Kimberly J. O'Donnell
Office Managing Partner



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Overview

Kimberly J. O'Donnell is Managing Partner of the Lexington office and a member of the Firm's **Employment and Labor** practice group. She advises and represents clients in matters involving a broad range of employment issues. She focuses her practice in employment litigation, where she represents employers in litigation before state and federal courts, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights and the Kentucky Division of Unemployment Insurance involving claims of employment discrimination, retaliation, retaliatory discharge, harassment, state and federal wage and hour laws, and violations of the Family and Medical Leave Act. Kim also advises employers on various employment issues, including employee handbooks, employee agreements, non-competition and confidentiality agreements, personnel policies and separation agreements.

Kim earned her J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law and her undergraduate degrees from the University of Kentucky. She is also a volunteer mediator for the Small Claims Division of the Fayette District Court.

Experience

Employment Litigation

- *Ebbs v. Community Medical Associates, Inc.* (d/b/a Norton Healthcare), 14-CI-00180, Oldham Circuit Court, 2018: Defended client at trial against plaintiff's claims of race discrimination, age discrimination and breach of contract. Kim argued the Motion for Directed Verdict, which was granted by the trial court on both the race and age discrimination claims. The jury returned a defense verdict in favor of client on the breach of contract claims. The jury also reached a verdict in favor of client on its counterclaim against the plaintiff.
- *Buckman v. Ingersoll Rand Company,* 1:14-cv-00149-GNS, United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky, 2017: Defended client and served as lead trial counsel in a federal jury trial in which plaintiff sought damages for alleged workers' compensation retaliation. The jury quickly returned a unanimous defense verdict in favor of client..

Appeals

- Appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit's Criminal Justice Act Panel in

December, 2017. The Criminal Justice Act Panel is a select group of qualified and court-approved attorneys who are eligible for appointment by the Court to represent individuals in criminal cases who are unable for financial reasons to retain counsel.

Recognition

News

- **Dentons recognized by Best Lawyers in America® in 2025 rankings**
- **Dentons recognized by Best Lawyers in America® in 2024 rankings**
- **Dentons recognized by Best Lawyers in America® in 2023 rankings**
- **39 Bingham Greenebaum Doll Attorneys Included in the 2018 Kentucky and Ohio Super Lawyers® Lists**

Honors and Awards

- Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* in the fields of Litigation – Labor and Employment, 2023-2025; Employment Law – Management, 2025; Employment Law – Individuals, 2025
- Named to *Kentucky Super Lawyers*, 2025
- Commerce Lexington Leadership Lexington Program, Class of 2018
- Kentucky Super Lawyers List Rising Star for Employment Litigation: Defense, 2018
- *Kentucky Law Journal,* 2006-2008
- University of Kentucky College of Law National Moot Court Team, 2006-2007
- University of Kentucky Gaines Fellowship in the Humanities, 2004- 2005

In the Media

- Quoted, "**Legal Services: Markets Make the Case for Diversity**," The Lane Report, May 18, 2023

Insights

- Co-editor, A Guide to ADA/ FMLA for Kentucky Employers, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, 3rd edition, 2021
- Co-author, "Supreme Court issues landmark Title VII ruling protecting sexual orientation and gender identity," Dentons client alert, June 16, 2020
- Co-author, "Enforceability of liability waivers to protect against COVID-19 claims", Dentons client alert, June 5, 2020
- Co-author, "What employers need to know about the Families First Coronavirus Response Act," Dentons client alert, March 20, 2020
- "The #MeToo Movement is Pushing Companies to Look Closely at Sexual Harassment Prevention and Gender Bias," July 24, 2018

Kentucky Cannabis Law Blog Insights

- **Employment and what cannabis businesses need to know**, May 22, 2024

Activities and Affiliations

- District of Columbia Bar Association
- Kentucky Bar Association
- Fayette County Bar Association
- FCBA Women Lawyers' Association

Community Involvement and Pro Bono

- Advisory Committee, Kentucky Chamber's Labor & Employment Law Task Force, 2023
- Board of Directors, Kentucky Association of Manufacturers
- Board of Directors, Bluegrass Society of Human Resource Management ("BGSHRM"), Legislative Affairs Director
- Board of Directors, Lexington Ballet Company
- Board of Directors, Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center
- Fayette District Court, Small Claims Division Mediator
- Member, Women Leading Kentucky
- Fundraising Committee Member, Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning
- Volunteer Teacher, Junior Achievement of the Bluegrass

Presentations

- Co-presenter, "Employment Law Update 2025," Kentucky Association for Healthcare Recruitment, March 4, 2025
- Presenter, "Legal Update: Ten Things Your Employment Attorney Wants You to Know," Bluegrass Society for Human Resources Management, January 14, 2025
- "Key Concepts and Best Practices for Leave of Absence and Workplace Accommodations," training presented to human resources staff at large employer, November 4, 2024
- Panelist for Governor Andy Beshear Interview, *Kentucky Association of Manufacturers' Industry Conference* , October 29, 2024
- Presenter, "**Doing Business Overseas: Key Trends and Common Pitfalls,**" Association of Corporate Counsel Webinar, October 26, 2023
- Presenter, "Legal Update: What 2023 Has in Store for Human Resource Professionals," Bluegrass Society for Human Resources Management, February 14, 2023
- Presenter, "Second Chance Employment: What Employers Should Consider When Hiring Employees with Criminal Backgrounds," Kentucky Chamber's Fair Chance Academy, June 8, 2022
- Presenter, "The Future of Restrictive Covenants in Kentucky: Best Practices and Current Trends for Employers to Consider," University of Kentucky College of Law Employment Law Institute, May 20, 2022
- Presenter, "Second Chance Employment: What Employers Should Consider When Hiring Employees with

Criminal Backgrounds," Kentucky Chamber 7th annual Kentucky Workforce Summit, February 15, 2022

- Presenter, "Legal Update: Navigating the Workplace of the Future," Bluegrass Society for Human Resources Management, February 8, 2022
- Presenter, "COVID-19 and Liability Considerations for Business," Kentucky Chamber of Commerce webinar, May 19, 2021
- Presenter, "Considerations When Returning Employees to the Workplace after COVID-19 Restrictions," BGSHRM, May 11, 2021
- Presenter, "An Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") Toolkit," 36th Annual KYSHRM Conference, October 14, 2020
- Presenter, "Why Pregnancy Discrimination Still Matters: The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 and the Kentucky Pregnant Workers' Act of 2019," University of Kentucky College of Law Employment Law Institute, August 20, 2020
- Presenter, "US COVID-19 top Employment and Labor issues to consider for your return-to-work strategy," Dentons webinar, June 5, 2020
- BGD Labor & Employment Breakfast Briefing: "A Conversation about the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Issues - Exemptions, Overtime, and Independent Contractors," April 2019
- BGD Labor & Employment Breakfast Briefing: "'Sexual Harassment Training Doesn't Work. But Some Things Do.' and Other Recent Headlines: What Employers Need to Know Regarding Sexual Harassment Prevention, the #MeToo Movement, and Gender Bias," March 2018
- BGD Labor & Employment Breakfast Briefing: "An Employer's Guide to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA): Forms, Eligibility, and Other Frequently Asked Questions," November 2017
- BGD Labor & Employment Breakfast Briefing: "The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA): Basics and Updates for Employers," August 2017
- BGD Labor & Employment Breakfast Briefing: "Do's and Don'ts of Internal Investigations: How to Avoid Legal Liability by Conducting a Meaningful Investigation into Allegations of Harassment, Discrimination, or Retaliation," March 2017
- BGD Breakfast Briefing: "Sexual Harassment Training Doesn't Work. But Some Things Do." and Other Recent Headlines
- Presenter, "Legal Update: What 2023 Has in Store for Human Resource Professionals," Bluegrass Society for Human Resources Management, February 14, 2023
- Presenter, "Second Chance Employment: What Employers Should Consider When Hiring Employees with Criminal Backgrounds," Kentucky Chamber's Fair Chance Academy, June 8, 2022
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- BGD Breakfast Briefing: "Sexual Harassment Training Doesn't Work. But Some Things Do." and Other Recent Headlines

Prior and Present Employment

- Kinkead & Stilz, PLLC, Associate, 2014-2016
- Special Counsel, Inc., Business Development Director, 2013-2014
- Stoll Keenon Ogden, PLLC, Associate, 2008-2013

Areas of focus

Practices

- **Appellate Advocacy**
- **Employment and Labor**
- **Labor Relations and Collective Labor Law Negotiation with Unions and Employee Representatives**
- **Wage and Hour/Working Time/Overtime Litigation**
- **Restructuring, Redundancies and Reductions in Force**
- **Occupational Safety and Health**

Industry sectors

- **Cannabis**
- **Insurance**

- **Hospitality and Leisure**

Education

- University of Kentucky College of Law, 2008, J.D.
- University of Kentucky, 2005, B.A. Political Science, *summa cum laude*
- University of Kentucky, 2005, B.A. Economics, *summa cum laude*

Admissions and qualifications

- District of Columbia
- Kentucky
- US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- US District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky
- US District Court for the Western District of Kentucky

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