HUSCH BLACKWELL

Thomas J. Arkell

PARTNER

THE LINK VIRTUAL OFFICE*
PHONE: 309.391.0840
EMAIL: TOM.ARKELL@HUSCHBLACKWELL.COM

OVERVIEW

Tom advises U.S. employers on effective immigration strategies to attract, retain, and empower global professionals essential to their success. He practices from Bloomington, Illinois as a member of our virtual office, The Link.

He also represents highly skilled individuals whose work advances the U.S. national interest, including those with extraordinary ability or outstanding achievements in academia and research.

A recognized leader in the field, clients rely on Tom to simplify the U.S. immigration process and manage interactions with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the Department of Labor, and the Department of State. For nearly three decades, he has helped colleges, universities, healthcare institutions, corporations, major league sports teams, professional athletes—including major league hall of famers and MVPs—scientists, and researchers navigate complex, ever-changing regulations where errors can have serious consequences. As a former special assistant attorney general for the State of Illinois, he is prepared to litigate when necessary to protect their interests.

Many clients hold advanced degrees from prestigious universities and work at the forefront of their fields. He routinely prepares and files National Interest Waiver (NIW) petitions, enabling faculty members, researchers, Ph.D. candidates, and scientists—across disciplines such as physics, chemistry, biology, aerospace, nanotechnology, medicine, engineering, materials science, sociology, and genetics—to pursue permanent residence without the need for employer

Industries

Education
Healthcare
Life Sciences

Services

Athlete Immigration
Business Immigration and Global Mobility
Higher Education
National Interest Waivers

© 2026 HUSCH BLACKWELL LLP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

sponsorship or labor certification. His command of NIW standards and documentation allows him to respond to questions immediately and decisively so the NIW petition can be prepared, filed, and approved expeditiously.

In addition to NIW cases, Tom assists clients with citizenship applications, green cards, work visas, and related filings. He has extensive experience with EB-5, J-1 waivers, H-1B, P-1, O-1, TN, PERM, I-140, I-485, L-1A and L-1B, citizenship, and various family-based applications. He has successfully represented scientists, researchers, executives, entrepreneurs, and elite athletes in EB-1A Extraordinary Ability cases, as well as universities seeking EB-1B Outstanding Professor/Researcher classifications for accomplished faculty and researchers. As former board counsel for the board of trustees of a state university, Tom is well-acquainted with university operations.

Tom also opines on Name, Image, and License (NIL) issues for international student-athletes.

A highly sought after speaker on immigration matters, he presents at national and regional conferences and meetings across the U.S.

Having personally navigated the immigration system—from F-1 student to permanent resident to U.S. citizen—Tom understands the stress, urgency, and high stakes clients face. Clients value his empathy, accessibility, and results-oriented approach, as well as a concierge service model, which includes a dedicated case manager and real-time case updates through a secure client portal. Together, Tom and his team work toward one clear goal: securing approval of each client's application or petition as efficiently and smoothly as possible.

Experience

- Secured USCIS approval of an NIW petition for a postdoctoral researcher in molecular and cellular biology, recognizing the potential impact of his work on cancer treatment; I-140 approved in 26 days.
- Secured USCIS approval of an NIW petition for an associate research scientist in immunobiology, recognizing research on immunological regulation, macrophage function, and metabolic control relevant to Type 2 diabetes and obesity.
- Secured USCIS approval of an NIW petition for a postdoctoral researcher in organic synthetic chemistry, recognizing pioneering work on total synthesis of natural products isolated from Avrainvillea nigricans with potential impact on multiple cancer treatments. The petitioner was the first to synthesize the molecule Calcaridine.

© 2026 HUSCH BLACKWELL LLP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Experience

- Secured USCIS approval of an I-140 petition for a research scientist in cybersecurity at the Information Trust Institute, contributing to the protection of the nation's smart grid—a National Science Foundation and Department of Energy-funded project; petition approved in 153 days.
- Secured USCIS approval of a petition for a postdoctoral scholar at St. Jude Medical, contributing to the development of an accelerated in-vitro model that replicates stress cracking on outer surfaces of cardiac implantable leads.
- Secured USCIS approval of an NIW petition for a flight test engineer and instructor who evaluated the first flight management system integrated into a single-pilot cockpit of a fighter/attack aircraft and the largest software change to the F/A-18 operational flight program; petition approved in four months.

Recognition

- Law Bulletin Publishing Company, Illinois Leading Lawyer – Immigration and Employment Law, 2017-present

Education

- J.D., University of Notre Dame Law School
- B.A., University of Notre Dame

© 2026 HUSCH BLACKWELL LLP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Admissions

- District of Columbia
- Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Central District of Illinois
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit

---

*Tom is licensed in Illinois, practicing in Bloomington, IL. Contact Tom via email or phone for in-person/virtual meetings. Use the address 1001 N. Main St., Suite B, Bloomington, IL 61701, for mail/deliveries.

© 2026 HUSCH BLACKWELL LLP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED