



Margaret L. Watson

Shareholder

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Practice Areas

Litigation and Trials
Investigations
Whistleblowing, Compliance and Investigations
Discrimination and Harassment
Financial Services

Overview

Margaret L. Watson is a highly experienced employment law trial attorney who has successfully represented clients in federal and state courts as well as in arbitrations (FINRA, AAA, JAMS) and agency proceedings. She serves as a co-chair of the firm's Financial Services Group and its FINRA Arbitration Team.

Margaret regularly defends employers and individual managers in cases involving discrimination and retaliation claims under Title VII, Section 1981, ADA, ADEA, FMLA, and related New York State and City laws, as well as claims of violations of Dodd Frank and New York State's whistleblower laws. Representative cases during her extensive career also include claims of fraud, breach of contract, defamation (including U-5 defamation), tortious interference, as well as the review and enforcement of restrictive covenants.

Margaret's practice includes counseling clients on litigation-avoidance strategies and risk management. She assists clients with investigations and policy audits. She has substantial experience with strategic initiatives around increasing diversity in the workplace and she is dedicated to partnering with clients to proactively prevent employment claims and enhance employee performance.

Prior to joining Littler, Margaret was the sole employment law counsel for the New York City office of a large East Coast regional law firm. Margaret previously served as inhouse counsel to a global wealth management firm, and she successfully designed and managed the first corporate ombudsman office for the U.S. broker-dealer business of that company.

Margaret began her career as a law clerk to the Hon. Whitman Knapp in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, and has practiced in the areas of securities law and white-collar criminal defense. She also previously served as a partner in a law firm where she represented employees as plaintiffs in discrimination matters. She is a trained mediator and has served as a trained neutral.

Professional and Community Affiliations

- Member, New York State Bar Association
- Member, Association of the Bar of the City of New York
- Member, HLS Women's Alliance of New York

Events & Speaking Engagements

Financial Services Roundtable

New York, NY
March 4, 2025

2024 Tri-State Regional Employer Conference

New York, NY
September 19, 2024

Defending Whistleblower Claims Against Highly Motivated Plaintiffs: A Case Study

Littler Executive Employer Conference, Phoenix, AZ
May 10, 2024

2023 Tri-State Regional Employer Conference

New York, NY
June 20, 2023

Whistleblowers: The New and Increased Risks

Littler 2023 Tri-State Regional Employer Conference
June 20, 2023

Protecting Privilege in Internal Investigations

Knowledge Group
June 7, 2023

Pitfalls of Arbitrating Employment Law Claims in FINRA

Lawline
December 8, 2022

Whistleblower Complaints: A Guide for Managers

New York, NY

October 3, 2022

A Virtual Financial Services Roundtable

September 28, 2021

A Virtual FINRA Roundtable

June 10, 2021

Virtual Financial Services Roundtable

New York, NY

April 6, 2021

Best Practices to Resolve Internal Complaints

New York, NY

November 5, 2020

Time for a Tune-Up: Compliance Tips for 2019 and Beyond

New York, NY

April 23, 2019

The Form U-5: Best Practices in How to Minimize Litigation Exposure and Reduce Potential Damages

CLE

March 28, 2017

Best Practices in Preserving Privilege in Internal Investigations and When Providing Guidance to Business

CLE

March 2, 2017

Education

J.D., Harvard Law School, , *cum laude*

B.A., Swarthmore College, , *Phi Beta Kappa*

Bar Admissions

New York

Courts

U.S. Supreme Court

U.S. Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York

U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York

Publications & Press

DFS Whistleblower Guidance: Advice and a Warning Shot

External Publication

March 13, 2019

Littler Adds Shareholder Margaret L. Watson in New York

Press Release

January 29, 2019