

Lisa M. Kathumbi

Office Managing Shareholder

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Focus Areas

Discrimination and Harassment
Leaves of Absence and Disability Accommodation
Hiring, Performance Management and Termination
ERISA and Benefit Plan Litigation
Investigations

Overview

Lisa M. Kathumbi represents and counsels employers, ranging from small businesses to Fortune 100 companies, across jurisdictions in a broad range of labor and employment matters arising under federal and state law. She routinely defends employers before state and federal courts and administrative agencies against allegations of discrimination and harassment, accommodation and leave violations, breach of or enforcement of restrictive covenants, wrongful termination public policy claims, and whistleblower violations, among other matters. With extensive experience in employee benefits litigation, Lisa has also represented clients across the country in dozens of denial of benefits claims arising under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA).

"Lisa Kathumbi 'is a top notch labor and employment, commercial and ERISA business attorney and litigator. '" Client quote, *Best Lawyers of America*®, 2021.

In addition to her litigation practice, Lisa provides training and advice to employers on a wide range of employment issues and conducts high-stakes workplace investigations. She has worked with clients to evaluate and address allegations involving C-Suite leaders, media cases, pattern and practice claims, and other sensitive matters and served as a strategy partner to improve organizational culture.

Select examples of Lisa's experience include the following:

- Obtained summary judgment in the Southern District of Ohio in disability discrimination and failure to accommodate case on behalf of Fortune 100 Company
- Secured judgment in the Eastern District of California enforcing forum selection clause in ERISA governed benefits plan and obtained judgment on the merits in the Southern District of Ohio following transfer
- Successfully defended university in labor arbitration involving claims of harassment and age discrimination brought by thirty year employee discharged for multiple safety violations
- Secured summary judgment on behalf of global manufacturing client in age discrimination lawsuit, affirmed by the Tenth District Court of Appeals of Ohio
- Successfully litigated motion to dismiss based upon Plaintiffs' failure to follow ERISA statutory notice requirements when requesting Plan documents, resulting in dismissal of all claims against national banking client
- Conducted numerous privileged investigations on behalf of retail, manufacturing and healthcare clients into allegations of workplace bullying, discrimination, harassment and ethics and code of conduct violations
- Delivered training on effective workplace investigations to in-house counsel, HR leaders and compliance officers at small and multistate companies

An active member of her community and within the legal profession, Lisa has served on the board of several nonprofits and bar associations, including the Ohio Women's Bar Association to which she was elected and served as President from 2016-2017.

** Not licensed to practice law in Kentucky. Acting only in the capacity of a management role.*

Professional and Community Affiliations

- President, Ohio Women's Bar Association, 2016-2017
- Vice President, Ohio Women's Bar Association, 2014-2015
- Member, Board of Trustees, Ohio Women's Bar Association, 2011-present
- Member, Board of Directors, Ruling Our Experiences (ROX), 2010-2013
- Member, Editorial Board, Better Lawyers, Columbus Bar Association Quarterly, 2007-2012
- Member, Executive Board, John Mercer Langston Bar Association, 2009-2012
- Member, Board of Directors, Red Cross of Greater Columbus, 2008-2010
- Member, Board of Directors, City Year Columbus, 2007-2010
- Chair, Young Women's Initiative, Women's Fund of Central Ohio, 2006-2008
- Alumni, Public Allies Chicago, 2002 and 2003

Recognition

- Named, The Best Lawyers in America®, 2022-2025
- Named, Columbus Lawyer of the Year, Employment Law, *Best Lawyers in America*®, 2021
- Named, Client Service All-Star, *BTI Consulting Group*, 2020, 2024
- Recipient, Barrister's Salute Award, *John Mercer Langston Bar Association*, 2018

- Named, Central Ohio Women Welding the Way (WELD), 2017
- Recipient, OWBA's President's Choice Award, *Ohio Women's Bar Association*, 2015
- Named, Rising Star, Ohio, *Super Lawyers*, 2014 and 2015
- Recipient, President's Choice Award, *Ohio Women's Bar Association*, 2014
- Fellow, African American Leadership Academy, 2010
- Named, Rising Star, *National Urban League*, 2007
- Dean's List, *University of Cincinnati College of Law*, 2003-2006
- Recipient, C-Ring Award, *University of Cincinnati*, 2001

Education

J.D., University of Cincinnati College of Law, 2006

M.A., University of Chicago, 2003

B.A., University of Cincinnati, 2001, *cum laude*

Bar Admissions

Ohio

Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, 6th Circuit

U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Ohio

Publications & Press

Do Columbus' top companies still value racial equity post affirmative action decision?

The Columbus Dispatch

March 19, 2024

How I Made Office Managing Partner: 'Trust the Journey,' Says Lisa Kathumbi of Littler Mendelson

Law.com

September 13, 2023

2023 Workforce Planning Amidst Economic Uncertainty

Legal Connections

August 8, 2023

Littler's Lisa Kathumbi Appointed as Office Managing Shareholder for Columbus and Lexington

Littler Press Release

April 3, 2023

Embracing Change: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse, Multigenerational Workforce

CBA Legal Connections

November 25, 2022

A New Normal: Survey of Local and National Employers

Columbus Bar Association Legal Connections

July 5, 2022

Conversations with Women: Perspectives from Littler Boomerangs

Littler Podcast

March 28, 2022

Addressing Workforce Diversity

Today's General Counsel

December 3, 2021

Best Lawyers in America© 2022 Edition Honors More Than 240 Littler Lawyers

Littler Press Release

August 19, 2021

Littler Joins Expansion of Summer Work Experience in Law Program to Support Next Generation of Diverse Talent

Littler Press Release

August 5, 2021

Shareholder Lisa Kathumbi Rejoins Littler in Columbus

Littler Press Release

April 12, 2021

Reopening business amidst COVID-19: No one-size-fits-all approach for managing employment law risks

May 5, 2020

EEOC provides COVID-19 return to work guidance for high risk workers as Ohio governor urges they stay home

April 30, 2020

COVID-19 and ERISA disability claim reviews: No automatic extensions issued

April 10, 2020

Federal judge reinstates collection of gender and race pay data on EEO-1 forms

March 15, 2019

Companies using independent contractors score big following NLRB ruling

February 14, 2019

“Me Too” Movement requires changes in sexual harassment policies

Channel 10 News

March 21, 2018

Equal treatment for dads: EEOC settles first of its kinds parental leave case

March 12, 2018

Labor & Employment Issues Facing the Healthcare Industry

Littler Report

April 12, 2016

Failing to manage harassment of workers can lead to litigation

McKnight’s Long Term Care News

May 4, 2015

Speaking Engagements

2023 Ohio Regional Employer Conference

Cleveland, OH

October 5, 2023

Effective Workplace Investigations: Strategies for Creating a Speak-up and Accountability Culture

May 11, 2023

2022 Ohio Regional Employer Conference

Cleveland, OH

October 6, 2022

Retaliation: Preventing and Responding to Claims

Advanced Employment Law Seminar, Ohio State Bar Association

May 25, 2022

“Free Speech” and Employment Law in the Era of Political Polarization, Plenary Speaker

Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association Conference

February 8, 2022

COVID-19 in the Workplace: Recent Developments and Compliance Challenges - Session 19

October 1, 2021

Hot Topics in Employment Law

Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC), Columbus Labor and Employment Committee
2020

Me Too and Times Up: Conducting Effective Workplace Investigations, Addressing Pay Equity & Creating Cultures of Inclusion

Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)
2019

Responding to and Investigating Sexual Harassment Claims

Ohio Hospital Association
2018

The Ten Commandments of Effective Workplace Investigations

Client Seminar
2018

Election Results are in, What's Next for Employers?

Client Seminar
2016

Healthcare Business Transactions and Employment Law Pitfalls

American Health Lawyers Association Webinar
January 13, 2016

Working from Home in All Its Dimensions

Human Resources Association of Central Ohio
July 16, 2015

Report on the EEOC: Regulatory Updates, the EEOC Strategic Enforcement Plan and What to Watch for in 2015

Human Resources Law Institute - Ohio State Bar Association
May 12, 2015