



IRINA Y. DMITRIEVA

Partner | Chicago, IL

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Irina Y. Dmitrieva is a highly experienced appellate litigator with more than 20 years of success at the federal and state appellate court levels. She has represented both private clients and governmental entities. Clients and trial lawyers value her meticulous attention to the facts of each case, her deep understanding of the governing legal principles, and her ability to formulate novel legal arguments to address each client's individual needs.

Ms. Dmitrieva has had appellate court successes arguing cases in the Illinois Supreme Court, Illinois appellate courts, and United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. In these venues, she's secured reversals of adverse trial court judgments and successfully defended trial victories.

She's scored wins in a variety of high-stakes cases involving:

- wrongful death
- personal injury
- fiduciary duties
- premises liability
- employment law
- multi-million-dollar commercial disputes
- Freedom of Information Act

Embedded Counsel on Trial Teams

Ms. Dmitrieva also serves as embedded counsel on trial teams. She advises teams on legal and strategic issues to effectively position clients for victories at critical litigation junctures. She also assists trial teams with post-trial proceedings to best position clients in proceedings before reviewing courts.

Previous Experience

Prior to joining HeplerBroom, Ms. Dmitrieva served as the sole appellate attorney for the Chicago Transit Authority, one of the largest mass transit companies in the United States. In that capacity, she was instrumental in shaping the law governing transportation companies and common carriers.

Previously, she represented the City of Chicago and its agencies in state and federal appellate courts in a wide variety of disputes including section 1983 civil rights litigation, taxation matters, municipal ordinances, and issues of federal and state constitutional law.

Earlier in her legal career, she practiced complex commercial litigation and appellate law at a large law firm in Chicago, where she was mentored by retired Illinois Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Miller.

In her former career as a journalist, she learned to craft compelling stories, an essential skill for writing convincing briefs and persuading appellate justices to understand her clients' perspectives.

Practices:

- Appellate
- Commercial Litigation
- Employment & Labor
- Government Affairs
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Municipal & Civil Rights
- Premises Liability

Education:

- University of Florida Levin College of Law, J.D., 2003
- University of Florida, Ph.D. in media law, 2003
- University of Minnesota, M.A. in Communications, 1998
- University of Moscow, B.A. in Journalism, 1995

Bar Admissions:

- Illinois
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
- Illinois Supreme Court

Results

- Successfully defended a favorable jury verdict in an Illinois appellate court in a case where jury awarded plaintiffs \$40,000 instead of the \$3 million they sought. Case involved an unusual cause of action that rarely goes to trial. Plaintiffs argued they were deprived of a fair trial based on alleged in limine violations, erroneous evidentiary rulings, improper jury instructions, and trial court's refusal to strike two jurors for cause. Lavernedra Wilson, Virginia Carr, Sandra Carr Taylor, and Marie Carr v. Spencer Leak & Sons Funeral Home Ltd., Spencer Leak Sr., and Anthony Leflore, 2025 IL App (1st) 241020-U.
- Obtained Supreme Court reversal of Appellate Court judgment and affirmed circuit court order dismissing wrongful death action against Defendant. Case brought by estate of pedestrian struck by rapid transit train while on Defendant's tracks. Court ruled Defendant owed no legal duty to protect trespasser on its tracks from an open and obvious risk of incoming train and had no duty to rescue. Quiroz v. Chicago Transit Auth, 2022 IL 127603.
- Secured Seventh Circuit affirmation of summary judgment in failure-to-accommodate case under Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Suit was brought by former bus driver with carpal tunnel syndrome. Frazier-Hill v. Chicago Transit Auth., 75 F.4th 797 (7th Cir. 2023).
- Obtained Illinois Appellate Court reversal of summary judgment in favor of Chicago Sun-Times in Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) case and instead secured summary judgment in favor of Defendant. Court ruled surveillance videos of subway platforms are exempt from disclosure under FOIA exemption concerning security measures. Sun-Times v. Chicago Transit Auth., 2021 IL App (1st) 192028 (FOIA).
- Secured Appellate Court affirmation of summary judgment on pension fund's contractual and fiduciary claims. Plaintiff had sought more than \$7 million in prescription drug rebates. Retirement Plan for Chicago Transit Auth. Employees v. Chicago Transit Auth., 2020 IL App (1st) 182510
- Secured Appellate Court affirmation of circuit court order dismissing wrongful death action brought by estate of customer who suffered diabetic shock while on Defendant's platform, fell on tracks, and sustained fatal injuries by contacting electrified third rail. Court ruled Defendant did not owe common carrier's highest duty of care to decedent because he was not a passenger at time of injury, and Defendant had no legal duty to monitor its premises for infirm individuals. Anderson v. Chicago Transit Auth., 2019 IL App (1st) 181564.

- In a case of first impression, Seventh Circuit ruled extreme obesity does not constitute a *per se* physical impairment and disability under the Americans with Disability Act. Affirmed summary judgment in the Defendant's favor on Plaintiff's employment discrimination claim. *Richardson v. Chicago Transit Auth.*, 926 F.3d 881 (7th Cir. 2019)
- Briefed and negotiated favorable settlement in Appellate Court of wrongful death action brought by estate of woman who drove into and drowned in Chicago River, which resulted in adverse \$13 million jury verdict. *Fehim Sabanovic v. City of Chicago et al.*, 2011 L 00458 (Cook Co. Cir. Ct.).
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- Other Significant Case Results
- *Gabriel v. Alton Memorial Hospital*, No. 5-24-0729, 2025 IL App (5th) 240729-U (wrongful death)
- *HeplerBroom v. Xie*, 2025 IL App (1st) 242515-U (breach of contract)
- *MKM Oil and Fast Break v. Welk and Welk*, 2025 IL App (4th) 240284-U (leasing dispute; tortious interference)
- *Wilson, Carr, Taylor, and Carr v. Leak & Sons Funeral Home*, 2025 IL App (1st) 241020-U (tortious interference)
- *Cole v. Chicago Transit Auth.*, 2025 IL App (1st) 230797
- *Sauer v. Chicago Transit Auth.*, 2023 IL App (1st) 220791 (relation back doctrine)
- *Pryor v. Chicago Transit Auth.*, 2022 IL App (1st) 200895 (wrongful death)
- *Burton v. Chicago Transit Auth.*, No. 21-2802, 2022 WL 2287424 (7th Cir. June 24, 2022) (employment law)
- *Miller v. Chicago Transit Auth.*, 20 F.4th 1148 (7th Cir. 2021) (employment law)
- *Daniel v. Chicago Transit Auth.*, 2020 IL App (1st) 190479 (wrongful death)
- *Slater v. Illinois Lab. Rels. Bd., Loc. Panel*, 2019 IL App (1st) 181007 (labor)
- *Pickett v. Chicago Transit Auth.*, 930 F.3d 869 (7th Cir. 2019) (employment law)
- *Elliott v. CTA et al.*, 2019 IL App (1st) 181892-U (putative class action)
- *Walker v. Weatherspoon*, 900 F.3d 354 (7th Cir. 2018)
- *Fuery v. City of Chicago*, 900 F.3d 450 (7th Cir. 2018)
- *In re Appointment of Special Prosecutor*, 2017 IL App (1st) 161376
- *Simic v. City of Chicago*, 851 F.3d 734 (7th Cir. 2017)

- *White v. Hefel*, 875 F.3d 350 (7th Cir. 2017)
- *Finko v. City of Chicago Dep't of Admin. Hearings*, 2016 IL App (1st) 152888
- *Roberts v. City of Chicago*, 817 F.3d 561 (7th Cir. 2016)
- *Zollar v. City of Chicago Dep't of Admin. Hearings*, 2015 IL App (1st) 143426

Professional Associations

- American Bar Association
- Illinois Appellate Lawyers Association
- Appellate Digest Committee (Co-Chair)
- Illinois Defense Counsel
- Amicus Committee
- "Appellate Practice Corner" columnist, IDC Quarterly (2024-present)