

## **Christine E. Howard**

### ***Partner***

Tampa/Atlanta

t: 813.769.7503/404.231.1400

f: 813.769.7501/404.240.4249

Email



### ***Service Focus***

- Class and Collective Actions
- Counseling and Advice
- Employee Leaves and Accommodations
- FCRA and Background Screening
- Litigation and Trials
- Wage and Hour

### ***Industry Focus***

- Automotive Dealership
- Healthcare
- Retail

### ***Overview***

Christine Howard is a member of the firm's management committee and a partner in the firm's Tampa and Atlanta offices. She also served as a founding Co-Chair of the firm's Women's Initiative and Leadership Council.

Christine focuses her practice on the defense of employment discrimination, harassment, and retaliation complaints; wage and hour litigation; and employee leave related complaints. She has successfully handled many dispositive motions, hearings, arbitrations, and trials on behalf of employers.

Over the last decade, she has defended numerous collective action cases filed on behalf of classes of employees alleging violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), successfully defeating attempts at class certification in practically every instance. Christine also defends class actions under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), helping employers navigate these claims to successful resolutions and dismissals.

In addition to litigating matters on behalf of employers, Christine conducts workplace investigations, compliance audits, and management training. She also counsels employers on the preventive measures they may take to avoid or reduce employment-related claims, including on issues arising under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Christine is "AV" Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell. She has been recognized in *Florida Super Lawyers* since 2014 and *The Best Lawyers in America* since 2015. She was also recognized in *Georgia Super Lawyers* each year from 2004 through 2008.

Christine was credited as an author on an E-Discovery Chapter in *Workplace Data: Law and Litigation*. The book provides an overview of legal issues associated with employment-related electronically stored information, focusing on discovery issues in particular.

## ***Recent Experience***

### **Experience**

- Eleventh Circuit affirmed dismissal with prejudice on motion to dismiss federal claims of sexual harassment hostile environment and retaliation where Plaintiff's Charge alleged hostile work environment but failed to allege sex. Court held that sexual harassment claim and retaliation claim based upon it were outside the scope of Plaintiff's EEOC Charge. *Ortiz v. Waste Management Inc. of Florida* (11th Cir. 2020)
- Secured summary judgment on multi-count complaint alleging race discrimination, hostile work environment and retaliation under Title VII, FCRA and Section 1981. *Boone v. Publix Super Markets, Inc.* (M.D. Fla. 2020)
- Avoided certification of FLSA collective action involving nationwide purported class of over 13,000 call center employees through aggressive declaration strategy and resolved individual class member claims on reasonable basis. *Confidential Matter* (M.D. Fla. 2019)
- Summary judgment granted to employer on twenty-five year employee's claim of age discrimination based on his failure to promote and termination and his claims for FMLA interference and retaliation. *Confidential Arbitration*, 2019
- Obtained summary judgment on the claims filed by a former human resources professional alleging race and age discrimination based on her pay and termination, as well as religious harassment discrimination. *Wallace v. Sanderson Farms, Inc.* (M.D. Ga. 2018)
- Summary judgment granted against seven Plaintiffs in a lawsuit alleging an unchecked "peeping tom" in the office caused intentional infliction of emotional distress and invasion of privacy. The Complaint further alleged that the employer was responsible for the actions of the peeping tom and hiring and retaining him was negligent. Judgement was entered in favor of the Defendant on all counts. *Murray et. al. v. The Auto Club Group*, Ga. Superior Ct. No. 2015-cv-268431 (June 13, 2017).

- Summary judgment granted in FLSA exemption case in which Court agreed Plaintiff was appropriately classified as exempt under the administrative exemption and also granted judgment on Plaintiff's national origin and retaliation claims. *Javier Negron v. The Auto Club Group, Inc.*, (S.D. Fla. 2016)
- Successfully positioned several class actions under the Fair Credit Reporting Act for highly favorable resolutions, including avoiding class certification, in matters brought in the Middle and Southern Districts of Florida. 2014-2018.
- Summary judgment granted in age discrimination action that included allegations of ageist comments made by decision-maker against Plaintiff. *Jerry Grace v. Chelco Services, Inc.*, (N.D. Fla. 2014)
- Claimant dismissed action in complex ADA/FMLA case after deposition. *Confidential Arbitration*, 2014
- Defeated motion for conditional certification in a collective action filed under the FLSA. The Order denied certification of a company-wide class of sales representatives claiming they were misclassified under the outside sales exemption. *Bearden et. al. v. AAA Auto Club South, Inc.* (W.D. Tenn. 2013)
- Won Arbitration after three-day arbitration hearing in which two Claimants alleged national origin discrimination and retaliation after being terminated within two weeks of attorney demand letter. *Garcia and Encinosa v. Asbury Automotive/Courtesy Nissan* (Arbitration 2012)
- Plaintiff dismissed case with prejudice after summary judgment filed in FMLA and gender case. *Smith v. Sanderson Farms, Inc.* (M.D. Ga. 2012)
- Secured summary judgment on race and gender discrimination claims. *Thomas v. Scott McRae Automotive Group, Inc., and Regency Motor Company, Inc.* (Arbitration, 2011) A second Arbitrator under a de novo review and after oral argument, affirmed the lower finding.
- Summary Judgment granted on breach of contract, breach of confidentiality, breach of privacy, tortious interference with contract, breach of implied duty of good faith and fair dealing, and violations of the FMLA and ADA. *Confidential Arbitration*, 2011
- Obtained summary judgment in job discrimination/retaliation case under 42 U.S.C. § 1981, where ten other employees had pending race charges at the time. *Brown v. Berg Spiral Pipe Corp.*, (S.D. Ala. 2011)
- Successfully avoided certification of class of technicians in FLSA collective action after convincing Plaintiffs that certification would be difficult based on individualized inquiries. *Scott v. General Electric* (S.D. Fl. 2010)

- Secured summary judgment in sexual harassment and retaliation case. *Johnson v. S.H.S. Resort, LLC aka Safety Harbor Resort and Spa* (M.D. Fla. 2010)
- Obtained summary judgment in age and race discrimination case. *Ferrell v. Greyhound Exposition Services* (N.D. Ga. 2010)
- Summary judgment granted in FMLA retaliation and battery case. *Confidential Arbitration*, 2010
- Summary judgment secured in ERISA action alleging wrongful denial of long-term disability benefits. *Otero v. National Distributing Company, Inc., et al.*, 627 F. Supp. 2d 1232 (2009)
- Secured voluntary dismissal with prejudice with no settlement in case brought as FLSA collective action; Plaintiff offered several admissions negating off-the-clock claims. *Cloud v. American Huts, Inc. d/b/a Pizza Huts* (N.D. Ga. 2008)
- Successfully defeated motion for conditional certification in which plaintiffs attempted a nationwide certification of clerks and assistant managers in FLSA collective action. *Robinson v. Dollar General Corporation* (M.D. Fla 2007)
- Secured summary judgment in race discrimination and retaliation case. *Chestang v. AAA Auto Club South, et al.*, 2007 WL 1450399 (N.D. Ga.)
- Obtained summary judgment in FMLA, Title VII and ADEA case. *Maitland v. Employease, Inc.*, 2006 WL 3090120 (N.D. Ga. 2006)
- Obtained summary judgment in reduction-in-force case. *Chriss v. Royal Indemnity Co.*, 2006 WL 1097605 (N.D. Ga. 2006)
- Secured summary judgment in Section 1981 and tort case. *Moten v. Alberici Constructors*, 380 F. Supp. 2d 1355 (N.D. Ga. 2005)
- Summary judgment granted in race discrimination action. *Johnson v. Fulton Concrete*, 330 F. Supp. 2d 1330 (N.D. Ga. 2004)
- Motion to dismiss granted in nationwide collective action after offers of full relief made. *Taylor v. CompUSA*, 2004 WL 1660937 (N.D. Ga. 2004)
- Motion to dismiss granted in nationwide collective action after offers of full relief made. *Mackenzie v. Kindred Hospitals East, LLC*, 276 F. Supp. 2d 1211 (M.D. Fla. 2003)
- Obtained summary judgment in sexual harassment and retaliation case affirmed by the Eleventh Circuit. *Mangrum v. Republic Industries*, 260 F. Supp. 2d 1229 (N.D. Ga. 2003)

- Summary judgment granted based on judicial estoppel where Plaintiff failed to identify claim in bankruptcy proceeding. *Traylor v. Gene Evans Ford (Autonation)*, 185 F. Supp. 2d 1338 (N.D. Ga. 2002)

## ***Credentials***

### **Education**

- J.D., 1990, with distinction, Emory University School of Law
- B.A., 1987, Emory University

### **Bar Admissions**

- Florida
- Georgia

### **Court Admissions**

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

## ***Recognitions***

- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* (2015-2025)
- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*, Lawyer of the Year - Litigation - Labor and Employment (2022 and 2024)
- *Chambers USA*, Labor & Employment (2022-2024)
- Listed in *Florida Super Lawyers* since 2014
- Listed in *Georgia Super Lawyers* from 2004 to 2008
- "AV" rated by Martindale-Hubbell
- Selected by the National Association of Women Lawyers to receive the Outstanding Woman Law Student Award at Emory University School of Law

## ***Affiliations***

### **Professional Activities**

- Member, American Employment Law Council

- Member, HR Tampa
- Member, Suncoast Human Resources Management Association
- Member, State Bar of Florida and Hillsborough County Bar Associations
- Member, Corporate Counsel and Labor and Employment Sections of the State Bar of Georgia and Atlanta Bar Association
- Member, Hofstra Labor and Employment Law Journal Advisory Board 2004-2006
- Former Chair, Fisher Phillips' Women's Initiative and Leadership Council

## ***Insights***

---

NEWS

03/20/25

### **Tampa Partners Honored Among Daily Business Review's 2025 Florida Legal Awards Finalists**

Christine E. Howard, LaKisha M. Kinsey-Sallis

[Read more →](#)

---

EVENT

11/21/24

### **A Look Forward: Preparing Your Management Team for a Compliant 2025: Tampa**

Christine E. Howard, Andrew Froman, Alissa Kranz, Steven M. Bernstein, Connie Yang, Elysse V. Gorney, LaKisha M. Kinsey-Sallis

[Read more →](#)

---

NEWS

07/01/24

### **Christine Howard Once Again Named a Notable Managing Partner in Florida Trend's 2024 "Legal Elite"**

Christine E. Howard

[Read more →](#)

---

NEWS

06/10/24

### **Fisher Phillips Earns Top Rankings Again as a Leading Firm in Labor and Employment Law by Chambers USA**

Edwin G. Foulke Jr., Andrew J. Sommer, Travis Vance, Kristin R.B. White, Danielle Hultenius Moore, Jocelyn Campanaro, Micah Dawson, Todd A. Fredrickson, Angelica M. Ochoa, Steven M. Bernstein, Suzanne K. Bogdan, Charles S. Caulkins, Christine E. Howard, Jeffrey E. Mandel, Cathy M. Stutin, Michael P. Elkon, Shanon R. Stevenson, Terri R. Stewart, Laurel K. Cornell, Raymond C. Haley III, Emily N. Litzinger, Todd B. Logsdon, Craig P. Siegenthaler, Megan Reese U'Sellis, Michelle I. Anderson, Edward F. Harold, Timothy H. Scott, David W. Erb, Daniel E. Farrington, Joseph W. Ambash, William E. Altman, Gregory V. Murray, Barbara Jean D'Aquila, Steven R. Cupp, Gregory D. Ballew, J. Randall Coffey, James R. Holland II, Brian J. Finucane, Melody L. Rayl, David B. Dornak, Scott M. Mahoney, Mark J. Ricciardi, Kathleen McLeod Caminiti, Rosemary S. Gousman, Michael R. Marra, David Klass, Richard A. Millisor, Clarence M. Belnavis, Todd A. Lyon, Michael P. Avila, Nan Sato, Christopher P. Stief, William D. Wright,

Michael D. Carrouth, C. F. W. Manning II, Stephen C. Mitchell, J. Hagood Tighe, David S. Jones, Greg Grisham, Jeff Weintraub, Stephen J. Roppolo, Teresa Valderrama, Theresa M. Connolly, Davis C. Bae, Ralph Hua, Radhika Mehta, Suzanne Kelly Michael

[Read more →](#)

---

NEWS 08/28/23

**Fisher Phillips’ Florida Attorneys Highlighted in 2024 Best Lawyers in America® Rankings**

Steven M. Bernstein, Charles S. Caulkins, Christine E. Howard, Jeffrey E. Mandel

[Read more →](#)

---

NEWS 08/17/23

**Fisher Phillips Attorneys Named Among the Best Lawyers in America® for 2024**

Charles S. Caulkins, Todd A. Fredrickson, Steven M. Bernstein, Christine E. Howard, Jeffrey E. Mandel, C. F. W. Manning II, John M. Polson

[Read more →](#)

---

NEWS 08/10/23

**Christine Howard Named Among “Top 10 Florida Labor & Employment Lawyers to Follow in 2023”**

Christine E. Howard

[Read more →](#)

---

NEWS 07/17/23

**Florida Trend Magazine Recognizes Christine Howard as a Notable Managing Partner Within its Selection of This Year’s “Legal Elite”**

Christine E. Howard

[Read more →](#)

---

NEWS 06/06/23

**Fisher Phillips Once Again Recognized as a Top Labor and Employment Law Firm by Chambers USA**

Edwin G. Foulke Jr., Andrew J. Sommer, Travis Vance, Kristin R.B. White, Danielle Hultenius Moore, Jocelyn Campanaro, Micah Dawson, Todd A. Fredrickson, Angelica M. Ochoa, Steven M. Bernstein, Suzanne K. Bogdan, Charles S. Caulkins, Christine E. Howard, Jeffrey E. Mandel, Cathy M. Stutin, Shanon R. Stevenson, Laurel K. Cornell, Raymond C. Haley III, Emily N. Litzinger, Todd B. Logsdon, Craig P. Siegenthaler, Megan Reese U'Sellis, Michelle I. Anderson, Edward F. Harold, Timothy H. Scott, David W. Erb, Daniel E. Farrington, Joseph W. Ambash, William E. Altman, Gregory V. Murray, Steven R. Cupp, Gregory D. Ballew, J. Randall Coffey, James R. Holland II, Brian J. Finucane, David B. Dornak, Scott M. Mahoney, Mark J. Ricciardi, Kathleen McLeod Caminiti, Rosemary S. Gousman, Michael R. Marra, Richard A. Millisor, Clarence M. Belnavis, Todd A. Lyon, Nan Sato, Christopher P. Stief, William D. Wright, Michael D. Carrouth, C. F. W. Manning II, Stephen C. Mitchell, J. Hagood Tighe, David S.

Jones, Jeff Weintraub, Arthur V. Lambert, Stephen J. Roppolo, Teresa Valderrama, Theresa M. Connolly, Davis C. Bae, Ralph Hua, Radhika Mehta, Suzanne Kelly Michael, Barbara Jean D'Aquila

[Read more →](#)

---

NEWS

03/10/23

## Christine Howard Named Among Tampa Bay Business Journal's 2023 BusinessWoman of the Year Honorees

Christine E. Howard

[Read more →](#)

[View All →](#)