



Geoff Lee

PARTNER

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RELATED SERVICES

- Employment
- Tribal & Native American
- Trial Practice
- Real Estate
- Retail & Hospitality

OFFICES

- Los Angeles
- Irvine
- San Diego

OVERVIEW

Geoff Lee is a Partner in the Employment and Real Estate practice groups. Geoff represents employers in defense of lawsuits involving wage and hour, wrongful termination, harassment, discrimination, and breach of contract claims. He has also handled numerous class actions and “Private Attorneys General Act” lawsuits claiming Labor Code and Wage Order violations, including failure to provide meal and rest periods, unpaid overtime, failure to reimburse employees’ business expenses, and unfair business practices. Geoff also counsels clients on workplace investigations, employee discipline, terminations, and compliance with the state and federal WARN Acts. Geoff specializes in representing employers in the construction, manufacturing, hotel, and addiction recovery industries.

Prior to joining GRSM, Geoff was an associate for a midsized firm where he handled a wide range of legal matters, including labor and employment claims, commercial litigation, real estate litigation, consumer class actions, construction defect cases, civil writs, and appeals.

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Prevailed at arbitration of a Disparate Impact age discrimination claim following a corporate Reduction in Force (“RIF”)
- Served as an Administrative Law Judge for Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians casino employee claims
- Drafted numerous executive-level and C-level employment agreements.
- Crafted and customized dozens of employment policies and employee handbooks.
- Prevailed at trial to challenge the validity of employee severance agreement based on alleged fraud and illegality.
- Prevailed on Motion for Summary Adjudication of Equal Pay Act claim.
- Prevailed on Motion for Summary Adjudication of retaliation claim by a temp agency.
- Prevailed on multiple Demurrers sustained without leave to amend where the plaintiffs failed to articulate a legal disability to support a claim of disability discrimination.
- Created the first known trial court precedent in Los Angeles County holding that individual managers cannot be personally liable for unpaid wages under Labor Code section 558.1.
- Created the first known trial court precedent in California holding that third-party administrators and PEOs have no duty to engage with and no duty to accommodate the disabilities of employees for clients to whom they provide service.
- Prevailed on Motion for Summary Adjudication for residential home inspector, effectively ending the case.
- Obtained summary adjudication of overtime, meal period premium, and rest break premium claims based on the administrative exemption defense.
- Obtained summary adjudication of age discrimination claim.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of garment manufacturer in a case of alleged unpaid wages and penalties.
- Successfully defended auto dealership against claims for unpaid wages and penalties.
- Successfully defended restaurant against sexual harassment claim by waitress.
- Successfully defended a salon against hairstylists’ claim for untimely wages and waiting time penalties after termination.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of a CEO sued for fraudulent transfer.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of a land developer sued for breach of contract.
- Successfully obtained a \$2 million pre-judgment lien on a defendant’s real property in a federal securities fraud case.

- Obtained \$2,500 in discovery sanctions against a school district for withholding documents demanded in preparation for trial.
- Prevailed at a jury trial against prominent divorce lawyers for abuse of process and slander of title.
- Prevailed at a bench trial to rescind sale of business.
- Prevailed at a bench trial for breach of fiduciary duty committed by a trustee.
- Prevailed at a bench trial for contempt of court against a rival real property claimant, which resulted in a criminal conviction.
- Obtained complete dismissal of gender discrimination and assault claims brought by former District Manager of an insurance brokerage in an arbitration before the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (“FINRA”)
- Successfully defended employer accused of successor liability for wrongful layoffs and primary liability for discriminatory failure to hire, after it acquired assets from another corporation going out of business.
- Successfully defended disability discrimination and wrongful termination claims brought by a terminally ill employee.

PUBLICATIONS

Geoff has been actively involved in speaking engagements on a wide range of employment topics, including sexual harassment, workplace investigations, managing difficult employees, California’s Electronic Discovery Act, and C.C.P. § 998 Offers.

- *Air Machine Com SRL v. Superior Court*, 186 Cal. App. 4th 414 (2010) (obtaining writ of mandate against trial court erroneously ruling that defendant had waived challenge to jurisdiction)
- The End of Locker Room Talk: Same-Sex Harassment Litigation Expected to Rise, *Employment Law Update*, January 2014
- California Supreme Court Limits PAGA Penalties, *Employment Law Update*, September 2019
- Important Rules for Employers to Know in the Wake of COVID-19, *Employment Law Update*, 2020
- LWDA Answers Some Questions About CA WARN Act, *Employment Law Update*, 2020
- California Requires Employers to Provide Paid Sick Leave, *Employment Law Update*, June 2015

CREDENTIALS

Admissions

- California
- U.S. District Courts of California, Southern, Northern, Central, and Eastern Districts
- Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- Intertribal Court of Southern California

Memberships

- Welsh Inn of Court
- Enright Inn of Court
- San Diego Inn of Court
- Association of Business Trial Lawyers
- Lawyers Club of San Diego
- State Bar of California, Labor and Employment Law and Litigation Sections
- Los Angeles County Bar Association

Education

- National Institute of Trial Advocacy, Louisville, Colorado
- J.D., University of California, Davis, King Hall School of Law
 - Order of Barristers
 - Winner, Francis Carr Mock Trial Competition
 - Mock Trial Honors Board
 - Extern to U.S. District Judge, Honorable Vaughn Walker
- B.A., Business Economics, University of California, Los Angeles
 - College Honors
 - Clara Rusk Hastings Award for Writing