



Leann M. Walsh

Partner

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OVERVIEW

Leann Walsh is a partner in the firm's Raleigh office where she is a member of the labor, employment, and workplace safety practice group and health care practice group. She is licensed to practice law in both North Carolina and Massachusetts.

Leann focuses her practice on counseling domestic and international businesses and private equity firms on difficult employee relations issues, conducting internal employment investigations, and defending employers in civil and administration employment litigation matters.

She regularly advises clients regarding complex labor and employment issues relating to mergers and acquisitions, and helps to lead the firm's collaborative initiatives between its employment law, corporate law, and health care practice groups. Throughout her career, Leann has worked with clients to help them successfully navigate through varying business climates—from economic downturns, layoffs and furloughs, to rapid growth, expansion and acquisitions.

Leann is dedicated to partnering with clients to ensure that they are able to accomplish their business objectives while remaining in compliance with employment laws and maintaining positive employee relations. Leann is passionate about providing clients both legal and practical business-related advice on improving their workplace culture, morale, diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Leann is a member of Moguls in HR, an exclusive network of the most successful female HR leaders worldwide. Her client base spans numerous industries and sizes, from not-for-profit organizations to start-up businesses to publicly traded companies, with concentrations in health care, high education, technology, and life science.

Leann also a member of NC Tech, a powerful network of top business and community leaders in the State of North Carolina working to foster growth and champion innovation in North Carolina's technology sector and position North Carolina as a global leader where technology professionals and companies thrive.

Leann regularly advises clients regarding compliance issues relating to affirmative action programs, including the development and implementation of affirmative action plan documents. She also advises clients relating to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, including examination accommodations and the accessibility of continuing professional education courses, websites, and physical buildings and facilities. Leann works with

clients to resolve these issues with the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Office for Civil Rights, and private litigants.

Leann is also a member and article contributor to the American Health Lawyers Association, the nation's largest non-profit educational organization devoted to legal issues in the health care field.

Within the firm, Leann is an active participant in the firm's Women in the Profession Committee and leads the committee's Raleigh office book club, which focuses on facilitating the professional, personal, and business development of its members while strengthening the professional bonds between them. Within the larger legal community, Leann is a member of the National Association of Women Lawyers, including its Women in Employment Law Group, empowering women in the legal profession and advocating for the equality of women under the law.

At the firm, Leann is also a member of the firm's Diversity Committee and LGBTQ affinity group.

Leann is an alumni of the North Carolina Bar Association's 2020 Leadership Academy, an intensive leadership training program for young lawyers expected to become leaders within the legal profession, their firms, and their local, state, national, and international communities.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Prior to joining the firm, Leann served as a senior associate at a Global 50 law firm where she counseled clients on employment matters, conducted internal employee investigations, drafted and negotiated employment-related policies and agreements, and gained significant employment litigation defense experience, including civil cases at both the state and federal levels. In addition, she routinely provided employment law guidance in multi-million and multi-billion dollar corporate transactions.

In 2016, Leann was temporarily assigned to a highly competitive six month program prosecuting crime as a Special Assistant District Attorney on behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In that role, she served as lead or co-counsel on fifty bench and jury trials and motions which involved a wide array of criminal conduct, including the crimes of larceny, receiving stolen property, operating under the influence, assault and battery, distribution of narcotics, criminal harassment, strangulation, and conspiracy.

During law school, Leann served for two years as a teaching and research assistant in a Legal, Research, Reasoning & Writing Class of Boston College Law School. She also served as a student attorney in the Boston College Legal Assistant Bureau Housing Clinic, where she successfully appealed the termination of Section 8 Housing benefits in an administrative hearing and favorably settled and mediated eviction and condominium conversion cases.

Leann interned in 2009 for the Office of the Solicitor of the U.S. Department of Labor in Boston, Massachusetts where she produced policy analyses and provided litigation support in cases relating to the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. Leann interned from 2004 to 2008 in the Legal Department of Jabil, a Fortune 500 publicly-traded company, where she analyzed international employment law compliance issues, assisted with the company's internal investigations, and drafted company policies and procedures.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Recipient of James W. Smith Award at Boston College Law School for graduating with the highest academic rank
- Recipient of Sheila McGovern Award at Boston College Law School for achieving personal goals under extraordinary circumstances
- Recipient of Dean Dooley Award at Boston College Law School for outstanding first year scholarship average
- Anderson Scholar of the Highest Distinction at the University of Florida
- Recipient of Robert B. Fraser Award from Goodwin Procter LLP for outstanding pro bono work and for making a special contribution to the enhancement of the pro bono programs at the firm

PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- Leann Walsh is currently a co-chair of the pro bono committee of the Labor & Employment Law Section of the North Carolina Bar Association
- Leann is a member of the National Association of Women Lawyers, including its Women in Employment Law Group
- Leann Walsh routinely provides pro bono employment law advice to non-profit organizations throughout the United States, donating hundreds of hours of pro bono work throughout her career
- Leann Walsh has served on the board of directors of the Wily Network, a non-profit organization working to improve college graduation outcomes for youth with foster care experience at four-year residential colleges, since 2016, including serving as president and co-chair of the organization from 2017-2019.
- Leann Walsh is also a member of the Board of Directors of the West End House Support, Inc., a non-profit organization supporting the West End House Boys & Girls Club of Allston, Massachusetts
- From 2013 to 2018, Leann Walsh coordinated a law firm's participation in the "Lawyer for the Day" Program in Boston Housing Court that provided pro bono legal aid to low-income tenants facing eviction

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- "Workplace Safety highlights from the CDC's May 2020 'Ten Ways Healthcare Systems Can Operate Effectively During the COVID-19 Pandemic' Guidance," *K&L Gates Health Care Triage Podcast*, 28 May 2020.
- "Employment Law Perspectives When Returning to the Workplace in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Association for Corporate Growth (Durham)*, 14 May 2020.

- “Is Your Employee Handbook Up to Date?: Essential Components and Sample Policies for Today’s Workplace” and “Workplace Behavior and Privacy Issues”, *Human Resource Law: What You Need to Know*, 13 November 2019.
- “A Journey Through Joint Employment in Health Care: Recent Developments and Guidance,” Contributing author and researcher, North Carolina Society of Health Care Attorneys, September 2019.
- “Time’s Up Healthcare: The Current Climate of Sexual Harassment in Healthcare and Important Considerations of the Future - Part 1,” *K&L Gates Health Care Triage Podcast*, May 31, 2019.
- “Time’s Up Healthcare: The Current Climate of Sexual Harassment in Healthcare and Important Considerations of the Future - Part 2,” *K&L Gates Health Care Triage Podcast*, 23 May 2019.
- “Under the Wire 2019: Internal and External Investigations in the Employment Context,” 31 January 2019.
- “Employment Law Overview” for a *K&L Gates General Counsel University Program*, 11 January 2019.
- “Imperative Information That Every Employee Handbook Should Contain” as part of the National Business Institute’s *Human Resource Law from A to Z Program*, 27 December 2018.
- “Workplace Privacy and Employee Monitoring” as part of the National Business Institute’s *Human Resource Law from A to Z Program*, 27 December 2018.
- “Accidental Domination and Interference with 'Labor Organizations' by the Modern Health Care Employer.” *K&L Gates Health Care Triage Podcast Series*, 2 August 2018.
- “United States Department of Labor, Wage & Hour Division – Pilot PAID Program,” *K&L Gates Working Wise Podcast Series*, Episode 10, 15 May 2018.
- “Conversation to Action: Preventing Sexual Harassment through Legally Sound Policies and Practices,” Contributing author and researcher, *International Center for Not-for-Profit Law*, January 2018.
- “Contract Drafting: When Ambiguities Lead to Lawsuits,” Substitute Adjunct Instructor, *New England School of Law*, February 2014.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

- Graduate of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination’s *Conducting Internal Discrimination Complaint Investigation Program* (2014)
- Completed University of Minnesota’s *Managing Employee Compensation* course via Coursera (March 2017)
- Completed University of Michigan’s *Managing Talent* course via Coursera (November 2015) and *Inspiring and Motivating Individuals* via Coursera (October 2015)

EDUCATION

- J.D., Boston College Law School, 2011 (*Valedictorian; Senior Editor on Boston College Law Review*)

- B.A., University of Florida, 2008 (*Valedictorian*)

ADMISSIONS

- Bar of Massachusetts
- Bar of North Carolina
- United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina
- United States District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina
- United States District Court for the Western District of North Carolina

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP POWERED BY HUB

- 26 October 2020, K&L Gates Working Wise: Transitioning to the "New" Normal - Strategic Considerations for Moving to Long-Term Work From Home (*Podcast*)
- 19 June 2020, COVID-19: K&L Gates Working Wise: Managing the Workplace when Employees Must Remain at Work With Increased Hours and/or Overnight (*Podcast*)
- 12 May 2020, COVID-19: Working with Third-Party Service Providers and Their Personnel for a Safer Reopening (*Alerts/Updates*)
- 16 December 2019, K&L Gates Working Wise: 2019 Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 Department of Labor Opinion Letter Updates (*Podcast*)
- 31 May 2019, K&L Gates Triage: Time's Up Healthcare: The Current Climate of Sexual Harassment in Healthcare and Important Considerations of the Future - Part 2 (*Podcast*)
- 23 May 2019, K&L Gates Triage: Time's Up Health Care: The Current Climate of Sexual Harassment in Health Care and Important Considerations of the Future - Part 1 (*Podcast*)
- 4 February 2019, Employment Law in the Health Care Industry: 2018 Year in Review (*Alerts/Updates*)
- February 2019, Seventh Annual "Under the Wire" CLE Seminar (*Webinar*)
- 1 November 2018, As Harassment Claims and Recoveries Continue to Increase, EEOC Report Analyzes Root Causes and Remedies (*Alerts/Updates*)
- 2 August 2018, K&L Gates Triage: Accidental Domination and Interference with "Labor Organizations" by the Modern Health Care Employer (*Podcast*)
- 15 May 2018, Working Wise: United States Department of Labor, Wage & Hour Division – Pilot PAID Program (*Podcast*)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- “Workplace Violence and the General Duty Clause: Measures Health Care Employers Can Take to Reduce Their Liability and Protect Health Care Workers from Patient Aggression,” *American Health Law Association*, April 15, 2020.
- “Drafting an Employment Dispute Settlement Agreement and Release,” Wolters Kluwer Smart Task.
- “An Unpredictable Legal Landscape for Joint Employer Issues in the Health Care Industry,” American Health Lawyers Association, Labor and Employment Practice Group Briefing, March 28, 2019.
- “Employee Duty of Loyalty; Covenant Not to Compete; Trade Secrets; and Tortious Interference,” Contributing editor, *American Bar Association, Section of Labor and Employment Law State-by-State treatises*, 2013-2016.
- “Employee Privacy Laws: Massachusetts,” *Practical Law Company*, September 11, 2015.
- “Proposed OSHA Workplace Data Program Could Lead to More Targeted Employer Inspections,” *Client Alert*, January 8, 2014.
- “In Harnett, First Circuit Rejects Bright Line “First Contact” Rule for Non-Solicitation Agreement,” *Client Alert*, November 1, 2013.

NEWS & EVENTS

- 4 December 2020, K&L Gates Again Advises Red Ventures on Pending Sale of CNET Content Services to 1WorldSync (*Noteworthy Work*)
- 3 November 2020, K&L Gates Advises Digital Education Curriculum Provider Discovery Education on Acquisition of Mystery Science (*Noteworthy Work*)
- 18 September 2020, K&L Gates Advises Red Ventures on USD \$500 Million Acquisition of CNET Media Group from ViacomCBS (*Noteworthy Work*)
- August 2020, K&L Gates Lawyers Provide Insights on Impact of COVID-19 Across Various Industries (*Media Mention*)
- 24 February 2020, K&L Gates Names 41 New Partners Across Global Platform (*Press Release*)

MEDIA MENTIONS

- Leadership in a Time of Change – NCBA Leadership Academy

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Labor, Employment, and Workplace Safety

- Health Care and FDA

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Investigated allegations relating to Title IX and federal Clery Act compliance in a highly publicized pro bono matter on behalf of Roxbury Community College
- Secured a favorable jury verdict on behalf of a global investment services company under the Family and Medical Leave Act
- Litigated on behalf of a nationwide transportation company in numerous civil suits arising out of alleged misclassification of independent contractors
- Advised federal contractor clients, including health care facilities and airlines, regarding affirmative action plan development, implementation, and compliance
- Obtained dismissal of an unfair labor practice charge on behalf of a national professional organization by the U.S. National Labor Relations Board relating to alleged protected concerted workplace activity
- Obtained administrative dismissal by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of disability discrimination and retaliation charge against fully integrated biopharmaceutical solutions organization
- Successful resolution of arbitration demand and Sarbanes-Oxley whistleblower complaint with the Occupational Safety & Health Administration regarding termination of employment of chief financial officer of public company client
- Successful resolution of federal lawsuit relating to alleged violations of the Family and Medical Leave Act, race- and sex-based discrimination and harassment, retaliation under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and wrongful discharge in violation of public policy under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-422.1
- Provided transactional assistance relating to private equity client investment into multi-state transportation and logistics provider employer
- Provided transactional assistance relating to private equity investment into employer with hundreds of employees across the southeastern United States in the business of designing, manufacturing, installing, maintaining, repairing and replacing equipment critical to the operation of industrial facilities
- Performed employment-related due diligence relating to financial investment in provider of commercial aviation simulation and training
- Advised regarding employment law matters relating to a client investment in two vegetation management services providers with almost 1,000 employees across eight states.
- Provided employment-related transactional assistance for strategic public company client investments into a digital health platform delivering medically-reviewed consumer content with more than 300 employees across California, New York and the United Kingdom and North Carolina-based leading provider of marketing and enrollment services to post-secondary institutions in the United States

- Obtained administrative dismissal by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of racial discrimination and retaliation charge in favor of emergency medical services billing provider
- Provided employment-related transactional assistance related to private equity firm investment in virtual anatomy application provider
- Provided transactional assistance on employment matters relating to private equity client investment into provider of signage and mailbox solutions in the building industries with employees in multiple states
- Provided transactional assistance on employment matters relating to \$100M+ strategic acquisition of South Carolina sawmill business
- Provided transactional assistance on employment matters relating to acquisition by private equity client of national global litigation support services company
- Advised regarding complex strategic employment issues relating to corporate asset purchase by global market research and consulting firm
- Provided transactional assistance on employment matters relating to investments by a multinational investment bank and financial services provider into a cryptocurrency financial services company and a global payments platform company
- Successful resolution of reverse-discrimination federal court claims by former employee of public technology company
- Advised employee staffing company regarding complex issues under the Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification Act relating to transition of leased employees in distribution center to direct employment with multinational shoe, clothing, and accessories manufacturer
- Successful resolution of former employee claims against former employer and related estate involving breach of contract and the North Carolina doctrine of necessities for home health services
- Investigated employee workplace injury relating to electrical arc-flash for manufacturer of home building materials
- Assisted with defense of class action lawsuit against fintech company relating to alleged unpaid employee overtime
- Obtained dismissal of Occupational Safety and Health Administration complaint regarding alleged workplace safety concerns relating to COVID-19
- Successful resolution of alleged breach of contract claim by former executive for unpaid severance of online retailer of electrical suppliers and tools