

HEPLERBROOM LLC

IRINA Y. DMITRIEVA

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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

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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

Professional Associations

- American Bar Association
- Illinois Appellate Lawyers Association

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- Appellate Digest Committee (Co-Chair)

- Illinois Defense Counsel
  - Amicus Committee
  - “Appellate Practice Corner” columnist, IDC Quarterly (2024-present)
- Seventh Circuit Bar Association
  - Illinois Chair, Rules and Practice Committee (2025-present)