Frances M. Haas

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CEDAR RAPIDS OFFICE

In her labor and employment practice, Fran Haas encounters a fair share of difficult cases, but in each matter, she's determined to reach a conclusion that satisfies her clients. "I'm able to handle all the issues my clients might encounter," she says. "It's about being resourceful."

Fran litigates for employers in cases related to harassment, discrimination, retaliation, Family and Medical Leave Act, equal pay, and wrongful termination. She negotiates collective bargaining agreements on behalf of management, as well as other labor disputes. She also takes on higher education cases in matters involving Title IX, Title VII, the Violence Against Women Act, and the Iowa Civil Rights Act. These cases often involve difficult facts relating to sexual misconduct or assault by employees or students—facts that she understands make people uncomfortable. "There are certain ways to handle cases that have delicate issues, and it often requires a soft touch and a lot of nuance," she says.

While Fran enjoys litigating, she emphasizes consulting before issues arise. Whether she consults through a phone call, conducts in-person training, or reviews policies or anticipated employee terminations, she's with the client from start to finish. "It's not just about pointing out the problem but getting them to the finish line so they don't have to worry about it at all." Fran also conducts internal workplace investigations to help clients navigate mission-critical or crisis-level personnel issues.

In addition, Fran leads webinars and speaks frequently on employment and higher education issues, with an emphasis on mental health and substance abuse issues in the workplace. Fran also understands the importance of workplace training and conducts tailor-made in-person training programs for her clients to help avoid claims before they develop.

On a daily basis, Fran takes satisfaction in seeing the legal system at work. As a former law clerk for a federal judge, Fran saw firsthand how the court provides an important service to citizens, something that drives her in her practice. "It's very rewarding to me when the system works the way it should and we get the outcome for the client," she says. "It's not just winning but being part of a process that works."

RECOGNITION

Chambers USA
Labor & Employment Law, 2022–2026

The Best Lawyers in America®
- Labor Law — Management, 2024–2027
- Litigation — Labor & Employment, 2024–2027
- Education Law, 2027
- Employment Law, 2027



PRACTICE AREAS

- Labor & Employment
- Affirmative Action Compliance & Enforcement
- Employment Litigation
- Higher Education & Title IX Law
- Workplace Investigations
- Litigation
- Administrative Hearings, Arbitrations & Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Appellate Practice
- Business & Commercial Litigation
- Employment, Labor & Discrimination
- Health Care Litigation
- Higher Education & Title IX Law
- Personal Injury & Tort Defense

EDUCATION

- University of Northern Iowa (B.A., summa cum laude, first in class)
- University of Iowa College of Law (J.D., with high distinction)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Iowa
- Wisconsin (inactive)
- Admitted to practice in all state and federal courts in Iowa
- Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Associate, Michael Best
- Law Clerk to Chief Judge Linda R. Reade, U.S. District Court, Northern

The Best Lawyers in America®

Lawyer of the Year:
- Labor Law — Management, Cedar Rapids, 2026
- Litigation — Labor & Employment, 2027

Benchmark Litigation
Future Star

First in class at UNI

Order of the Coif, University of Iowa

Jessup International Moot Court Competition
Semifinalist

Moot Court Judge

Research Assistant for Dean Linda McGuire

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

Iowa State Bar Association
Federal Practice Committee
- Chair, 2018–2019
- Vice Chair, 2017–2018

Wisconsin Bar Association

Linn County Bar Association

Appointed to the Federal Practice Committee for the Northern District of Iowa
2013–present

Appointed to Advisory Committee for the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals

Multiple appointments to Magistrate Selection Committee for Northern District of Iowa

SIGNIFICANT CASES

Snyder v. JRS Pharma, LLP (Iowa District Court for Linn County 2024). Obtained defense verdict following jury trial in Linn County for wrongful termination claim for pharmaceutical company.

Shearer v. Hirschbach Motor Lines (N.D. Iowa 2022). Obtained summary judgment defeating plaintiff's attempt to reclassify independent contractor truck driver as employee, and secured dismissal of Title VII and negligence claims.

Andrew v. Hamilton County Public Hospital (Iowa District Court for Hamilton County 2022). Obtained a defense verdict from jury in complex employment matter.

NLRB (2023). Obtained non-board NLRB settlement in highly-contested unfair labor practice matter.

Carroll v. Hawkeye Community College (N.D. Iowa 2023). Obtained summary judgment in federal court on highly contested section 1983 and defamation claims

District of Iowa

arising out of public employee's hearing, developing new, favorable law related to public entity termination proceedings.

Hart v. Deere & Co (N.D. Iowa 2023). Obtained summary judgment on race discrimination, harassment, and retaliation claims.

Andrew v. Van Diest Medical Center (Iowa Supreme Court 2021). Victory on interlocutory appeal for medical center who was accused of defaming a former surgeon when it reported concerns with the surgeon's narcotic prescription practices. The Court also found in our client's favor on an alleged violation of the Iowa Wage Payment Collection Act.

Williams v. Dave Wright Auto (Southern District of Iowa 2021). Obtained summary judgment on husband and wife's various race discrimination claims.

Rossley v. Drake University, 2020WL 2107937 (8th Cir. 2020). Obtained summary judgment for client in Title IX and ADA retaliation case.

***Edwards v. Des Moines Public Schools* (Polk County Dist. Ct. of Iowa, 2019).** First-chair defense verdict in jury trial involving claim of wrongful termination.

***Bandstra v. Covenant Reformed Church* (Iowa Supreme Court 2018).** Favorable outcome on appeal of multiple tort claims in clergy sexual abuse case.

***Smock v. Muscatine Center for Social Action* (Muscatine Cnty. Dist. Ct. of Iowa 2017).** Obtained summary judgment on plaintiff's claims for wrongful discharge claim in violation of public policy and breach of contract.

***Banks v. John Deere & Co.*, Case No. 15-2058 (8th Cir. 2016).** The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed summary judgment for the employer on the plaintiff's race discrimination and harassment claims under Title VII and the Iowa Civil Rights Act.

***Massey-Diez v. University of Iowa Community Medical Services, Inc.*, Case No. 15-2924 (8th Cir. 2016).** The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed summary judgment for the employer on the plaintiff's FMLA entitlement and discrimination/retaliation claims.

***Dindinger v. Allsteel, Inc.*, 860 N.W.2d 557 (Iowa 2015).** Obtained favorable answers to two certified questions of law on wage discrimination claims before the Iowa Supreme Court.

***Ackelson v. Manley Toy Direct, LLC*, No. 12-0442 (Iowa 2013).** The Iowa Supreme Court held that punitive damages are not available in employment discrimination claims under the Iowa Civil Rights Act.