



Thadford A. Felton

Partner | Partner-in-Charge, Chicago

tfelton@ubglaw.com

Chicago - 312.658.6623

With over 25 years of experience advising businesses and business owners, Thad proactively identifies potential risks and develops long-term strategies and solutions for his clients. As outside general counsel, he partners with businesses and business leaders to help them grow companies, compete favorably, and protect their business assets. As a trial attorney, Thad tirelessly advocates for his clients to help them achieve their goals.

As a seasoned outside general counsel, Thad spends time getting to know his clients, their goals, and their challenges. With that knowledge, Thad takes a strategic approach to advising his clients on a wide range of business and legal risks and issues related to corporate governance, contracts, employment and personnel matters, risk management, and litigation. He also works with business owners to draft and negotiate shareholder, operating, purchase, and sale agreements.

In addition, Thad works with business leaders to understand their business and personal objectives and strategizes with them on how to achieve those objectives. Thad has worked with businesses to implement risk mitigation measures through trade secret and confidential information audits, non-competition and non-solicitation agreements, non-disclosure agreements, and employment agreements. Thad also guides clients through mergers and acquisitions, including the post-sale integration processes to ensure seamlessness of customer interactions, employment law issues, litigation avoidance, and overall business success.

As a trial lawyer, Thad litigates and directs litigation in federal and state courts nationwide. Just a few examples of the types of matters Thad has handled for his clients include the following:

- Emergency and other relief related to the misappropriation of trade secrets, the enforcement of restrictive covenants, and unfair competition;
- Illinois Trade Secret Act and the Federal Defend Trade Secrets Act claims;
- The Computer Fraud and Abuse Act claims;
- Fraud, misrepresentation, fraudulent transfer, and consumer fraud act claims;
- Breach of contract, including issues related to interference with contract and business expectancy;

Practices & Industries

- Restrictive Covenants
- Emergency Response and Injunctive Relief
- Business Law
- Construction
- Construction Litigation
- Construction Industry
- Bankruptcy & Creditors' Rights
- Bankruptcy & Insolvency Litigation
- Employee Benefits
- Employee Benefits & ERISA Litigation
- Electronic Information Management
- eDiscovery
- Health Care
- Private Equity
- Energy Industry
- Software & Information Technology
- Trade Secret Protection & Enforcement
- Litigation & Dispute

- Breach of fiduciary duty and employment agreements;
- Class actions;
- Products liability; and
- Insurance coverage disputes.

Thad is a member of the firm's Governing Board and is the leader of the Chicago office.

Education

- Chicago-Kent College of Law (J.D., 1994)
- Denison University (B.A., 1989)

Bar Admissions

- Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois - General & Trial Bar
- U.S. District Court, Colorado
- U.S. District Court, New Jersey
- U.S. District Court, District of South Carolina
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Michigan
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit

Professional Affiliations

- American Bar Association
- Illinois State Bar Association

Firm Involvement

- Partner-in-Charge, Chicago
- Member, Governing Board

Awards & Honors

- Named a "Litigation Star" in Illinois by *Benchmark Litigation* (2015-2022; 2025; 2026)
- Named to Illinois Leading Lawyers list for Closely & Privately Held Business Law, Commercial Litigation and Trade Secrets/Unfair Competition Law (2016-2024)

Experience

Dispute Resolution

- Successfully represented the owner of a dental practice in unwinding an 18-month-old transaction in which that owner joined her dental practice with a national Dental Service Organization.
- Represented large franchisor in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

Resolution

- Energy
- Intellectual Property & Technology
- Health Care & Regulated Industries
- Convenience Retailing
- Energy Litigation
- Oil & Gas
- Renewables
- Utilities

in enforcing its rights under several franchise agreements against several franchisees and secured an injunction against the franchisees competing against the franchisor, which was upheld on appeal to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

- Directed litigation in a large commercial matter in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois that involved complex breach of contract, fraud, and deceptive practices issues and hundreds of thousands of documents.
- Represented a fifty percent (50%) owner of a dental practice in a dispute with the co-owner. After years of litigation brought both owners back together, negotiated a new ownership agreement between the owners and the dental practice is growing.
- Successfully defended a claim brought by an employer against an employee salesperson to enforce non-competition and non-solicitation clauses in an employment agreement. The court ruled that both restrictive covenants were unenforceable.
- Enforced non-competition and non-solicitation clauses in an employment agreement against a physician who was terminated from a practice group. The court upheld both restrictive covenants.
- Defended a large international manufacturer's representative in a trade secret case in the U.S. District Court for New Jersey. Although damaging evidence was uncovered during discovery, the case was settled on favorable terms for the client.
- Represented the owner of a prominent high-end hotel chain in a dispute with its general contractor regarding overages.
- Obtained a \$42.5 million settlement in an environmental insurance coverage matter on behalf of a bankruptcy trustee.
- Defended a motor coach manufacturer in product liability litigation resulting from catastrophic accidents throughout the United States.
- Represented owners in a dispute with general and subcontractors regarding deficiencies in the design of a medical office building, specifically involving the design of the HVAC system, the plumbing system, and the humidity controls for the MRI room.
- Successfully represented a regional multiple listing service as plaintiff in a breach of contract and false advertising action and defended it as a counter-defendant in an antitrust claim in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. The defendant entered into an agreed injunction, paid monetary damages, and dismissed the antitrust counterclaim.
- Negotiated settlement terms favorable to a national real estate brokerage firm in a breach of non-solicitation agreement against a former office manager.
- Successfully represented real estate brokers in 50-plus matters concerning allegations of fraud, consumer fraud, negligence, and violation of the Illinois Real Estate License Act. Most matters were dismissed on motion practice or settled for under \$10,000 ("cost of defense" settlements).
- Successfully barred plaintiff's damages expert through motions in limine from testifying at trial in a mold/property damage case which led to plaintiff lowering its settlement demand from the high six-figure range to the mid five-figure range. The case was settled before trial for less than cost of defense.
- Represented a business in a breach of contract action related to the theft of payments from insurance companies.

Trials

- First-chaired a jury trial in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

representing three plaintiffs in a Section 1983 action. The jury awarded plaintiffs the full amount of damages sought, which was in the high six-figure range.

- First-chaired a bench trial in Cook County, Illinois, representing the plaintiff in a breach of a partnership agreement dispute. The judge awarded the full amount of relief sought, about \$250,000.
- Second-chaired jury trial in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois representing a minor plaintiff in a section 1981 and 1982 action. Jury awarded damages in a high six-figure range.
- Second-chaired two-month jury trial in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa representing a commercial client in a Lanham Act case. The client was awarded the full amount of damages.
- First-chaired a bench trial in Cook County, Illinois, representing a plaintiff in a breach of contract related to cryptocurrency. The judge awarded the dollar value of the cryptocurrency that was taken from plaintiff.

News & Media

March 2, 2026

Confidential Information vs. Trade Secrets: Why the Distinction Matters in Litigation

February 4, 2026

Fiduciary Duties Before an Employee Leaves: Where the Legal Line Is Drawn

January 20, 2026

What C Level Leaders Need to Know About the Seventh Circuit's Decision in Next Payment Solutions v. CLEAResult: A Business Focused Analysis

December 17, 2025

Understanding When Competitive Conduct Becomes Unlawful

December 16, 2025

Identifying and Protecting Your Company's Trade Secrets

October 30, 2025

UB Greensfelder and Attorneys Receive Honors in Illinois, Missouri, and Ohio in 2026 Edition of Benchmark Litigation Guide

October 20, 2025

Protecting Trade Secrets and Confidential Information: Building a Culture of Confidentiality

October 9, 2024

UB Greensfelder and Attorneys Receive Honors in Illinois, Missouri, and Ohio in 2025 Edition of Benchmark Litigation Guide

August 19, 2024

Your Trade Secret IP Stands Between You and Your Competition. The Impending September 4, 2024 FTC Rule Would Ban Most Non-Competes. Has the FTC Taken Away One of Your Reasonable Steps to Protect Your Trade Secrets? Not So Fast.

October 30, 2023

What Options Does A Business Have When Faced With A Legal Dispute Where Money Damages Will Not Offset The Loss?

October 30, 2023

Death Care Series: What You Should Know About The Changes To The Various Act That Take Effect On January 1, 2024

October 30, 2023

Death Care Series: Best Practices in Light of the Amendments to the Illinois Cemetery Oversight Act and Illinois Cemetery Protection Act that Go into Effect on January 1, 2024

In the News

- *Chicago Lawyer*, "A fresh feeling: UB Greensfelder remodels office one year after merger" (August 21, 2025)