



# Sheldon T. Zenner

Partner

White Collar and Internal Investigations

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Drawing on over 40 years of combined experience as a federal prosecutor and defense attorney, Sheldon Zenner expertly navigates his clients through high-stakes matters, including government and internal investigations, regulatory proceedings, all phases of criminal matters and related civil litigation. Sheldon's diverse client base is made up of corporations, high-ranking executives and company owners across a wide range of settings, including financial services, health care, the public sector and entertainment. Importantly, his representation of clients goes beyond advising on purely legal issues; it encompasses practical business implications, operational issues, public scrutiny, reputational damage and other considerations relevant to corporate and individual clients with businesses or livelihoods on the line.

## A former federal prosecutor's perspective

The foundation of Sheldon's white-collar defense practice is the more than seven years he served as an assistant US attorney in Chicago, prosecuting numerous high-profile criminal matters and supervising the work of junior line prosecutors. Having a successful prosecutorial background gives Sheldon critical insights into, and the ability to anticipate, the government's strategic decision-making. It also informs Sheldon's approach as a defense lawyer. Although never anything short of zealous, he favors a search for common ground and reasonableness, whenever possible, while ready to go to the mat at trial when necessary.

That defense style has proven effective even when the government has opted for dramatic action. In one matter of note, 100 federal agents were deployed to execute a massive search of a client company's headquarter offices, seizing millions of dollars of products and attempting to interview executives. Sheldon immediately showed up on the scene to help control the situation, calm the employees and negotiate with the government and to address the press, which had been alerted by law enforcement to the raid. He then engaged with federal prosecutors in a year-long effort to persuade them that the company had engaged in no criminal conduct. Ultimately, after numerous meetings with the prosecutors and the

## Practices

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- Antitrust and Competition
- Financial Markets Litigation and Enforcement
- Health Care Litigation, Reimbursement and Regulation
- Litigation
- Securities Litigation
- White Collar and Internal Investigations

## Industries

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- Education
- Entertainment and Media Litigation
- Finance and Financial Markets
- Sports and Sports Facilities

## Education

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- JD, Northwestern University School of Law
- BA, Northwestern University

## Bar Admissions

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- Illinois

## Court Admissions

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- US Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit
- US District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Trial Bar

## Professional & Community Involvement

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- American Bar Association
- Chicago Inn of Court
- Goodman Theatre Board of Trustees

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submission of a lengthy legal analysis, the government was persuaded to decline any prosecution and return all of the seized products without any charges being filed.

In a recent high-profile federal criminal case, Sheldon was brought on as counsel just before trial. Sheldon and the Katten team analyzed all the evidence, determined that his client had not committed the crimes for which he was indicted, and obtained a meeting with the trial prosecutors and their supervisors, who were persuaded to dismiss the Indictment just weeks before the trial was to commence.

Although it is a paramount goal of any potential criminal matter to avoid prosecution, Sheldon is equally prepared to, and equally skilled at, trying cases. Among other victories, he convinced the government to abandon the first federal criminal computer-hacking prosecution after his damaging cross-examination of the government's expert at trial.

Many of Sheldon's matters involve alleged violations of public corruption, antitrust, securities, or anti-fraud laws. Given the international nature of his clients' businesses, his work takes him to many foreign jurisdictions, including China, Japan, Brazil and South Africa, as well as many European countries. In addition to advising on government inquiries, Sheldon also helps clients conduct internal investigations into suspected wrongdoing and respond when they have been victimized by white-collar crime. Sheldon also has an active high-end civil litigation practice on behalf of companies and individuals who find that the skills honed in the federal criminal courts can be equally effective in civil disputes.

The breadth and depth of Sheldon's experience provides his clients with great assurance and comfort that they have counsel on board who can assist them to meet whatever challenges they may be facing.

## Recognitions

*Recognized or listed in the following:*

- *Benchmark Litigation*
  - Local Litigation Star, 2016–2018, 2022, 2025-2026
- *Best Lawyers in America*
  - Criminal Defense: White-Collar, 1997–2026
- *Chambers USA*
  - Litigation: White-Collar Crime & Government Investigations, 2009–2025
- Federal Bar Association, Chicago Chapter

- Northwestern University, Adjunct Faculty
- Northwestern University Student Funded Public Interest Fellowship

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***"He is a very experienced trial attorney who is trusted by clients."***

***Chambers USA 2022  
(Illinois, Litigation: White-Collar Crime & Government Investigations) survey response***

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- Award for Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service, 2023
- *Leading Lawyers Network*
  - Top 250 Leading Business Lawyers in Illinois, 2014
- Legal Assistance Foundation
  - Champion for Justice Award, 2010
- Student Funded Public Interest Fellowship Program (SFPIF), Northwestern University School of Law
  - Northwestern Law Distinguished Alumni Award, April 2014
- *Super Lawyers*
  - Illinois, 2005–2024
- *The International Who's Who of Business Lawyers*
- *The Legal 500 United States*
  - Recommended Attorney, 2017–2018, 2020–2022, 2024–2025
- Thomson Reuters
  - Stand-out Lawyer, 2024–2026
- *Who's Who in America*
- *Who's Who in American Law*
- *Who's Who in the Midwest*
- *Who's Who in the World*

## News

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- 13 Katten Attorneys Honored Among *Thomson Reuters* Stand-out Lawyers (February 5, 2026)
- Katten Celebrates 101 Attorneys Honored by *Best Lawyers®* (August 21, 2025)
- Katten Receives High Marks in the Legal 500 US 2025 Guide (June 11, 2025)
- *Chambers USA* 2025 Ranks Katten as Leading Law Firm (June 5, 2025)
- Katten Attorneys Recognized as Stand-Out Lawyers by *Thomson Reuters* (March 20, 2025)
- Katten Attorneys Recognized as *Best Lawyers®* and *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch®* Award Recipients (August 15, 2024)

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- Katten Highly Ranked in Legal 500 United States 2024 (June 12, 2024)
- Katten Receives High Marks in *Chambers USA* Guide 2024 (June 6, 2024)
- Katten Attorneys Named to 2024 Illinois Super Lawyers, Rising Stars Lists (January 25, 2024)
- Katten Attorneys Distinguished by *Best Lawyers*® (August 17, 2023)
- Naturalization Ceremony Arranged by Sheldon Zenner at Sox Park Draws Coverage by Multiple Media Outlets (June 2, 2023)
- Katten Boosts Rankings in *Chambers USA Guide 2023* (June 1, 2023)
- Federal Bar Association Lauds Four White Collar Attorneys for Pro Bono Work (May 2, 2023)
- Katten Attorneys Selected to 2023 Illinois Super Lawyers, Rising Stars Lists (January 24, 2023)
- Katten Attorneys Recognized by *Best Lawyers*® (August 18, 2022)
- Katten Awarded Top Ranking in Structured Finance: Securitization in The Legal 500 United States 2022 (June 8, 2022)
- Katten Ranked Leading Law Firm by *Chambers USA 2022* (June 1, 2022)
- Katten Attorneys Named to 2022 Illinois Super Lawyers, Rising Stars Lists (January 28, 2022)
- Christopher Stetler's Return to Katten Garners Media Attention (January 6, 2022)
- Katten Attorneys Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® (August 19, 2021)
- Katten Receives High Marks in Derivatives, M&A and Securitization in The Legal 500 United States 2021 Guide (June 10, 2021)
- Katten Boosts Rankings in *Chambers USA 2021* (May 20, 2021)
- Katten Attorneys Chosen for 2021 Illinois Super Lawyers, Rising Stars Lists (January 29, 2021)
- Katten Attorneys Distinguished as Top Legal Talent in the 2021 *Best Lawyers in America* and *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch* Lists (August 20, 2020)
- Katten Rated Top Law Firm by *Chambers USA 2020* (April 23, 2020)

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- Katten Attorneys Selected to 2020 Illinois Super Lawyers, Rising Stars Lists (January 29, 2020)
- Katten Lauded Top Ranked Law Firm by *Chambers USA* 2019 (April 25, 2019)
- Super Lawyers Lists Honor More Than 50 Katten Attorneys in Illinois (January 24, 2019)
- Katten Distinguished by *The Legal 500 United States* (June 14, 2018)
- Katten Rated as Leading Law Firm by *Chambers USA* 2018 (May 3, 2018)
- Katten Attorneys Recognized in 2018 Illinois Super Lawyers, Rising Stars Lists (January 25, 2018)
- Katten Selected as the "Go-To" Firm for Sports Law in Chicago (July 27, 2017)
- Katten Distinguished by *The Legal 500 United States* 2017 (May 31, 2017)
- Katten Recognized as Leading Law Firm by *Chambers USA* 2017 (May 30, 2017)
- Katten Attorneys Recognized in 2017 Illinois *Super Lawyers*, Rising Stars Lists (January 13, 2017)
- 79 Katten Attorneys Selected for *Best Lawyers in America*® 2017 (August 15, 2016)
- *Chambers USA* 2016 Distinguishes 22 Katten Practices and 50 Attorneys (May 27, 2016)
- Katten Partner Sheldon Zenner Named Top Litigator in *BTI Client Service All-Stars 2016* (February 8, 2016)
- Forty-Seven Katten Attorneys Recognized in 2016 Illinois *Super Lawyers* List (January 8, 2016)
- 91 Katten Attorneys Recognized in *Best Lawyers in America*® 2016 (August 17, 2015)
- Katten Attains 22 Practice and 58 Attorney Rankings by *Chambers USA* 2015 (May 20, 2015)
- Fifty-Three Katten Attorneys Recognized in 2015 Illinois *Super Lawyers* List (January 12, 2015)
- 85 Katten Attorneys Named to *Best Lawyers in America*® 2015 (August 18, 2014)

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- *Chambers USA* 2014 Distinguishes 24 Katten Practices and 54 Attorneys (May 23, 2014)
- Sheldon Zenner, National Head of the Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice, Honored for Public Service by Northwestern Law (March 10, 2014)
- Sheldon Zenner, Head of the Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice, Shares Personal Vignettes from Operation Greylord Trial With *Illinois Super Lawyers Magazine* (January 21, 2014)
- Fifty-Four Katten Attorneys Recognized in 2014 *Illinois Super Lawyers List* (January 13, 2014)
- 83 Katten Attorneys Lauded in *Best Lawyers in America*® 2014 (August 15, 2013)
- *Chambers USA* 2013 Recognizes 24 Katten Practices and 49 Attorneys (May 24, 2013)
- 33rd Annual Ray Garrett Jr. Corporate and Securities Law Institute (May 2, 2013)
- Katten Wins Dismissal of Say-on-Pay Lawsuit for AAR Corporation (April 9, 2013)
- Sixty-Nine Katten Attorneys Included on 2013 *Illinois Super Lawyers List* (January 4, 2013)
- *Benchmark Litigation* 2013 Recognizes Three Katten Litigators (December 3, 2012)
- 80 Katten Attorneys Named to *Best Lawyers in America*® 2013 Guide (August 24, 2012)
- *Chambers USA* 2012 Distinguishes 19 Katten Practices and 45 Attorneys (June 7, 2012)
- Eighty-Six Katten Attorneys Named 2012 *Illinois Super Lawyers* (February 28, 2012)
- 75 Katten Attorneys Named to *Best Lawyers in America*® 2012 Guide (September 12, 2011)
- Katten Earns Recognition for 17 Practices and 44 Attorneys in 2011 *Chambers USA* Guide (June 10, 2011)
- Partner Sheldon Zenner and Associate Bryan Stroh Mentioned in *New York Times*, *American Lawyer* Articles on White Sox Whistleblower Case (December 4, 2010)
- Katten Wins Dismissal for Rush University Medical Center (November 8, 2010)

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- Five Katten Attorneys Recognized by *Benchmark Litigation* (October 2010)
- 70 Katten Attorneys Named to *Best Lawyers in America*® 2011 (August 9, 2010)
- Katten Lands 16 Practices and 39 Attorneys in *Chambers USA* Guide (June 24, 2010)
- Katten's Sheldon Zenner Honored with Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago's 2010 Champion for Justice Award (June 7, 2010)
- 12 Katten Partners Named Among Nation's Leading Lawyers by Lawdragon (May 19, 2010)
- Five Katten Partners Recognized as Leading Litigators by *Benchmark Litigation* (August 20, 2008)
- Katten Lands 14 Practices and 32 Attorneys in *Chambers USA* Guide (June 13, 2008)
- 46 Katten Attorneys Named to 2008 List of *Best Lawyers in America*® (October 31, 2007)
- 13 Katten Partners Named Finalists for Lawdragon 500 Leading Lawyers in America (September 27, 2007)
- Katten Lands 15 Practices and 28 Attorneys in *Chambers USA* Guide (June 15, 2007)
- Partner Sheldon T. Zenner Interviewed by Leading Publications Regarding Enron Trial Proceedings (April 2006)
- Partner Sheldon Zenner, Chair of White Collar Practice, Quoted in *Chicago Tribune* on Jury Deliberations in the George Ryan Trial (March 15, 2006)

## Presentations and Events

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- Gianrico Carofiglio on The Measure of Time - A Book Presentation (May 6, 2021) | *Speaker*
- The 28th Annual National Institute on White Collar Crime (March 5–7, 2014) | *Panelist* | *Significant Legal Developments in the Central and Midwest Regions*
- Sixth Annual National Institute on Securities Fraud (November 3–4, 2011) | *Moderator* | *Internal Investigations: Where Is My Deputy Badge?*

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- The Fifth Annual National Institute on Securities Fraud (October 7–8, 2010) | *Moderator* | *Inside Insider Trading: A Look at Galleon and Other Recent Cases*
- The Rapidly Expanding Duties of Counsel in Crisis Management (December 8, 2008) | *Panelist*
- National Institute on Securities Fraud (October 2–3, 2008) | *Panelist* | *Representing Witnesses During SEC Testimony*
- Internal Investigations 2008: Legal, Ethical & Strategic Issues (June 17, 2008) | *Moderator*
- 45th Annual Corporate Counsel Institute (November 30–December 1, 2006) | *Moderator* | *What You Should Do When the Government Comes Knocking: Anticipating and Responding to Government Investigations*
- ABA National Institute on Securities Fraud (September 28–29, 2006) | *Moderator* | *Aiders and Abettors: Indirect Focus has Direct Consequences*
- Options Back-Dating (July 25, 2006) | *Panelist*
- BlueCross BlueShield Association - 2006 Compliance and Ethics Conference (March 13–16, 2006) | *Presenter* | *The State of Recent White Collar Health Care Fraud Prosecutions*