

# Danessa P. Watkins

Chicago, IL

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**PARTNER**

## Overview

Danessa likes to win, whether she is playing a recreational sport or arguing a motion in court. Her clients appreciate her competitive spirit and commitment to helping them achieve their goals.

Through years of representing a diverse clientele, ranging from small business entrepreneurs to *Fortune* 500 companies, Danessa appreciates that legal representation is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. She dedicates time to understanding her clients' long- and short-term goals. She then analyzes and explains the options available to her clients before making a recommendation on how to best proceed. Danessa's professional success is a direct result of her ability to add a personalized touch to her client advocacy.

As a member of the firm's Business Litigation Service Group, Danessa defends clients in matters relating to business disputes, computer fraud, products liability, breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, and tortious interference. Growing up in an entrepreneurial family, she recognizes how disruptive a legal battle can be to daily life and business operations. Danessa is effective in securing swift resolutions for her clients through her meticulous motion writing and creativity in negotiating settlements.

As a member of the Entertainment & Media Service Group, Danessa represents the free speech rights and reputational interests of media clients, businesses and individuals. The continuous advancements in technology and global access present unique challenges for journalists and news outlets in presenting accurate information and protecting their sources. Danessa stays current on the ever-evolving area of First Amendment law and defends the media against libel suits and intrusive subpoenas. The niche areas of defamation, false light and right to privacy also present unique challenges for companies and individuals looking to promote and protect their products, services and image. Danessa counsels clients on how to minimize risk in their publications and advertising. When litigation does arise, her clients value her thorough evaluation of potential exposure and tenacity in defending their reputational interests.

## SERVICES

Business Litigation  
Entertainment & Media  
Hospitality, Leisure & Tourism

## EDUCATION

Boston University School of Law, J.D., 2013  
Northeastern University, B.S., 2010

## ADMISSIONS

Illinois  
Massachusetts

When she is not in the office, Danessa enjoys traveling, hiking and exploring Chicago's restaurant scene. She participates in the annual Le Tour de Shore 100 mile charity bike race that starts in Chicago and ends in New Buffalo, Michigan. She is also actively involved in local organizations that foster the collaboration and advancement of women business owners.

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## Experience

Regularly Defend Public Figures' First Amendment Right to Free Speech

Achieved Dismissal of Defamation Claims For Business Client

Defended and Prosecuted Counterclaims on Behalf of a Client in a Dispute Against Business Partner

Defended an International Airline Accused of Defaulting on an Aircraft Sale and Finance Agreement

Helps a National Multi-Line Insurance Company With Multiple Areas of Representation and Business Operations

Assumed the Lead on a Case that had Been Pending for Seven Years and Asserted Claims of Fraud and Breach of Fiduciary Duty

Successfully Defended a New Reporter Against Claims of False Light, Conspiracy and Defamation

Achieved a Dismissal with Prejudice in a Defamation Case

Successfully Negotiated Settlements with Eight Plaintiffs Alleging False Advertising and Endorsement Under the Lanham Act

Negotiated a Seven Figure Asset Purchase Agreement and Dissolution of the LLC

Prepared a Motion to Dismiss a Negligence Claim Filed Against a Fortune 500 Company

Prepared a Motion to Bar and Eight Figure Wage Loss Claims as Speculative

Negotiated an Offer of Judgment for the Full Amount of Damages Alleged by Our Client

Successfully Defended a News Publication Against Intrusive Subpoenas

Serves as Outside Counsel to Media and Marketing Solutions Company

Obtained Swift Dismissal with Prejudice on Behalf of its Restaurant/Bar Client

## Membership & Involvement

- Member: Chicago Bar Association; Women's Bar Association of Illinois; ABA Forum on Communications Law

## Honors

- Selected to *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*® in America in Commercial Litigation: 2024

## Firm News

105 Amundsen Davis Attorneys Recognized by Best Lawyers® in 2024 in America  
Firm News, August 17, 2023

SmithAmundsen Promotes Three to Partner  
February 22, 2021

## Speaking Engagements

Your Business's Response to Bad "Press" and Negative Social Media Posts  
Illinois Chamber of Commerce, Webcast, February 23, 2022

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