



## Paul F. Pautler, Jr.

### PARTNER

KANSAS CITY, MO

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### OVERVIEW

**Raised in a family of journalists, Paul built his successful 25-year labor & employment litigation practice on communication basics.**

For 25 years, Paul has used media fundamentals to advocate for clients: lead with the important, get to the point and focus on credibility with the jury. He has tried cases and counseled clients in more than 25 states, the District of Columbia and the United Kingdom.

Paul prevails for clients in jury trials of delicate harassment and discrimination cases. He also represents management clients in class and collective actions, complex employment lawsuits and arbitration proceedings. In arbitrations before American Arbitration Association (AAA) and Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) panels he represents employers. He represents clients across a broad range of industries, including hospitality and financial services.

Paul is a frequent speaker, trainer and author for business and professional organizations regarding employment obligations and management strategies.

*"It's great working with Paul - his knowledge and advice on employment matters is a great benefit to our organization."*

— Chambers USA 2023

### Industry

Food Systems

### Services

Hospitality

Labor & Employment

Employment Litigation Defense

HR Consultation & Training

Employment Class & Collective Actions

Traditional Labor Relations

Non-Competes & Restrictive Covenants

Workplace Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

## Experience

- Defended a highly contested gender/race discrimination case in Hawaii, obtaining summary judgment on two-thirds of the plaintiff's claims and then settling before trial.
- Defended national restaurant chains, hotels and casinos across the country and worked with executive management to develop training and litigation strategies to reduce liability risk in high-turnover industries.
- Obtained verdict in state court jury trial where plaintiff originally demanded \$10 million to settle and its last offer during trial was \$2 million. Obtained award of attorney's fees and expenses for prevailing client.
- Obtained a rare complete-summary judgment in a Missouri state court lawsuit (*Davis v. Mediacom and Art Samuel*) in which the plaintiff alleged age discrimination and retaliation under the Missouri Human Rights Act.
- Handled a case involving claims of race, age and national-origin discrimination, as well as retaliation and public policy wrongful discharge. The plaintiff claimed that he was fired for refusing to approve nonconforming materials to be used in nuclear weapons. Court granted motion for summary judgment on all four counts based upon admissions obtained in the deposition of plaintiff.
- Defended a complaint filed with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) alleging that client retaliated against the complainant in violating the whistleblower-protection provisions of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. In addition to mounting a substantive defense, aggressively pursued dismissal based on jurisdiction. After extensive discovery and briefing, the administrative law judge dismissed the matter for lack of jurisdiction. Decision upheld on appeal to U.S. Department of Labor's Administrative Review Board.
- Served as first chair in numerous employment discrimination jury trials in state and federal courts, all of which returned verdicts in favor of clients.
- Handled Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) class/collective action matters involving employee misclassifications, off-the-clock work, and donning and doffing.

## Experience

- Obtained summary judgments for defense in sexual harassment, age, gender and disability cases.
- Successfully defended energy company in a workplace discrimination lawsuit filed by a former employee who claimed age discrimination, gender discrimination, associational race discrimination and retaliation.
- Assisted and counselled client through a reduction in force involving approximately 10% of its workforce in the spring of 2020.
- Led the defense of a class and collective action where plaintiffs claimed unpaid overtime with alleged damages in the seven figures.

## Recognition

- *Benchmark Litigation*
  - Local Litigation Star, 2026
  - Labor & Employment Star - Midwest, 2018-2024
- *The Best Lawyers in America®*
  - Employment Law - Management, 2013-2026
  - Labor Law - Management, 2025 and 2026
  - Litigation - Labor and Employment, 2021-2026
- *Chambers USA*, Labor & Employment, 2013-2025
- Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers, 2006-2012, 2014-2021, 2023
- Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent

## Education

- J.D., University of Missouri School of Law
  - Order of the Barristers
  - Order of the Coif
  - *Missouri Law Review*, Note and Comment Editor
- B.A., William Jewell College
  - *magna cum laude*
  - *Student*, Editor-in-Chief
  - *Hilltop Monitor*, Editor-in-Chief

## Admissions

- Missouri
- U.S. District Court, District of Kansas
- Kansas
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit
- U.S. Supreme Court

## Community Leadership

- St. Peters School, seventh- and eighth-grade basketball coach
- Kansas City Autism Training Center, board member



2026 Benchmark Litigation -  
Litigation Star