HUSCH BLACKWELL

Jacob Sawyer

PARTNER

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OVERVIEW

An experienced litigator and trial attorney, Jacob defends clients in mass tort matters.

Jacob represents product manufacturers and premises owners facing environmental or toxic exposure claims, with a focus on asbestos, benzene, and diacetyl matters. Most of Jacob's work is in Cook County and McLean County, but he has managed cases in both state and federal courts throughout the Midwest—all the way from initial pleadings through trial. He stands out among toxic tort attorneys for his substantial trial experience, having taken multiple cases to jury verdict and also handled appeals. Jacob's trial skills and experience mean that he is often brought in on toxic tort cases likely to go to trial.

Jacob first came to the practice of law with an interest in environmental law, driven by a genuine curiosity about the science that underpins these cases. This interest continues to shape his practice, as he regularly manages Superfund and CERCLA matters and enjoys working through the technical details that come with toxic tort litigation.

Clients appreciate Jacob's approach to trial work. Rather than relying on aggressive tactics, Jacob has a knack for building rapport, both with witnesses and opposing counsel. This style helps move cases forward, yielding effective depositions and encouraging favorable settlements when appropriate. In court, Jacob's approachable manner means that he relates well to juries: he's accustomed to working in difficult jurisdictions for defendants, but he knows that juries are always open to new information, and he has a gift for presenting the facts clearly and building jurors' trust.

Industries

Manufacturing
Technology
Transportation

Services

Asbestos Litigation
Complex Torts (CXT)
Litigation & Alternative Dispute Resolution
Toxic Tort

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Jacob is known for open communication with clients and thorough preparation. Clients value his reliability, organization, and commitment to achieving the best possible results, as well as his efforts to avoid surprises. Jacob's practical, science-driven approach and his focus on clear communication make him a trusted resource for companies navigating complex environmental and toxic tort claims.

Experience

- Successfully built a group to handle asbestos and talc litigation for several high profile and high-volume defendants.
- Served as national counsel for two separate diacetyl defendants.
- Managed asbestos docket with complete case workup from initial reports and responsive pleadings to the taking of sensitive depositions, the preparation of dispositive motions, and ultimately trial and appellate practice when necessary.
- Handled several sophisticated environmental matters involving Superfund site administration and negotiations related to remediation.
- Relevant trial experience: *Homolka v. Union Carbide Corp.* (case tried to hung jury twice), Cook County, IL; *McNamara v. Wedco, Cook County*, IL (defense verdict); *Krentz v. Motor Castings*, Milwaukee County, WI; *Wright v. CBS Corp.*, Northern District of IL (defense verdict); *Kinser v. CBS Corp.*, Central District of IL (defense verdict)

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Recognition

- *The Legal 500 United States*
  - Product liability, mass tort and class action - defense: toxic tort, Recommended lawyer, 2026
- Super Lawyers
  - Illinois Super Lawyer, 2022-2025
  - Illinois Rising Star, 2015-2018
- Leading Lawyers
  - Products Liability Defense Law/Toxic Tort Defense, 2011-2025

Education

- J.D., Washington University in St. Louis School of Law
  - *Global Studies Law Review*
- B.S.B.A., Oklahoma State University

Admissions

- Illinois
- Missouri
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Central District of Illinois

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Community Leadership

Jacob has handled a variety of plaintiffs' civil rights and employment lawsuits, as appointed by the Northern District of Illinois Trial Bar. He also volunteers with:

- Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing
- Lawyers for the Creative Arts

The Legal 500 United States

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