

Catherine Steege

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Areas of Focus

Bankruptcy and
Restructuring

Content, Media, and
Entertainment

Energy

Intellectual Property

Life Sciences



Overview

When clients need help navigating financial difficulties or transactions with distressed counterparties, Catherine Steege is their guide. A Co-Chair of the firm's Bankruptcy and Restructuring Practice, Cathy focuses her practice on representing committees, debtors, contract counterparties, creditors, trustees, and examiners in complex chapter 11 cases and related out-of-court restructurings and litigation. She has deep experience representing parties in complex fraudulent transfer and other insolvency related litigation, having obtained ten-figure judgments on behalf of litigation trusts and trustees, and having successfully defended parties facing significant claims.

Cathy also has extensive experience representing retiree committees in both the commercial and governmental realms, working with the committees to retain health care and pension benefits for their constituents. Comfortable both in the court room and at the negotiating table, Cathy works with her clients to develop a strategy to obtain the best outcome. With her trial and appellate experience, adversaries know she is capable and ready to litigate a matter, which helps facilitate favorable settlements. She also counsels clients pre-bankruptcy with respect to restructuring their debt. She also has far-reaching appellate experience and has argued cases in the United States Supreme Court and in the First, Third, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Circuits.

Cathy is a fellow of the American College of Bankruptcy and a member of the National Bankruptcy Conference, which advises Congress on bankruptcy laws and policy. She taught bankruptcy law for 22 years at The John Marshall Law School/University of Illinois Chicago Law School.



I care about my clients and the outcomes they receive. I look at where the client would like to be when the engagement is concluded, and then map a strategy to achieve that end goal.”

Areas of Focus

- Bankruptcy and Restructuring
- Content, Media, and Entertainment
- Energy
- Intellectual Property
- Life Sciences
- Markets and Trading
- Transitions in Energy and Climate Solutions

Representative Matters

- Represented Retiree Committees in the Puerto Rico title III restructuring and in the chapter 11 cases of American Airlines, Armstrong Flooring, The Budd Company, United Airlines, Northwest Airlines, and Walter Energy.
- Obtained a \$280 million breach of contract judgment, successfully defended against three different appeals, and engaged in substantial post-judgment collection litigation resulting in a highly favorable settlement piercing an alleged spendthrift trust.
- Represented McKesson in Purdue Pharma’s chapter 11 case, acting as lead negotiator for an industry group in the settlement of substantial indemnification claims arising out of opioid litigation.
- Negotiated a \$380 million settlement of claims against USA Gymnastics in its Chapter 11 case, and served as lead counsel when USAG faced claims by gymnasts alleging negligence in supervising a doctor who assaulted hundreds of female athletes.
- Served as lead counsel for Consol Energy Inc., a significant executory contract counterparty in the Murray Energy Chapter 11 case, renegotiating agreements arising from the sale of one of its business units.
- Represented Anton Valukas in his role as the examiner appointed in the Lehman Brothers chapter 11 case, drafting significant sections of the report addressing potential avoidance actions, and represented Shoba Pillay, the examiner of Celsius Network LLC.
- Argued on behalf of Wellness International in the Supreme Court in the landmark case, Wellness International Network v. Sharif, 575 U.S. 665 (2015) and was co-counsel for the petitioner in Law v. Siegel, 571 U.S. 415 (2014) and for the respondent in City of Chicago v. Fulton, 141 S. Ct. 585 (2021).

Credentials

Admissions

- Illinois, 1982

Education

- DePaul University College of Law, BA, with honors, 1982
- Northwestern University, BSJ, 1978

Court Admissions

- US Supreme Court, 2010
- US Court of Appeals, First Circuit, 2018
- US Court of Appeals, Third Circuit, 2002
- US Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit, 1985
- US Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, 1990
- US Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, 1996
- US District Court, Central District of Illinois, 2007
- US District Court, Northern District of Illinois, 1983
- US District Court, Southern District of Illinois, 2009

Service / Recognition

Awards

- *Lawdragon 500 Leading Global Bankruptcy & Restructuring Lawyers*, 2026
- *The Best Lawyers in America*, Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights/Insolvency and Reorganization Law, Litigation, Bankruptcy, 2007-2021, 2024, 2026
- *Chambers USA*, Bankruptcy/Restructuring (Illinois), 2008-2025
- *Illinois Super Lawyers*, 2005-2024 in Bankruptcy, Creditor/Debtor Rights, Bankruptcy: Business, Top 50 Women Illinois Super Lawyers, 2009-2015; 2017-2018; 2019-2020; Top 100 Illinois Super Lawyers, 2017-2018; 2020
- Jenner & Block Mentorship Award, 2014
- *Law360*, Bankruptcy MVP, 2014, 2015
- Leading Lawyers Network, Bankruptcy & Workout Law, Commercial, 2005-2019; Top 100 Leading Women Lawyers in Illinois, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012; Top 100 Leading Women Business Lawyers in Illinois, 2009, 2010, 2012; Top 50 Leading Women Business Lawyers in Illinois, 2006
- *Legal 500*, Finance, Corporate Restructuring, 2011, 2013, 2017, 2018; Corporate Restructuring (including Bankruptcy), 2020, 2021

- *National Law Journal*, Outstanding Women Lawyers, 2015
- Seventh Circuit Bar Association, Pro Bono Award for Service to Bankruptcy Court, 2012
- Federal Bar Association, Pro Bono Award for Excellence in Public Interest Service, 2019
- Who's Who Legal, *The International Who's Who of Insolvency & Restructuring Lawyers*, 2013-2015

Service to the Bar

- American College of Bankruptcy, Board of Directors, 2016-2017
- American Bankruptcy Institute, Co-Chair, Bankruptcy Litigation Committee, 2010-2012
- American Bar Association
- Catholic Lawyers Guild of Chicago, Member, Board of Governors, 2012-present
- Chicago Bar Association
- Illinois State Bar Association
- International Women's Insolvency and Restructuring Conference
- National Association of Bankruptcy Trustees
- Northern District of Illinois Bankruptcy Court Pro Bono Committee, Co-Chair, 2021-present

Industry

- National Bankruptcy Conference, Fellow

Speaking Engagements

- Panelist, "Getting to and Arguing before the Supreme Court," American College of Bankruptcy and Boston College Law School, March 23, 2018
- American Bankruptcy Institute's Annual Spring Meeting Great Debates, April 21, 2017
- Panelist, "In re Kaiser: A Study of Advanced Fraudulent Transfer Issues" and "You Be the Judge: Evidence and the Consumer Practitioner," Seventh Circuit Consumer Bankruptcy Conference, October 12, 2015
- Panelist, "White Collar Crime, Asset Forfeiture and Business Bankruptcies" and "Making Law, Doing Good – Pro Bono Appellate Advocacy from the BAP to the Supreme Court," National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, September 27, 2015 to September 30, 2015
- Panelist, "Wellness International Network Ltd. v Sharif – Stern v Marshall Redux," Forty-Fifth Annual Barbara A. Everly Advanced Bankruptcy Procedures Seminar", July 09, 2015
- To view Cathy's extensive speaking engagement credentials, please [click here](#).