

Palma R. Yanni

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About Palma

Palma has been practicing immigration law for over 45 years and provides counsel on all aspects of immigration law. She works with corporations in employment verification and worksite enforcement matters, as well as with individuals on family-based applications and naturalization. She also represents clients before the US Citizenship and Immigration Service, the Department of Labor, and consular offices of the Department of State.

One of the country's leading practitioners in physician immigration cases, Palma also handles matters involving scientific researchers, immigrant and non-immigrant investors, educators, athletes, entrepreneurs, ministers and religious workers, employees of international organizations and their dependents, skilled and essential workers, students, and their dependents.

Palma represents many individuals in naturalization applications and assists permanent residents and US citizens in bringing family members to the United States.

Palma's Affiliations

- American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), National President, 2003 – 2004

Areas of Focus

Industries: Construction; Education; Healthcare

Services: Employment Advice & Counseling; Employment Litigation; Immigration;
Labor & Employment

Experience

- Advises a financial institution with over 8,000 employees on complex immigration matters, ensuring compliance and facilitating seamless onboarding.
- Secured approvals for high-achieving individuals through extraordinary ability and national interest waiver self-petitions.
- Secures visa approvals for senior officials of a globally recognized charitable organization, supporting uninterrupted international operations.
- Assists a nonprofit physical therapy provider in obtaining nonimmigrant visa status and permanent residence for key employees, ensuring continuity of care.
- Provides ongoing immigration counsel to a rapidly growing project and construction management firm, aligning legal strategy with workforce expansion.
- Represents US citizens sponsoring family members for permanent residence, reuniting families, and navigating evolving immigration policies.

Recognition

- Lexology's International "Lexology Index" guide, Thought Leader in "Thought Leaders – USA," 2026
- Susan D. Quarles AILA Service Excellence Award for outstanding services in advancing the mission, development, and value of AILA for its members and the public it serves, 2023
- American Immigration Lawyers Association, Edith Lowenstein Memorial Award for Excellence in Advancing the Practice of Immigration Law, 2008
- *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Immigration Law, 2006 – 2025
- President's Commendations for exemplary service to the President and AILA, 2022, 2024, 2025
- Holds the Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers, AV® Peer Review Rating from Martindale-Hubbell, its highest rating for ethics and legal ability, 1994 to present
- *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*, Immigration – USA – Nationwide, 2014 – 2020

Credentials

Education

Northwestern University School of Law, JD, 1979

Mount Holyoke College, BA, *magna cum laude*, 1976

Bar Admissions

District of Columbia

Illinois

Maryland

Court Admissions

US Supreme Court

US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

US District Court for the District of Columbia

Interests

Did you know...

An avid warm-water scuba diver, Palma finds solitude with Caribbean fish and community with fellow “water babies” sailing, kayaking, and enjoying waterside escapes.

On land, she’s often seen cruising around southern Maryland in her 1997 pearl-white Mitsubishi 3000GT VR4, or her 1998 Torch Red convertible Corvette.

Community/Civic Activities

- American Immigration Council, Founding Member and Board of Trustees, 1998 – 2002; Board of Directors, 2002 – 2005

Thought Leadership

Presentations

Palma is a recognized voice on immigration issues, having twice testified before the U.S. House Committee on Small Business about the impact of visa approval backlogs on American small business.

She has presented at more than 25 American Immigration Lawyers Association Annual Conferences on a wide variety of immigration topics.

Publications

- Co-Author, “USCIS Systems and Procedures: A Practical Understanding of What Happens with Your Petition, from Filing to Approval,” *Immigration Practice Pointers*, American Immigration Lawyers Association, 2024-2025
- Co-Author, “Diplomatic Visas,” *Rome District Chapter in London*, American Immigration Lawyers Association, March 2022
- Co-Editor, *The Diplomatic Visas Handbook, 2nd Edition*, American Immigration Lawyers Association, 2017
- Chapter Author, “Special Permanent Residence Provisions for International Organization Employees and Diplomats,” *The Diplomatic Visas Handbook, 2nd Edition*, American Immigration Lawyers Association, 2017
- Co-Author, “Researching the Researchers: Developing Immigrant Visa Petitions for Researchers,” *Immigration Practice Pointers*, American Immigration Lawyers Association, 2016– 2017

- Co-Author, “Recent proposed and implemented Department of Homeland Security initiatives regarding high-skilled workers, STEM students, and Entrepreneurs,” Fall Conference, American Immigration Lawyers Association, 2016
- Reviewer, *Kurzban’s Immigration Law Sourcebook*, American Immigration Lawyers Association, 8th through 19th Editions

Insights for Employers Alert

- Critical New Compliance Updates on Employment Authorization Terminations for Employers of Foreign Nationals, Jul 18, 2025

Press Releases

- Scott Seaman, Palma Yanni, and Ian Wagreich Recognized as 2026 *Lexology Index Thought Leaders: USA*, Oct 2, 2025
- Experienced Immigration Attorney Palma Yanni Joins Hinshaw in Chicago, Aug 27, 2025