



SpencerFane®

Sonja McGill

Partner

Contact

Dallas

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Overview

Sonja McGill has spent her entire career helping companies throughout the employment cycle: from hiring to firing and everything in between. Sonja has become particularly skilled at harnessing her corporate experience to help companies make certain key staffing and organizational decisions that are critical to creating a corporate culture that promotes high productivity and morale.

In addition, Sonja has developed extensive experience as a trial attorney in all phases of labor and employment law and commercial litigation. She has successfully tried multiple labor and employment claims throughout the U.S. in state courts and federal courts as the lead trial attorney and is licensed to practice in the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth and Tenth Circuits, and the U.S. District Court for the Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western Districts of Texas. Sonja also has built a distinguished track record of results on behalf of clients in arbitrations.

Sonja is a seasoned mediator and negotiator and was recently selected to become an arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association. She regularly gives presentations and seminars on employment law training programs for companies' HR and management departments and assists with formulating and revising HR policies and company handbooks.

Before re-entering private practice, Sonja served as in-house counsel for two large name-brand companies.

Education

- The University of Texas School of Law, 1998 (J.D.)
- The University of Texas at Austin, 1998 (M.P.A.)
- Princeton University, 1993 (B.A.)

Bar Admissions

- Texas

Court Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
- U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas

Community Involvement

- Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Board of Governors
- SPCA of Texas, Board of Directors
- Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Dallas Alumni Association
- The Village Giving Circle at the Texas Women's Foundation, Founding Member
- The Coalition for a New Dallas, Advisory Board Member
- Attorneys Serving the Community
- Princeton Alumni Association of Dallas/Fort Worth, Past President
- Theatre 3, Former Chair, Board of Directors
- Oak Cliff YMCA, Former Chair, Board of Managers
- Fair Park First, Former Member, Board of Directors
- Out Teach (REAL School Gardens), Former Board Member
- Big Thought, Former Board Member
- Dallas Historical Society, Former Board Member
- Grand Park South TIF District, Former Board Member
- Executive Women of Dallas, Former Member
- Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Emerging Leaders Empowerment Series Participant, 2008 Convention
- Junior League of Dallas, Former Member
- Genesis Women's Shelter Alliance, Former Member
- Meals on Wheels, Former Volunteer

Distinctions

- *Best Lawyers in America*, 2024
- *D Magazine*, Best Lawyers in Dallas (Labor & Employment), 2017-2023
- The DALLAS 500, "The Most Powerful Business Leaders in Dallas-Fort Worth," 2021-2023
- American Arbitration Association, "Roster of Arbitrators," 2019
- Texas Diversity Council, "Dallas Top 50 Women Lawyers Award," 2018
- National Diversity Council, "Top 50 Multicultural Lawyers in Dallas," 2017
- FINRA Arbitrator
- Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Fellow, 2016
- Lyndon B. Johnson School Fellowship (full tuition scholarship)
- Austin Independent School District Mentor Award
- White House Fellow

Memberships

- American Bar Association, ADR and L&E Sections
- State Bar of Texas, ADR and L&E Sections
- Dallas Bar Association, Alternative Dispute Resolutions and Labor & Employment Sections
- National Employment Law Council
- The Center for Women in the Law at the University of Texas at Austin, Leader's Circle Member
- J.L. Turner Legal Association
- Texas Bar Foundation, Sustaining Fellow
- Dallas Bar Foundation, Fellow
- Dallas Young Lawyers Association, Fellow
- American Journal of Criminal Law, Member
- Bar Association of the 5th Federal Circuit

Presentations and Publications

- "Human Recourses in a Challenging Labor Market," 2023 ISCPO Conference, April 12, 2023
- "What the American Rescue Plan Means for Employers," March 31, 2021
- "Playing in a New Arena: What Employers Need to Know about Labor & Employment Law Trends in 2021," February 24, 2021
- "Employment Law Regulatory Update Part I – Five Major Regulatory Developments and Practical Takeaways from the EEOC, the NLRB, and Congress," October 13, 2020
- "Choosing the Best Lawyer for Your Business," June 3, 2020
- "Best Workplace Practices Beyond COVID-19," National Minority Supplier Development Council COVID-19 Virtual Town Hall, May 28, 2020
- "Best Workplace Practices Beyond COVID-19: Planning for the Employee's Return to Work," Spencer Fane Webinar, May 1, 2020
- ["The CARES Act: What's in it for You and Your Taxes? Key changes to the Tax Code after COVID-19,"](#) April 22, 2020
- "The Dos & Don'ts of Managing Employees in Today's Workplace," Dallas Metropolitan Small Business Development Center, January 31, 2020
- "Dallas' Paid Sick Leave Ordinance: The Devil is in the Details," *Dallas Business Journal*, August 2019
- "Workplace Culture, a.k.a. Employment Law 101," Texas Security Bank Leadership Academy, July 31, 2019
- "The Latest Developments in the #MeToo Movement," Dallas Bar Association Labor & Employment Law Section, May 26, 2019
- "Are You a Big Fish in a Small Pond or a Small Fish in a Big Pond?" LCLD Fellows Alumni Advocacy Groups, January 31, 2019
- "Right words in an employee handbook short-circuits harassment before it starts," *Dallas Business Journal*, June 1, 2018
- "How to Prevent Internal Control Breakdowns and Workplace Harassment," *Texas Lawyer*, May 16, 2018
- "FINRA's 2018 Annual Examination Priorities," 2018 FPA DFW Annual Conference, May 16, 2018
- "Latest and Greatest Developments in Labor & Employment Law Update," Texas Legal Counsel, January 30, 2018
- "FINRA's 2017 Annual Examination Priorities," DFW Compliance Roundtable, February 8, 2017
- "Contractor Sick Leave Creates Two-Tier System," *Law360*, November 8, 2016
- "Recent Expansions for Employees of Government Contractors," DallasHR, October 15, 2015
- "Squaring Pregnancy Accommodation in the Workplace," *Texas Lawyer*, April 30, 2015
- "10 Quick Tips to Keeping In-House Counsel Happy," *Texas Lawbook*, January 19, 2015

Related Experience

- Following a three-week jury trial in Texas state court, achieved a “take-nothing” defense verdict for two individuals accused by their former company of civil conspiracy, theft of corporate trade secrets and fraud.
- Successfully achieved a defense verdict for two employment arbitrations in a six-month period regarding a national origin discrimination, harassment and retaliation case in Florida, as well as an age discrimination, promissory estoppels and retaliation case in Indiana.
- Won summary judgment motions nationwide on a broad range of employment law issues, including national origin discrimination (Ohio); age discrimination (Massachusetts); disability discrimination (Connecticut); sex discrimination, retaliation, and promissory estoppel (Colorado); sexual harassment, retaliation, and promissory estoppels / detrimental reliance (Minnesota); wrongful discharge and defamation (New York); and workers’ compensation retaliation (Oklahoma).