

Richard Gellersted

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Richard H. Gellersted, P.C.

33 North County Street, Suite 605, Waukegan, IL 60085 (July 2014-Present)

Attorney

Represent clients in family based immigration law, both transactional (petitions, applications) and in immigration court (removal/applications for relief). Petitions for Alien Relatives, Applications for Adjustment of Status, Parole, U-Visas, VAWA, Immigrant Visas, Waivers.

Practice areas also include Probate and Guardianship, real estate law, criminal and family law. Income tax preparation.

Bennu Legal Services, NFP, Lake Bluff, IL

(August 2011-July 2015)

Attorney

Immigration attorney. Represented clients in family, employment and investor based immigration law. Work was transactional (petitions/applications) and representing clients in immigration court. Also represented clients, civil litigation, family, real estate, criminal and traffic law.

Law Offices of Richard Gellersted, Lake Bluff, IL

Attorney

(April 2009-August 2011)

Represented clients in family law, Chapter 7, 11 and 13 bankruptcy, bankruptcy adversary complaints, real estate, landlord-tenant, contracts and commercial litigation in my own practice. Defended clients in residential and commercial foreclosure actions, performed loan modifications, represented clients in short sales and deed in lieu of foreclosure transactions.

Fidelity National Financial, Inc.

Fidelity National Title Group, Inc., Chicago

Vice President and Senior Claims Counsel.

(2002-2009)

Developed expertise in claims investigation, coverage opinions under title insurance policies and products, escrow liability determination, claims resolution, title clearance, defalcation management and recoupment for the nation's largest title insurance company through its title insurance underwriting subsidiaries. Administered Claims for 16 states. Reviewed title, escrow file documentation, chains of title and surveys. Researched title. Analyzed state and federal statutory, case law and regulations for the purposes of claims investigation litigation. Specialized in Michigan construction lien claims. Specialized in the investigation of fraud. Represented the company in litigation. Drafted title and settlement documents. Determined acceptable risks and issued Letters of Indemnity as part of underwriting function. Acknowledged by company management for the quality of legal work performed and by customers for unrivaled service level.

Chief Administrator, Team Leader and Senior Claims Counsel for Eastern Great Lakes (Michigan, Indiana, Ohio) Region Team. Reviewed new claims and assigned them for administration. Lead, mentored, supervised and reviewed the performance of 13 person claims counsel team in addition to handling own high volume claims load. Prescribed claims counsel performance standards. Managed team and individual team member production and quality. Lead team education efforts. Recruited claims counsel. Reported to the claims center manager for purposes of implementing the legal department's management initiatives for the administration of claims.

Praised for quality of public oral presentations at company business conferences. Advised agents and direct operations with regard to underwriting and claims issues. Prepared written reports and made oral presentations to company management, the office of general counsel and large agents. Responded on behalf of the company to complaints submitted to state departments of insurance. Obtained the support of state direct operation and agency management and underwriters as to my policy initiatives.

Coordinated outside counsel retention program to achieve both title revenue and manage claim expenses for the company. Retained, directed, monitored, supervised and evaluated work performance of outside counsel retained to represent company insureds and the company's title insurance and title operation subsidiaries in litigation.

Vice President and Recoupment Counsel.

(2002)

Represented the company as its attorney in all phases of civil litigation from drafting of pleadings through trial before courts in Cook and the collar counties. Areas of focus were contract, subrogation and warranty litigation. Achieved major recoveries of claim loss payments. Negotiated with agents and other responsible parties for recoupment outside of litigation.

Strategic Accomplishments

- Devised improvements to company reporting requirements that allowed for greater use of collaborative administration to mitigate the consequences of employee turnover.
- Lead a team that doubled the average annual number of claims administered per administrator.
- Increased amount of Team recovery of losses by over 100%. Team was the highest performance team as to loss recovery of any team in any center in 2008.
- Implemented outside counsel cost reduction program that resulted in 15% savings.
- Achieved lowest loss & expense to claim ratio of all claim centers.

Pomper & Goodman, Chicago Trial Attorney

(1999-2001)

Represented clients in all phases of litigation, arbitration and trials, jury and non-jury, and the settlement of high volume personal injury, uninsured motorist, worker's compensation cases. Primary areas were automobile negligence and premises liability. Settled over 100 personal injury and worker's compensation cases. Successfully litigated insurance coverage cases in the Chancery Court and obtain three settlements based on motions for summary judgment. Drafted and responded to pleadings and written discovery. Took depositions of parties and witnesses. Prepared, responded to and argued motions. Wrote appellate briefs.

Litigated contract, employment, probate, social security, landlord tenant, criminal, traffic, domestic relations and post judgment collection. Represented sellers and purchasers of real estate. Served as attorney title agent.

Headed the firm's consumer bankruptcy law practice. Counseled clients and prepared Chapter 7 and 13 Petitions and Plans. Negotiated and engaged in motion practice as necessary to accomplish plan confirmation and debtor discharge.

Headed the firm's immigration law practice. Counseled clients and prepared petitions for alien relative/application for lawful permanent residence, and naturalization petitions. Represented clients before the I.N.S. and EOIR in deportation cases.

Shelton & Younes

Trial Attorney

(1991-1999)

Represented clients in all phases of civil litigation through appeals. Primary focus was personal injury law but also practiced in numerous areas of general civil law. Tried 16 cases to jury verdict. Conducted bench trials and hundreds of arbitrations. Successfully tried two commercial cases before the bench.

Appellate Decisions –

Fields v. Southwest Financial Bank & Trust, no. 1-01-1164 (2001) Illinois Appellate Court, First District

Michael P. Cascino, Ltd., Chicago

(1989-1990)

Litigation Attorney

Prepared pleadings, motions and legal memoranda. Performed written and oral discovery for trial of Environmental Toxic Tort, Asbestos product liability cases.

EDUCATION

DePaul University College of Law, Chicago

Juris Doctorate, 1988

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

B.S., Economics, 1985

DePaul University, Kellstadt Graduate School of Business, Chicago

Completed several courses in the Masters of Business Administration program in finance, marketing and human resource leadership.

BAR ADMISSION

Illinois, 1988

DESIGNATIONS

Certified Illinois Assessing Officer (C.I.A.O.) Designation, 2025 from Illinois Property Assessment Institute

COMMUNITY/PRO BONO

Chairman Arbitrator. Circuit Court of Cook and Lake County Mandatory Arbitration Programs.

Prairie State Legal Services, Waukegan, Volunteer Attorney, Family Law

Bennu Legal Services, Lake Bluff, IL, Volunteer Attorney, Immigration Law

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services Chicago. Volunteer Attorney

Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, Inc., Volunteer Attorney

Lake County Bar Association

Toastmasters International – 2018-2019 District 30 Financial Officer (1 year treasurer term).

Served as officer in all club officer positions.