



Erika L. Shao

PARTNER

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RELATED SERVICES

- Employment
- Trial Practice
- Product Liability

OFFICES

- Los Angeles
- Irvine
- San Diego

OVERVIEW

Erika Shao is a Partner and trial attorney in GRSM's Los Angeles office and a member of the Employment, and Product Liability practice groups. Erika specializes in litigating single and multi-plaintiff employment cases in state and federal court for a wide range of business clients, including large corporations, public entities, and non-profit organizations.

Erika has significant case management experience, including complex case evaluations, depositions, motion practice, and trials. She routinely works to develop defense and trial strategies from the onset of litigation. In addition to an active civil court practice, Erika has also successfully represented her clients before administrative agencies such as the Department of Labor Standards Enforcement and the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. Erika also litigates cases concerning alleged violations of wage and hour laws. Erika also defends aviation actions as well as manufacturers in wrongful death and personal injury actions involving claims of product defects, toxic exposure, and negligence.

In addition to litigating employment matters, Erika regularly counsels employers on employment law issues such as employee discipline and termination, hiring, reductions in force, wage and hour issues, misconduct investigations and sexual harassment training. Erika also provides advice and counseling to employers regarding drafting policies and employee handbooks and making presentations on current trends in employment law.

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Trial Counsel in a national origin discrimination, harassment and retaliation case venued in Los Angeles Superior Court, February 2018. Plaintiff claimed his postdoctoral fellowship was not renewed the second year because of his complaints of discrimination and harassment. After a two-week trial and less than a day of deliberations, the jury returned a defense verdict on all of plaintiff's causes of action.
- Trial Counsel in a disability discrimination and wrongful termination case venued in Los Angeles Superior Court, January 2018. Plaintiff claimed he was terminated from his employment due to his alleged disability and wrongfully terminated his employment while on a medical leave. The defense team demonstrated plaintiff was terminated after the employer conducted a finance review and corporate security investigation and uncovered mischaracterization of numerous charges on expense reports to make them appear as company reimbursable business expenses. After a two-week trial, the jury deliberated for three hours before returning a complete defense verdict.
- Trial Counsel in a disability discrimination and failure to accommodate case venued in Ventura Superior Court, May 2014. Plaintiff claimed she was discriminated against due to her disability and that the company failed to accommodate her disability by not holding her job open for over 4 months while she was on a leave of absence. Plaintiff did not qualify for leave pursuant to the Family Medical Leave Act, but the company held her position open for 7.5 weeks. The company placed Plaintiff on an extended leave that offered no guarantees of re-employment but the ability to return to a vacant position. The jury deliberated for less than 2 hours before returning a complete defense verdict.
- Part of trial team that secured a defense verdict in a wrongful death/design defect case involving a multiple fatality helicopter crash venued in Los Angeles Superior Court (May 2016).
- Part of trial team that secured a defense verdict in an employment discrimination case involving claims of gender and pregnancy discrimination, disability discrimination, retaliation and wrongful termination against a restaurant group employer venued in Los Angeles Superior Court (February 2016).
- Won summary judgment on behalf of a security company client in a wrongful termination, retaliation, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and assault and battery case venued in Los Angeles Superior Court.

- Won summary judgment on behalf of a large, national retailer in a disability discrimination, disability harassment, failure to accommodate and engage in the interactive process, retaliation, and wrongful termination (9 causes of action total) case venued in Los Angeles Superior Court.
- Won summary judgment on behalf of a large, national insurance company in a failure to prevent discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and retaliation case venued in Los Angeles Superior Court.

PRESENTATIONS

- Significant Changes and Developments in Employment Litigation for 2025, GRSM Legal Education Conference, Los Angeles, CA, June 2025

CREDENTIALS

Admissions

- California
- U.S. District Court, Central, Southern, Eastern and Northern Districts of California

Memberships

- American Bar Association
- Los Angeles County Bar Association

Community Involvement

Erika was previously on the Board of Directors for the Los Angeles Chapter of GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network), whose mission is to ensure that every member of the school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Education

- J.D., Southwestern Law School
 - Notes and Comments Editor, Southwestern Law Review
 - Member, Southwestern Moot Court Honors Program
 - Octa-finalist Oralist, Intramural Moot Court Competition
 - Recipient. Dean's Merit Award (2007-2009)
 - Recipient, Exceptional Achievement Award: Civil Procedure
 - Recipient, Witkin Award for Academic Excellence: Products Liability
- B.A., Mass Communications & Sociology, University of California, Berkeley

Externships

- The Honorable Arthur L. Alarcon, Senior Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Honors

- *Super Lawyers*® Rising Star, Southern California (2016-2019)