

LAUREN KATUNICH

PARTNER

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Lauren J. Katunich represents employers in all areas of labor and employment matters, including trade secret misappropriation, wrongful termination, sexual harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and individual and class action wage and hour claims. Lauren also conducts employee training classes and webinars, drafts employee handbooks and other personnel forms and documentation, prepares employment-related agreements and audits wage and hour compliance. She directly advises human resources professionals and business owners on issues ranging from sexual harassment training and prevention, wage and hour compliance, and the complexities of navigating state and federal medical leave laws.

Lauren has successfully represented clients in federal and state court proceedings, including summary judgments, arbitrations, and jury trials in employment and business litigation matters.

SIGNIFICANT ENGAGEMENTS & TRANSACTIONS +

- › Chaired and successfully obtained a complete defense verdict in a pregnancy discrimination and wrongful termination arbitration brought against an established insurance agency.
- › Chaired and successfully obtained a complete defense verdict in a pregnancy and wrongful termination jury trial brought against a real estate owner and developer where the jury reached its decision in less than 30 minutes.
- › Chaired and successfully obtained a complete defense verdict in an arbitration action brought against a prominent plastic surgeon sued for numerous claims, including pregnancy discrimination, disability discrimination, failure to accommodate, wrongful termination, intentional infliction of emotional distress and defamation.
- › Chaired and successfully obtained a complete defense verdict in an arbitration brought against a restaurant client sued for misappropriation of server tips and missed meal and rest breaks.
- › Chaired and successfully obtained a complete defense verdict in an arbitration brought against a well-known restaurant chain sued for various wage and hour claims. Matter was initiated by a delivery driver and filed as a representative action under California Private Attorney General Act, which also included an individual claim for wrongful termination. Defeated the representative claims and had the wrongful termination claims dismissed, and the action proceeded to arbitration as a single-plaintiff wage and hour action. The arbitrator ordered claimant to pay respondent \$25,000 in fees and costs as part of the final arbitration award.
- › Chaired and successfully obtained a complete defense verdict in an arbitration brought against high-profile travel agency accused by the executive vice president of age discrimination and wrongful termination brought.
- › Chaired and successfully obtained a complete defense verdict in an arbitration brought against a popular hotel flag by its former general manager for wage and hour misclassification.
- › Second chaired and obtained complete defense verdict in six-week long jury trial brought against the president and general manager of a concert video production

Areas of Practice

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT ›

Education

- › J.D., Loyola University School of Law (cum laude)
- › B.A., Brigham Young University

Admissions

- › State Bar of California
- › United States District Court for the Central District of California
- › United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
- › United States District Court for the Northern District of California
- › United States District Court for the Southern District of California
- › United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

company with claims of misappropriation of trade secrets and breach of fiduciary duty. Plaintiffs sought over \$13 million at trial with request for punitive damages.

- › Successfully defeated class certification in a claim for missed meal and rest breaks and numerous wage and hour violations against a retail establishment with 13 California locations.
- › Gained a \$1.3 million arbitration award for business development manager on a claim for unpaid commissions.
- › Achieved a victorious summary judgment win for a Southern California parts manufacturer in a national origin discrimination and wrongful termination case resulting in award of costs for the employer.
- › Negotiated numerous speedy and advantageous class action settlements for employers across various industries in complex, multi-location wage and hour lawsuits in which hourly workers claimed failure to pay wages and overtime.
- › Brought appeal to the California Court of Appeal, and later to the California Supreme Court, achieving complete dismissal for law firm and attorney in an anti-SLAPP action. *Vafi v. McCloskey* (2011) 193 Cal. App. 4th 874.

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITIONS +

- › Lauren's experience and skill has led to her selection by Super Lawyers Magazine, a reputable industry rating service of lawyers who have attained a high-degree of peer recognition and professional achievement, as a Southern California Rising Star in 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018. Lauren was named by the same publication as one of the Up-and-Coming 50 Women (Southern California) in 2017, 2018, and 2019, and as one of the Up-and-Coming 100 Attorneys (Southern California) in 2018 and 2019. Lauren was recently rated a Top Rated Super Lawyer in 2019 and 2020.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION +

- › Order of the Coif, Cum Laude – Loyola Law School
- › Recipient of Michael W. Harahan Award for Outstanding Adult Volunteer to honor efforts as a coach for Special Olympics, Tri- Valley
- › Ahmanson Foundation Scholarship for Academic Excellence
- › Law Review: Loyola of Los Angeles Entertainment Law Review, Chief Note and Comment Editor
- › Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society – Brigham Young University
- › "Time to Quit Paying the Payola Piper: Why Music Industry Abuse Demands a Complete System Overhaul," 22 Loy. L.A. Ent. L. Rev. 643 (2002)

