



Karen G. Schanfield

COUNSEL

Minneapolis

612.492.7357

kschanfield@fredlaw.com

fredlaw.com

Services

Employment, Labor & Benefits

Employment & Labor Alternative Dispute Resolution

Employment & Labor Litigation

Internal Investigations

Labor Management Relations

Trade Secrets

Non-Competes

Aging & Disability Providers

Nonprofit & Tax Exempt Organizations

Shareholder & Partnership Disputes

Karen advises and represents employers on a broad range of workplace matters.

Her expertise includes leaves of absence, wage and hour issues, harassment, discrimination, disability and religious accommodation, retaliation, non-compete agreements, executive agreements and compensation, whistleblower claims, downsizing and union matters. Her clients include publicly traded companies, non-profit organizations, government entities and executives. Karen serves as national labor and employment counsel for companies with operations in several states.

Karen has handled several high profile matters, including the investigation of top public officials for alleged sexual harassment, the termination of executives for illegal conduct, and whistleblower claims. For example, in the fall of 2015, Karen co-lead an investigation of sexual harassment and the University of Minnesota Athletics Department in the wake of the resignation of Athletics Director Norwood Teague. The investigation consisted of over 100 interviews, the review of thousands of pages of relevant documents and emails, and broad-based surveys. At its conclusion, the investigation's findings and recommendations were presented to the University's Board of Regents and the State Legislature in public sessions.

Karen has over twenty-five years' experience working with health care providers, clinics, hospitals, long-term care facilities and other health care organizations. She has drafted and enforced physician employment and separation agreements and provides counsel on employment matters unique to the health care setting, such as HIPAA violations and the use of EMR. Karen also works closely with colleges and universities, advising on the denial of tenure and promotion, termination of faculty appointments, academic freedom claims and student matters.

Karen is an experienced arbitrator and mediator. She has decided and helped parties resolve workplace issues involving claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, FMLA and other leave of absence issues, whistleblower claims, defamation, and wage and hour disputes.

Experience

Employment

- Handles matters involving sensitive and controversial issues, significant potential damages, publicity and unique legal issues
- Negotiates and drafts executive employment contracts, non-compete, non-solicitation, and separation agreements for individual and group terminations
- Enforces non-compete agreements by employers and negotiates releases from non-compete agreements for employees and hiring entities
- Investigates claims of harassment and misconduct in public and private sector workplaces
- Represents employers in arbitrations, mediations, and before various state and federal agencies and courts, including the NLRB, the EEOC, the DOL, and state and local enforcement agencies
- Conducts due diligence reviews on labor and employment matters in connection with mergers and acquisitions
- Trains Boards of Directors, managers, supervisors and employees on compliance with workplace laws and regulations

Labor Matters

- Represents private and public employers in union arbitrations, union organizing, union contract negotiations and unfair labor practice proceedings

ADR Matters

- Serves as an arbitrator and mediator in cases involving claims related to executive pay disputes, discrimination, leaves of absence, retaliation, whistleblower activity, defamation, discrimination, unjust termination and other workplace matters

Credentials

Education

- University of Minnesota Law School, J.D., 1978, *cum laude*
- University of St. Thomas, M.A., 1972, *with honors*
- University of Minnesota, B.A., 1971, *magna cum laude*

Admissions

- Minnesota, 1978
- U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota, 1978
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, 1979

Languages

- Spanish

Recognition

- Leonard Lindquist Distinguished Practice Award, Minnesota State Bar Association Labor & Employment Law Section, 2022
- North Star Lawyer, Minnesota State Bar Association, 2013, 2015, 2019-2022
- *Minnesota Super Lawyers*, Employment & Labor, 1997, 2002-2022
- *Best Lawyers in America*, Employment Law-Management, 2011-2021; Labor Law-Management, 2011-2021
- Lifetime Commitment Award, Twin Cities Cardozo Society, 2017
- Lawyer of the Year in Minneapolis for Labor Law-Management, 2017
- Lawyer of the Year in Minneapolis for Employment Law-Management, 2016
- *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*, Minnesota – Labor & Employment, Multiple Years
- Top 50 Women in Minnesota, *Minnesota Super Lawyers*, 2010-2014
- Top 100 Women in Minnesota, *Minnesota Super Lawyers*, 2005-2009
- Top 40 Labor and Employment Law Attorneys, *Minnesota Super Lawyers*, Multiple Years
- *Law and Leading Attorneys*, Multiple Years
- *Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent® Peer Review Rated*, Multiple Years
- Fellow, College of Labor and Employment Lawyers

Civic & Professional

Professional Activities

- Governor's Commission on Judicial Selection, At-Large Member, 2023-2027
- Ramsey County Bar Association, Chair, Labor and Employment Law Section
- American Bar Foundation, Fellow
- Minnesota State Bar Association, Labor and Employment Law Section, Executive Council

- National Association of College and University Attorneys, Member
- American Employment Law Council, Member
- University of Minnesota Law School, Adjunct Faculty Member
- William Mitchell College of Law, Adjunct Faculty Member
- Advisory Committee for the National Academy of Arbitrators Annual Meeting, Member, 2012

Community

- MinnPost, Board of Directors, Chair, DEI Committee
- Infinity Project, Board of Directors
- Jewish Family Service, Board of Directors
- The Jewish Federation of Greater St. Paul, Board of Directors
- Volunteer Lawyers Network, Provider of Pro Bono Legal Advice
- Hennepin County District Court, Volunteer Mediator
- United Jewish Fund and Council, Chair, Partnership 2000 Committee
- St. Paul Jewish Community Center, Board of Directors
- Minnesota Women Lawyers, Board of Directors
- Resources for Child Caring, Board of Directors
- Melpomene Institute, Board of Directors
- Jewish Metropolitan Council, Member, 2017

News

Firm News | 06.26.2023

Fredrikson Attorneys Recognized as North Star (Pro Bono) Lawyers

Firm News | 06.01.2023

Fredrikson Recognized by 2023 Chambers USA

Firm News | 01.09.2023

Karen Schanfield Appointed to the Commission on Judicial Selection

Firm News | 06.16.2022

Fredrikson & Byron Attorneys Recognized as North Star Lawyers

Firm News | 06.15.2022

Attorney Karen Schanfield Receives 2022 Leonard Lindquist Distinguished Practice Award

Firm News | 06.02.2022

Fredrikson & Byron Recognized by 2022 Chambers USA

Firm News | 05.20.2021

Fredrikson & Byron Recognized by 2021 Chambers USA

Firm News | 11.27.2017

Attorney Karen Schanfield Named to Jewish Metropolitan Council

Firm News | 02.13.2017

Two Fredrikson & Byron Attorneys Receive Twin Cities Cardozo Society's Lifetime Commitment Award

Speaking Engagements

Event | 06.13.2018

Beyond #MeToo: Conducting Effective and Privileged Workplace Investigations

Legal Updates

Legal Update | 07.01.2015

Proposed Changes to FLSA Rules Would Make Millions Eligible for Overtime by More Than Doubling Minimum Salary

Legal Update | 03.30.2015

Employer Confidentiality Rules and Other Policies: NLRB Report Discusses Lawful and Unlawful Language

Legal Update | 04.09.2014

Adjuncts and Athletes: Unions and the Academy

Legal Update | 03.03.2014

Making Up For Lost Time: The NLRB's Ambitious Agenda

Legal Update | 02.03.2014

"Donning and Doffing" Protective Gear Not Compensable Time for Union-Represented Employees

Publications & Presentations

Publications

Co-Author, *Minnesota Practice: Employment Law and Practice*, Thomson West Publishing

Editor, *Minnesota Employment Laws*, Thomson West Publishing.

Selected Presentations

Co-Presenter, "Internal Workplace Investigations," Fredrikson & Byron's 34th Annual Employment & Labor Law Seminar, November 1, 2018

Co-Presenter, "Beyond #MeToo: Conducting Effective and Privileged Workplace Investigations," Fredrikson & Byron Seminar, June 13, 2018

Presenter, "The Do's and Don'ts of Workplace Investigations," Fredrikson & Byron's 32nd Annual Employment & Labor Law Seminar, October 26, 2016

Co-Presenter, "HR's Role in Corporate Restructuring," Fredrikson & Byron's 32nd Annual Employment & Labor Law Seminar, October 26, 2016

Presenter, "Honey, I Shrunk the Exemptions," Fredrikson & Byron's 31st Annual Employment & Labor Law Seminar, November 6, 2015

Co-Presenter, "Accommodation Tribulations Parts I and II," Fredrikson & Byron's 31st Annual Employment & Labor Law Seminar, November 6, 2015

Presenter, "Pitfalls and Pratfalls in Classifying Employees in Light of the (Upcoming) Federal Exemption Guidelines: Practical Guidance on Planning and Executing a Privileged Audit," American Employment Law Council, October 2015

Panelist, "ADR Topics: Practice Tips for Advocates in Arbitration," Minnesota CLE Webcast, May 29, 2015

"Accommodation Tribulations: Disability, Pregnancy, Religion, Oh My!," Fredrikson & Byron Employment & Labor Law Seminar, April 22, 2015

Panelist, "Ten Ways Corporate Counsel Can Make the Most of Arbitration," MSBA CLE, April 13, 2015

Co-Presenter, Happy Holidays...and Pass the Tissues Webcast, December 3, 2014

"Minnesota Update," Fredrikson & Byron's 30th Annual Employment & Labor Law Seminar, October 28, 2014

"Whistleblower & Retaliation," Fredrikson & Byron's 30th Annual Employment & Labor Law Seminar, October 28, 2014

"The Strategic Use of Separation and Release Agreements," Fredrikson & Byron's Employment Law Seminar, Des Moines, Iowa, October 7, 2014

Sample Media Mentions

Featured in "Fredrikson & Byron attorneys see workplace misconduct caseload surge in wake of #MeToo movement," *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal*, September 26, 2018

Quoted in "U regents hear of several serious violations of spending rules by athletics department," *Star Tribune*, December 9, 2015

Quoted in "Probe Largely Clears 'U' Athletics Dept. In Teague Case," CBS WCCO-TV news coverage, December 8, 2015

Featured in "U of M retains external legal counsel Karen G. Schanfield to review and assess sexual harassment claims and the climate in athletics," University of Minnesota, August 14, 2015

Featured in "An Experiment in Legal Education: Simulating ADR Processes in the Capstone Course on Labor and Employment Law" by Professor Laura J. Cooper, *Dispute Resolution Journal*, vol. 66, no. 1 (February-April 2011), a publication of the American Arbitration Association

Software

Creator of the online training program "Prevent Harassment: Promote Respect" for Employer Training, LLC