

FORTY UNDER 40 2017

Gia Colunga doesn't shy away from taking on the biggest of cases. This is evident in Colunga's work as the primary litigator for an international corporation in a multiple-plaintiff, multiple-defendant litigation case which is currently pending.

In this case, Colunga, while managing a team of attorneys, is responsible for juggling a complicated deposition schedule, numerous court appearances, discovery disputes and lengthy client memorandums. One of her nominators has worked closely with Colunga on this case. After observing her legal talents, offers nothing but praise for this labor and employment lawyer at Chicago's Freeborn & Peters.

"I can say, without a doubt, that of more than a dozen skilled lawyers involved in this case, Gia has the best, most comprehensive grasp of the facts of the case, the nuances of the witnesses and the legal principles applicable to the litigation," the nominator said. "I can say she is one of the select few who has the natural talent, the drive and the quintessential professionalism to lead the bar in the years ahead."

One of her clients, first used Colunga representing their interests in a restrictive covenant case filed in Chicago. He had this to say about Colunga, "I have been litigating cases for over 27 years and evaluating other litigators for 15. Ms. Colunga is simply an outstanding attorney and the best example or endorsement I can give is that I have exclusively retained Ms. Colunga and her firm in Illinois since 2009." The nominator continued "That is truly an outstanding feat. In my opinion, to be a good litigator, an attorney has to be able to assimilate mountains of data and be able to boil all of that down to form that is easily understood by a jury or trier of fact. Not many attorneys meet my definition of a litigator." But Colunga meets this definition.

Colunga's peers agree. Megan Kokontis, an associate with Chicago law firm Akerman, pointed to the results of a four-day bench trial that Colunga handled earlier in her career.

This restrictive covenant case in federal court was brought by a large national insurance brokerage client against a former executive. The court awarded Colunga's client \$1.9 million in attorneys' fees, imposed a permanent injunction and referred both the defendant and a key third-party witness to the Office of the United States Attorney for investigation into possible perjury charges.

"Gia is an exceptional attorney," Kokontis said. "She is a wonderful mentor and teacher, and she is a skilled litigator. She is calm under pressure and does not back down. She is thorough and detail-oriented."

When she's not handling complex cases, Colunga spends time volunteering in her community and for her profession. An athlete herself, with a background in soccer and running, Colunga volunteers on the board of Girls on the Run – Chicago, an organization that helps teen girls develop their athleticism and self-esteem.

Her peers have recognized her talents, too, as Colunga has been selected as a Super Lawyer and an Emerging Lawyer.

John Hammerle, with True Value Company, echoed the sentiments of several past clients when he said that Colunga has a bright future in the legal field.

"Gia is a smart and confident attorney who understands how to obtain the desired results," Hammerle said. "She is not afraid to take risks, and consistently exhibits an admirable dedication to the law. She is an exemplary litigator who can find common ground with the most bullheaded of opponents."

GIA COLUNGA



Age
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Firm

Freeborn & Peters LLP
311 S. Wacker Drive
Chicago

Law School

Loyola University Chicago School
of Law

Practice Area

General commercial and labor/
employment litigation

“MS. COLUNGA IS SIMPLY AN
OUTSTANDING ATTORNEY”