

Sarah K. Willey

MEMBER

Kalamazoo

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Sarah K. Willey is a Member of the firm and has been practicing law since 1997. Her practice is focused on representing clients ranging from small family-owned businesses to large multinational corporations in labor and employment law matters, as well as representing housing providers in fair housing matters. She serves as vice chair of Miller Johnson's Employment and Labor Practice and chairs the firm's FMLA/ADA Solutions practice group.

Employment and Labor Law

Ms. Willey works with a diverse clientele to provide counsel on a wide-range of employment-related legal issues and disputes. Her employment and labor knowledge and experience provide the foundation for her to partner with clients to develop personnel policies and management training programs. This proactive and preventive approach fosters positive employment relations and long-term profitability. Clients have come to trust that she provides timely and current advice on employment issues.

Fair Housing Law

Ms. Willey represents housing providers on a variety of fair housing matters under the Fair Housing Act, the Americans With Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. She has significant expertise in the areas of requests for reasonable accommodations, assistance and service animals, HUD and DOJ guidance on landlord/tenant matters, responding to complaints of discrimination in front of HUD and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, and defending claims in

Practice Areas

- [Employment and Labor](#)
- [Employment Litigation](#)
- [FMLA / ADA Solutions](#)
- [Disabilities and Accommodation](#)
- [National Employment Law Compliance](#)
- [Employment – Health Care](#)
- [Employment Discrimination](#)
- [Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation](#)
- [Health Care Reform Team](#)
- [Management and Employee Training](#)
- [Workplace Harassment](#)
- [Employee Handbook and Personnel Policies](#)
- [Government Affairs](#)
- [Education](#)

Education

- J.D., The George Washington University National Law Center, 1997, with honors
- B.G.S., University of Michigan, 1994, *magna cum laude*

Bar Admissions

- Michigan, 1997



federal court.

Litigation

Her employment and fair housing litigation practice demonstrates that she is aggressive but sensitive in resolving employment and fair housing disputes.

Medical Issues in the Workplace

Ms. Willey has significant experience working with employers on issues related to medical issues in the workplace. In fact, her advanced knowledge on issues related to the FMLA and ADA earned her the title of “point person” for her peers (approximately 30 employment and labor attorneys) at the firm. She advises employers about their rights under the FMLA and ADA and stresses the potential liability resulting from not paying close attention to the laws. Ms. Willey provides clear direction on reasonable accommodation, leaves of absence, fitness for duty exams, FMLA eligibility, medical certifications, second opinions and how to work with health care providers.

Health Care Focus

Ms. Willey has considerable experience with clients in the health care industry. She works with hospitals and health systems, medical providers, nursing facilities, home health care services and regional medical diagnostic centers. The complexity of health care systems in the 21st century, the critical importance of good staff relations and the ever-present need for uncompromising patient care combine to make management of a health care facility a challenging endeavor. When working with health care human resource professionals, she keeps the focus on developing and maintaining a culture that empowers employees and provides high quality care. She understands the challenges which include:

- Peer review privilege – how to effectively review professional practices for the purpose of improving patient care and reducing morbidity and mortality
- Whistleblowers protection act – protects employees and contractees from civil and criminal liability and adverse employment actions based on complaints



- Duty to report – the health care facilities responsibility to report employee misconduct especially any disciplinary action which shows incompetence, change of status or adversely affects clinical privileges for more than 15 days
- Criminal liability – licensed health care providers practicing their professional with elevated blood alcohol or while under the influence of a controlled substance
- Union organizing

Ms. Willey is a member of the firm's Health Care Reform Team. Because of the complexity and ambiguity of the two acts that make-up the health care reform legislation, she is committed to informing clients of new regulations as they are released in order to ensure compliance.

Professional Affiliations, Activities and Honors

Ms. Willey serves on Miller Johnson's Management Committee and is the chair of the firm's FMLA/ADA Solutions Practice Group. She belongs to the American Bar Association, State Bar of Michigan and Kalamazoo County Bar Association. Ms. Willey is a member of the American Health Lawyers Association and the Labor and Employment practice group. She is a member of the Kalamazoo Human Resources Management Association. Ms. Willey was also a 2013 Fellow with the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity.

Ms. Willey is listed in the "Best Lawyers in America®" for Employment – Management and Labor Law – Management. She has also been recognized as a Michigan Super Lawyer for Employment and Labor.

Community Activities

Ms. Willey is on the Board of Directors of Family & Children's Services as well as Sherman Lake YMCA and Adventure Center at Pretty Lake. Ms. Willey is also on the Advisory Council of the Kalamazoo Marathon and is a coach for Girls on the Run.

Education

Ms. Willey received her undergraduate degree *magna cum laude* in 1994 from University of Michigan where she was a



member of Phi Beta Kappa and Golden Key National Honor Society. She earned her law degree with honors in 1997 from The George Washington University National Law Center. She was on the George Washington University Law Review and Order of the Coif. Ms. Willey is admitted to practice in Michigan.

Employment Lawyers Talk Off The Clock Webcast

Ms. Willey also co-hosts Miller Johnson's *Employment Lawyers Talk Off The Clock* web/podcast. This webcast features real conversations between employment and labor lawyers on the hot topics employers face on a daily basis. [Watch on YouTube](#) or you can also listen and subscribe to the podcast on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), or [Google Podcasts](#)

