chapter 4 – Age Discrimination," (co-author) Illinois Institute of Continuing Education (IICLE®) (January 2026)

"2026 Employment Termination: Employer Obligations and Workplace Considerations 2026 Edition: Chapter 4 - Investigation, Testing, and Privacy," (co-author) Illinois Institute of Continuing Education (IICLE®) (January 2026)

"IICLE Intellectual Property Law 2025 Edition: Chapter 14 - Trade Secret Remedies and the Inevitable Disclosure Doctrine," (co-author) Illinois Institute of Continuing Education (IICLE®) (November 2024)

"U.S. District Court Invalidates FTC Non-Complete Rule," (co-author) *RSHC Client Alert* (August 21, 2024)

"U.S. District Court Enjoins Implementation and Enforcement of FT Rule Banning Non-compete Agreements," (co-author) *RSHC Client Alert* (July 5, 2024)

"Federal Trade Commission Approves New Rule That Prohibits Non-Compete Agreements," (co-author) *RSHC Client Alert* (April 24, 2024)

"Effective Appellate Advocacy," (speaker) Conferences by Illinois Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) and Illinois Appellate Lawyers Association (January 28, 2021; May 11, 2023)

"Effective Appellate Advocacy in Termination of Parental Rights Cases," (speaker) Appellate Lawyers Association webinar (January 28, 2021)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Imerman Angels Charity, Professionals' Board Member (2019-Present)