

## Alison M. Ballard

Shareholder

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### Areas of Practice & Industry Specialties

Litigation; Intellectual Property Litigation; Trade Secrets & Employee Mobility; Technology



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Alison M. Ballard is a Shareholder in the Firm's Atlanta office and a member of the Litigation practice group. She is an experienced commercial litigator representing her clients as lead counsel in all types of disputes in federal and state courts, in arbitration, and before administrative agencies.

Ms. Ballard zealously protects and enforces her clients' rights in intellectual property, trade secrets, restrictive covenants, employment, and commercial contracts. Ms. Ballard represents public companies, large corporations, small businesses, executives, and individuals that span a diverse range of industries. She has a track record of significant wins both prosecuting and defending disputes at all stages of litigation, from pre-litigation investigations and strategic negotiations through trial and appeals.

Ms. Ballard has particular experience with the technology sector. Her clients range from publicly-traded, global service providers to IT developers and start-ups in the areas of software, SaaS, CRM, CX, telecommunications, and more. Ms. Ballard is also well-versed in the technological aspects of investigations and litigation. She manages large scale electronically stored information ("ESI"), forensic investigations, and e-discovery, and previously served as an e-discovery chair, developing firm wide protocols for client ESI.

In addition to her litigation practice, Ms. Ballard is a trusted advisor to her clients on a variety of pre-litigation legal issues, including employment matters, internal investigations, government investigations, data privacy, data breach response, proactive safeguarding of trade secrets and intellectual property, and more.

Ms. Ballard previously served for five years as Deputy General Counsel to a full-service law firm based in Atlanta, where she was a partner.

Ms. Ballard has consistently been recognized by Best Lawyers in America, Georgia Super Lawyers, and other organizations. In her community, Ms. Ballard has served on nonprofit boards of directors, as a mentor, and as a trustee. For over a decade, she has devoted significant time to Georgia Appleseed, a non-profit advancing justice for marginalized children through policy change. Ms. Ballard co-founded Georgia Appleseed's program training attorneys to *pro bono* represent Georgia foster children in school hearings.

### Awards and Honors

- Best Lawyers in America®, 2023-2025; Ones to Watch, 2021
- Georgia Super Lawyers, 2023, 2024
- Georgia Super Lawyers, Rising Stars, 2014-2023
- Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, Good Apple Award for Outstanding Volunteerism that Promotes Justice, 2016
- University of Georgia 40 Under 40, Nominee, 2023

## Professional Involvement

- The Sedona Conference
- State Bar of Georgia, Labor & Employment Section, Mentorship Academy, Mentor
- State Bar of Georgia, Co-Chair of YLD Labor & Employment Committee, 2013-2015

## Representative Matters

- As lead counsel, defended a private corporate security and staffing company in a restrictive covenants and trade secret dispute brought by a global conglomerate in federal court and Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. Successfully opposed temporary restraining order prohibiting the client from doing business with customers he serviced at his former company prior to its acquisition by Plaintiff. Achieved confidential favorable settlement at mediation after significant litigation.
- As lead counsel, achieved a full award of all damages on contract and tort claims in confidential arbitration AAA on behalf of fourteen parties—a national foodservice distribution leader and its third-party distributors—against three national restaurant chains.
- As lead counsel, represented an industrial process heating systems supplier in federal court adverse to a supplier seeking a declaratory judgment to enforce its limitation of liability clause. Prosecuted breach of contract, breach of warranties, unjust enrichment, and negligence claims. Achieved a favorable confidential settlement on behalf of the client after significant expert discovery.
- As lead counsel, represented in federal court a regional design-build construction for clients in the logistics and distribution, food and beverage, and medical device sterilization industries against a large competitor for trade secret misappropriation, cyber theft, and other business torts. Obtained a favorable confidential settlement after two years of litigation.
- As lead counsel, represented a home healthcare services agency in federal court over a dispute in a \$3.4M transaction; successfully defended against counterclaims and third-party complaint against client and its principals for breach of contract, breach of warranties, breach of confidentiality, indemnification and seeking and injunction and attorneys' fees. Reached a confidential favorable settlement prior to significant discovery.
- As lead counsel, represented in federal court a restaurant chain defending against claims of violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act, including the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act, related to the separation of an employee during the Covid-19 pandemic. Achieved favorable confidential settlement at mediation.
- As lead counsel, defended a leading global language services provider in AAA commercial arbitration against breach of contract claim in which plaintiff sought a six-figure award; obtained complete defense verdict at final evidentiary hearing.
- Conducted an internal investigation of employment discrimination claims against a public company; successfully defended against claims before the EEOC.
- Achieved favorable confidential settlement at mediation on behalf of healthcare provider resolving litigation concerning race and national origin discrimination and retaliation claims in the Northern District of Georgia.
- Obtained multiple temporary restraining orders in Georgia Superior Court on behalf of regional financial services firm, enforcing non-solicitation covenants of departing financial advisors and other executives who went to work for a competitor.

## Presentations

- Presenter, "Contract Management Techniques for In-House Counsel," Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) Georgia, CLE Challenge, August 15, 2023
- Moderator, "Economic Trends in the Manufacturing Sector," Fireside Chat with Simeon Wallis, June 28,

2023

- Presenter, "Cyber Security Best Practices and Ethical Obligations of Attorneys," Corporate Intellectual Property Institute (CIPI), Georgia Intellectual Property Alliance (GIPA), October 13, 2022

### **Education**

Ms. Ballard earned her J.D. from The University of Georgia School of Law, where she was the recipient of Bryant T. Castellow Memorial Scholarship. She earned her B.B.A., *cum laude* from The University of Georgia, Terry College of Business.

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### **Bar Admissions**

- Georgia

### **Community**

- Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
  - Board of Directors, Board Chair of Development
  - Executive Committee of the Young Professionals Council, Past President
  - Student Tribunal Project, Co-Founder
- University of Georgia School of Law Alumni Association, Firm Representative and Champion Cup Recipient
- University of Georgia School of Law Mentorship Program, Mentor, 2020-2021
- Founding Member, The Lola, Atlanta, GA
- Art Institute of Atlanta, Board of Trustees, 2021-2023; Board Chair 2022-2023