

SARAH PIERCE WIMBERLY

Partner / Atlanta

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Sarah Wimberly spearheads FordHarrison's airline litigation and arbitration practice and is the co-leader of the airline service practice group. For 27 years she has focused her practice primarily on labor and employment matters unique to the aviation industry. She is an industry leader on absence management and leave abuse, as well as disability accommodation and compliance.

Sarah frequently works with aviation clients on complicated or sensitive harassment and discrimination complaints, complex discipline or discharge, and fitness for duty evaluations, with particular emphasis on flight crews. She arbitrates employment-related union grievances, responds to crew-related administrative charges before the FAA, OSHA, EEOC and similar state agencies (including administrative trials), and litigates employment and labor (RLA) claims in state and federal court. Sarah has particular expertise and experience with leaves of absence issues (FMLA), disability accommodation (ADA), and whistleblower complaints (AIR21).

Sarah represents clients across the country in all aspects of the industry. In her 27 years of practice, she has handled litigation, arbitrations and administrative charges and complaints in almost every state. She works with mainline carriers, low cost carriers, regional carriers, cargo carriers, charter and on-demand operators, ground support companies and MROs. Sarah is a frequent speaker at industry conferences and champion of the advancement of women in the industry.

Representative Experience

- » Obtained summary judgment on RLA preemption grounds in federal-court religious accommodation and retaliation case filed by religious advocacy group on behalf of flight attendant
- » Secured summary judgment for an airline against the EEOC in a gender-harassment claim, which forced the EEOC to dismiss voluntarily a second, related lawsuit asserting

EDUCATION

- » University of Georgia School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 1994)
- » Vanderbilt University (B.A., *cum laude*, with honors in Economics, 1991)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- » Georgia

COURT ADMISSIONS

- » U.S. Supreme Court
- » U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- » U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- » U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
- » U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- » U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
- » U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas
- » U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
- » U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia
- » U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia
- » U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida
- » U.S. District Court for the

retaliation

Western District of Arkansas

- » Secured dismissal of two sexual-orientation discrimination and harassment complaints filed by two pilots before a local human rights commission after a public hearing with significant media coverage
- » Obtained denial of grievance filed by captain over discharge for alleged date-rape of first officer and attempted assault of flight attendant on overnight trips

Honors & Awards

- » *The Best Lawyers in America* - Employment Law - Management
- » *The Legal 500 United States*, Recommended attorney in Labor & Employment - Labor and Employment Disputes (2020, 2021)
- » AV® Preeminent Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell

Memberships

- » American Bar Association (Labor and Employment Section, Litigation Section)
- » Atlanta Bar Association
- » State Bar of Georgia

News & Insights

- » SourceBook - Editor, FordHarrison's Labor & Employment Law Sourcebook, Interaction Between the RLA and Other Laws
- » August 17, 2023 - Fourteen Atlanta-Based FordHarrison Attorneys Listed in the 2024 Best Lawyers in America and Five Listed in Ones To Watch
- » February 14, 2022 - "Labor-Law Conflicts for Flight Crews Add to Airlines' Covid Woes," Bloomberg Law
- » July 16, 2021 - "FordHarrison Revamps Airline Team Under New Leadership," Law360 Pulse
- » July 15, 2021 - FordHarrison Announces Changes in Airline Leadership

Events

- » April 01, 2022 - "2022 Airline Employment Law Update" 2022 Airline Labor & Employment Law Symposium
- » February 27, 2020 - "Is Your Business Ready to Deal with

Coronavirus?" Complimentary Lunch Briefing - Atlanta, GA

- » April 11, 2019 - "Now Trending in Labor and Employment Laws," 2019 FordHarrison Airline Labor & Employment Law Symposium - Austin, TX
- » June 16-18 - "Summer Seminars 2019" Regional Airline Association - Charlotte, NC

Offices

- » *Atlanta:*
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