



MEET MELISSA

*"I enjoy problem solving and welcome the opportunity to face and resolve conflicts."*

— Melissa K. Atkins

Melissa is a highly experienced and accomplished labor and employment lawyer with over fifteen years of practice. Throughout her career, she has successfully represented both private and public sector employers from various industries across the country. Her expertise encompasses a wide spectrum of labor and employment matters. Melissa has a proven track record of effectively handling employment investigations on a national scale, numerous collective bargaining negotiations, arbitrations, Act 111 arbitrations, and union organizing and decertification cases throughout the United States. She is well-versed in navigating the complex legal landscape of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and various state and federal courts and agencies.

Melissa’s reputation extends to her expertise in negotiating with Police Unions throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Her skill and knowledge in this area have made her highly sought after by municipalities seeking guidance and representation in labor negotiation or before the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board. In addition to litigation, Melissa provides invaluable counseling and compliance advice to employers. She assists in drafting employment contracts, developing comprehensive employee handbooks and policy manuals, and navigating the intricate web of federal and state employment statutes.

Melissa actively collaborates with employers to align their labor and employment strategies with their core business objectives. Her expertise is instrumental in guiding non-union-represented employers and mature union-represented employers through pivotal initiatives such as new product development,

complexity reduction, organizing campaigns, facility shutdown or relocation, and other strategic endeavors.

Melissa's approach emphasizes effective communication, collaboration, and a comprehensive understanding of her clients' specific needs and objectives. She works closely with employers to develop customized negotiation strategies that align with their organizational goals and priorities.

Recognized for her deep understanding of labor relations and the ever-evolving employment laws, Melissa is frequently sought after by national media outlets for her insights and commentary. She remains at the forefront of developments in DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) and ensures her clients stay informed and compliant with the latest industry trends and regulations.

Melissa cherishes moments spent with her husband and four children. Melissa has a deep love for sports, having previously served as the team captain for the University of Miami's women's basketball team. As an ardent supporter, she never passes up the chance to cheer on her beloved Philly teams and Miami Hurricanes.

## EXPERIENCE

Prior to joining Obermayer, Melissa worked as a Deputy City Solicitor in the Labor and Employment Unit for the City of Philadelphia and in the Employment Law practice group of one of the world's largest publicly traded property and casualty insurance companies, where she maintained a caseload of complex employment law cases from inception to resolution, representing a wide range of private sector employers in union and non-union workplaces across many industries, including education, health care, construction, industrial and manufacturing.

Melissa gained broad experience in court proceedings, performing all phases of litigation including developing case strategy, conducting discovery, depositions, and witness preparation, and drafting responsive pleadings, motions, and briefs. She was also first chair spokesperson in settlement negotiations. Melissa's experience includes the following:

- Counsel on Human Resources matters, including performance management and employment termination.
- Research and draft legal memorandum on various employment issues including discrimination, retaliation, and sexual harassment in federal district and circuit courts
- Negotiate, draft, and revise contracts and agreements involving bonus and executive compensation plans, terms and conditions of employment, settlement terms and conditions, and release agreements.
- Analyze and present updates to Healthcare industry clients regarding the Families First Corona Response Act leave policies and OSHA Compliance.
- Successfully negotiated over 110 settlements of employment discrimination claims for clients.

- Three successful Summary Judgment Motions and one successful Third Circuit Appeal for years 2019-2020

## NEWS & INSIGHTS

### **Melissa Atkins Discusses Impact of Presidential Election on US Labor Relations in Maritime Negotiations**

October 29, 2024 by Melissa K. Atkins

### **Melissa Atkins to Present at AEJMC Annual Conference**

August 08, 2024 by Melissa K. Atkins

### **Melissa Atkins to Present at the NBI's Alabama Human Resource Law 2024**

August 21, 2024 by Melissa K. Atkins

### **Melissa Atkins to Present at the PBA Diversity Summit 2024**

October 30, 2024 by Melissa K. Atkins

### **Melissa Atkins Weighs in on the ILA-USMX negotiations in Logistics Management**

June 26, 2024 by Melissa K. Atkins

### **Melissa Atkins Weighs In on Workers' Legal Responses to Office Mandates in The Washington Post**

May 07, 2024 by Melissa K. Atkins

## ACTIVITIES & HONORS

Melissa is a frequent presenter at seminars on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the practice of law; and labor and employment topics, including the Family and Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VII and other federal, state and local anti-discrimination, anti-harassment; anti-retaliation and paid leave statutes.

Some of Melissa's professional accomplishments include:

- Named to *City & State's* 2024 Black Trailblazers Power List
- Included in *The Best Lawyers in America* Ones to Watch® list in 2024
- Named to *City & State Pennsylvania Philly's 40 under 40* in 2022
- Recognized among The Legal Intelligencer's 2022 Professional Excellence Award Winners in the Lawyers on the Fast Track category
- Philadelphia Tribune's Ten People Under 40 to Watch in 2013
- Philadelphia Business Journal's 25 Young Lawyers on the Rise in 2017

In law school, Melissa was a Merit Scholar. She was also:

- Public Interest Fellow
- Mock Trial Regional Finalist and National Competitor
- Black Law Students Association Vice President

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## EDUCATION

Faulkner University, JD

University of Miami, BBA

## ADMISSIONS

Pennsylvania

Alabama

United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania

United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

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## CAPABILITIES

### Labor & Employment

Counseling, Compliance & Training

Employment Litigation

Employment-Related Agreements

Executive Compensation & Employee Benefits

Internal Investigations

Labor Arbitration

Traditional Labor Relations & Collective Bargaining

Wage & Hour

### Industry Focus

Health Care

Individuals & Private Clients

International Businesses

Local Governments & Municipal Authorities

Nonprofit Organizations

Universities & Secondary Schools