

Melissa Root

**Managing Partner,
Chicago**

mroot@jenner.com

She / Her

Office

Chicago

Phone

+1 312 840 7255

Areas of Focus

Bankruptcy and
Restructuring

Insurance Recovery and
Counseling

Transitions in Energy and
Climate Solutions

Hedge, Investment, and
Private Equity Funds

Global Crisis Management
and Strategic Risk



Overview

When a company faces financial distress, Melissa Root turns a bankruptcy or restructuring into an opportunity. A fellow of the American College of Bankruptcy, she helps creditors, debtors, trustees, estate fiduciaries, and investors craft the right approach to achieve their goals whether through aggressive litigation or strategic negotiations. Melissa also represents clients in out-of-court workouts and restructurings, and in acquisitions. She serves as a Co-Chair of the firm's Bankruptcy and Restructuring Practice. Melissa also serves as office Managing Partner of the firm's Chicago Office.

Equal parts litigator and transactional lawyer, Melissa brings the full force of her skill to help clients re-evaluate their objectives and emerge from challenging situations with a fresh start. Clients in crisis trust her with sensitive bankruptcy cases involving mass torts, fraud, or financial mismanagement. In these high-stakes matters, her collaborative approach transforms the outcome not just for her client, but for other impacted parties. Melissa also represents clients in bankruptcy-related appellate matters.

Melissa helps creditors and other stakeholders regain their footing in bankruptcy cases and reach a favorable outcome. She also has a strong track record of helping official committees withstand difficult and drawn-out company or government restructurings and maximize value. Clients experiencing financial distress or crises also look to Melissa to guide them through a chapter 11 case or out-of-court restructuring. With her counsel, investors

in distressed companies enter into deals with a clearer picture of the risks and nuances of bankruptcy-related transactions.

Melissa maintains an active pro bono practice representing clients in bankruptcy cases and in other matters. She is also active in the community and the bar and a frequent speaker on a variety of restructuring and bankruptcy topics, as well as matters relating to recruiting, hiring, and diversity and inclusion.



Bankruptcy lawyers need to see the solution, not the problem. I work with my clients to evaluate the best possible outcome and the steps we can take together to get there.”

Areas of Focus

- Bankruptcy and Restructuring
- Insurance Recovery and Counseling
- Transitions in Energy and Climate Solutions
- Hedge, Investment, and Private Equity Funds
- Global Crisis Management and Strategic Risk

Representative Matters

- Represented USA Gymnastics in achieving a successful chapter 11 bankruptcy, which culminated in a joint plan of reorganization with the Survivors' Committee and a \$380 million settlement.
- Counseled the Official Committee of Retirees in the Title III cases for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, representing the interests of approximately 167,000 public-sector retirees who were owed approximately \$50 billion in connection with the funding of their accrued pensions.
- Represented the class of student creditors in the ITT Technical Institute bankruptcy case.
- Advised the Committee of Executive and Administrative Retirees in the chapter 11 case of The Budd Company, Inc.
- Counseled the Section 1114 Committee of Retired Employees in the chapter 11 case of AMR Corp. and American Airlines, Inc.
- Represented Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG) in connection with the chapter 11 bankruptcy cases of Dynegy Holdings, LLC and certain of its affiliates and in the Edison Mission Energy bankruptcy cases, involving issues arising out of complex sale-leaseback transactions of the debtors.

Credentials

Admissions

- Illinois, 2006
- Indiana, 2003

Education

- University of Michigan Law School, JD, *cum laude*, 2003
- Bowling Green State University, BA, *magna cum laude*, 2000

Court Admissions

- US Supreme Court, 2013
- US Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit, 2011
- US District Court, Northern District of Illinois, 2005
- US District Court, Northern District of Indiana, 2003
- US District Court, Southern District of Indiana, 2003

Service / Recognition

Awards

- American College of Bankruptcy, Fellow
- American Bankruptcy Institute, 40 Under 40, 2017
- *The Best Lawyers in America*, Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law; Litigation - Bankruptcy, 2024
- *Chambers USA*, Bankruptcy/Restructuring (Illinois), 2018-2025
- *Crain's Chicago Business*, Who's Who in Law, 2023, 2024, 2025
- *Illinois Super Lawyers*, Bankruptcy: Business, 2019-2024, 2026; Rising Star, Bankruptcy & Creditor/Debtor Rights, 2012-2018, 2026
- *Lawdragon 500 Leading Global Bankruptcy & Restructuring Lawyers*, 2026
- *The M&A Advisor*, Emerging Leader, 2016
- Selected participant in The National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges inaugural Next Generation program

Community

- *Law360* Illinois Editorial Advisory Board Member, 2026
- Trustee, Chicago Symphony Orchestra
- Cabrini Green Legal Aid, Executive Board Member, Treasurer and Finance Committee Co-Chair
- The Chicago Network, Member

- Daniel Burnham Fellow, 2023
- Coalition of Women's Initiatives in Law, Board Member, Chicago Chapter
- Economic Club of Chicago, Member
- Leadership Greater Chicago, Fellow, 2015

Service to the Bar

- American Bar Association, The Women Advocate Committee, Co-Chair, 2017; Bankruptcy & Insolvency Litigation Committee, Co-Chair, 2014-2017
- American Bankruptcy Institute, Bankruptcy Litigation Subcommittee Member
- Northern District of Illinois, Bankruptcy Liaison Committee Member, 2012-2014
- International Women's Insolvency and Restructuring Confederation, Board of Directors (Chicago Network), Member; past Chair