



## DANIEL R. SALEMI

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Chicago

**Law School:** Notre Dame Law School

**Area of Practice:** Employee benefits



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**D**an Salemi’s peers say that this employee benefits specialist has a unique ability: He can make the most complex benefits and ERISA issues understandable to his clients.

This is an important skill. And it’s one reason why Salemi has built a thriving employee benefits practice at such a young age. As nominator Edward Druck, a St. Charles-based employment lawyer, says, Salemi’s sound and practical approach to benefits law is much appreciated by his clients.

“This is a unique skill in the world of lawyering that can’t be taken for granted,” Druck said. “It’s not universal in my experience, and Dan possesses it. It’s a great credit to him and it has served him well. That’s why clients and other lawyers like him.”

As an example of Salemi’s legal skills, Druck points to the work this young attorney turned in for a large client that had during the course of 30 years miscalculated thousands of pensions in its pension plan. In some instances, the plan had paid too much and in others too little. Druck says the client faced millions of dollars of exposure.

Salemi took the lead in dealing with the IRS, the U.S. Department of Labor, the union that represented the plan’s participants and other stakeholders and helped craft a plan to correct the errors while minimizing the impact to the client and the plan’s participants. Salemi also worked with a team to successfully defend several subsequent lawsuits that challenged the corrections.

“Dan was instrumental in working with the experts, coordinating with the IRS and coming up with the best plan in a highly unenviable situation in which tens of millions of dollars were at stake,” Druck said. “Dan did that quite well at a relatively young age.”

Mike Richardson, a Chicago-based labor and employee benefits lawyer, worked closely with Dan on this project, which spanned several years. Richardson stated that Salemi has “engendered the confidence and respect of such a wide range of clients and colleagues at a relatively young age... But more than that, he is measured, poised and demonstrates judgment beyond his years.” Most importantly, according to Richardson, “Dan puts his clients first, treating them and their problems as if they were his own.”

Andrew Malahowski, of Arthur J. Gallagher & Co., said that Salemi is a fierce advocate for his clients. As Malahowski says, Salemi never backs down from a fight if it will benefit his clients.

“I would trust Dan over almost anyone to help a client settle a legal gray area or extricate themselves from a sticky situation,” Malahowski said. “Dan has the rare combination of diligent hard work, a sharp mind and practical street smarts to take the complexity out of employee benefits and to help clients solve problems.”

“If I had to choose one word for Dan, it would be ‘poised,’” said Joseph Burke, a trustee for the Retirement Plan for Chicago Transit Authority Employees. “His professional knowledge is exceptional. He is also a scholar of the law. He’s always prepared. And, for a younger person, he has a deep knowledge of not only procedural issues, but also specific issues regarding employee benefits law.”

Salemi is an active member of the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans, where he regularly speaks to national audiences and writes articles for the foundation’s publications. He also served as vice chair of the Fiduciary Responsibility Subcommittee in the Employee Benefits Committee of the Tax Section of the American Bar Association.