



## SARAH E. FLOTTE

36

**Firm:** Michael Best & Friedrich LLP  
444 W. Lake St., Suite 3200  
Chicago

**Law School:** DePaul University  
College of Law

**Area of Practice:** Employment  
litigation, higher education



“She always puts up a great fight, but does so with dignity and respect.”

**H**ow has Sarah Flotte managed to build such a successful employment practice at such a young age? Flotte’s fellow attorneys point to her legal skills, acute business sense and constant professionalism.

As Kerryann Haase Minton, managing partner of Michael Best & Friedrich’s Chicago office put it, Flotte “quickly analyzes legal issues and provides clear, thoughtful and creative solutions to her clients’ problems.”

“She is a great lawyer not only because she knows and understands the law, but because she knows and understands her clients’ businesses,” Minton said. “Clients rave about her counsel not only as a lawyer but as a strategic business partner. This has put her leaps and bounds ahead of her peers.”

Describing Flotte as an exceptional litigator, Alexandria Relias, with the Office of University Counsel at the University of Illinois at Chicago, said “I have experienced firsthand her ability to help her clients prevail, including in the most difficult of cases.” “Her advocacy is hard-hitting, yet compassionate and professional. Her advice is sensible. And her approach is practical and mindful of her clients’ businesses.”

U.S. Magistrate Judge Jeffrey Cole once complimented Flotte on her performance at the conclusion of a high-profile employment litigation case. Cole, in a letter to Flotte’s firm, wrote, “In all the years that I’ve been a lawyer, and now a judge, I can tell you without the slightest degree of exaggeration that [Flotte] is one the most skilled lawyers I have ever seen.” The judge went on to say that Flotte “was always incredibly poised” and “exhibited great skill in argument,” which was “matched by the decorous way in which she interacted with opposing counsel.”

Flotte generates similar praise from her opponents. As opposing counsel Carrie Hershman of Choate Hershman Levison said about the many lengthy court hearings with Flotte, “[she] was always prepared, articulate, and immensely professional.” “She always put up a great fight, but did so with dignity and respect.”

How successful has Flotte been? During the last two years alone, she earned a precedent-setting win in a case involving one of the country’s top universities, successfully litigated a multi-party class action wage and hour suit, and counseled numerous clients on issues ranging from discrimination to non-competes to defamation. Marking another victory, in the last two years, Flotte worked side-by-side with her clients to help them reframe the #MeToo movement as an opportunity to redefine company culture and improve employee recruitment and engagement.

During this time, Michael Best also named Flotte co-chair of the firm’s Higher Education Industry Team, which serves over 80 colleges and universities across the U.S.

“Sarah takes her work personally, in a good way,” said Flotte’s former boss, Dennis Stefanowicz of Holman & Stefanowicz. “Sarah always made an effort to get to know clients personally and to develop with them a relationship of trust and service. This takes a high level of effort and genuineness that simply is not possessed by all attorneys, young or tenured.”

Holland & Knight partner Trisha Rich described Flotte as “always thinking of ways she can help not only her clients, but other attorneys – regardless of their firm or affiliation.” Marc Cervantes of Cervantes, Chatt, & Prince P.C. echoed; “Being a supporter and advocate of others is in [Sarah’s] DNA.”

Even with a busy legal career, Flotte volunteers in the community. In addition to being a trained “Wish Granter”, she recently completed the final year of her three-year presidency term of the Make-A-Wish Illinois Associate Board. Under Flotte’s leadership, the associate board raised more than \$500,000.