Kelley Edwards

Shareholder
Co-Chair, Energy Industry Group

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Practice Areas

Litigation and Trials
Appellate
Business Restructuring and M&A
Discrimination and Harassment
Energy

Overview

Kelley Edwards has dedicated her career to counseling and advocating on behalf of employers. While the clients she partners with are diverse in size, scope, and focus, she has deep experience advising clients in the energy and healthcare industries. Board Certified in Labor and Employment Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, Kelley has worked with clients in nearly every facet of employment law, from advising employers on implementing legal requirements in the daily workplace, to assisting clients with drafting and revising employment policies and agreements, to representing companies in complex employment disputes. A trusted advisor, Kelley makes a point to understand her clients' business practices and preferences so that she can appropriately tailor her advice and representation to meet their business needs.

Substantively, Kelley has experience in a variety of labor and employment litigation matters, including discrimination, wage and hour, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and unfair competition. She performs training seminars, prepares and reviews personnel handbooks and policies, manages large-scale audits, and conducts workplace investigations. Kelley also has particular experience in the area of reductions-in-force, WARN, and other issues related to business restructuring. In this capacity, Kelley's legal assistance runs full circle, from advising clients on hiring decisions, to counseling them through terminations, to defending them in any ensuing litigation.

A seasoned litigator, Kelley has tried dozens of cases to verdict in federal, state, and local courts and has handled numerous arbitrations and mediations, having obtained defense verdicts in jury trials involving discrimination on the basis of race, age, disability, national origin, and sexual harassment. Kelley excels at relating to jurors and effectively advocating for her clients to factfinders, including judges and arbitrators. A small sampling of her notable litigation successes includes:

- Trying two high-profile race discrimination cases for a national fast food franchisee, both resulting in complete defense verdicts
- Successfully defending a telephone directory company in a multiplaintiff federal bench trial alleging wrongful denial of overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act
- Obtaining a complete defense verdict for a Texas healthcare provider in a national origin retaliation case following a three-day jury trial in federal court
- Successfully uncovering evidence fabricated by the plaintiff in a sexual harassment case, resulting in a voluntary dismissal of the case in exchange for a waiver of costs
- Winning a directed verdict at the trial of an age discrimination and retaliation case against a national chain of convenience stores
- Obtaining a complete defense verdict on behalf of a large hospital system in a multiplaintiff pregnancy discrimination case

Kelley also has an active appellate practice, having argued multiple times before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. She has successfully defended favorable trial verdicts and awards of summary judgment in ERISA, workers' compensation, disability, and Title VII cases before state and federal appellate courts.

Kelley was previously the Houston Office Managing Shareholder and previously served on Littler's Board of Directors. She is a founding member and current Co-Chair of the firm's Energy Industry Group and has served on the firm's Client Investment Management Committee as well as the Associates Committee. Kelley is a classically trained musician who previously performed as a flautist with the Houston Ballet Orchestra and currently plays with the Spring ISD Alumni Band. She serves on the Band's board of directors and is also active in a variety of local nonprofit agencies, having recently served on the board of directors for a Houston-based organization providing education services to children.

Professional and Community Affiliations

- Member, Greater Houston Partnership
- Member, Litigation Section, Houston Bar Association
- Member, Houston Young Lawyers, Federal Bar Association
- Member, Labor and Employment and Litigation sections, State Bar of Texas
- Membership Chair, Labor and Employment Section, Houston Bar Association, 2007 and 2008
- Board Member, Writers in the Schools, 2015-2021

Recognition

- Named, The Best Lawyers in America®, 2024-2027
- Named, Rising Star, *Texas Monthly Magazine*, 2010-2018

- Named, Super Lawyer, *Texas Monthly Magazine*, 2018-2020
- Named, Up and Coming 50: 2018 Women Texas Rising Stars, *Super Lawyers*

Education

J.D., University of Virginia School of Law, 2003
B.S., Rice University, 2000, *cum laude*

Bar Admissions

Texas

Courts

U.S. Supreme Court
U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit
U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas
U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas

Publications & Press

Covid-19 Vaccine-Mandate Bans Tread on Uncertain Legal Ground
The Wall Street Journal
October 14, 2021

Texas Governor Abbott Bars Employers and Individuals from Compelling COVID-19 Vaccines
Littler ASAP
October 12, 2021

Tips for Conducting Virtual Jury Selections
American Bar Association
August 16, 2021

Texas Governor's Mask Stance Won't Shift Employer Safety Plans
Law360
May 25, 2021

Littler Elects Seven New Members to 2021 Board of Directors
Press Release
January 21, 2021

Legal experts weigh in on what you need to know about the workforce amid Covid-19
Houston Business Journal
December 22, 2020

Here's what companies need to know about new anti-LGBTQ-discrimination ruling
Houston Business Chronicle
June 17, 2020

The Open Texas Plan: A State and Local Update
Littler ASAP
May 1, 2020

Texas Stay Home Orders: A State and Local Update
Littler ASAP
April 9, 2020

Harris County, Texas Issues "Stay Home, Work Safe" Order
Littler ASAP
March 25, 2020

Offshore Drilling Companies Can Rest Easy: Supreme Court Holds California Wage and Hour Law Inapplicable to Certain Rig Workers
Littler ASAP
June 11, 2019

Meet the Largest Labor and Employment Law Firm in Houston
Houston Business Journal
May 25, 2018

Littler Shareholder Kelley Edwards Named Houston Office Managing Shareholder
Press Release
June 1, 2016

Littler Appoints Two Co-Chairs to Energy Industry Practice Group
Press Release
April 7, 2016

Fracking Activities Could Pose Heightened Risks to Employers
Energy Litigation News & Developments, Section of Litigation – American Bar Association (ABA)
July 2, 2012

Littler Rings in New Year with New Shareholders: Leading Labor and Employment Firm Elevates 13 Associates
January 4, 2012

Recent EEOC Lawsuits Highlight Importance of Adopting Comprehensive Procedures for Managing Employee Leaves
Society for Human Resource Management Atlanta
March 1, 2011

Recent EEOC Lawsuits Highlight Importance of Adopting Comprehensive Procedures for Managing Employee Leaves
Littler ASAP
February 22, 2011

Recent EEOC Lawsuits Highlight Importance of Adopting Comprehensive Procedures for Managing Employee Leaves
Littler Mendelson Insight Article
February 2011

Texas Supreme Court Holds Certain Tort Claims Related to Sexual Harassment are Preempted by the TCHRA
Littler Mendelson ASAP
June 21, 2010

Texas Supreme Court Holds Certain Tort Claims Related to Sexual Harassment Are Preempted By the TCHRA
Littler ASAP
June 20, 2010

Supreme Court Upholds Ability to Agree to Mandatory Arbitration of Discrimination Claims for Union Members,
The Houston Lawyer
July/August 2009

EEOC Issues New Guidance on Severance Agreements
Littler ASAP
July 31, 2009

EEOC Issues New Guidance on Severance Agreements
Littler Mendelson ASAP
July 31, 2009

The NEW Americans with Disabilities Act
Human Resource Fundamentals Lorman Educational Services
March 2009

Supreme Court Broadly Interprets Title VII Anti-Retaliation Provision
Firm Publication
January 27, 2009

United States Supreme Court issues Significant Labor and Employment Decisions
Firm Publication
June 20, 2008

Uniform Application of Absence Control Policy Trumps Evidence of Motive in Workers' Compensation Retaliation Case
Firm Publication
May 18, 2005

Employee Handbooks
Employment Related Records in Texas, Lorman Educational Services
May 2005

Events & Speaking Engagements

2026 Houston Regional Employer Conference
Houston, TX
September 17, 2026

2025 Houston Regional Employer Conference
Houston, TX
September 25, 2025

2025 Love Your Lawyer
Houston, TX
February 13, 2025

2024 Houston Regional Employer Conference
Houston, TX
September 26, 2024

Love Your Lawyer
Houston, TX
February 13, 2024

2023 Houston Regional Employer Conference
Houston, TX
October 18, 2023

2023 Love Your Lawyer
Houston, TX
February 14, 2023

2023 Texas Webinar Series - Session 1
January 19, 2023

Managing Risk in COVID's Wake: Assessing the Pandemic's Impact on Trial Outcomes and the Implications for Employers
Littler Executive Employer Conference
May 5, 2022

2021 Houston Employer Conference
Houston, TX
October 26, 2021

Love Your Lawyer: Littler Lawyers Answer Your Most Burning Labor and Employment Questions
Houston, TX
February 10, 2021

Love Your Lawyer: Littler Lawyers Answer Your Most Burning Labor and Employment Questions
Houston, TX
February 11, 2020

What Managers Can Do to Mitigate Litigation Risk (and What You Can Do to Help Them)
Houston, TX
February 12, 2019

2018 Houston Employer Conference
Houston, TX
August 8, 2018

Power Breakfast – Human Resources
Houston Business Journal
July 20, 2018

Workplace Violence: Strategies for Recognizing and Avoiding Workplace Violence
2017 Littler Houston Employer Conference
August 10, 2017

Managing and Improving Wage/Hour and Contingent Workforce Practices in the Energy Industry
Houston, TX
March 7, 2017

2016 Houston Employer Conference
Houston, TX
August 11, 2016

2015 Houston Employer Conference
Houston, TX
August 13, 2015

Furloughs, WARN, Reductions-in-Force and Other Cost-Savings Considerations in the $40 per Barrel Oil Economy
February 11, 2015

Wage & Hour Issues in the Oil Patch
December 2, 2014

Wage & Hour Issues in the Oil Patch
Houston, TX
October 24, 2014

The 2014 Houston Employer Conference
Houston, TX
August 14, 2014

The 2012 Houston Employer Conference
Houston, TX
August 2, 2012

Controlling Employee Personal Behavior in the Age of Social Media and Personal Technology
Littler Mendelson, Houston, TX
August 2, 2012

2012 Littler Healthcare Summit: Critical Employment Law Issues Facing Healthcare Employers Today
Houston, TX
June 14, 2012

Latest Employment Law Trends and How to Channel Compliance Efforts
Employment Law Update
December 2011

The 2011 Houston Employer Conference
Houston, TX
August 11, 2011

Social Media and the Workplace: How Does an Employer Manage 'Social' Postings?
Littler Mendelson, Houston, TX
August 11, 2011

What does Ricci v. DeStefano Really Mean? The Diversity Tightrope
Littler Mendelson, Houston, TX
August 12, 2010

Wage and Hour Class Actions in the Healthcare Industry: Diagnosis and Prevention in 2010
Houston Society for Healthcare Human Resources Administration
June 16, 2010

EEOC Issues New Guidance on Severance Agreements
Legal Update, Labor and Employment Section Luncheon - Houston Bar Association
October 12, 2009

The NEW Americans with Disabilities Act - What the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 Means for Disability Discrimination and Harassment Issues in the Workplace
Human Resource Fundamentals - Lorman Educational Services
March 2009

The Employer's Duty to Furnish Information to Unions
Traditional Labor Law 101
February 2009

What Has the Supreme Court Done Now?
Labor and Employment Law Update
September 2008

Employment Litigation: Where's the Action and How Can Your Organization Avoid It?
Labor and Employment Law Update
June 2007

Employee Handbooks
Employment Related Records in Texas - Lorman Educational Services
May 2005