

Dana Waterman Hempy

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DES MOINES OFFICE

Dana Waterman Hempy loves logistics. She adores problem-solving. "I like that litigation has a lot of moving parts," she says. "There are always new challenges. I like expecting the unexpected. You never know what's around the corner."

At the same time, Dana knows a litigator has to keep the overall goal in mind. "You need to make sure all those moving parts line up to get to the result you're looking for," she says. "You can't get too lost in one piece and lose track of the six other pieces that are equally important. You need to be able to move in and out of the specific and the general."

Part of the challenge is always working with people. Dana puts her undergraduate degree in psychology to good use. "It helps me build better connections with people," she says.

Dana's experience as a law clerk for an Iowa Supreme Court justice also gave her insight into effective litigation strategies. For thorny issues before the Iowa Supreme Court, Dana was tasked with analyzing cases and presenting the best arguments on both sides. "I got to come up with what was each side's best argument, and then explain all their weaknesses," she says.

As a law clerk, Dana read a lot of briefs: good, bad, and in between. "It definitely has shown me that writing matters," she says. "Judges put their time and their energy into finding an answer. We need to put our energy and time into giving them the best information and our best arguments."

Because every client and every fact pattern is different, it's her job as an attorney to find new avenues of persuasion and ways to get the judge's attention. She constantly looks for opportunities to make her arguments stand out.

"I want to feel like my work is contributing to an answer," Dana says. "It's going to move the ball forward on whatever problem someone is encountering." She values that litigation uses concrete steps to move toward answers.

Hardworking and communicative, her approach includes ensuring clients understand the steps taken on their behalf. "I want clients to come away feeling they understood the process," she says.



PRACTICE AREAS

- [Labor & Employment](#)
- [Litigation](#)
- [Appellate Practice](#)
- [Business & Commercial Litigation](#)

EDUCATION

- Pepperdine University (B.A., cum laude, Psychology)
- University of Iowa College of Law (J.D., with highest distinction)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Iowa

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Judicial Law Clerk, Iowa Supreme Court Justice Matthew McDermott
- Summer Associate, Nyemaster Goode, P.C.
- Summer Associate, Belin McCormick, P.C.
- Assistant Program Director, Camp Shalom Inc.

Dana's path to law school and litigation took her first to California. After growing up in the Quad Cities, Dana took an opportunity to attend college in the Los Angeles area. She enjoyed the school, the weather, and the experience, but the hustle-bustle of the West Coast wasn't her dream.

She knew she wanted to return to Iowa for law school and, eventually, to practice law. "Practicing in Iowa is the right place for me because Iowans respect one another and work together to improve our communities," Dana says.

RECOGNITION

Great Plains Super Lawyers

Rising Stars, 2024

Order of the Coif

Dean's Award for Academic Excellence: Criminal Law

Dean's Award for Academic Excellence: Criminal Procedure

Dean's Award for Academic Excellence: Professional Responsibilities

Dean's Award for Academic Excellence: Administrative Law

Jurisprudence Award for Academic Excellence: Public Health Law

Iowa Law Review, vols. 105–106

Editor in Chief and Student Writer

ALI CLE Scholarship & Leadership Award

PUBLICATIONS & SPEECHES

"A Defendant's Ability to Pay: The Key to Unlocking the Door of Restitution Debt,"

106 *Iowa L. Rev.* 455 (2020)

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Chapter President, Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women