



J. Hayes Ryan

PARTNER

Chicago

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RELATED SERVICES

- Environmental & Toxic Tort
- Commercial Litigation
- Class Action Defense
- Professional Liability Defense
- Chemical Exposure
- Employment
- Directors & Officers and Shareholder Litigation
- Product Liability
- Asbestos & Talc
- Trial Practice

OFFICES

- Chicago
- St. Louis

OVERVIEW

Hayes Ryan is a Partner in the Chicago office and member of the firm's Executive Committee. He handles a wide range of litigation, including matters involving employment law, environmental and chemical exposure claims, product liability, business disputes, professional liability and consumer fraud. His experience includes lead counsel roles in jury trials and arbitrations. Hayes has well proven experience representing Fortune 500 clients in complex, multi-plaintiff product liability class actions and mass torts, including currently serving as National Coordinating Counsel for the largest full line wheel-service equipment manufacturer in North America.

Hayes' business and business owner clients also utilize his services to assist with various complex commercial disputes, including breach of contract, business fraud, investor disagreements, alliance and joint venture disputes, construction contracts, purchase and sale matters. He also serves as outside general counsel to a large regional health management provider that designs and administers partially self-funded healthcare plans for middle-market companies involving an extensive network of partnerships with broker/clients and strategic vendors.

Additionally, Hayes handles numerous real estate matters, including escrow, landlord-tenant class actions. He also defends professional liability claims, including those focused on insurance agents and brokers.

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Representative Experience

Examples of Hayes experience include the following:

Mass Tort

- Obtained multiple dismissals for a self-insured industrial product manufacturer client. Plaintiffs' counsel sought product liability for several of Mr. Ryan's clients' product lines. A motion for summary judgment was brought on the basis that the client made an asset only purchase of rights to trademarks for one of the product lines at issue and, therefore, was not a successor-in-interest under Illinois corporate law. Plaintiffs' counsel subsequently withdrew its claims arising from this product line and has agreed to no longer file suit arising from this particular product line. The successful result was achieved without any depositions of corporate witnesses.
- Hayes also defends numerous class action matters, including large residential landlords against matters brought by tenants alleging consumer fraud and violations of statutory requirements for the handling of security deposits. In addition, he has successfully defended FACTA class action matters.

Environmental and Toxic Tort

- Obtained summary judgment in the second week of trial in an ethylene oxide case brought by 22 plaintiffs;
- Dismissal of benzene matter during fact discovery versus a major whole-sale company manufacturing charcoal briquettes;
- Dismissal of diacetyl matter versus manufacturer of flavor chemicals; and,
- Regularly defends numerous companies involved in national asbestos litigation, including Fortune 500 Companies.

Employment Litigation

- Dismissal of claim alleging discrimination by local Fire Department following successful completion of investigation at the EEOC;
- Dismissal of claim alleging gender discrimination versus national dietary company; and,
- Dismissal of claim for whistleblower retaliation/wrongful termination action by a former employee versus regional hand tool manufacturer.

PRESENTATIONS

- *COVID-19 and the Asbestos Litigation*, Travelers Insurance (April and June 2020)

CREDENTIALS

Admissions

- Illinois
- Missouri

Memberships

- State Bar of Illinois
- Chicago Bar Association
- Illinois Defense Counsel
- University of Chicago Cancer Research Foundation
- GRSM Diversity Committee

*Hayes Ryan is not licensed to practice in Indiana

Education

- J.D., John Marshall Law School, 2000
- B.A., Kenyon College, 1996
- Lord Rothermere Scholar, New College, Oxford, England, 1994

Honors

- *Super Lawyers*® distinction in the fields of Personal Injury – Products: Defense, Employment Litigation: Defense, and Environmental (2012-2022, *Law & Politics*)
- *Rising Stars*® distinction in the fields of Personal Injury – Products: Defense, Employment Litigation: Defense, and Environmental (2010 and 2011, *Law & Politics*)
- *Best Lawyers in America*® distinction in Employment Law – Management (2024-2025)