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Jenny O. Blake

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"The members of the Law Bulletin
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"I see in Jenny the legal skills, passion, creativity and personal character that have distinguished her from other attorneys her age."



Jenny O. Blake, 35, immigrated to the United States in 1979 after leaving the former Soviet Union.

After graduating from Bowling Green State University and earning a law degree from the John Marshall School of Law, Blake joined the Illinois bar in 1999. Within 6½ years of entering practice at Lewis & Gellen, she was named the youngest partner ever at the firm.

Blake focuses on representing hospitals, physicians and other health care providers in medical negligence cases. She also practices in product liability. Her pro bono efforts have involved federal civil rights, divorce, custody, medical health care rights and federal criminal matters.

She has served as second chair in six trials, which is unusual for a young attorney these days. Given the propensity of medical negligence plaintiffs to seek many millions of dollars in damages, relatively few high-stakes cases reach trial. Since 2006, Blake also has successfully argued 10 dispositive pre-trial motions in Cook County Circuit Court that limited or eliminated claims against her clients.

"I look to Jenny as being the main contact person at her law firm, and she is the reason that our business relationship has grown," says Scott H. Beckman, former vice president for risk management and insurance at Advocate Health Care and currently the vice president of claims ISMIE Mutual Insurance Company. Beckman says Blake's competence, intelligence and legal analysis are outstanding. He adds that she is able to be aggressive yet collaborative when dealing with opposing counsel.

Kathleen Nelson, the director of insurance and claims management at Resurrection Health Care, says Blake has delivered consistently positive results defending the corporation's hospitals over the last five years. "She has successfully argued actual and apparent agency allegations, the bane of hospital defense," Nelson says. Blake is always timely in acknowledging assignments, consistent in complying with guidelines, and thorough in her analysis and summary of legal issues affecting defense strategy, Nelson says.

Nominators say Blake is always prepared and can be relied on to identify important issues and pursue them zealously. Lawyers report being impressed by her knowledge, enthusiasm and overall passion for the profession.

"She gives every issue she confronts the same level of attention, be it a mere skirmish or a war that she intends to wage" says Kendall Woods of Chuhak & Tecson. Woods says Blake's dedication and skill can be seen in the numbers of victories she continues to procure for clients.

Mark J. Lura of Anderson, Rasor & Partners says Blake "has a quiet tact and efficiently gets everything accomplished that she sets her sights on." Lura describes Blake as tenacious, based on the way she acts in depositions. He says he looks forward to being on trial with her someday.

One of Lura's partners, Marilee Clausing, has practiced in medical negligence defense since 1985 and has worked with many of Blake's clients. "I see in Jenny the legal skills, passion, creativity and personal character that have distinguished her from other attorneys her age," she says, "and that will mark her as a leader among her peers for years to come."

Blake has given presentations on such topics as apparent agency, informed consent, nursing documentation, tort reform and the Medical Studies Act to a wide range of professionals. Her professional memberships include the American Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association and Chicago Bar Association. She is fluent in Russian.

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