



Our Employment Practice Group attorneys defend employers in single plaintiff as well as class action litigation involving ADA, ADEA, FMLA, the WARN Act, Title VII and related state and local anti-discrimination and wrongful termination laws. We defend claims of wage and hour violation, defamation, interference, non-compete, trade secret, fiduciary duty, and whistleblower retaliation. We are seasoned trial attorneys who have successfully obtained numerous summary judgments, directed verdicts and defense verdicts.

We understand the value of being proactive. We complete robust early case assessments and promptly communicate opportunities for resolution. We advise employers on the day-to-day employee-related issues that arise and conduct internal complaint investigations. We draft arbitration clauses and clear, defensible employment policies and procedures.

We counsel clients in the development of diversity programs and initiatives. We provide onsite training related to state and federal employment laws with an emphasis on workplace diversity and inclusion.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)
- Employee Benefits and Contracts
- Executive Compensation
- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Reduction-in-Force
- Terminations
- Title VII - Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation
- Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN)

RELATED EXPERIENCE

- Obtained a defense verdict in litigation filed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) against a Wisconsin auto parts retailer concerning alleged violations of Title 1 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This was the first such complete defense verdict obtained against the EEOC in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, which was also affirmed on appeal.
- Obtained defense verdict in high profile jury trial involving a claim of race discrimination under Section 1981 which was affirmed on appeal. The case involved alleged hangman nooses.
- Represented a multi-national staffing and employment agency in connection with alleged pattern and practice discrimination claims. Partnered with in-house counsel and successfully settled claims on favorable terms.
- Represented a major Wisconsin manufacturer in connection with claims of systemic race discrimination pursued by the NAACP. Successfully resolved claims without commencement of litigation or adverse publicity.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of corporate client in litigation involving claims of wrongful termination in violation of public policy.
- Defended Fortune 500® corporation against claims of pregnancy discrimination, sex discrimination and constructive discharge. Successfully obtained dismissal through Motion for Summary Judgment which was affirmed by the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Represented a major insurance provider in a Title VII race discrimination lawsuit prosecuted by the EEOC. Obtained favorable resolution of the claim prior to trial.
- Investigated claims of alleged systemic race discrimination by a major law enforcement agency. Due to our comprehensive investigatory report and recommendations, the claimants chose not to litigate the claims.



180 combined years of legal experience



7 dedicated attorneys offering their guidance



Offices in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin

REPRESENTATIVES

**KERRIE M. MURPHY**MANAGING PARTNER | WEST DES MOINES &
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With 30 years of experience, I have litigated cases of all sizes under a variety of employment laws, including Title VII, ADA, ADEA, FLMA, FLSA and their state law equivalents. My experience includes defense of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation claims asserting violations based on various protected categories including, but not limited to, sex, race, age, disability, pregnancy, religion, national origin and veteran status. I have also defended litigation involving state law claims of wrongful termination, wage payment violations, assault, defamation, and interference with business relationships.

My employment practice includes conducting internal investigations for clients, as well as preparation of responses to complaints filed at the local, state, and/or federal commission levels. I also conduct training and seminar presentations for clients on various employment-related issues.

I advise clients on a variety of human resources matters to prevent claims, including the review of employee handbooks, advice on policy changes, and management of employee issues that arise on a daily basis. I provide advice and counsel to my clients on a multitude of issues that employers confront on a frequent basis including, but not limited to, employee performance, incidents that require discipline or discharge, accommodation and leave-related issues.

**JULIE T. BITTNER**

EQUITY PARTNER | WEST DES MOINES

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I have 13 years of litigation experience. My employment practice includes defending claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) violations, wage disputes, employment-related torts, and contract disputes.

I regularly draft and review employee handbooks, conduct audits of company employment practices and policies, consult on workforce reductions, conduct internal investigations, and provide training to executives, managers and other employees regarding employment practices, equal employment opportunity and diversity. I also regularly counsel clients on best practices involving hiring processes, discipline and dismissals, and a variety of other workplace issues.

**EMERY K. HARLAN**

EQUITY PARTNER | MILWAUKEE & CHICAGO

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I have 32 years of experience as a trial attorney representing a wide range of disputes. My practice includes an emphasis on defending a large array of industries in complex ERISA, labor and employment matters. I have extensive experience defending companies and governmental entities in high profile, aggravated discrimination claims.

I have served as national employment law counsel to numerous companies, including a major airline. In addition to my litigation work, I counsel clients regarding the development of diversity programs.

Throughout my career, I have served as a leader in promoting greater diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. Immediately prior to co-founding MWH Law Group LLP, I served as Chairman of one of the largest minority-owned law firms in the United States.

I also co-founded the premiere trade association focused on creating opportunities for women and minority-owned law firms - the National Association of Minority & Women Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF). NAMWOLF has been, and continues to be, responsible for the tremendous growth in the number of minority and women-owned law firms in the United States.

**WARREN E. BULIOX**

EQUITY PARTNER | MILWAUKEE

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With 16 years of experience, I have represented and counseled small and large businesses, including Fortune 50[®], 100[®] and 500[®] corporations, in all phases of civil rights matters. I also assist my clients in developing creative and proactive solutions to mitigating or eliminating risks.

I have defended and provided counsel on claims involving ERISA, allegations of race and color discrimination, sex discrimination, age discrimination, religious discrimination, disability discrimination, arrest and conviction record discrimination, and disparate impact discrimination based on credit history and incarceration rates/stats.



VINCENT J. VIGIL

PARTNER | CHICAGO & MILWAUKEE

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I am a trial attorney with 37 years of experience representing and counseling insurance companies, third party administrators, and small and large businesses, including Fortune 500® corporations, on a wide range of complex matters. I have served as lead attorney with respect to claims involving wrongful death, product liability, construction litigation, automobile and trucking accidents, premises liability claims, and claims for defamation.

I have extensive experience with employment claims, breach of contract claims, fraud and misrepresentation claims, and real estate and commercial litigation matters.



SUZAN J. SUTHERLAND

SPECIAL COUNSEL | CHICAGO

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I have 46 years of experience as a litigator. I strategically manage and supervise litigation from the first notice of a claim through trial and appeal. I have been the lead attorney in over fifty successful jury trials in state and federal courts.

I have successfully defended clients in bench trials and evidentiary hearings before administrative agencies. I have experience handling appeals before Seventh Circuit, Illinois Supreme Court, Illinois Fourth District Court of Appeals, and the United States Court of Appeals.



ERIC L. ANDREWS

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I litigate as lead counsel with respect to auto/trucking litigation, fire and explosion, product liability, premises liability, toxic tort, and insurance defense matters. With over 8 years as a litigator, I have first-chaired jury trials on behalf of municipalities, tried multiple small claims matters before court commissioners and small claims judges, and successfully obtained multiple summary judgments.

HIGHLIGHTS

MWH Law Group LLP is a community of individuals from diverse backgrounds, with distinct and contrasting experiences, which forms the basis of our unique corporate culture. These differences allow MWH attorneys to assist our clients in achieving the best solutions for the legal challenges they face.

- ✓ *Highly rated by Super Lawyers and Rising Stars*
- ✓ *Earned the highest ratings by Martindale-Hubbell*
- ✓ *Named Best Lawyers in America, Leaders in the Law, and Up & Coming Lawyers by Wisconsin Law Journal*