



Catherine A. Williams

Partner

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Catherine Williams is a Partner in the Firm's Litigation department, where she represents clients in complex commercial and employment litigation and investigations. Her clients range from not-for-profit organizations, colleges and universities, publishers, and professional associations to medical device manufacturers, financial institutions and consumer products companies.

Ms. Williams has substantial experience defending clients in class action litigations. In her employment practice, she has represented clients in wage and hour class actions asserting a variety of claims under state and federal law. She also defended a putative ERISA class action alleging failure to pay benefits due to nationwide class of employees under severance pay plan. Ms. Williams also defends commercial class actions. In one recent matter, she defended an educational publishing company in a putative class action filed by authors concerning payments of royalties. She has also represented consumer products companies in false advertising class actions brought by competitors and consumers.

In her employment law practice, Ms. Williams advises corporate and not-for-profit clients on a wide range of issues including internal investigations relating to sexual harassment claims and whistleblower, discrimination and retaliation complaints; employment policies and agreements; non-compete agreements; and wage and hour law compliance. She assists clients in negotiating employment and transition agreements for high level executives, and advises both in-house counsel and human resources personnel on risk management concerns surrounding employee terminations.

When clients are faced with litigation relating to employment, Ms. Williams has been successful in defending employers against claims for breach of employment agreements as well as discrimination and retaliation charges under city, state and federal law, including those relating to whistleblower and FCPA claims. She has also represented universities in litigation regarding wrongful termination claims by faculty members and the use of restricted endowment funds for faculty, and advises universities with respect to Title IX compliance and investigations.

As a commercial litigator, Ms. Williams has represented monoline insurers asserting contract and fraud claims relating to mortgage-backed securities transactions. On behalf of a medical device manufacturer, she obtained preliminary injunction in a false advertising and trademark infringement action, which was affirmed by the Ninth Circuit.

Ms. Williams shares in the Firm's commitment to pro bono service, and is currently representing a class of children in foster care with developmental disabilities in a suit alleging that government agencies have failed to provide required services and have left the children in unduly restrictive placements. The class certification

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decision was affirmed by the New York Court of Appeals, and litigation is ongoing. *City of New York v. Maul*, 14 N.Y.3d 499 (2010). She also serves as a Board Member for New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.

Ms. Williams served as a Law Clerk to the Hon. Paul G. Gardephe of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Education

- Yale Law School (J.D., 2003)
 - *Yale Law Journal*
- Williams College (B.A., *summa cum laude*, 2000)

Admissions

- U.S. Courts of Appeals, Second Circuit; Ninth Circuit; Federal Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Southern, Eastern and Northern Districts of New York
- New York

Professional Activities

MEMBERSHIPS: Board Member, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

HONORS: Listed as a "Labor & Employment Star" in Euromoney Institutional Investor PLC's *Benchmark: America's Leading Litigation Firms and Attorneys*