

R. MICHELLE TATUM-BUSH

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Michelle Tatum-Bush provides advice and handles disputes for employers in Florida and with operations throughout the US.

Her clients represent a wide variety of industries, including construction, brokerages, medical practices, management, insurance, and not-for-profit organizations. Michelle has particular expertise in FMLA and ADA accommodations matters. She is also passionate about helping clients throughout their litigation matters, whether the cases involve discrimination and harassment in the workplace, retaliation against whistleblowers, WARN Act claims or violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination in the Employment Act.

Michelle understands the challenges facing employers first hand. Prior to joining FordHarrison, Michelle was a judicial staff attorney for the Fourth Judicial Circuit in Jacksonville, Florida, where she oversaw the operation of the Criminal Division and was responsible for hiring, firing, managing, and disciplining attorneys as well as interns. Michelle also served as the Capital Judicial Staff Attorney, appointed by the criminal judiciary to attend all phases of capital murder trials to assist judges with instantaneous research and recommendations on issues that arose during hearings and trials.

Prior to joining FordHarrison, Michelle also served as a Special Master, appointed by the Chief Judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit on a per case basis to preside over evidentiary hearings regarding petitions for belated appeal filed in the First District of Appeal. In this role Michelle issued written orders to the First District Court of Appeal setting forth findings of fact and conclusions of law regarding a petitioner's entitlement to a belated appeal.

Michelle served eleven years on the Board of Directors for the University of North Florida Alumni Association, serving as its President for two years. During her time serving as Board President Michelle was honored to give graduation commencement speeches at each graduation ceremony, awarded monies raised by the Alumni Association to the first-generation scholarship fund, served as an Ex-Officio board member on UNF's Foundation Board, and was selected to be on the committee leading the Foundation in

EDUCATION

- » Stetson University College of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 2004)
- » University of North Florida (B.A., 2001)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- » Florida

COURT ADMISSIONS

- » U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
- » U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida
- » U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida
- » U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida

developing the University's ten-year strategic plan. Michelle remains very involved in UNF.

Michelle also speaks frequently to groups of HR professionals, brokers and other audiences on a wide range of employment-related topics.

Representative Experience

- » Obtained favorable decisions in federal district courts dismissing discrimination actions including those based on race, sex, disability, sexual harassment, age, religion, and FMLA as well as retaliation claims
- » Successfully defended against a motion to compel ESI discovery as not proportional to the needs of the case due to state confidentiality laws at play and based on the scope of the discovery request under the amended Rule 26 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure
- » Successfully defended several appeals to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit including favorable discovery and summary judgment rulings
- » Defended various companies against charges of age, disability, race, harassment and gender discrimination and retaliation claims
- » Defended companies against workers compensation retaliation claims
- » Successfully defended termination and disciplinary actions in labor arbitration grievance proceedings on behalf of public sector employer
- » *Per Florida Bar rules, information on litigation and other legal successes has not been disclosed but is available upon request.*

Honors & Awards

- » "Florida Rising Stars," *Super Lawyers* magazine
- » "*Best Lawyers in America*" (2023-2026)

Memberships

- » LEAD Brevard - Class of 2024
- » The Florida Bar
- » Jacksonville Federal Bar Association
- » Jacksonville Bar Association
- » Legislative Chair, Space Coast HRA

- » Vasser B. Carlton Inn of Court (Barrister)

News & Insights

- » SourceBook - Co-Editor, FordHarrison's Labor & Employment Law Sourcebook, Employee Leaves
- » August 17, 2023 - Nineteen Florida-Based FordHarrison Attorneys Listed in the 2024 Best Lawyers in America and Eight Listed in Ones To Watch
- » September 30, 2021 - Florida Business Required to Report Independent Contractors Effective October 1

Events

- » April 30, 2025 - Spring 2025 Legal Update: The First 90 Days of Trump 2.0 – An Overview for HR Professionals (Presentation Request)
- » January 16, 2025 - South Brevard SHRM/FordHarrison Annual New Year's HR Legal Conference
- » September 17, 2024 - Legal Update for HR - Space Coast Human Resource Association
- » January 11, 2024 - Get Ready for 2024 – with the "Annual Half-Day Legal Conference-New Years' Edition," Hosted by South Brevard SHRM and FordHarrison on January 11, 2024
- » September 19, 2023 - "2023 Legal Update for HR," Half-Day Seminar Hosted by Space Coast HR Association and FordHarrison

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