



## PHILLIPS L. MCWILLIAMS

Partner

Columbia

803.255.0000

803.255.0202

### Service Focus

- Counseling and Advice
- Employee Defection and Trade Secrets
- Employment Discrimination and Harassment
- Labor Relations
- Litigation and Trials
- Wage and Hour

### Industry Focus

- Healthcare
- Hospitality
- Manufacturing

## OVERVIEW

Phillips McWilliams is an attorney who makes sure he understands his client's business objectives. He provides a tailored approach to each issue or case a client brings to him with the goal of ensuring the client can reach those objectives, thus ensuring a satisfactory result. Ultimately, he understands that each company he represents is a business that serves the community and the company can only continue its business if he works to find creative, long-term solutions to their problems.

Phillips regularly counsels employers on a variety of employment and labor issues in an effort to avoid litigation, to include decisions regarding hiring, discipline, investigations, and other related issues. He also gives talks to management and leadership in companies on harassment, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) compliance, the Family Medical Leave Act and many other areas.

An active litigator and appellate lawyer, Phillips handles lawsuits and arbitrations involving discrimination, non-competition, harassment, defamation, wage and hour claims, whistleblower claims, USERRA violations, and other federal and state employment law issues. He has extensive experience with appeals and argued multiple cases before the South Carolina Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of South Carolina.

Phillips also assists employers in traditional labor law matters. He has assisted clients facing union campaigns and unfair labor practice proceedings.

Prior to attending law school, Phillips served as an infantry officer in the United States Army attaining the rank of Captain. While in the military, Phillips spent more than a year in Iraq, leading over 400 combat and nation-building operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. During his time in Iraq, Phillips worked with a variety of individuals and institutions, to include regular coordination with foreign nationals and foreign institutions. This experience taught him the value of working with institutions and companies to help solve problems and set future goals. As a result, he is not intimidated when undertaking daunting tasks or cases as an attorney. Phillips' awards and decorations from his time in the military include: the Bronze Star Medal, the Ranger Tab, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the Parachutist Badge.

Deeply committed to veteran's issues, Phillips served as the President of the Service Members and Veterans in Law Society while in law school, has provided pro bono legal services to veterans as part of the Lawyers 4 Vets program at the VA, and serves on the Board for Salute From The Shore.

Phillips resides in Columbia's Forest Hills neighborhood with his wife and their two young children, Phillips Jr. and Reagan, who is the first girl born into the McWilliams family in 107 years—Phillips Jr. was the 16<sup>th</sup> straight boy in the McWilliams family. When not at work, Phillips can be found chasing after his children at Riverbanks Zoo, the Soda City Market on Saturday mornings, or in some other outdoor setting that allows them to run free. Phillips also enjoys any activity connected with one of South Carolina's beaches and never passes up an opportunity to cheer on the Gamecocks in person.

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## Credentials

### Education

- University of South Carolina School of Law, J.D., cum laude, 2014
- University of South Carolina, B.A., cum laude, 2006

### Bar Admissions

- South Carolina

### Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina
  - U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
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## Recognitions

- Recognized as *Thomson Reuters Stand-Out Lawyer* (2023 - 2024)
  - Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* (2026)
  - Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch* (2021 - 2025)
  - Named to *Columbia Business Monthly's* Legal Elite of the Midlands in 2021
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## Affiliations

### Professional Activities

- Member, South Carolina Bar Association
- Member, American Bar Association

### Community Activities

- Phillips is a Sunday school teacher at Eastminster Presbyterian Church.
- Board Member, Salute From the Shore

**Publication**

**Jan 9, 2026**

Republished Insight: Military-Related Work Leave Hits Highest Rates Since 2006 – Does Your Company Know How to Comply with USERRA?

**Insights**

**Oct 30, 2025**

Comprehensive FAQs For Employers on Hurricanes and Other Workplace Disasters: 2025 Edition

**Insights**

**Sep 17, 2025**

Military-Related Work Leave Hits Highest Rates Since 2006 – Does Your Company Know How to Comply with USERRA?

**Insights**

**Aug 28, 2025**

FP Snapshot for Manufacturers: Delay Alone Can Violate the ADA

**Insights**

**Sep 7, 2023**

Labor Board Once Again Shifts the Scales to Ensure More Employee Conduct is Considered Protected Concerted Activity

**Insights**

**Sep 8, 2022**

Comprehensive FAQs For Employers on Hurricanes and Other Workplace Disasters: 2022 Edition