



## Laura Petroff

Partner

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With more than 30 years of experience as a labor and employment litigator and counselor, Laura represents major employers in all aspects of employment relations, including litigation and preventive counseling and guidance. She has extensive experience defending employers in class actions, and also in multi- and single-plaintiff cases in state and federal courts, and has consistently achieved favorable results both before and at trial and arbitration. Clients say “she is a very strong, aggressive, and extremely confident adviser” (*Chambers USA* 2018) and “incredibly talented and knowledgeable” (*Chambers USA* 2022). Laura was honored with a 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award by ALM’s California Legal Awards.

Laura guides clients through their most significant employment-related challenges, including litigation and also protection of assets, prevention of employee raiding, managing trade secrets and non-competes, and working to achieve high-level management goals without meaningful disruption, fees, and costs generated by extended litigation.

In litigation, Laura has extensive experience in disputes involving sexual harassment, all types of discrimination, retaliation, whistleblower, and non-competition agreement matters; and she has focused considerable attention on

defending employers in class actions, particularly wage and hour cases.

Laura represents employers in the consumer and luxury goods, financial services, medical devices, manufacturing, professional services, health care, and retail industries, among others.

Laura's representative clients include the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences; Accenture; Bakkavor Foods; Brookfield; Cboe; Clune Construction Company; Echo Global Logistics; Fluidra USA; Guggenheim Partners Investment Management; The Hertz Corporation; JP Morgan Chase Bank; Lamb Weston Holdings, Inc.; Lilly; Los Angeles Dodgers LLC; LVMH Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton; Louis Vuitton North America, Inc.; Marsh & McLennan; Northern Trust; Nuveen Investments; Medtronic, Inc.; Nissin Foods (USA); Northern Trust; SunPower Corporation; Symphony Asset Management; Wasserman Media Group and Zodiac Pool Systems, LLC.

## Key Matters

### DISCRIMINATION/RETALIATION

- Obtained highly favorable settlement in six-plaintiff age discrimination case for one of the largest banks in the country. After the case had been pending for three years and trial was approaching, Laura was retained as trial counsel. Shortly thereafter, the Plaintiffs sought mediation, vastly reduced their settlement demand, and the matter settled on highly favorable terms for the client.
- Obtained summary judgment in the American Arbitration Association for medical device manufacturer in whistleblower retaliation action brought by former area sales manager. Following months of extensive discovery and contentious motion practice, the AAA panel granted summary judgment in her client's favor and dismissed the case before trial—an extremely uncommon occurrence in arbitrations.
- Obtained highly-favorable settlement for a medical device manufacturer on a former senior executive's claims for disability discrimination, retaliation, and sexual orientation discrimination. The settlement was the result of numerous admissions against interest that Laura obtained during the plaintiff's deposition.

### COMPETITION/TRADE SECRETS

- Obtained a preliminary injunction from the New York Supreme Court enjoining competitive employment and misappropriation of confidential information against former executive of luxury goods company attempting to defect to a competitor with the client's stolen information. Following issuance of injunction, the client also obtained substantial monetary payment from the ex-employee.
- Enforced a non-compete and other post-employment covenants for one of the leaders in the pool equipment industry. To succeed in enforcing the non-compete and non-solicit, Laura's strategy was to file a complaint, which she used to conduct discovery to credibly determine what information a former employee may have leaked to a competitor. After an in-person meeting with the former employee and counsel to examine the former employee, she was able to obtain a declaration confirming that none of the client's highly confidential information had been misappropriated. We also secured an agreement regarding compliance with all post-employment obligations, and then dismissed the case, without prejudice.

### WAGE & HOUR

- Over the last two decades, Laura has generated incredible success in wage and hour class and collective actions. Most often she implements innovative and aggressive strategies to defeat class certification. In one recent matter, Laura's strategy resulted in defeating class certification and settlement on a single-plaintiff basis in the four-figure range. The strategies vary depending on the claims and the underlying facts, but consistently result in successful client outcomes.
- Frequently, Laura has been hired to substitute in as new counsel in wage and hour matters, to enhance the client's chances of success or simply to improve the client's position in defense of the case. This pattern

continues to occur with increasing frequency, and also with an increasing number of victories and otherwise improved outcomes for her clients.

## INVESTIGATIONS

- Laura has significant experience in leading high-profile and highly confidential internal investigations for clients ranging from a leading player in the solar industry, a prominent luxury goods company, one of the country's largest food product manufacturers, a number of companies in the entertainment and marketing industries, a national general contractor, and one of the country's largest metropolitan transit agencies. Each investigation presents its own set of challenges, but Laura has maneuvered each client through the process to a satisfactory result.

## Recent Experience

Hospice Source's Acquisition of Superior Healthcare Inc.

Forum Merger II Corp. Business Combination with Ittella International, Inc.

High-Stakes, High-Level HR Investigation, Counseling, and Settlement of Sexual Harassment Allegations

Settlement in Reverse Discrimination Dispute by Legal Leadership Team Member

Conducted Urgent Internal Harassment Investigation and Obtained Favorable Settlement of Subsequent Lawsuit

Negotiated Extremely Favorable Settlement and Indemnification in Wage and Hour Class Action

Litigation Risk Assessment for Leading MedTech Company

High-Profile Disability and Sexual Orientation Discrimination Settlement

Motion for Summary Judgment Win in Whistleblower Retaliation Case

Consolidated Wage and Hour Class Action Cases in Northern California

## Recognitions

In 2025, Laura was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by ALM's California Legal Awards.

Laura was recognized in the 2024 and 2025 editions of *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Litigation - Labor and Employment and in *Lawdragon 500's* 2021–2025 “Leading U.S. Corporate Employment Lawyers” guides to the nation's top talent representing Corporate America. She has been named a leading employment defense lawyer by *Chambers USA* from 2009–2024. Clients say she is a “great advocate and seasoned litigator.” She was also recognized as a “Labor & Employment Star” by *Benchmark Litigation US* (2020; 2022–2024) and in *The Legal 500 US* from 2017–2021 for her work in labor and employment disputes.

Laura was honored with the Tyler Clementi Foundation's 2024 “Upstander Legacy Award” for her 10 years of pro bono legal services to the foundation, working to end online and offline bullying. She was also selected as a 2015 “Woman of Influence” honoree by *L.A. Biz* and was named one of the “Top 100 Most Powerful Employment Attorneys in the Nation” for 2015, 2016, 2019–2020 by *Human Resource Executive*®. She was nominated for the *Los Angeles Business Journal's* “Executive of the Year” award in both 2008 and 2009 and as part of the publication's “Women Making a Difference” awards program. Laura has also been honored as a *Southern California Super Lawyer* in 2004, 2006–2025.

# Activities

Laura is the former managing partner of the firm's Los Angeles office, former chair of the firm's Partner Compensation Committee, and a former member of the Executive Committee.

Laura was a founding member of the Women Rainmakers Roundtable and serves on the board of directors of Public Counsel. She is also a member of the Alumni Board of Advisors for Denison University.

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“Laura handles large and small matters with the same level of responsiveness and dedication.”

*Chambers USA*

## Credentials

### EDUCATION

Laura received a J.D. from Vanderbilt University School of Law in 1980 and a B.A. from Denison University in 1977.

### ADMISSIONS

- California

## Related Insights & News

Laura frequently speaks on topics of interest to employers. Her recent speeches include:

- “Managing Through the ‘Next’ Normal”
- “Hot Topics in the Employment Arena: From Managing Class Actions to Social Media Implications, Employers Face New Challenges”
- “Avoiding the Alphabet – Escaping the EEOC, Dodging the DFEH, and Other Handy Tricks”
- “3rd Quarter Employment Law Update”
- “Tips, Tactics & Trends for 2010”
- “Social Media in the Workplace”
- “The Legalities of Reducing Payroll”
- “Conducting Effective Investigations”
- “Balancing Employees’ Rights in the Information Age”
- “Harassment Prevention”
- “Employment Law Update: The Legal Year in Review and New Developments in the Courts and the Legislature”

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### RECOGNITIONS

## Winston Partners Honored During the 2025 California Legal Awards

APRIL 23, 2025

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### RECOGNITIONS

Laura Petroff Honored by The Tyler Clementi Foundation

OCTOBER 25, 2024

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### RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® 2025

AUGUST 15, 2024

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### RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *Chambers USA* 2024

JUNE 6, 2024

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### RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in 2024 *Benchmark Litigation*

OCTOBER 6, 2023

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### RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Partners Recognized in 2024 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading U.S. Corporate Employment Lawyers

SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

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### RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® 2024

AUGUST 17, 2023

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### RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *Chambers USA* 2023

JUNE 6, 2023

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### CLIENT ALERT

New Laws and Trends Affecting the Workplace in 2023

JANUARY 23, 2023

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### BLOG

Winston Convenes First In-Person Diverse Lawyers Retreat Since the Onset of Covid-19

OCTOBER 24, 2022

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### BLOG

In Coast-to-Coast Rulings, Courts Certify Classes in Worker Misclassification Suits

**RECOGNITIONS**

Winston & Strawn Partners Recognized in 2022 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading U.S. Corporate Employment Lawyers  
AUGUST 17, 2022

# Capabilities

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Labor & Employment

Litigation/Trials

ERISA Litigation

Trade Secrets, Non Competes & Restrictive Covenants

Financial Services

Health Care

Medical Devices

Professional Services

Technology, Media & Telecommunications

Life Sciences