



Karen P. Layng ,Esq.
Riverside,Illinois



Primary Areas of Expertise

- Commercial
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Joint Ventures / M&A
- Financial
- Energy

[View Video](#)

Professional Summary

Experienced arbitrator, mediator and DRB panel member specializing in commercial and construction projects and disputes. With extensive experience as a C-Suite Executive, BigLaw partner, and adjunct professor at Northwestern University. Proven record of accomplishment in resolving complex commercial disputes. Notable career achievements include leadership roles such as National President of the Girl Scouts of the USA, the first woman President of the Seventh Circuit Bar Association and receiving the University of Illinois Alumni Achievement Award.

Current Employer-Title

M.A.I.T. Co. - CEO
Northwestern University - Adjunct Professor

Profession

Arbitrator, Mediator (including on the Construction Mega Case Panel);
DRB Chair

Work History

CEO, M.A.I.T. Co., 2018 - Present; Adjunct Professor, McCormick School of Engineering MS EMDC Program - Northwestern University, 2018 - Present; Chief Strategy Officer and General Counsel (2014-2018)/General Counsel and Vice President Corporate Development (2013-2014), Scheck Industries, 2013 - 2018; Shareholder, Board Member, Compensation Committee Chair, and Chair of the Litigation and Construction Practice Areas, Vedder Price P.C. (formerly Chadwell Kayser et. al.), 1990 - 2013.

Experience

Construction and Energy Law Expertise: (Representative examples)

Represented a diverse array of clients in complex commercial, construction, and energy contract and litigation matters, as well as in ADR disputes and mediations. Representative clients include project owners, developers,

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Neutral ID: 155682

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contractors of all tiers, financial institutions, and public entities. Experience includes:

- Mega Construction Projects: Representing clients and serving on DRB and arbitration panels in disputes involving manufacturing facilities, co-generation, solar, wind, natural gas, nuclear, and power plant projects, and construction and design of transit stations, depots, roads and bridges and all infrastructure projects.
- Governmental Investigations: Expertise in OSHA violations, False Claims Act, and Foreign Corrupt Practices Act claims, including federal and state criminal investigations.
- Real Estate Matters: Litigation and business representation for builders, developers, and financial institutions.
- Insurance Coverage Disputes: Declaratory Judgment and other litigation involving bonding companies, sureties and other carriers

Commercial Arbitration Expertise: (Representative examples)

Expertise spans a wide range of commercial disputes, including:

- Financial, Accounting, and Bankruptcy Disputes: Handling cases involving fraud, misappropriation, corporate espionage, and financial malfeasance.
- Pharmaceutical and Intellectual Property Disputes: Addressing trademark and trade dress conflicts, franchisor/franchisee issues, and manufacturer/distributor disagreements.
- Contract and Partnership Disputes: Resolving joint venture, license, partnership, and shareholder, buy-sell and other agreement issues, breach of representation and warranty claims, along with lender/borrower conflicts.
- Supply Chain and Logistics Disputes: Managing disputes related to commercial sellers/vendors and warranty matters under the UCC.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Experience

Alternative Dispute Resolution Experience: (Representative examples)

Frequently serves as an arbitrator, mediator, and Dispute Resolution Board member, including as Chair, in complex, multi-party commercial and construction cases and public design build projects. Years of experience in handling:

- Breach of Contract and Fraud Claims: Including financial misrepresentations in M&A deals and construction disputes.
- Cyber Theft and Corporate Espionage Claims: Addressing issues in engineering, manufacturing, and energy sectors.
- Franchise/Distributor Disputes: Resolving conflicts in the transportation and logistics industries.

Strategic C-Suite Leader and Corporate Board Director; Member FDOT Active DRB Members and Chair List; and AAA Mediator Panel

Technology Proficiency

Adapt at conducting virtual arbitrations and mediations using platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and GoToMeeting. Significant experience in managing ESI and predictive coding in complex cases and teaches ethics in AI.

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Education

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois (JD-1987; BA, International Economics-1984); University of Dijon (University of Burgundy), Dijon, France: semester abroad program (1982-1983).

Professional Licenses

Admitted to the Bar: Illinois (1987); U.S. District Court: Northern (1987) and Central (2002) Districts of Illinois, District of Columbia (1989); Trial Bar (1997); U.S. Court of Appeals: Third (2005), Seventh (1991), Ninth (1992) Circuits.

DRBF Dispute Board Administration & Practice Training (January 2026)
FDOT DRB Chair: Roles and Responsibilities Workshop Training (DRBF-Orlando) (March 2026)

Professional Associations

- Girl Scouts of the USA (National President and Chair of the Board of Directors 2020 to 2023 and Board Member 2017-2023);
- Northwestern University, McCormick School of Engineering Industry Advisory Board Member;
- Construction Lawyers Society of America (Fellow and first recipient of the 2024 Woman in Construction Award);
- American Arbitration Association Board of Directors (2020-2026); Chair (2025-2026); and former AAA-ICDR Foundation Board Member;
- Dispute Resolution Board Foundation Member - Dispute Board Administration & Practice Trained;
- National Construction Dispute Resolution Committee (Member and former Co-Chair);
- Metropolitan Planning Council of Chicago (former Executive Leadership Advisor member);
- Seventh Circuit Bar Association (First woman President, Board of Governors member, and past Secretary);
- Member of the Seventh Circuit Jury Instructions Committee;
- Economic Club of Chicago Member;
- American Bar Association Construction Forum Trial Academy Faculty at all five Academies and former Co-Chair Construction Litigation Committee;
- Member of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners; and
- University of Illinois, Alumni Association Board Member, College of Law Strategic Leadership Advisory Board member, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS Alumni Association past President and Board of Directors member and Distinguished Service and Loyalty Award recipient), Chair of the University of Illinois Council, and awarded University of Illinois College of Economics Social Impact Award in conjunction with 125th Anniversary of the College.

Recent Publications & Speaking Engagements

Panelist Construction Super Conferences:

(12/2024) on Navigating New Frontiers in Construction Dispute Resolution and Technology: Ethical Perspectives; (12/2023) on Consequential Challenges in Arbitration Clauses; (12/2018) on SCOTUS Swings the

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Pendulum Back in Favor of Arbitration: Ensure That Your Next Arbitration Clause Is Effective and Enforceable; (12/2017) on How Effective Preliminary Hearings Ensure Efficiency and Economy and also on panel entitled Streamlining Your Arbitration: How to Avoid Reliving the Construction Project “Brick by Brick;” (12/2016) on Modern Challenges and Ethical Dilemmas at Arbitration; (12/2015) on Ethics in Arbitration; (12/2014) on Ethical Pitfalls of Electronic Communications and (12/2013) on Ethical Lapses and Criminality in Construction Procurement and Staffing; and

Other Recent Representative Speaking Engagements:

6/2025: AAA Annual Construction Panel on Ethics in AI at New York Law School
10/2024: Women Lead with Illinois Law - Keynote UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF LAW in Chicago, IL
10/2024: U. of I. Society of Women in Public Affairs Guest Speaker (virtual)
05/2024: Moderator of the panel session Disputes Under Progressive Design-Build Project Delivery at the DRBF's 23rd Annual International Conference in Washington, D.C.
04/2024: Panelist ABA Forum on the Construction Industry Annual Meeting: The Art of Cross Examination in New Orleans, LA
03/2024: AAA-ICDR Construction Conference: Panelist on the topic: Keeping up with the Jones – Are You Meeting Your Ethical Obligations to Stay Abreast of New and Improving Technologies? in Miami, FL
03/2024 (virtual): CBA International Women’s Month – Arbitration Panel: Breaking Boundaries, Building Futures: Inspiring Tales of Women Arbitrators
01/2024: Chicago Bar Association & AAA-ICDR Foundation annual event (virtual): Advancing Social Justice Initiatives Through Alternative Dispute Resolution
6/2023: Panelist on 2023 AAA Construction Conference: Ethics Issues with Virtual Hearings and Document Productions in Santa Monica, CA
5/2023: Webinar GA Bar Association Construction Section: Mediation of Construction Disputes: Construction Law Section | National Panel of Construction Mediators

Locations Where Parties Will Not be Charged for Travel Expenses

No charge for expenses for travel within the Chicago area in Illinois and southern Wisconsin and Northwest Indiana. Will travel nationally and internationally for matters.

Citizenship

United States of America

Languages

English

Compensation:

Hearing: \$550.00 per hour
Study: \$550.00 per hour
Cancellation: \$2,500.00 per day
Cancellation Period: 30 days

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Comment:

Available to serve globally. Willing to forgo billing travel time for matters in reasonable driving distance of Chicago. For all other matters, will bill costs of transportation (will not bill time spent traveling unless engaged in work on the case).

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