

People



Erica V. Mason

Partner, Labor and Employment
Employment Litigation

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vCard

Erica Mason is a seasoned litigator and advisor whose highly diverse, multi-lingual team offers a strategic advantage to clients with increasingly multicultural and globalized workforces. As national and regional employment counsel for her clients, she routinely defends employment claims before state and federal courts and agencies across the country, including, successfully litigating five sexual harassment class actions against the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and dozens of class and collective actions against privately-represented individuals and groups.

Erica also assists clients with internal and governmental audits and investigations, M&A and private equity HR due diligence, restructurings and reductions-in-force, restrictive covenant agreements, multi-state employment law compliance programs, and crisis management/PR messaging in cases involving sensitive allegations against high-ranking employees. She is known as a strategic counselor, creative problem solver, and committed advocate.

Clients also value Erica's proactive and practical approach to identifying preemptive HR strategies that will increase employee job satisfaction, minimize risk, and reduce overall litigation spend—work that she considers critical to ensuring her clients' long-term success. She also conducts training on a number of employment-related topics including EEO and wage/hour compliance issues; as well as diversity, inclusion, implicit bias, and respectful workplace norms; leadership development and executive presence.

Numerous organizations have named Erica a top labor and employment attorney in Georgia and nationally, including nine consecutive years by *Georgia Super Lawyers* and three consecutive years by *Best Lawyers in America*, and she is a nationally sought out thought leader on a wide array of legal and non-legal issues.

Erica is also passionate about community service. She has received numerous awards recognizing her pro bono work, bar leadership,

Areas of Experience

Labor and Employment
Wage and Hour
Employment Litigation
Employment Training and Compliance
Hospitality
Restaurant

Education

J.D., University of Pennsylvania Law School, 2004
B.B.A., Georgia State University, 2000, cum laude

Admissions

Bars

Georgia

Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Georgia
Georgia Court of Appeals
Supreme Court of Georgia

Related Content

Erica Mason to Speak on Free Speech and Workplace Violence
October 12, 2023

34 Akerman Lawyers Recognized in Benchmark Litigation
October 03, 2023

Six Akerman Lawyers Featured Among *Lawdragon's* 500 Leading U.S. Corporate Employment Lawyers
September 26, 2023

and advocacy for increasing racial/ethnic diversity and inclusion in the legal profession: most recently, *Atlanta Magazine's* "500 Most Influential Leaders in Atlanta." She is the immediate past National President of the Hispanic National Bar Association and sits on a number of non-profit boards.

Notable Work

Title VII: Represented employers in restaurant and staffing industries in Title VII sexual harassment class actions enforcement actions brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Tennessee, and New Mexico.

Public Accommodations Discrimination: Won full dismissal of six-plaintiff customer discrimination lawsuit brought against nationwide restaurant chain.

Restrictive Covenants: Successfully and concurrently prosecuted state law restrictive covenant violations against ten former sales employees working for two different competitions in Arizona and Illinois.

Joint Employment Claims: Obtained dismissal of employment discrimination, OSHA, and USERRA claims asserted against PEO as the "joint employer" or "integrated enterprise" in separate actions filed in Georgia, Illinois, and South Dakota.

Breach of Contract by CEO of a Multi-National Corporation: Successfully negotiated zero dollar "walk away" settlement of breach of contract and wrongful termination claims asserted by a former CEO of a U.S.-based subsidiary, as well as claims against its German parent company and U.K-sister company.

FLSA: Successfully fought conditional certification or obtained decertification of FLSA nationwide collective actions in Georgia, Alabama, New Jersey, and New York.

Honors and Distinctions

- *The Best Lawyers in America*, 2016-2024, Listed in Georgia for Litigation - Labor and Employment and Employment Law - Management
- *Lawdragon*, 2020-2024, Listed as a "Lawdragon 500 Leading U.S. Corporate Employment Lawyer"
- *Benchmark Litigation*, 2021-2023, Listed in Georgia as a "Labor & Employment Star"
- *Atlanta Magazine*, 2019-2023, Listed in "Atlanta 500: Most Influential Leaders in Atlanta"
- *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, 2023, Women of Influence Award
- Lawyers of Color, Nation's Best 2019, Honoree
- Women Works Media Group's "Most Powerful and Influential Women in Law," 2017-2018
- *Latino Leaders Magazine's* "Top Latino Lawyers List," 2017-2019
- *Super Lawyers Magazine*, 2018-2020, Listed in Georgia for Employment and Labor and Employment Litigation: Defense
- *Super Lawyers Magazine*, 2010-2017, Listed in Georgia as a "Rising Star"
- *Lawyer Monthly Magazine*, Women in the Law, 2017

- Georgia Latino Law Foundation, Inaugural Trailblazer Award, 2017
- Hispanic National Bar Association, 2016, “40 Under 40,” Honoree
- Barry W. Ford Diversity Award, 2014
- *Georgia Trend*, 2012, 40 Under 40: Georgia’s Best & Brightest
- *Georgia Trend*, 2012, Legal Elite
- Phenomenal Women’s Health, Inc., Volunteer of the Year Award, 2012

Affiliations

- Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), Immediate Past President, 2019
 - President, 2017-2018
 - President Elect, 2016-2017
 - Latina Commission Co-Chair, 2014-2016
 - National Finance Director, 2013-2014
- HNBA Vision in Action Foundation Board Member, 2019
 - Board Chair and Founding Member, 2017-2018
- National Employment Law Council (NELC), 2013-2018
 - Instructor for YLD Leadership Academy, 2014
- American Bar Association
 - Law Practice Management Section, Member, 2012-Present
 - Women’s Rainmakers, Member, 2012-Present
 - Labor and Employment Law Section, Member, 2012-Present
 - Standing Committee on the American Judicial System, Federal Courts Subcommittee, 2016-2019
 - Collaborative Leadership Bar Academy Faculty and Steering Committee, 2013-2018
- State Bar of Georgia, 2005-Present
 - Diversity and Inclusion Trainer for YLD Leadership Academy, 2014-2017
- Leadership Counsel on Legal Diversity, 2012-Present
 - IL and Pathways Mentor, 2013-2016
 - 2012 Fellow & Fellows Alumni Conferences
- OnBoard Now, Board Director, 2016-2019
- Phenomenal Women’s Health, Volunteer, 2011-Present
- ABA/MCCA Bias Interrupters Working Group, 2016-2017
- Eyedrum, Pro Bono Counsel, 2015-2016
- Covenant House, Volunteer, 2010-2012
- Grow Kids, Inc., Chair, Board of Directors, 2011-2013

Published Work and Lectures

Labor and Employment Law:

- Seminar Group, 20th Annual Labor & Employment Law Event, Speaker, “Free Speech & Workplace Violence,” October 12, 2023
- Akerman Atlanta Breakfast Briefing, Co-Panelist, “Coffee, Bagels, and L&E: Recent Trends in Employment Law,” April 27, 2023
- Akerman Labor & Employment Law Virtual Summit, Breakout Co-Moderator, “The Right and Wrong Ways to Use AI in Workforce Management and the Evolving Federal and State Employment,

Data, and Privacy Laws Implicated in the Use of AI in Employment,” April 22, 2021

- Appellate Judge Education Institute Annual Conference, Speaker, “#MeToo: Best Practices for Appellate Courts to Address Past and Avoid Future Sexual Harassment Claims,” Atlanta, November 2018
- 12th Annual ABA L&E Law Conference, Moderator, “Combatting Non-Responsive Discovery in Class Action Litigation,” San Francisco, November 2018
- State Bar of Georgia Newsletter, Contributor, “Promoting a Professional Culture of Respect and Safety #MeToo,” September 2018
- Annual Firm Employment Law Conference, Speaker, “Houston, We Have A Problem: Solving Remote Workplace Challenges,” Atlanta, May 2018
- University of Georgia Alumni Weekend Ethics & Professionalism CLE, Speaker, “Bias, Prejudice & Harassment In The Profession: A Proposal For A New Rule,” Athens, GA, March 2018
- Annual Firm Employment Law Conference, Speaker, “Perfecting Your Documentation to Avoid Risk,” Atlanta, May 2017
- Labor & Employment Breakfast Briefing, Speaker, “Labor and Employment Law Update: 2014 Year In Review and Looking Ahead to 2015,” Atlanta, February 2015
- HNBA Annual Convention, Speaker, “Employment Law Challenges in Managing a Global Workforce,” Boston, September 2015
- SHRM Chapter Meeting, Speaker, “Navigating through the Bermuda Triangle and Coming Out Alive: Interplay Between the ADA, FMLA, and Workers’ Compensation,” Atlanta, January 2015
- Labor & Employment Breakfast Briefing, Speaker, “Jumping Ship or Walking The Plank? Drafting and Enforcing Non-Compete Agreements and Other Restrictive Covenants,” Atlanta, April 2014
- HR Star Conference, Speaker, “Emerging Social Media Issues For Employers,” Atlanta, October 2013
- Lorman Education Seminar, Speaker, “FMLA Medical Certification Process, Intermittent and Long Term LOAs, and the Interplay between the FMLA, GINA & the ADA,” Atlanta, March 2013
- SHRM Strategic Conference, Speaker, “The Impact of Preventative Business and HR Strategies, and Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives for Decreasing Litigation Costs and Increasing Employee Job Satisfaction.” Atlanta, October 2012
- International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Meeting, Speaker, “Employment Law Update: Avoiding Legal Pitfalls in Law Enforcement Management,” San Diego, October 2012
- Labor & Employment Breakfast Briefing, Speaker, “Social Media & Employee Privacy Claims,” Atlanta, June 2011
- Labor & Employment Breakfast Briefing, Speaker, “How To Protect Yourself From GINA- The Newest Anti-Discrimination Law,” Atlanta, October 2010

Innovation in the Law:

- High Performance Counsel, Contributing Author, “Top of Mind; Storm Rising Edition,” September 2018
- HNBA Corporate Counsel Conference Journal, Author, “Innovation Distinguishes Leaders From Followers,” March 2018
- *Noticias* Magazine, Author, “Innovation Is Key To The Legal Profession Avoiding Its “Napster” Moment,” Spring 2018

- High Performance Counsel, Contributing Author, “Top of Mind; Baker’s Dozen Edition,” March 2018
- ACC Annual Meeting, Speaker, “310 - Design Thinking: Applying Creative and Practical Problem-solving Methodologies to Add Client Value,” Washington, DC, October 2017

Diversity & Inclusion:

- Hispanic National Bar Association Corporate Counsel Conference Latina Commission Plenary, Speaker, “Elevating Our Collective Latinidad and Recognizing our Hues – How Understanding the Impact of Colonialism and Colorism on Our Multifaceted Identities Can Help Shape a More Inclusive Future,” March 11, 2023
- Hispanic National Bar Association Annual Meeting, Panelist, “Career Development for Young and Seasoned Lawyers Track - Calladita: The Unseen Barrier for Women,” September 8, 2022
- Association of Corporate Counsel, Panelist, “The Rise of the LatinX Lawyer,” September 30, 2021
- *Noticias Magazine*, Author, “Judicial Diversity Crisis: Efforts To Increase the Number of Latino Judges at the State & Federal Level,” September 2018
- LCLD Alumni Conference, Speaker, “Fellows at the Top: A Conversation with Current and Former Presidents of Diversity Organizations,” Los Angeles, June 2018
- *Multicultural Law Magazine*, Interview, 13th Anniversary Edition Cover Story, Fall 2018
- *Corporate Counsel/Law.com*, Interview, “Painting the Portrait of Future GCs,” September 2018
- *Corporate Counsel/Law.com*, Interview, “Hispanic Bar Association Leaders Discuss Initiative to Increase Latino GC Numbers,” May 2018
- ACC Foundation Webinar, Speaker, “How You Can Help: Disaster Relief Services for Puerto Rico,” April 2018
- NAWL Mid-Year Meeting Plenary Luncheon, Speaker, “A Collaborative Approach To Moving Diversity Forward,” Miami, March 2018
- *NBCLatino*, Interview, “Who is Trump’s first Latino judicial nominee, Fernando Rodriguez, Jr.?” February 2018
- *Latino Leaders Magazine*, Interview, “Erica Mason: Voice of Law,” January 2018
- *Women Works Magazine*, Interview, “Erica Mason: Equality In The Law,” Fall 2017
- AlDia News, Interview, “Aspiring Latino Lawyers Wanted,” December 2017
- *NBCLatino.com*, Interview, “Where Are All the Latino Lawyers?: Hispanics Scarce in the Legal Profession,” October 2017
- National Association of Women Lawyers Annual Meeting & Awards, Speaker, “Moving Diversity Forward: A Collaborative Effort,” New York City, July 2017
- HNBA Corporate Counsel Conference, Moderator, “What Can We Learn From Silicon Valley About Diversity & Inclusion?” Plenary Breakfast, Las Vegas, March 2016
- National Latino Law Students Association Annual Meeting, Speaker, “Latina Partners in Big Law,” Atlanta, October 2017
- HNBA Annual Convention, Speaker, “Lessons in Leadership & Report from the Frontlines: The Continued Fight to Increase the Status of Latinas in the Legal Profession,” Chicago, September 2016

- State Bar of Georgia YLD Leadership Academy, Diversity & Inclusion Trainer, Macon, GA, May 2016
- *Law360.com* Interview, “Minority Powerbrokers Q&A: Erica Mason,” March 2015

Leadership Development:

- U.S. State Department’s Mandela Washington Young African Leaders Institute, Speaker, “Empowering Women to Lead,” Atlanta, July 2019
- HNBA Corporate Counsel Conference, Latina Commission Breakfast Plenary, Speaker, “Finding A Path To Success: Why Latina Lawyers Stay or Go,” Albuquerque, March 2019
- Emory Law School, Speaker, “Deal Talk: How To Develop An International Employment Law Practice,” Atlanta, February 2019
- Charting Your Own Course (CYOC) Conference, Speaker, “Going From Team Member To Team Lead,” Orlando, January 2019
- HNBA Annual Convention Opening Plenary, Speaker. “Leveraging Your Authenticity to Reach Breakthrough Career Success,” Philadelphia, September 2018.
- HNBA Annual Convention Speaker, Latina Leadership Academy, “Q&A on Executive Coaching,” Philadelphia, September 2018
- Collaborative Bar Leadership Academy, Speaker, “View From The Top; Lessons Learned from Presidents of National Bar Associations Of Color,” Miami, June 2018
- DRI Diversity Success Conference, Speaker, “Strategic Planning and Personal Branding: Preparing for Your Future Success,” Chicago, June 2018
- DRI Diversity Success Conference, Speaker, “Leveraging Diverse Bar Involvement into Business Development,” Chicago, June 2018
- Facebook Livestream Policy Pulse Interview, “Policy Pulse: Lessons from a Bad-A** Latina Lawyer.” Washington, D.C., February 2018
- ABA Collaborative Bar Leadership Academy, Speaker, “A Guided Conversation on Value, Money, and Fundraising,” Minneapolis, July 2017
- ABA Professional Success Summit, Speaker, “Making the Transition: From Litigation Team Member to Team Lead,” November 2016
- HNBA Annual Convention, Speaker, “ME, Inc.—The Ins and Outs of Developing Your Brand & Owning Your Career,” Chicago, September 2016