

LUIS A. SANTOS

Partner / Tampa, Orlando

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Luis Santos has a unique understanding of the administrative and legal challenges faced by clients in industries like hospitality, retail, restaurant, and grocery.

Prior to attending law school, Luis worked for many years in hospitality management. He began as a front desk clerk and worked himself up to the position of assistant hotel manager. Luis also worked as a grocery store cashier. After becoming a lawyer, he set out to utilize this insider's perspective to continue helping companies in the hospitality and grocery industries with their employment-related issues.

As co-chair of FordHarrison's Wage and Hour and Restaurant Practice Groups, Luis has extensive experience addressing the challenges faced by employers in this industry. Additionally, Luis represents employers in a wide variety of industries beyond hospitality and grocery, including transportation, healthcare, and insurance; handling wage and hour disputes, discrimination claims, union avoidance, regulatory compliance, and all other facets of employment law.

Luis can fluently speak, read, and write in Spanish. He often uses his bilingual skills to train and educate Hispanic management and staff in their native language. Luis also serves as FordHarrison's Deputy Diversity Partner and Orlando Office Managing Partner and is focused on recruiting and mentoring diverse attorneys with a particular emphasis on Hispanic outreach.

Luis is the son of migrant parents and the first in his family to attend college. Through his childhood experiences, he developed a great appreciation for hard work and an understanding of the importance of education. During law school, Luis was an American Bar Association Merit Scholarship recipient. He was also a Moot Court board member and a member of the Diversity Committee. While on Moot Court, Luis participated in the Seventh Willem C. Vis (East) International Commercial Arbitration Moot, winning the Best Respondent Memorandum and receiving an Honorable Mention for Best Oral Advocate. He also served as a judicial intern for the Honorable Judge Covington-Hernandez, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida. In addition, Luis served as the Secretary

EDUCATION

- » Stetson University College of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 2010)
- » Florida International University (B.A., *magna cum laude*, 2006)
- » Valencia College (A.A., *magna cum laude*, 2004)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- » Florida

COURT ADMISSIONS

- » U.S. Supreme Court
- » U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida
- » U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida
- » U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida

FIRM LEADERSHIP

- » Orlando Office Managing Partner
- » Management Group
- » Diversity Executive Council
- » Deputy Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Partner
- » Wage and Hour Practice Group, Co-Chair
- » Restaurant Industry Group, Co-Chair

LANGUAGES

for Stetson University's Hispanic Bar Association, Vice-President of the Part-Time Student Society, and a member of Phi Delta Phi Honor Society.

» Spanish (fluent)

Representative Experience

- » Successfully defended restaurant group in DOL enforcement action seeking over \$20 million.
- » Obtained defense verdict in multi-million-dollar jury trial involving a commission dispute.
- » Obtained defense verdict in race discrimination jury trial.
- » Obtained defense verdict in age discrimination jury trial.
- » Obtained dismissal of discrimination claim against national hospitality client.
- » Obtained dismissal of sexual harassment and retaliation claims against national hospitality group.
- » Successfully defended Eleventh Circuit appeal of summary judgment granted in two separate race discrimination cases against national retailers.
- » Successfully defended workers' compensation retaliation claim against local grocery store.
- » Conducted English and Spanish anti-harassment training for multiple Florida grocery stores.
- » Handled multiple APA administrative hearings of pension forfeitures for public employees.
- » Conducted multiple union-avoidance trainings and development of campaign strategies for national employers.
- » Advised national healthcare client on the legal issues related to unionization and/or efforts to organize its employees.
- » Conducted company-wide I-9 Audit to assure compliance with federal regulations.
- » Successfully defended national employer on FMLA retaliation case.
- » Successfully represented clients before the EEOC and state and local human rights commissions in multiple charges of discrimination, harassment and retaliation, including on-site investigations.
- » Represented a national restaurant chain in successfully defeating the attempted class certification of more than 8,400 restaurant servers alleging violations of the Department of Labor's 80/20 rule.

- » *Per Florida Bar rules, information on litigation and other legal successes has not been disclosed but is available upon request.*

Honors & Awards

- » "Latino Leadership International Award," *Profiles in Diversity Journal* (2023)
- » *The Legal 500 United States*, Recommended Attorney in Labor & Employment - Labor and Employment Disputes (2021)
- » *Best Lawyers in America* - Employment Law - Management, Litigation - Labor and Employment, Labor Law - Union (2021-2025)
- » *2020 National Latino Leader Award Winner*, National Diversity Counsel
- » "Florida Rising Stars," *Super Lawyers Magazine* (2018-2020)

Memberships

- » Orlando Diversity Council, Membership Committee Co-Chair (2019-2022)
- » National Employment Law Council, Site Selection and Budget Subcommittee Past Chair (2017-2019)

News & Insights

- » January 07, 2025 - FordHarrison Announces Three New Office Managing Partners
- » September 01, 2023 - DOL's New Proposed Overtime Rule Would Drastically Increase the Salary Threshold for the White Collar Overtime Exemption
- » August 17, 2023 - Nineteen Florida-Based FordHarrison Attorneys Listed in the 2024 Best Lawyers in America and Eight Listed in Ones To Watch
- » July 07, 2023 - COVID-19 Flexibilities For Remote I-9 Document Review Ending; Employers Must Resume Physical Inspections of Employment Authorization and Identity Documents On August 1, 2023
- » May 25, 2023 - Sixth Circuit Rejects the Traditional Two-Step Conditional Certification Process in FLSA Collective Actions

Events

- » November 05, 2020 - Generational Bashing, is it Real - FordHarrison Diversity Webinar Series

Offices

- » *Tampa:*
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