

Katie Graham

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DES MOINES OFFICE

People are the essence of the law, and Katie Graham knows people. As a trial attorney, Katie understands what it takes to win: experience, hard work, and being able to connect with people. While winning looks different to every client, you cannot develop pressure points for a cost-effective settlement without trial experience. Opponents know that Katie tries cases and is prepared to take the case as far as it needs to go.

Focused on [employment law](#), [product liability](#) and municipal law, she often draws on her pre-law experience in customer-facing jobs. “You learn so much about people and how to interact with them through the service industry,” Katie says. That ability to connect with people helps Katie strategically respond to her clients, their employees, and jurors in relatable ways. “You have to be able to explain a story in commonsense terms in a world where everything gets overcomplicated.” Telling a clear story helps jurors relate to her and her arguments.

Katie trusts her instincts and relies on her ability to think beyond the expected solution. “That’s where I can add value to my team and my clients,” she says.

When conducting investigations, honing those instincts might require a visit to a client’s factory or workplace. Katie doesn’t believe in recycling ideas from behind a desk. Being on-site lets her see the problem in context, learn the business requirements, and efficiently find a creative answer. “Facing problems head on is the best way,” she adds. “You cannot solve a problem efficiently or effectively if you cannot relate to the situation.”

Katie is serving her second term as chair of Nyemaster’s Litigation Department. She is committed to carrying out Nyemaster’s mission of developing the best trial attorneys in Iowa.

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

American Bar Association

Iowa State Bar Association

Polk County Bar Association

Iowa Defense Counsel Association

Board Member

Drake Law School Board of Counselors

2023-25

Des Moines Music Coalition

- Former President
- Former Board of Directors Member



PRACTICE AREAS

- Government Affairs
- Administrative Rulemaking
- Bill Drafting
- Campaign Finance & Elections
- Strategic Planning
- Labor & Employment
- Employment Counseling & Risk Avoidance
- Employment Litigation
- Litigation
- Employment, Labor & Discrimination
- Product Liability

EDUCATION

- University of Iowa (B.A.)
- Drake University (J.D., with high honors)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Iowa
- Admitted to practice in all state and federal courts in Iowa

RECOGNITION

Best Lawyers in America®

Labor and Employment Law - Management, 2021-2025

Benchmark Litigation

Future Star

Martindale-Hubbell

AV Preeminent

Great Plains Super Lawyers

Rising Stars, 2016–2021

Iowa Academy of Trial Lawyers

Fellow

Des Moines Business Record Forty Under 40

Honoree, 2015

Iowa Defense Counsel Association

Rising Star Award

President's Award (2021)

Drake Legal Clinic

Student Attorney, 2010–2011

U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa

Law Clerk

Drake Journal of Agricultural Law

Executive Editor

SIGNIFICANT CASES

As lead counsel, obtained complete defense verdict for school district in case involving allegations of race harassment, retaliatory constructive discharge, and tortious discharge in violation of public policy. Defense verdict affirmed on appeal.

As trial and appeal co-counsel, obtained complete dismissal of adverse six-week jury verdict on appeal in case against former governor and State of Iowa involving claims of constitutional due process and procedural due process violations.

As co-counsel, obtained defense verdict for farm implement dealer in case involving allegations of age- and sex-based harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.

As co-counsel, obtained defense judgment for manufacturing client on claims of pregnancy discrimination and retaliation.

As co-counsel, obtained defense judgment for plasma donation facility on claim of professional negligence.

As co-counsel, obtained defense verdict for client in case involving allegations of disability discrimination and retaliation.

As co-counsel, successfully obtained defense verdict for manufacturing client in allegations of race discrimination and retaliation.

Obtained summary judgment for banking client in claims of retaliatory discharge.

Obtained summary judgment for school district on claims of retaliatory discharge in violation of public policy.

Obtained summary judgment for nursing home in a case involving allegation of retaliatory discharge in violation of Iowa public policy.

Obtained summary judgment for long-term care facility on constructive discharge claim.

Obtained motion to dismiss in favor of church based on Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of Federal and Iowa Constitutions.

Obtained motion to dismiss in favor of county defendant involving claims of unconstitutional COVID-19 private Federal election grants.

Obtained summary judgment on behalf of school in a case involving allegations of age discrimination and retaliation.

Represented client in appeal to Iowa Supreme Court in which it was determined punitive damages were not available under the Iowa Civil Rights Act.

Represented local municipality in more than 50 bench trials prosecuting simple misdemeanor and traffic charges.