

**Yates M. French****Phone:** (630) 510.4904**Email:** [yfrench@rathjelaw.com](mailto:yfrench@rathjelaw.com)

Yates French is a creative and innovative commercial litigator who helps businesses resolve complex disputes, with a particular focus on real estate litigation. He has extensive experience litigating cases arising in bankruptcy court, and has received national recognition for his work representing debtors and creditors<sup>1</sup>. He has also achieved significant victories in state and federal courts, including claims involving commercial leases, 9-figure development projects, and alleged fraudulent transfers.

Since joining Rathje in 2023 (after 15 years at a top national law firm), Yates has expanded his practice to include novel consumer fraud and class action claims. See *Franco v. Chobani, LLC*, 184 F.4th 599, 602 (7th Cir. 2026)

**Practice Areas**

- Litigation

**Education**

- University of Minnesota Law School (J.D., 2008) *magna cum laude*
- Marquette University (B.A., 2005) *cum laude*

**Bar Admissions**

- 2008 Illinois Supreme Court
- 2008 U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

**Memberships & Recognitions**

- [Named as a Litigator of the Week by The American Lawyer Litigation Daily, May 14, 2020](#)

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<sup>1</sup> **The American Lawyer Litigation Daily**, “Litigators of the Week: A Whirlwind Victory for Kirkland Trio” (May 14, 2020), <https://www.law.com/litigationdaily/2020/05/14/litigators-of-the-week-a-whirlwind-victory-for-kirkland-trio/>.

## Presentations and Publications

- ["Bullied by Government: How the South Shore Chamber of Commerce Resisted Defeat," Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, December 18, 2020](#)
- "Spotlight on Success: How Auburn-Gresham Fought Back and Won," Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, September 29, 2016

## Prior Work Experience

- Kirkland & Ellis, LLP - Partner (2015 - 2023)
- Kirkland & Ellis, LLP - Associate (2008 - 2015)

## Representative Matters

- *Wilmington Savings Fund Society, FSB v. iHeart Communications Inc. et al.* – Trial counsel for iHeart Media, Inc. in a victory at trial against Noteholders alleging breach of a \$500 million indenture. After trial, the court entered a complete defense verdict, disposing of claims alleging securities fraud, breach of contract and seeking related equitable relief.
- *Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors of HH Liquidation, LLC v. Comvest Group Holdings, LLC, et al.* — Defended Comvest Equity Partners, LLC, and all other defendants, in a \$100 million victory at trial against the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors of HH Liquidation, LLC. After a week-long bench trial in Federal Bankruptcy Court in Delaware, defendants prevailed on all 78 counts vindicating their position against claims for fraudulent transfer, constructive fraud, breach of fiduciary duty, substantive consolidation, recharacterization and equitable subordination.
- *Country Visions Cooperative v. Archer Daniels Midland Company et al.* — Trial counsel for ADM in a breach of contract case seeking \$25 million in damages and ownership of a commercial property. After two weeks of trial, the court entered a highly favorable judgment awarding \$0 damages and declining to grant any equitable relief.
- *Ambac Assurance Corp. v. MHPI Projects* — Achieved complete victory for privatized military housing projects against bond insurer claims that projects must pay \$220 million for breach of loan agreements. During three years of litigation, won every substantive battle, including three summary judgments on the ultimate merits, three preliminary injunctions and multiple motions to compel.
- *Fort Benning Family Communities LLC, et al. v. American Management Services LLC, et al.* — Obtained historic settlement of nearly \$200 million on behalf of Plaintiffs and the U.S. Army in a series of cases involving privatized housing at four military bases. The settlement resolved claims of fraud, breach of fiduciary duty and civil RICO against a third-party property management firm, and its chairman and CEO, and is the largest settlement or verdict of a RICO claim in Georgia.