FORDHARRISON

SARAH PIERCE WIMBERLY

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Sarah Wimberly spearheads FordHarrison's airline litigation and arbitration practice and is the co-leader of the airline service practice group. For over 30 years she has focused her practice primarily on labor and employment matters unique to the aviation industry. She is an industry leader on absence management and leave abuse, as well as disability accommodation and compliance.

Sarah frequently works with aviation clients on complicated or sensitive harassment and discrimination complaints, complex discipline or discharge, and fitness for duty evaluations, with particular emphasis on flight crews. She arbitrates labor grievances, responds to crew-related administrative charges before the FAA, OSHA, EEOC and similar state agencies (including administrative trials), and litigates employment and labor (RLA) claims in state and federal court. Sarah has particular expertise and experience with leaves of absence issues (FMLA), disability accommodation (ADA), Pilot Records Database (PRD) obligations, and whistleblower complaints (AIR21).

Sarah also has extensive expertise in negotiations. She negotiates labor contracts and agreements under the RLA, mostly with pilot and flight attendant workgroups. Sarah handles mediated negotiations and assists clients with navigating the National Mediation Board.

Sarah represents clients across the country in all aspects of the industry. In her over 30 years of practice, she has handled litigation, arbitrations and administrative charges and complaints in almost every state. She works with mainline carriers, low cost carriers, regional carriers, cargo carriers, charter and on-demand operators, ground support companies and MROs. Sarah is a frequent speaker at industry conferences and champion of the advancement of women in the industry.

Representative Experience

- Obtained summary judgment on RLA preemption grounds in federal-court ADA lawsuit brought by pilot against mainline

EDUCATION

- University of Georgia School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 1994)
- Vanderbilt University (B.A., *cum laude, with honors in Economics*, 1991)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Georgia

COURT ADMISSIONS

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida
- U.S. District Court for the

carrier over discharge.

- Obtained summary judgment on RLA preemption grounds in federal-court religious accommodation and retaliation case filed by religious advocacy group on behalf of flight attendant over inflight alcohol service.
- Secured summary judgment for an airline against the EEOC in a gender-harassment claim, leading the EEOC to dismiss voluntarily a second, related retaliation lawsuit.
- Secured dismissal of two sexual-orientation discrimination and harassment complaints filed by two pilots before a local human rights commission after a public hearing with significant media coverage.
- Obtained denial of grievance filed by captain over discharge for alleged date-rape of first officer and attempted assault of flight attendant on overnight trips.

Honors & Awards

- AV® Preeminent Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell
- *The Best Lawyers in America* - Employment Law - Management (2024 - 2027)
- *The Legal 500 United States*, Recommended attorney in Labor & Employment - Labor and Employment Disputes (2020 - 2021)

Memberships

- American Bar Association (Labor and Employment Section, Litigation Section)
- Atlanta Bar Association
- State Bar of Georgia

News & Insights

- SourceBook - Editor, FordHarrison's Labor & Employment Law Sourcebook, Interaction Between the RLA and Other Laws
- August 17, 2023 - Fourteen Atlanta-Based FordHarrison Attorneys Listed in the 2024 Best Lawyers in America and Five Listed in Ones To Watch
- February 14, 2022 - "Labor-Law Conflicts for Flight Crews Add to Airlines' Covid Woes," Bloomberg Law

Events

- July 19, 2026 - Regional Airline Association 2026 Summer

Western District of Arkansas

FIRM LEADERSHIP

- Airline Industry Group, Co-Chair

Seminars, Speaker – San Diego

- March 27, 2025 - 2025 Airline Labor & Employment Law Symposium
- July 28-30, 2024 - Regional Airline Association 2024 Summer Seminars, Speaker – Denver, CO
- September 21-22, 2023 - FordHarrison 2023 Airline Labor & Employment Law Symposium "Climb + Descend: Adjusting to a Changing Workforce" - San Antonio, TX
- July 16-18, 2023 - Regional Airline Association 2023 Summer Seminars, Speaker – San Antonio, TX

Offices

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