FORDHARRISON

LUIS A. SANTOS

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Luis Santos serves as the office managing partner for FordHarrison's Orlando office.

Luis has a unique understanding of the administrative and legal challenges faced by clients in industries like hospitality, retail, restaurant, and grocery. Prior to attending law school, Luis worked for many years in hospitality management. He began as a front desk clerk and worked himself up to the position of assistant hotel manager. Luis also worked as a grocery store cashier. After becoming a lawyer, he set out to utilize this insider's perspective to continue helping companies in the hospitality and grocery industries with their employment-related issues.

As co-chair of FordHarrison's Wage/Hour and Restaurant Practice Groups, Luis has extensive experience addressing the challenges faced by employers in the restaurant industry. Additionally, Luis represents employers in a wide variety of other industries, including retail, transportation, healthcare, and construction. Luis handles wage and hour disputes, discrimination claims, union avoidance, regulatory compliance, and all other facets of labor and employment law.

Luis can fluently speak, read, and write in Spanish. He often uses his bilingual skills to train and educate Hispanic management and staff in their native language. Luis also serves as FordHarrison's Deputy Diversity Partner and is focused on recruiting and mentoring diverse attorneys with a particular emphasis on Hispanic outreach. Additionally, Luis is on the firm's Diversity Executive Council.

Luis is the son of migrant parents. Through his childhood experiences, he developed a great appreciation for hard work and an understanding of the importance of mentorship and education. Luis is a husband, father, and seasoned traveler. He's visited over 25 countries and hopes to double that list.

Representative Experience

- Successfully defended restaurant group in DOL enforcement action seeking over $20 million.
- Obtained defense verdict in multi-million-dollar jury trial

EDUCATION

- Stetson University College of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 2010)
- Florida International University (B.A., *magna cum laude*, 2006)
- Valencia College (A.A., *magna cum laude*, 2004)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Florida

COURT ADMISSIONS

- U.S. Supreme Court
- 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

FIRM LEADERSHIP

- Orlando Office Managing Partner
- Management Group
- Diversity Executive Council
- Deputy Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Partner
- Wage/Hour Practice Group, Co-Chair
- Restaurant Industry Group, Co-Chair

LANGUAGES

involving a commission dispute.

- Obtained defense verdict in race discrimination jury trial.
- Obtained defense verdict in age discrimination jury trial.
- Obtained dismissal of discrimination claim against national hospitality client.
- Obtained dismissal of sexual harassment and retaliation claims against national hospitality group.
- Successfully defended Eleventh Circuit appeal of summary judgment granted in two separate race discrimination cases against national retailers.
- Successfully defended workers' compensation retaliation claim against local grocery store.
- Conducted English and Spanish anti-harassment training for multiple Florida grocery stores.
- Handled dozens of APA administrative hearings of pension forfeitures for public employees.
- Conducted multiple union-avoidance trainings and development of campaign strategies for national employers.
- Advised national healthcare client on the legal issues related to unionization and/or efforts to organize its employees.
- Conducted company-wide I-9 Audit to assure compliance with federal regulations.
- Successfully defended national employer on FMLA retaliation case.
- Successfully represented clients before the EEOC and state and local human rights commissions in multiple charges of discrimination, harassment and retaliation, including on-site investigations.
- Represented a national restaurant chain in successfully defeating the attempted class certification of more than 8,400 restaurant servers alleging violations of the Department of Labor's 80/20 rule.
- *Per Florida Bar rules, information on litigation and other legal successes has not been disclosed but is available upon request.*

Honors & Awards

- "Latino Leadership International Award," *Profiles in Diversity Journal* (2023)
- *The Legal 500 United States*, Recommended Attorney in

- Spanish (fluent)

Labor & Employment - Labor and Employment Disputes (2021)

- *Best Lawyers in America* - Employment Law - Management, Litigation - Labor and Employment, Labor Law - Union (2021-2027)
- *2020 National Latino Leader Award Winner*, National Diversity Counsel
- "Florida Rising Stars," *Super Lawyers Magazine* (2018-2020)

Memberships

- Chairman of Skybuilders 4 All nonprofit organization.
- Orlando Diversity Council, Membership Committee Co-Chair (2019-2022)
- National Employment Law Council, Site Selection and Budget Subcommittee Past Chair (2017-2019)

News & Insights

- October 21, 2026 - DOL Takes Another Step Towards Eliminating the 80/20 Rule for Tipped Employees
- May 15, 2026 - DOL Restores 2019 Salary Thresholds for White-Collar Overtime Exemptions
- April 27, 2026 - The Joint Employer Test, Rewritten: What Employers Need to Know
- May 05, 2025 - U.S. Department of Labor Announces It Will No Longer Enforce 2024 Independent Contractor Rule
- January 07, 2025 - FordHarrison Announces Three New Office Managing Partners

Offices

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