



Helen M. McFarland

Member

Seattle, San Francisco

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Helen M. McFarland focuses her practice on employment litigation and counseling for a broad range of California, Oregon, and Washington employers, professionals, insurers, and businesses. She advises clients on the entire gamut of employment issues, including hiring and firing employees, avoiding harassment and discrimination claims, responding to leave requests, accommodating disabilities or claimed disabilities, ensuring wage and hour compliance, handling grievances and investigations, and drafting employee handbooks, agreements, and other employment policies. Helen also trains supervisors and other Human Resources professionals in best practices.

In addition to counseling, Helen has more than 16 years of experience litigating cases in state and federal courts, in arbitrations, and before administrative agencies. She deftly handles all aspects of litigation from initial witness interviews through discovery, dispositive motions, mediations, and trial. She also assists employers in responding to complaints brought before the EEOC and the DFEH.

Helen earned her law degree from Lewis and Clark Law School, where she served as the managing editor of the *Environmental Law Review* and was selected by faculty to be on the Cornelius Honor Society. She received her undergraduate degree from Vassar College.

Experience

Defense verdict in multimillion dollar partnership dispute in Marin County Superior Court.

Successfully defended multi-national corporation in putative wage and hour class action in which, after extensive discovery, the representative plaintiffs' counsel voluntarily dismissed the class allegations.

Negotiated dismissal of FEHA discrimination and wrongful termination case against large corporation and four individual defendants for a waiver of costs following plaintiff's deposition in Orange County.

Summary adjudication on 17 of 19 causes of action in an employment discrimination case alleging FEHA age and marital status discrimination and retaliation, wrongful termination, and numerous other statutory and tort employment claims.

Summary judgment on FEHA disability discrimination and failure to accommodate claims brought by former employee against Silicon Valley start-up and its CFO. Received an award of all costs as prevailing party.

Complete defense verdict after three years of litigation and a five day arbitration in which the plaintiff sought over \$1.3 million plus attorneys' fees, for an alleged breach of contract and other statutory and tort causes of action. Received an award of all attorneys' fees and costs incurred.

Practice Areas

- Labor & Employment
- Employment Litigation
- Professional Liability
- Litigation

Education

- Northwestern School of Law of Lewis and Clark College, J.D., 2001
- Vassar College, B.A.

Bar Admissions

- California
- Oregon
- Washington

Court Admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Court -- Central District of California
- U.S. District Court -- Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court -- Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court -- Oregon
- U.S. District Court -- Western District of Washington

Affiliations

- Pacific Coast Labor and Employment Law Conference Planning Committee
- King County Bar Association -Labor and Employment Section
- San Francisco Bar Association
- Edward J. McFetridge Inn of Court

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