



Erin McAdams Franzblau

Partner | Chicago

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Areas of Practice

Litigation/Trial Practice | Labor and Employment Practice | Class Action Litigation | Employee Benefits, Executive Compensation and ERISA Litigation | Trade Secrets | Worker Safety and OSHA | Consumer Products

Erin McAdams Franzblau is a Partner in the Litigation Practice of Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP. Ms. McAdams Franzblau was a Partner at Freeborn & Peters, which combined with SGR in 2023.

Ms. McAdams Franzblau litigates employment matters, counsels employers on nearly every sub-specialty of employment law, and acts as employment counsel for M&A transactions.

In her counseling practice, Ms. McAdams Franzblau assists organizations with a wide range of day-to-day employment issues, including personnel policies and procedures, executive employment and independent contractor arrangements, accommodations, restrictive covenants, employee misclassification risks, and internal investigations.

As one client said about Ms. McAdams Franzblau's assistance:

"We developed a great partnership with Erin immediately and she was able to provide exceptional guidance in a clear and individualized manner. Erin provides outstanding professional support with impeccable response time. The best part is that I can completely trust Erin to guide us through difficult issues and represent our company professionally. Erin and Freeborn & Peters LLP have quickly grown to be invaluable partners to our organization."

Ms. McAdams Franzblau is experienced in all stages of litigation, from inception through trial and post-trial appeals, and

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she has won summary judgment for her clients on a range of employment matters. She regularly defends employers in a wide range of class and collective actions, single-plaintiff disputes, and restrictive covenant matters before federal and state courts and administrative bodies.

In her pro bono practice, Ms. McAdams Franzblau is committed to advocating for the rights of women and children. She has represented sexual assault survivors in their efforts to seek civil restraining orders, and secured relief for a refugee client under the Violence Against Women Act, allowing the client to gain resident status in the United States. She has also represented prisoners in Section 1983 actions and achieved favorable settlements on behalf of her clients. In 2018, she was honored by Legal Aid Chicago for her work representing sexual assault survivors.

Ms. McAdams Franzblau is a frequent writer and speaker on employment law issues, including topics such as personnel management, COVID-19 compliance, and marijuana legislation. She is active in the bar and is currently President Elect and an Executive Board member of the Federal Bar Association Chicago Chapter.

Prior to joining the Firm, Ms. McAdams Franzblau practiced employment litigation at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, and clerked for the Honorable William J. Zloch, United States District Judge of the Southern District of Florida.

While at Freeborn (now SGR), Ms. McAdams Franzblau served as Associate General Counsel for Employment Matters. She was also the Co-Chair of the Freeborn & Peters Women's Leadership Council in 2021 and served as the Steering Committee Chair in 2022.

Ms. McAdams Franzblau earned her J.D. from the Indiana University Maurer School of Law where she graduated *cum laude* and served as Articles Editor of the Law Review. She earned her B.A. from the University of Notre Dame where she graduated *magna cum laude*.

Representative Experience

- Member of trial team representing former Illinois state Treasurer in retaliation lawsuit in Cook County, resulting in full defense verdict for client.
- Member of trial team representing private equity firm against former CEO in breach of fiduciary duty action; settled favorably for client on eve of trial.
- Lead associate in Western District of Wisconsin injunction hearing against client's former CEO, resulting in contempt finding against former CEO and in favor of client; later upheld by the Seventh Circuit.

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- Secured summary judgment in the Western District of Wisconsin for plan sponsor in ERISA denial of benefits litigation.
- Secured summary judgment for automotive company in two multi-count FMLA and ADA cases in the Southern District of Indiana.
- Secured summary judgment for trucking company on sex discrimination claim in Michigan state court.
- Secured reduction in penalty for OSHA citations involving fatality at Illinois trucking facility.
- Secured complete revocation of penalties for OSHA citations involving powered industrial trucks at Ohio trucking facility.
- Secured multiple dismissals in wrongful termination litigation in the Eastern District of Michigan, including arguments concerning LMRA preemption.

Admissions

Illinois

United States District Court for the Northern, Central, and Southern Districts of Illinois

United States District Court for the Northern and Southern Districts of Indiana

United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan

United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin

United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri

United States Court of Appeals, Sixth and Seventh Circuits

Recognitions

The Best Lawyers in America®, *Employment Law – Management*, 2024

Award for Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, 2023

Crain's Chicago Business Notable Women in Law, 2022

Crain's Chicago Business Rising Stars in Law, 2021

Volunteer of the Year, Legal Assistance Foundation (now Legal Aid Chicago) Children & Families Group, 2018

Recipient, Ilene and Michael Shaw Younger Lawyer Public Service Grant, 2017

Memberships

Federal Bar Association Chicago Chapter President Elect (2023-2024), Vice President (2022-2023), Treasurer (2021-2022), and Executive Board Member (2021-Present)

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Federal Bar Association Chicago Chapter Board Member (2015-present)

Federal Bar Association Chicago Chapter Programming Committee Co-Chair (2018-2021)

Federal Bar Association Younger Lawyers' Division Co-Chair (2015-2018)

7th Representative and Chair of the Publications Committee (2018-2020), Board of the Young Lawyers' Division of the National FBA (2018-present)

Publications

- Moderator, Federal Bar Association Chicago Chapter, 8th Annual Employment Law Seminar, "[Understanding Mental Health Conditions Under the ADA and FMLA](#)," (February 9, 2023)
- Guest Speaker, Talent Optimization Podcast with Traci Scherck, "[The Impact of Pay Transparency on Organizational Culture](#)" February 9, 2023.
- Panelist, Women, Influence & Power in Law Conference, "Take the Driver's Seat: Governing a Hybrid Workforce," (October 18, 2022).
- Presenter, Association of Workplace Investigators ("AWI") Webinar, "Pay Equity Issues in Investigations: A Changing Landscape," (September 29, 2022).
- Co-Author, "[Employers Need to Prepare for Illinois Crown Act](#)," Powerhouse Points - A Quarterly Litigation Update, Summer 2022.
- Co-Author, "[Client Alert: Employment Law Mid-Year Update – Illinois and Chicago](#)," Freeborn & Peters LLP (July 23, 2021).
- Panelist, Centerforce Driving Diversity in Law and Leadership Conference, "From Competition to Collaboration: Shifting the Paradigm," (May 19, 2021).
- Contributor, "Employers in Wait-and-See Mode over Possible DOL Guidance on Refusal to Work," SHRM Online, February 12, 2021.
- Moderator, Federal Bar Association Chicago Chapter, 8th Annual Employment Law Seminar, "Can I say that? Employee and Corporate Speech in Polarized Times," (January 11, 2021).
- Author, "[Anti-Sexual Harassment Training Required for All Illinois Employers by December 31, 2020](#)," November 2020.
- Author, "Client Alert: [Deadline Approaching - Illinois Employers Must Report Adverse Employment Rulings by October 31, 2020](#)," Freeborn & Peters LLP, July 27, 2020.
- Presenter, Freeborn & Peters LLP Emerging Industries Webinar, "Employers Prepare: Legal Landmines in Illinois Cannabis Laws," (June 24, 2020).

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- Co-Author, "[Client Alert: New Employment Laws in 2019 and 2020 Increase Employer Obligations](#)," Freeborn & Peters LLP, June 22, 2020.
- Presenter, Freeborn & Peters LLP COVID-19 Webinar, "Getting Back to Business: Safely, Legally, and Effectively," (May 28, 2020).
- Panelist, Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education's Employment Law Institute's Webcast, "Furloughs, Layoffs, WARN and Re-opening the Business," (May 14, 2020).
- Co-Author, "[Client Alert: U.S. Department of Labor Issues Additional Guidance for Compliance with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)," Freeborn & Peters LLP, March 26, 2020.
- Co-Author, "[Client Alert: President Signs COVID-19 Paid Leave Bill into Law](#)," Freeborn & Peters LLP, March 19, 2020.
- Author, "[Client Alert: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and the Workplace: Frequently Asked Questions](#)," Freeborn & Peters LLP, March 13, 2020.
- Panelist, Shared Voices seminar, "Speaking Out – Stuttering, Diversity and Hiring," speaking to reasonable accommodations and disability discrimination under the ADA, (January 23, 2020).
- Panelist, Federal Bar Association Chicago Chapter Labor and Employment Seminar, "#MeToo and More: How has the movement affected new regulations, training requirements, and challenges to law firms?" (January 13, 2020).
- Author, "Employers be "WARN"ed When Implementing Reductions in Force," Illinois Manufacturer Association Magazine, January 2020.
- Author, "[Client Alert: Employers Beware: Sweeping Changes to Illinois Employment Laws on the Horizon](#)," Freeborn & Peters LLP, August 28, 2019.
- Author, "Auto-deducted meal breaks — can they be done?," HR Dive, July 29, 2019.
- Presenter, CLE for the Federal Bar Association Chicago Chapter, Influencers, Social Media, and Legal Ethics – Hot Topics and Emerging Trends, (July 25, 2019).
- Author, "OSHA Review Commission Upholds General Duty Clause Citation for Workplace Violence Hazard Created by a Third Party," Spring 2019 Powerhouse Points.