

Sara E. Welch

She/Her

PARTNER

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Office: Kansas City



Fiercely protective of her clients' interests, Sara combines a deep knowledge of employment law with a practical approach to the most complex issues facing national and regional employers.

A nationally recognized litigation attorney, Sara has broad experience in a wide variety of employment disputes. She defends employers against the full range of employment claims under federal and state laws, serving as lead counsel in jury trials, arbitrations and on appeal. Sara's extensive litigation experience contributes to her ability to provide employers with sound advice on day-to-day human resources issues and to serve as a proactive partner in her clients' strategic business initiatives.

Sara represents local and national companies in labor and employment law litigation with an impressive track record of success. Among her recent clients are Cerner Corporation and the Kansas City Royals. Her practice encompasses complex class and collective action cases under state and federal law, as well as claims of discrimination, retaliation, whistleblowing, Family and Medical Leave Act violations, confidentiality and non-compete agreements. In addition to serving as lead counsel in litigation, Sara also has successfully represented employers in government audits and investigations and guided them toward quick and favorable resolutions.

PRACTICES & INDUSTRIES

Labor, Employment & Benefits
Business Litigation
Class Action
Employment Litigation
Sports & Recreation

ADMISSIONS

Missouri, 1993
Kansas, 1994

EDUCATION

Northwestern University, J.D., 1993
University of Kansas, B.A., *with highest distinction*, 1990

CLERKSHIPS

Honorable Howard F. Sachs, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri

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Prior to joining the firm, Sara served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Howard F. Sachs, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri.

EXPERIENCE

Sara's considerable class and collective action experience includes:

- Defense of a worldwide health care information technology company in multiple class and collective action lawsuits alleging violations of federal and state wage and hour laws
- Representation of a global packaging company in a nationwide collective action alleging "off the clock" claims under the Fair Labor Standards Act
- Defense of a wireless technology deployment company against class and collective action claims under the Fair Labor Standards Act
- Defense of a federally qualified health center against class and collective action claims alleging misclassification of exempt employees
- Representation of a multi-state property management firm in a class and collective action case alleging misclassification of exempt employees

Sara's impressive roster of victories in discrimination claims includes:

- Successful defense of a worldwide hotel company, through trial and appeal, against claims of harassment based on race, sex and age
- Successful defense of a regional bank, at trial, against claims of gender discrimination under Missouri state law
- Enforcement of mandatory arbitration agreements and successful defense of a professional services firm at arbitration hearing
- Numerous summary judgment decisions and successful defense of those decisions on appeal for clients in a wide variety of industries, including a U.S.-based airline, a national bank, a Major League Baseball franchise, and one of the world's largest food companies
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of a regional medical center in a case alleging violation of the FMLA and discrimination based on disability
- Successfully defended a credit services company, through summary judgment and appeal, against claims of wrongful discharge based on an employee's whistleblowing
- Recent reported cases include *Washington v. American Airlines*, Case No. 08-6121, 2011 WL 4729813 (W.D. Mo., Oct. 7, 2011); 2015 WL 1345221 (8th Cir. March 26, 2015)

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RECOGNITIONS

Received *Martindale-Hubbell* "AV" Rating, 2020

Named one of the *Kansas City Business Journal's* 2013 Women Who Mean Business.

Listed in the 2013-2024 editions of *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Labor and Employment Law and selected as 2015 and 2022 Litigation – Labor and Employment "Lawyer of the Year" in Kansas City, Mo.

Listed in the 2010-2023 editions of *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business* for Labor & Employment. Sources say Sara is "one of the top lawyers in town ...very knowledgeable and thoughtful," with a "broad employment litigation practice." A client also attests: "She gets right to the heart of what the issues are and makes balanced recommendations as to what makes sense for our company."

PROFESSIONAL & CIVIC ACTIVITIES

Board of Directors for the Folly Theater, Member and 2018 Event Co-Chair

Board of Directors for Friends of the Conservatory of Music and Dance, Past Member

Board of Directors of Kansas City Young Audiences, Past Member and 2019 Event Co-Chair

Hope House, Past Board Member; Board Chairperson, 2010-2012

2004 Woman of the Year Candidate, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

American Employment Law Council, Member

Kansas Bar Association

The Missouri Bar

Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association

NEWS

175 Stinson Attorneys Selected to the 2024 *Best Lawyers in America* List
08.17.2023

Chambers USA 2023 Legal Guide Recognizes Stinson Attorneys and Practice Groups
06.05.2023

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The 2022 *Chambers* USA Guide Recognizes Stinson Attorneys and Practice Groups

06.02.2022

103 Stinson Attorneys Selected to the 2022 *Best Lawyers in America* List

08.19.2021

Ten Stinson Attorneys Named 2022 Lawyers of the Year by *Best Lawyers in America*

08.19.2021

Stinson and Association of Corporate Counsel Hold Virtual Nonprofit and Small Business Pro Bono Legal Clinic

06.16.2021

Chambers USA Recognizes Stinson Attorneys and Practice Groups Nationwide

05.25.2021

112 Stinson Attorneys Selected to the 2021 *Best Lawyers in America* List

08.20.2020

Chambers USA Recognizes Stinson Attorneys and Practice Groups Nationwide

04.29.2020

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

New Challenges for HR in 2023 – St. Louis

02.02.2023

New Challenges for HR in 2023 – Kansas City

Kansas City, 01.26.2023

Employment Due Diligence in Mergers & Acquisitions and the Hiring Process

03.12.2022

New Challenges for HR in 2022

02.03.2022

New Challenges for HR in 2021

02.04.2021

Managing Employee Mental Health Issues Webinar

04.21.2020

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New Challenges for HR in 2020 - Kansas City
Overland Park Convention Center, 02.13.2020

PUBLICATIONS

2019 and 2020 EEO-1 Component 1 Data Collection is Now Open
04.29.2021

U.S. Supreme Court Rules that Federal Law Forbidding Workplace Discrimination Protects LGBTQ+ Workers
06.15.2020

Colorado Employers Face a Bevy of New State Laws
03.12.2020