



Michael A. Wilder

Shareholder
Chair, Board of Directors

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Focus Areas

Litigation and Trials

Overview

Michael A. Wilder, Chair of Littler's Board of Directors, and a core member of the firm's Complex Litigation and Jury Trial Practice Group, regularly advises and represents employers in various areas of employment law before state and federal district courts, state and federal appellate courts, the American Arbitration Association, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and other state agencies responsible for investigating workplace discrimination and harassment. Michael has specific experience providing litigation defense of claims arising under:

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act
- 42 U.S.C. § 1981
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Families First Coronavirus Recovery Act
- Emergency Family Medical Leave Expansion Act
- Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act
- Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
- Retaliation and whistleblower laws

Michael provides training and advice to employers on a wide range of employment issues and conducts high-stakes workplace investigations. He has worked with clients to evaluate and address allegations involving C-suite leaders and other sensitive matters, as well as served as a strategy partner to improve organizational culture.

A skilled litigator, Michael successfully defended a major health care provider in an appeal before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, in which the Court affirmed the district court's dismissal of all counts for want of prosecution. He successfully argued an appeal before the same Court on behalf of a refractories company, which resulted in the Court's affirmation of the district court's grant of summary judgment on all counts.

Michael was recently part of a trial team that defended a waste disposal company during a jury trial in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. His team received a complete defense verdict on all claims. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit affirmed the verdict in its entirety on appeal.

Michael also successfully defended a major retailer in a sexual harassment case, leading to summary judgment for the employer, which was affirmed by the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals following oral argument.

Michael serves on Littler's Diversity and Inclusion Council, responsible for creating, implementing, and reviewing firmwide diversity and inclusion strategies, including enhancing the firm's recruitment and retention of diverse attorneys, and creating pipelines in which lawyers from diverse backgrounds are promoted within the firm's management and leadership tracks.

Michael was a judicial extern to the Hon. Diane Larsen of the Circuit Court of Cook County. In law school, he was an editor for the *Employee Rights and Employment Policy Journal*, an extern for the National Labor Relations Board, and was inducted into the prestigious Bar and Gavel Society. He also earned his Certificate of Labor and Employment Law.

Professional and Community Affiliations

- Member, Board of Directors, Illinois Equal Justice Foundation
- Member, Labor and Employment Law Committee, American Bar Association
- Member, Board of Directors, Just the Beginning – A Pipeline Organization
- Associate Board Member, Coordinated Advice and Referral Program for Legal Services (CARPLS)
- Member, The Chicago American Inn of Court
- Adjunct Law Professor, Advance Legal Writing IV for Labor & Employment, Chicago-Kent College of Law, Spring 2017, 2018, and 2019
- Chairman and Co-Founder, Black Men Lawyers' Association, 2017
- Former Co-Chair, Minority Law Student Job Fair Committee, Cook County Bar Association
- Former Member, Board of Directors, Cook County Bar Association

Recognition

- Recipient, 34th Annual C.F. Stradford Award, *Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO)*, 2024
- Recipient, Men of Excellence Award, *Chicago Defender*, 2021
- Recipient, 40 Game Changer Class of 2020, *WVON and Ariel Investments*, October 12, 2020
- Named, Leading Lawyers, Top Lawyers in Illinois, 2019

- Named, Top 5 Under 40, *Just The Beginning – A Pipeline Organization*, 2019
- Named, Leading Lawyers, Top Labor and Employment Lawyers in Illinois, 2018
- Named, One of the Most Influential Minority Lawyers in Chicago, *Crain's Chicago Business Magazine*, December 2017
- Named, 40 Under 40, *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*, 2015
- Recipient, Presidential Award, *Cook County Bar Association*, 2011
- Recipient, Junior Counselor Award, *Cook County Bar Association*, 2011
- Recipient, Distinguished Alumni Service Award, Black Law Students Association, *Chicago-Kent College of Law*, 2008
- Recipient, Outstanding Young Alumni Award, *Chicago-Kent College of Law*

Education

J.D., Chicago-Kent College of Law, 2006

B.A., Michigan State University - James Madison College, 2003

Bar Admissions

Illinois

Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Indiana

U.S. District Court, Southern District of Indiana

Publications & Press

Celebrating Black History Month: From Litigation to Literature

Littleler Podcast

February 29, 2024

Littleler Elects Five New Members to 2024 Board of Directors

Littleler Press Release

January 24, 2024

Renaissance Man: Littleler attorney finds creative outlets as author, game designer and art curator

Chicago Lawyer Magazine

April 12, 2023

Little Names Michael Wilder Chair of its 2023 Board of Directors and Welcomes Three New Members

Little Press Release

January 17, 2023

Diversity By the Numbers

Chicago-Kent Magazine

November 15, 2022

Illinois Makes Discrimination and Immigration Practices Based on Work Authorization Status a Civil Rights Violation

Little ASAP

August 12, 2021

Little Elects Seven New Members to 2021 Board of Directors

Little Press Release

January 21, 2021

A Call For Greater Collaboration Among Attorneys of Color Within Law Firms

Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession (IILP)

June 23, 2020

Little Recognized by Leadership Council on Legal Diversity as a 2019 Top Performer and Selected for the 2019 Compass Award

Little Press Release

November 1, 2019

Little X-celerator Expands to Illinois

Little Press Release

April 17, 2017

Lawyer Michael Wilder pens 'Playbook'; teaches millennials about money, goals

Rolling Out

May 26, 2016

Little Names Michael A. Wilder the 2015 Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Fellow

Little Press Release

February 6, 2015

Little Elevates 16 Attorneys to Shareholder

Little Press Release

January 2, 2014

Kasten v. Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corporation: U.S. Supreme Court Rules in Favor of Employees in FLSA Complaint Case

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. Dukes et al.: Wal-Mart Prevails Before U.S. Supreme Court in Discrimination Case

The Post-Dukes Era: Employment Class and Collective Action Decisions

Speaking Engagements

Moderator: Don't Get Lost in the Weeds: The Latest on Marijuana and the Workplace

2019 National Bar Association: Section of Labor and Employment Conference

October 2019

Panelist, Effective Strategies for Mediating Single, Multi and Class Action Employment Disputes

National Bar Association Labor & Employment Section Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA

October 27, 2017

OFCCP Update: Compliance in a Time of Change

May 11, 2017

OFCCP's Final Regulations for Veterans and Individuals with Disabilities

March 18, 2014

Affirmative Action Boot Camp

Chicago, IL

October 3, 2012

Little Presenters Our Affirmative Action Boot Camp

Chicago, IL

June 16, 2011