



## Katherine R. Schafer

### Member

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### Profile

**Recognized as an Upstate New York Super Lawyer, Katherine (Katie) Schafer works closely with employers to provide practical, tailored advice for each organization's unique needs and goals. Katie strives to be actively engaged with her clients, developing strategies to help them reach their desired objectives while ensuring compliance with federal and state labor and employment laws.**

Her practice includes counseling and defending management in all aspects of labor and employment matters, including defense of discrimination and harassment complaints, civil rights litigation, employee discipline, terminations, layoffs, handbook policies, employee agreements, separation agreements, labor negotiations, grievances and arbitrations, and wage and hour issues.

Katie has particular experience in workplace investigations, including those involving allegations of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, sexual assault, bullying, theft, wage and hour issues, abuse of power and compliance issues. Katie brings her legal background and experience to clients in need of an outside investigator to conduct timely and thorough investigations into complex, sensitive and high-profile matters. At the conclusion of the investigation, Katie provides clear and actionable recommendations designed to address the issues identified during the investigation, prevent future occurrences, and avoid costly litigation. Katie also routinely counsels, oversees and trains clients in conducting effective workplace investigations.

### Representative Investigations

- Conducted investigation regarding allegations of bullying, harassment and fiscal improprieties against executive director of non-profit organization.
- Conducted investigation for health care plan of allegations of inappropriate and discriminatory behavior regarding chief medical officer.
- Conducting investigation for university concerning allegations against department chair, including allegations of cheating, improper conduct on trips, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) violations, and harassment, bullying, retaliation and targeting of students. The investigation included interviews with more than 60 students and professors.
- Assisted employer by conducting investigation of department-wide allegations of theft of employer property.

### Education

- Syracuse University College of Law (J.D., *summa cum laude*, 2008)
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges (B.A., *summa cum laude*, 2005)

### Bar/Court Admissions

- New York
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York

### Practices

- School Law
- Labor and Employment
- Essential Resources for Business

- Conducted investigation for federal contractor regarding allegations of sexual assault and sexual harassment against supervisor.
- Assisted health care system in conducting investigation of allegations of workplace violence, defamation, and harassment against a doctor and chair of department.
- Conducted investigation for school district of multiple allegations of bullying and harassment by parents and students regarding varsity coach.
- Conducted investigation of racial harassment against manager for financial institution.

## Representative Trainings

- Sexual/Workplace Harassment Training Compliant with New York State Law – Supervisory and Employee
- Employment Law Fundamentals for Leadership/Management Training
- Workplace Investigations Best Practices
- Leave Management for Employers: FMLA, ADA, PFL and More
- One-On-One Harassment/Sensitivity Re-Training Following Misconduct/Discipline
- Pregnancy in the Workplace: Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, Leave Issues, Accommodations
- Maintaining Healthy Boundaries for School District Personnel
- Hiring Practices/Interviewing Job Candidates

## Honors & Affiliations

- Listed in:
  - *New York Super Lawyers 2019®*, Upstate New York Rising Star, Employment and Labor
  - *New York Super Lawyers 2018®*, Upstate New York Rising Star, Employment and Labor
  - *CNY Business Journal* 40 Under Forty, 2019
  - *Martindale-Hubbell®*, AV Preeminent Rated
- New York State Bar Association, Equal Employment Opportunity Committee
- Onondaga County Bar Association
- Central New York Women's Bar Association
- Justinian Honorary Law Society
- Order of the Coif
- Executive Editor, *Syracuse Law Review*
- Scribes National Law Review Award, Best Note or Comment

## Representative Presentations

- Arbitration Case Study and Grievance Arbitration Best Practices 2024, New York State Association of Management Advocates for School Labor Affairs, June 14, 2024

- Unlimited PTO: The Answer You've Been Looking For Or Your Worst Nightmare?, Bond's Business in 2024 Webinar Series, June 5, 2024
- School Law 101: Conducting Thorough Investigations, School Law 101 Webinar Series, May 16, 2024
- Workplace Investigations Best Practices, Bond's Statewide Labor, Employment & HR Conference, May 11, 2023
- School Law 101: Personnel Investigations, School Law 101 Webinar Series, January 18, 2023
- Legislative Update: What HR Professionals Need to Know for 2022, CNY SHRM, January 20, 2022
- On the Horizon: Key Labor Law Areas to Watch in 2021, Bond Labor and Employment Law Breakfast Briefing, April 7, 2021
- Leave Management and COVID Impacts for Small Business, Camillus Chamber of Commerce, March 24, 2021
- Legislative Update: Where We've Been and Where We're Going in 2021, CNY SHRM, January 28, 2021
- Overcoming Age Discrimination in the Workplace, CNY SHRM, November 19, 2020
- Moderator, Solving the Leave Management Puzzle, CNY SHRM, June 18, 2020
- Returning to Work After the Pause: Anticipating Labor and Employment Issues and Creating a Communications Plan, May 15, 2020
- Reopening Considerations, Bond Webinar Series, April 26, 2020
- Legislative Update for Human Resource Professionals, CNY SHRM, January 30, 2020
- Employee Leave Strategies: FMLA, ADA and More, National Business Institute, November 20, 2019
- Workplace Harassment Prevention Laws & Prevention - A Necessity Now More Than Ever Webinar, Community Health Care Services Foundation, Inc., November 7, 2019
- Workplace Harassment Prevention, New York State Association of Health Care Providers, November 6, 2019
- What You Need to Know About the New State Sexual Harassment Law, CNY SHRM, October 25, 2018
- Legal Considerations When Hiring, CNY SHRM, October 24, 2019
- Workplace Harassment Prevention: A Necessity Now More Than Ever, CNY SHRM, September 17, 2019
- Marijuana Legalization: Impacts on the Workplace, CNY SHRM, June 13, 2019
- 9 to 5 No More: Regulating Employee Off-Duty Conduct, Bond Labor and Employment Breakfast Briefing, January 15, 2019
- Employment Law Basics for Supervisors, Managers and Business Owners, CNY SHRM, March 22, 2018
- A Practical Look at the New York State Paid Family Leave Law and What it Means for Your Workplace, CNY SHRM, September 28, 2017
- Moderator, Ready or Not: What You Need to Know About the U.S. DOL's Final Overtime Rules, CNY SHRM, October 27, 2016

- The Leave Labyrinth: Strategies for ADA and FMLA Compliance, Bond's Statewide Labor, Employment & HR Conference, May 2016
- Workplace Violence: Preventing and Responding to the Unthinkable, Bond Labor and Employment Law Breakfast Briefing, April 7, 2016
- Hiring Employees in the Age of Social Media, Greater Baldwinsville Chamber of Commerce, October 22, 2015
- Employee Handbooks – Choose Your Words Wisely, Bond Statewide Labor, Employment & HR Conference, June 9, 2015
- New Legal Challenges to Hiring Practices, Bond Labor and Employment Law Breakfast Briefing, March 25, 2015
- Employment Law Basics for Supervisors, Managers & Small Business Owners, CNY SHRM, March 19, 2015
- It's Not Just Your Lunch Money at Risk – Standing up to Workplace Bullying and Harassment, Bond Statewide Labor, Employment & HR Conference, May 21, 2014
- Revolving Issues of Intermittent FMLA Leave, Bond Statewide Labor, Employment & HR Conference, May 21, 2013
- EEOC's New Guidance on Criminal Background Information, Rochester Business Alliance, August 17, 2012

## Representative Publications

- "What do I need to know about the DOL's Final Overtime Regulations?," *CNY SHRM E-Newsletter*, Spring 2016
- "What does the EEOC's Proposed Enforcement Guidance on Retaliation mean for me and my organization?," *CNY SHRM Chapter Newsletter*, Winter 2016
- "What can I do to prepare for the new overtime exemption rules?," *CNY SHRM Chapter Newsletter*, Fall 2015
- "What do I need to know about the NLRB's new Guidance on Employee Handbook Rules?," *CNY SHRM Chapter Newsletter*, Summer 2015
- "I keep hearing about this new 'Ban-the-Box' law. Do I have to change my application process?," *CNY SHRM Chapter Newsletter*, Spring 2015
- "NLRB Regional Director Finds College Football Players Qualify as Employees and Can Unionize," *Higher Education Law Report*, March 24, 2014
- "The U.S. Department of Labor Extends FLSA Protections to Most Home Care Workers," *New York Labor & Employment Law Report*, September 30, 2013
- Schafer, Katherine Ritts and Langan, Kerry W., "Survey of New York Law: Labor and Employment Law," 63 *Syracuse L. Rev.* 829, 2013
- Schafer, Katherine Ritts and Langan, Kerry W., "Survey of New York Law: Labor and Employment Law," 62 *Syracuse L. Rev.* 709, 2012
- Ritts, Katherine A. and Langan, Kerry W., "Survey of New York Law: Labor and Employment," 61 *Syracuse L. Rev.* 831, 2011
- "The Constitutionality of 'Let Them Rest in Peace' Bills: Can Governments Say 'Not Today Fred' to Demonstrations at Funeral Ceremonies?," 58 *Syracuse L. Rev.* 137, 2007

## Other Activities

- Central New York Society for Human Resource Management (CNY SHRM), Board of Directors, Legislative Committee Chair
- New York State Association of Management Advocates for School Labor Affairs
- The Junior League of Syracuse, Inc.