

DAWN SILER-NIXON

Partner / Tampa

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Dawn has spent two decades partnering with her clients to help guide and direct their employment decisions to avoid the time and expense of litigation, and creating and executing a strategy to defend them through trial should the need arise. Dawn uses depth of knowledge and expertise to ensure that clients exceed their Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) goals, while avoiding legal landmines.

She is committed to knowing her client's businesses. Dawn's familiarity with her client's businesses and industries and knowledge of current legal trends is beneficial to her clients in preparing for and thwarting any potential adverse actions. It is for these reasons that employers turn to her to defend them in administrative proceedings and state and federal court actions involving sex, age, national origin, race and other discrimination claims. Dawn has extensive experience handling ADA and Family and Medical Leave Act claims and has successfully litigated multiple plaintiff Age Discrimination claims in state and federal court.

Dawn provides regular training and counsel to employers on a variety of issues to ensure compliance with new laws and emerging trends. She provides helpful tools, including checklists for employers to use to detect and prevent potential claims and acts as a partner to employers in evaluating day-to-day employment decisions from disciplinary actions to termination. As a Certified Diversity Executive, Dawn routinely provides DEI advice, training and workshops designed to allow employees to recognize and combat their biases and create safe spaces where employees can bring their full selves to work and engage in courageous conversations across differences.

Dawn is the Firm's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Partner with responsibility for the oversight and implementation of the Firm's Diversity Strategic Plan. As the Firm's DEI Partner, Dawn is a member of the Management Group and the Firm's seven (7) person Executive Committee, the Firm's highest governing body that sets policy and compensation. Dawn is recognized as a Certified

EDUCATION

- » University of North Carolina School of Law (J.D., 1993)
- » University of North Carolina (B.A., 1990)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- » Florida

COURT ADMISSIONS

- » U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida
- » U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida
- » U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
- » U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida

FIRM LEADERSHIP

- » Executive Committee
- » Management Group
- » Diversity Executive Council
- » Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Partner
- » DEI Practice Group, Chair

Diversity Executive through the National Institute for Diversity Certification.

Representative Experience

- » Successfully represented a large regional power company in a family and medical leave act claim. Obtained judgment and costs in favor of the company in 2009. Judgment was upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals.
- » Won a non-compete trial before the District Court, including the enforcement of a one year injunction against the former employee and his new employer in 2008. Injunctive relief was upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals.
- » Acts as the Labor Relations Management Team for a national supply company, providing advice, training and expertise on labor relations and management issues in 2008-2021.
- » Develops robust and individualized Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Plans for employers, including a 3-5 year strategic plans, employee resource group charters/development, training/workshop cascades for depth of knowledge and understanding and ongoing support and guidance.
- » ***Per Florida Bar rules, information on litigation and other legal successes has not been disclosed but is available upon request.***

Honors & Awards

- » 2023 CW DEI Trailblazer Award Recipient
- » *The Legal 500 United States*, Recommended attorney in Labor & Employment - Labor and Employment Disputes (2020, 2021)
- » "500 Leading U.S. Corporate Employment Lawyers," *LawDragon* (2020-2024)
- » *The Best Lawyers in America*, Employment Law - Management and Litigation - Labor & Employment (2005-2025)
- » *Fellow, Litigation Counsel of America*, The Trial Lawyer Honorary Society
- » *Fellow, American Bar Foundation*
- » "League of Extraordinary Women," The Helen Gordon Davis Centre for Women, 2018
- » "500 Leading Lawyers in America," *LawDragon*, 2018

- » "Legal Elite," *Florida Trend* magazine, 2018
- » "The National Black Lawyers - Top 100"
- » "2016 Client Choice Award"
- » "100 Most Powerful Corporate Employment Lawyers," *LawDragon*, 2015 -2019
- » "Most Influential Black Lawyers," *Savoy* magazine, 2015
- » "Women Worth Watching," Profiles in *Diversity Journal*, 2011
- » *Certified Diversity Executive*, National Institute for Diversity Certification
- » "Florida Super Lawyers," *Super Lawyers* magazine
- » *Florida's Top Lawyers*
- » *Florida's Diversity Council Promoting Diversity First*
- » *2012 Delano S. Stewart Diversity Award*, George Edgecomb Bar Association

Memberships

- » U.S. District Court Middle District of Florida Merit Selection Committee, 2024 - present
- » Client Advisory Board, Saxon Advisors, 2024
- » Board of Directors, National Pediatric Cancer Foundation, 2019-2021
- » Board of Directors, The Florida Holocaust Museum, 2022
- » American Bar Association
- » American Bar Association - AIDS Coordinating Committee Chair
- » The Florida Bar
- » Hillsborough County Bar Association
- » National Bar Association
- » George Edgecomb Bar Association
- » Member, The Trial Law Institute
- » Member, Diversity Law Institute
- » The National Black Lawyers - Top 100
- » 50/50 Women on Boards, Steering Committee

News & Insights

- » SourceBook - Co-Editor, FordHarrison's Labor &

Employment Law Sourcebook, Hiring

- » February 26, 2025 - Preliminary Injunction Issued to Block Provisions of Executive Orders Limiting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs; Now What?
- » February 13, 2025 - Pam Bondi's Memo to DOJ on DEI: What it Means for Private Employers
- » January 27, 2025 - Will the Elimination of Efforts in the Federal Sector to "Build a Workforce That Reflects the Diversity of America" Impact the Private Sector?
- » March 19, 2024 - "Stop Woke is Broke: Injunction Stopping Florida's Anti-Woke Law Aimed at Employer Training is Upheld by Eleventh Circuit," The Florida Bar, Labor and Employment Law Section, E-Updates

Events

- » March 19, 2025 - The Allyship Exchange: Insights from Innovators - Part 2
- » February 20, 2025 - The Allyship Exchange: Insights from Innovators - Part 1
- » January 30, 2025 - "Advancing Inclusion in The New Political & Legal Landscape"- The National Disability Inclusion Roundtable™ - Houston
- » December 11, 2024 - Advancing Disability Inclusive Hiring In Your Contingent Workforce Program - Nashville Roundtable
- » October 30, 2024 - "Advancing Disability Inclusive Hiring in Your Contingent Workforce Program" - The National Disability Inclusion Roundtable | Austin, TX

Offices

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