

Joseph B. VanFleet

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“Mr. VanFleet concentrates his practice in business, banking, commercial, real estate, and construction litigation.”

Mr. VanFleet began his career at one of the world's largest law firms, representing banks and Fortune 100 companies in a variety of financial, white-collar, and real estate based investigations and litigation. He left the relative stability of an international firm to form his own boutique law firm where he became a nationally recognized trial lawyer, focused on providing sophisticated cost-effective representation for his broad spectrum of banks and corporate clients. After merging his firm with Howard & Howard in 2016, his practice now ranges from small businesses and community banks to the Fortune 100 publicly traded entities and large-scale lenders he has always represented. Mr. VanFleet brings an innovative, practical, and solution-based approach; has represented clients throughout the country and in numerous complex and multidistrict cases; and has obtained victories in well over 100 trials, appeals, and alternative disputes.

Business Litigation

- Business Bankruptcy and Creditors' Rights
- Business and Corporate
- Construction and Development
- Financial Institutions

Representative Matters

- Represented a trustee in its individual and trustee capacity in federal court trust litigation for issues involving potential conflicts between Illinois and New Mexico law, a demand for an accounting, and declaratory judgment over certain estate planning documents. The case resolved amicably at a federal settlement conference before the Central District Federal Magistrate Judge.
- Defended an institutional corporate trust department against a demand for an accounting and a

claim for breach of fiduciary duty. After over six years of litigation, not only did the bank pay nothing to Plaintiff, but the bank even secured reimbursement for approximately 50% of its own attorneys' fees incurred in the defense from the filing party.

- Represented the two beneficiaries of a GST Trust and the residuary beneficiary trustee in litigation filed by the successor trustee and another residuary beneficiary over claims for an accounting and with respect to certain fiduciary duties. The matter resolved through a negotiated non-judicial settlement agreement.
- After the U.S. Department of Justice and Internal Revenue Service served subpoenas and seized computers and documents from a Fortune 100 company, we were retained to represent one of the corporate officers who was concerned that he may be a target of an investigation. No charges were ever filed against the officer.

Education

- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, College of Law, 1990
 - J.D.
 - *Law Review*, Editor
- University of Illinois College of Commerce and Business Administration, 1987
 - B.S., highest honors, Finance

Memberships

- Litigation Counsel of America
 - Order of Centurions, Barrister
 - Order of Certus, Advocate
 - Trial Law Institute
 - Diversity Law Institute
- Peoria County Bar Association
- Illinois State Bar Association
- American Bar Association
- Federal Bar Association
- The Abraham Lincoln Court
- Illinois Creditors' Bar Association

Admissions

- Illinois, 1990
- Supreme Court of the United States, 2012
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit, 2010
- U.S. District Court, Central District of Illinois, 1998
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, 1990
- Illinois Supreme Court, 1990

Professional Achievements

- Illinois *Leading Lawyers*: "Leading Commercial Litigation Lawyers," 2023
- *Peoria Magazine*, Leading Lawyers, 2023
- Litigation Counsel of America, Fellow
- Illinois *Leading Lawyers*, 2009-2025
 - Advisory Board, 2024-2025
- *Chicago Lawyer Magazine*, "40 Illinois Attorneys Under 40 Years Old to Watch," 2000
- Martindale-Hubbell® AV Preeminent® Peer Review Rating
- Eureka College, "Outstanding Lecturer," as voted by students
- University of Illinois, "Outstanding Lecturer," as voted by students