Smith Gambrell Russell

Terrence J. Sheahan

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Areas of Practice

Litigation / Trial Practice | Insurance and Reinsurance | Private Equity and Venture Capital | Banking / Financial Institutions | Trade Secrets | Trust & Estate Litigation and Family Business Disputes

Terrence J. Sheahan is a Partner in the Litigation Practice of Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP, serves as Managing Partner of the Chicago Office, and is a member of the Firm's Executive Committee. Mr. Sheahan was previously a Partner with Freeborn & Peters, which combined with SGR in 2023.

Mr. Sheahan represents both plaintiffs and defendants in a wide range of commercial matters and business disputes including: breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duties, tortious interference, fraud, trade-secret and non-compete disputes, real estate disputes, defamation, partnership wind-ups, insurance coverage, trust and estate and family business disputes, administrative review proceedings, and other multi-million dollar matters in state and federal courts and before administrative agencies. He also has experience in class action litigation and constitutional law.

Before joining the Firm, Mr. Sheahan served as a Prosecutor in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, Narcotics Special Prosecutions Bureau. Throughout his career as a trial lawyer, T.J. has tried to verdict more than 150 civil and criminal bench trials, 18 civil and criminal jury trials, and several others resolved during trial, and handled numerous appeals before the Illinois Supreme Court, the Illinois Appellate Court, and several federal and appellate courts. In addition to his courtroom experience, he routinely represents business clients in arbitrations and mediations.

For the past 16 years, Mr. Sheahan has served as an Adjunct Professor at Northwestern University Law School teaching "Introduction to Trial Advocacy." He is also a periodic guest lecturer for trial advocacy courses at several Chicago law schools and serves as a team coach and judge for several Moot Court competitions.

While at Freeborn (now SGR), Mr. Sheahan served as Co-Leader of the Litigation Department. He is a Member of the Board of Directors for Arc of Hope (Uganda), and formerly has served as a Member and President of the St. Joan of Arc School Board.

Representative Experience

- Successfully represented a recycling facility in a suit against the City of Chicago appealing the denial of a permit to operate. We argued that our client obtained all the required permits and zoning approvals and had been wrongfully denied. A City of Chicago Administrative Law Judge ruled that the City of Chicago had wrongfully denied our client the permit, had no authority to conduct environmental justice analysis, and vacated the denial.
- Successfully represented trust beneficiary in obtaining an injunction preventing the trustee from using trust assets to defend multiple breach of trust claims asserted against her.
- Successfully represented a non-for-profit hospital system, as the recipient of a large bequest upon the death of a former patient, in litigation in Illinois brought by family-member beneficiaries of the father's estate.
- Co-lead counsel in a nine-day jury trial on claims against our client, a landfill operator, for negligence, trespass and Plaintiffs alleged that odors, noise, dust, birds, and litter emanating from the landfill interfered with the use and enjoyment of their property. Plaintiffs sought a seven-figure award, the jury entered a verdict in favor of our client on all counts.
- Co-lead counsel in an arbitration against a nationwide retailer on multiple claims, including breach of contract relating to the creation and operation of a national retail-marketing database. The arbitration spanned eleven days and included five expert witnesses. The arbitration panel found in our client's favor and awarded our client reasonable attorneys' fees on the successful breach of contract claims.
- Lead drafter of *amici curiae* brief to United States Supreme Court in *Friedrichs, et al., v. California Teachers Association, et. al.,* Case No. 14-915 (filed November 2015).
- Member of Freeborn Team (and one of the attorneys who presented witness testimony and oral argument at the Preliminary Injunction hearings) in two lawsuits that challenged two Illinois pension reform laws. In both cases, Freeborn won on summary judgment and obtained rulings that both pension reform laws violated the Illinois Constitution. Both cases were affirmed on appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court. See, *In Re Pension Reform Litigation*, 2015 IL 118585 (2015); *Jones, et al., v. Municipal Employees' Annuity & Benefit Fund of Chicago*, 2016 IL 119618 (2016).
- Lead counsel in a bench trial on claims for breach of contract relating to a 17-acre real estate development dispute. The court entered a verdict in favor of our client on all counts.
- Co-lead counsel in an eight-day jury trial on claims against a financial services company for breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, violations of the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Practices Act, professional negligence and negligent misrepresentation. The jury entered a verdict in favor of Freeborn's client on all counts, which resulted in a seven-figure settlement payment to our client.

- Represented plaintiff bank in a legal malpractice action against its former counsel in connection with a portfolio of SBA loans resulting in substantial seven-figure settlement.
- Lead counsel who drafted briefs and presented oral arguments in business litigation and defamation cases before the Illinois Supreme Court and the Illinois Appellate Court, including a case involving a matter of first impression in the Illinois Supreme Court. *Wright Development Group, LLC v. Walsh et al.,* 238 Ill.2d. 620, 939 N.E.2d 389, (2010).
- Lead counsel who obtained a dismissal of a $30 million tortious interference with contract and tortious interference with business expectancy lawsuit against an international information technology services and solutions company.
- Lead counsel for a private equity portfolio company who obtained a multi-million-dollar settlement in favor of global supplier of uniformity, dynamic and geometric products in a breach of contract claim in federal court.
- Lead counsel who prosecuted a breach of employment contract and breach of fiduciary duties lawsuit on behalf of an international software solutions and graphic communications company.

Admissions

Illinois

Admitted pro hac vice in other state courts including in California, Delaware, Florida, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts

United States Supreme Court

United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth, Sixth and Federal Circuits

United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (General and Trial Bar)

United States District Court for the District of Colorado

United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan

United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana

Admitted pro hac vice in several United States District Courts and United States Bankruptcy Courts located in Arizona, California, Florida, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas

Memberships

Chicago Inn of Court, Member

Chicago Bar Association, Member

- Commercial Litigation Committee, Co-Vice-Chairman, 2019-20
- Judicial Evaluation Committee, Investigator (several campaign cycles)

Illinois Appellate Lawyers Association, Member

Recognitions

Illinois Super Lawyers, Business Litigation, Appellate (2013–2018; 2023–2025)

Illinois Leading Lawyers, Commercial Litigation, Civil Appellate Law (cited in multiple years)

Chicago Daily Law Bulletin and Chicago Lawyer – 40 Under Forty Illinois Attorneys to Watch (2011)

Publications

- Presenter "Commercial Litigation 101," Chicago CLE event (June 20, 2024)
- Co-Author, *Remedies for Non-Compliance*, CIVIL DISCOVERY PRACTICE, Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education (IICLE) 2024, Edition, 2020 Edition, 2017 Edition.
- Author, "Prejudgment Interest Under The Illinois Interest Act: A Category of Damages Not To Be Overlooked In Commercial Disputes," *Civil Litigation FlashPoints*, May 2016.
- Author, "The Illinois Appellate Court Finds the Absolute Litigation Privilege Applies to Claims of Invasion of Privacy, Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress and Breach of Contract," *Civil Litigation FlashPoints*, March 2014.
- Author, "The Illinois Business Corporation Act: The Survival Provisions of 805 ILCS 5/12.80 Do Not Apply to Claims That Accrue After a Corporation Dissolves," *Civil Litigation Flashpoints*, published by the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education, May 2013.
- Author, "Compelling An Officer, Director, or Employee of a Party To Appear at Trial: Exploring the Limits of a Notice To Produce Under Supreme Court Rule 237(b)," *Civil Litigation Flashpoints*, published by the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education, March 2010.
- Author, "The Illinois Appellate Court Clarifies the Pleading Requirements Under the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act and Reaffirms an Absolute Privilege Under Illinois Defamation Law," *Civil Litigation Flashpoints*, published by the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education, July 2009.