

Carolyn M. Passen

Counsel

Intellectual Property

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Carolyn Passen focuses her practice on intellectual property (IP) litigation and counseling, with a concentration in trademark, copyright and trade secret matters. She is also a skilled litigator, representing clients in complex commercial disputes, including high-profile defamation cases involving major media corporations.

Helping clients protect and enforce their most valuable assets

Described by clients as "strategic, persistent and very aware of client needs" (*Chambers USA* 2026), Carolyn guides clients through the full lifecycle of IP — from clearance and protection to enforcement and high-stakes litigation. She combines deep litigation experience with a business-minded approach to counseling, helping clients identify and mitigate risk early while building strong positions for resolution when disputes arise. Carolyn, praised as "a fantastic lawyer and asset on any case (*Chambers USA* 2026)," represents companies ranging from emerging brands to Fortune 100 businesses across a variety of industries, including fashion, hospitality, media and technology. In 2026, World Trademark Review 1000 named Carolyn among the world's leading trademark professionals based on peer and client feedback. She has also been consecutively recognized by Best Lawyers in America in the area of Trademark Law for the last three years, along with numerous rankings by *Chambers USA*.

Beyond her IP practice, Carolyn brings extensive litigation experience to complex commercial disputes, including defamation cases stemming from statements made during public broadcasts or in the press.

Representative Experience

- *Ivy Coach Inc. v. Crimson Consulting Limited*, No. 1:25-cv-05906 (S.D.N.Y. 2026)
- *PMA Financial Network, LLC v. InvestCloud, Inc.*, No. 1:25-cv-00907 (N.D. Ill. 2026)
- *James MacDonald v. Matthew Erich "Mancow" Muller, et al.* (Cook Cty. Cir. Ct. 2025)
- *Visier, Inc. v. Google LLC* (N.D. Cal. 2024)

Practices

- Intellectual Property
- Intellectual Property Litigation
- Litigation
- Trademarks and Trademark Litigation

Industries

- Entertainment and Media
- Fashion, Retail, Luxury and Beauty
- Hospitality
- Technology

Education

- JD, DePaul University College of Law, *with honors, DePaul Law Review Editor*
- BA, Miami University, *with honors*

Bar Admissions

- Illinois

Court Admissions

- US Court of Appeals, Federal Circuit
- US Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- US District Court, Northern District of Illinois

Professional & Community Involvement

- American Bar Association
- The Chicago Bar Association
- International Trademark Association
- Lawyers for the Creative Arts

- *The Breakfast Klub, Inc. v. 1600 Breakfast Club, LLC* (C.D. Cal. 2024)
- *Theory LLC v. Young Man Moving Productions, Inc.*, Opposition No. 91275050 (TTAB 2024)
- *Adidas America, Inc., et al. v. Forever 21, Inc.*, 3:17-cv-00377 (D. Or. 2023)
- *Peter Ludlow v. Sun-Times Media LLC, et al.*, 14 L 1529 (Ill. App. Ct. 1st Dist. 2015)

Recognitions

Recognized or listed in the following:

- *Chambers USA*
  - Intellectual Property: Trademark, Copyright & Trade Secrets, 2022–2026
- *Best Lawyers in America*
  - Litigation - Intellectual Property, 2027
  - Trademark Law, 2023–2027
  -
- *The Legal 500 United States*
  - Recommended Attorney, 2026
- *Super Lawyers Rising Stars*
  - Illinois, 2009–2010, 2014
- *World Trademark Review 1000*
  - Illinois, 2025-2026

News

- Katten Attorneys Recognized in 2027 *Best Lawyers* Guide (August 20, 2026)
- Katten Earns Top Rankings in the Legal 500 US 2026 Guide (June 10, 2026)
- Katten Climbs in *Chambers USA* 2026 Rankings (June 4, 2026)
- Katten IP Practice Ranked by *World Trademark Review 1000* (January 28, 2026)
- Katten Celebrates 101 Attorneys Honored by *Best Lawyers*® (August 21, 2025)

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- *Chambers USA* 2025 Ranks Katten as Leading Law Firm (June 5, 2025)
- Katten Named to *The Fashion Law* 2025 List of Top US Law Firms for Retail Companies (March 12, 2025)
- Katten IP Practice Receives Acclaim in *World Trademark Review 1000*, 2025 (February 3, 2025)
- Katten Attorneys Recognized as *Best Lawyers*® and *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*® Award Recipients (August 15, 2024)
- Katten Receives High Marks in *Chambers USA* Guide 2024 (June 6, 2024)
- Katten Scores Dismissal of Patent Docketing Contractor From Lawsuit Regarding Missed IP Deadline (April 16, 2024)
- Katten Named 2024 'Law Firm of the Year' for Trademark Law by Best Law Firms® (November 2, 2023)
- Katten Attorneys Distinguished by *Best Lawyers*® (August 17, 2023)
- Katten Boosts Rankings in *Chambers USA Guide 2023* (June 1, 2023)
- Katten Attorneys Recognized by *Best Lawyers*® (August 18, 2022)
- Katten Ranked Leading Law Firm by *Chambers USA* 2022 (June 1, 2022)
- Katten Secures Motion to Dismiss for YCharts in California District Court Case (May 19, 2015)
- Katten Successfully Represents Cumulus Media in Illinois Appellate Court Defamation Case (April 21, 2015)
- Katten Obtains Dismissal for Cumulus Broadcasting in Defamation Suit (July 21, 2014)
- Fifty-Four Katten Attorneys Recognized in 2014 Illinois *Super Lawyers* List (January 13, 2014)
- Katten's Representation of Agave Loco Highlighted in Law360 Article (October 2, 2013)
- Katten's Representation of Bausch & Lomb in District Court Noted in Law360 (September 5, 2013)
- Katten Obtains Favorable Decision for Bausch & Lomb in Trademark Infringement Suit (July 29, 2013)
- Katten Representation of Bausch & Lomb in Trademark Infringement Suit Noted in Law360 (April 9, 2013)

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- Eighty-Six Katten Attorneys Named 2012 Illinois Super Lawyers (February 28, 2012)
- Katten Secures Federal Circuit Reversal in Lucky Litter IP Matter (October 11, 2010)
- Katten Attorneys Win Federal Appeals Case on Behalf of Entrepreneur (October 8, 2010)

Publications

- 2009 Year-End Intellectual Property Issues Advisory (December 2009)