



Cardelle Spangler

Managing Partner, Internal Affairs

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Over her 25-plus-year career, Cardelle has concentrated her practice on employment relations litigation and counseling matters. She has significant experience representing clients in the medical device, pharmaceutical, food service, financial service, and transportation industries. Cardelle is Winston's Managing Partner for Internal Affairs.

Cardelle has represented clients in complex class action, collective action, multi-plaintiff, and single plaintiff employment litigation. Cardelle has substantial trial experience before state and federal courts, as well as arbitrators. She has successfully defended collective action lawsuits brought under the Fair Labor Standards Act; class action lawsuits brought under the FLSA, Title VII and ERISA alleging breaches of fiduciary duties against corporate and individual defendants; claims brought under ERISA for denial of benefits and discrimination; claims brought under various state and federal statutes for age, race, sex, color, religion, and disability discrimination and/or harassment; and common law and/or statutory claims for unfair competition, misappropriation of trade secrets, and various torts. Cardelle has also conducted harassment and other investigations, drafted employment and independent contractor agreements, and conducted labor and employment training.

MAJOR APPOINTMENTS

In 2010, Cardelle was appointed by a federal judge to serve as compliance administrator for the Cook County Recorder of Deeds. Her responsibilities include(d), among other things, adjudicating employee claims of unlawful

political discrimination, including awarding damages where appropriate; training the recorder, supervisors and employees on unlawful political discrimination; monitoring and reporting on employment actions of the office; drafting an employment plan for approval by the parties and the court to ensure proper policies and procedures are established and followed to help prevent unlawful political discrimination in the office; and filing periodic public reports with the court on the office's progress toward substantially complying with the terms of the court's order.

Key Matters

Cardelle's recent significant litigation matters include:

- Representing five members of the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team (USWNT) in a landmark action before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) accusing the U.S. Soccer Federation of wage discrimination on the basis of gender. The matter helped garner the firm the designation of "Law Firm of the Year" for Sports Law in the 2018 edition of *U.S. News & World Report* – Best Law Firms.
- Successfully prosecuting motions for temporary injunctive relief on behalf of major pharmaceutical and medical device company.
- Achieving substantial victory for a medical device company in a jury trial in federal court against claims of sex and pregnancy discrimination.
- Successfully defending a major restaurant chain against allegations of minimum wage, overtime and pay stub violations under the FLSA and Illinois state law.
- Prevailing on a motion to dismiss all claims against the independent fiduciary to a major airline's ERISA-covered plans in a class action lawsuit alleging breach of fiduciary duty under ERISA.
- Successfully defending a major airline in a two-week jury and bench trial in federal court against claims of retaliatory discharge.
- Achieving substantial victory for consulting firm in a three-week jury trial in state court against tort and discrimination claims.

Recent Experience

Secured Landmark Equal-Pay Settlement for Current and Former USWNT Members

Settled Discrimination Case for Luxury Brand

Settlement in Reverse Discrimination Dispute by Legal Leadership Team Member

Successfully Transferred Matter from Tennessee Federal Court to Pennsylvania Federal Court Following Plaintiffs' Depositions and Opposition to Motion for Class Certification

Litigation Risk Assessment for Leading MedTech Company

Advised Fortune 100 Manufacturing Company in Systemic Discrimination/Toxic Culture Investigation

Recognitions

Cardelle's consummate work and leadership are consistently recognized by local and national publications. She was ranked in the 2025 edition of *Chambers USA* for Labor & Employment in Illinois, named to the 2025 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Lawyers in America list, recognized in the 2022–2024 editions of *The Best Lawyers in America*®, featured as a “Labor & Employment Star” in the 2020 and 2022–2024 editions of *Benchmark Litigation*, and recognized as a “Key Lawyer” for Labor and Employment Disputes in the 2024 and 2025 editions of *The Legal 500 US*. She was also one of 10 finalists for *Benchmark Litigation*'s 2023 “L&E Litigator of the Year.”

Cardelle's influence is further reflected by her inclusion on *Crain's Chicago Business*'s 2023 list of “Notable Litigators and Trial Lawyers,” her inclusion on *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* and *Chicago Lawyer Magazine*'s 2022 and 2024 “Top Woman in Law” lists, and being named among the “Notable Women in Law” by *Crain's Chicago Business* in 2022.

In February 2022, Cardelle was among the team of lawyers named as runners-up for “Litigator of the Week” in The Am Law Litigation Daily for their representation of current and former members of the U.S. Women's National Team in their landmark settlement of the equal pay portion of their lawsuit seeking to equalize pay and working conditions between the men's and women's U.S. national soccer teams.

Cardelle was chosen by Law Bulletin as a “Leading Woman Lawyer” in 2016 and as a “Leading Lawyer” in 2015. She was also named by *Super Lawyers* as an “Illinois Rising Star” in 2008–2009 and selected as an Illinois *Super Lawyer* from 2015–2025.

Activities

Cardelle is Winston's Managing Partner for Internal Affairs. She is a member of the firm's Executive Committee and DE&I Committee. Cardelle is the former Managing Partner of Winston's Chicago office, a former member of the firm's Associate Evaluation Committee and Hiring Committee, and the former chair of the Respectful Workplace Issues Committee.

Outside of the firm, Cardelle is on the board of directors for Hope Chicago and the Chairman of the Board of Academy of Urban Schools Leadership.

Credentials

EDUCATION

Cardelle received a B.A. in psychology from Washington University in 1991 and a J.D. from Washington University School of Law in 1997, where she was a member of the *Washington University Law Quarterly*.

ADMISSIONS

- Illinois

Related Insights & News

- Speaker, “Psychological Issues in the Workplace 2024,” PLI's Conference Center, Oct. 23, 2024
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RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *The Legal 500 U.S.* 2025

JUNE 12, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *Chambers USA* 2025

JUNE 5, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Featured on the 2025 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Lawyers in America List

JANUARY 14, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Cardelle Spangler Named Among the Top Woman in Law by *Chicago Lawyer Magazine* and Law Bulletin Media

NOVEMBER 7, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Earns Top U.S. and International Rankings on *The American Lawyer's* 2024 Pro Bono Scorecard

JULY 12, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *The Legal 500 U.S.* 2024

JUNE 12, 2024

IN THE MEDIA

Marc Krickbaum Returns to Winston & Strawn in Chicago Office

JUNE 5, 2024

PRESS RELEASE

Litigation Partner Marc Krickbaum Returns to Winston & Strawn After Stint as Deputy Special Counsel

JUNE 3, 2024

CLIENT ALERT

New Laws Enhance California's Noncompete Prohibitions

JANUARY 22, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Shortlisted for *Benchmark Litigation U.S.'s* 2024 Illinois Firm of the Year

JANUARY 8, 2024

PRESS RELEASE

Winston & Strawn Elevates Four Partners to Senior Leadership Roles Overseeing Key Firm Functions
NOVEMBER 16, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in 2024 *Benchmark Litigation*
OCTOBER 6, 2023

Capabilities

Labor & Employment

ERISA Litigation

Trade Secrets, Non Competes & Restrictive Covenants

Government Program Fraud, False Claims Act & Qui Tam Litigation

Public Companies

Financial Services