



Melanie Gurley Keeney

ATTORNEY AT LAW / SHAREHOLDER

Practice Areas

Education
Employment
Immigration
Litigation

Bar Admissions

Missouri Bar, 1990
Illinois Bar, 1991

Contact Information

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Melanie Gurley Keeney practices in the areas of education, employment, and immigration law. She is a frequent presenter and also provides regular training to clients. Her experience in education law includes representing institutions regarding various personnel and student matters, including terminations, state and federal discrimination claims, discipline, § 1983 claims, Open Meetings law, and other issues.

Melanie represents private employers with respect to a wide range of employment matters, including discrimination charges and lawsuits, wage-hour compliance, non-competes, wrongful discharge actions, privacy, defamation and related tort litigation, disability issues, and provides preventive employment law services, including supervisor training programs and employment compliance audits.

Melanie also represents corporations, educational institutions and individuals with their immigration needs and in handling Global Mobility matters, including obtaining temporary and permanent visas, handling employer sanctions issues, I-9 and E-Verify employment eligibility verification compliance, consular processing and naturalization.

Melanie is a founding Shareholder of the Firm and currently serves as its Chairperson. She served on the Management Committee from 2006 to 2015, and served as its Managing Partner and President in 2014 and 2015.

Education

J.D., Washington University School of Law, 1990

- Notes and Topics Editor, Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law

B.A., Baylor University, magna cum laude, 1987, Phi Beta Kappa

Significant Honors and Awards

- Women's Justice Litigation Practitioner Award presented by Missouri Lawyers Weekly, 2016
- International Women's Day Award for Employment Law, awarded by Washington University School of Law, 2014
- Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyer, awarded by Super Lawyers for over 10 consecutive years and in the top 50 female lawyers in Missouri and Kansas
- St. Louis Best Lawyers Education Law Lawyer of the Year, awarded by Best Lawyers, 2017
- St. Louis Best Lawyers Immigration Law Lawyer of the Year, awarded by Best Lawyers, 2019, 2015, 2012
- Recognized by Best Lawyers in America, St. Louis, in the practice area of Immigration Law since 1995, and in the practice areas of Education Law and Employment Law-Management since 2015
- Martindale-Hubbell® Bar Register of Preeminent Women Lawyers™

Professional and Academic Affiliations

- Adjunct Professor, Washington University School of Law, 2017
- The Missouri Bar
- Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis



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- Illinois Bar Association
- Council for Educational Advancement, Board Member, 2015-Present
- National Council of School Attorneys Board of Directors, 1996-2000
- Missouri Council of School Attorneys, Chairman, 1997
- American Immigration Lawyers Association ("AILA"), Missouri-Kansas Chapter Chair, 1997-1999

Civic and Charitable Activities

- Board Member, Council for Educational Advancement (CEA)
- Former Board Member, The Wilson School
- Active with Burmese refugee population through church activities
- Church Youth Group Sponsor since 1990

Selected Publications and Presentations

- "DOJ Gone Wild! IER Discrimination Investigations," ACC (Association of Corporate Council) CLE, November 2022
- "Employment Law Practices: Discrimination & Relation," Missouri United School Insurance Council (MUSIC) and Gallagher Bassat, November 2022
- "Working 101 – Introduction to H-1B, and Other Visa Options," Washington University Office for International Students and Scholars, November 2022
- "Handling Tricky Employment-Based Nonimmigrant and Immigrant Visa Issues," AILA (American Immigration Lawyers Association) Missouri-Kansas Chapter Meeting, October 2022
- "Understanding Employees' First Amendment Rights," Principals Academy, October 2022
- "Employment Bases Immigrants," Guest Lecture Washington University in St. Louis, September 2022
- "Non-Immigrant Priorities," Guest Lecture Washington University in St. Louis, September 2022
- "Addressing the Labor Shortage – The Ins and Outs of H-1B Visas and Sponsoring Foreign Workers," MOASPA (Missouri Association of School Personnel Administrators) Webinar, July 2022
- "I-9 Compliance and Immigration Hot Topics," Higher-Education Seminar CLE, June 2022
- "Employment Law Practices: Discrimination & Relation," Missouri United School Insurance Council (MUSIC) and Gallagher Bassat, May 2022
- "Legal Issues Impacting Faith-Based Schools," CFO's for Faith-Based Schools, Westminster Christian Academy, March 2022
- "North America Year in Review: United States Immigration Law. Immigration Webinar Round Table," Employment Law Alliance (ELA), January 2022
- "Doc Extraordinaire Panel," Physician Immigration Institute Presentation presented by International Medical Graduate Taskforce (IMG Taskforce), Washington D.C., December 2021
- "What's on the Horizon: Employment Based Immigration Update," Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC), St. Louis, MO, November 2021



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- "Legal Overview: Employment-Based Immigration," Washington University Office for International Students and Scholars, St. Louis, MO, October 2021
- "Tinkering On-line: *Mahanoy vs. B.L.*," The Missouri Bar Committee Meetings, Missouri Education Law, Panelist Discussion of First Amendment Issues, May 2021
- Podcast – "US Business Immigration: The Road Ahead Under the Biden Administration," Employment Law Alliance (ELA), May 2021
- "EB-1 Questions and Answers," Immigration Law Worldwide (ILW), March 2021
- "Critical Policy and Handbook Updates," Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), February 2021
- "Higher Education Webinar: Immigration – What to Expect in 2021!," Missouri United School Insurance Council (MUSIC), January 2021
- "Working 101 – OPT, CPT, Academic Training, H-1B and other visa options," Washington University Office for International Students and Scholars, January 2021
- "ACC St. Louis Labor & Employment Webinar – What to Expect in 2021!," Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC), December 2020
- "Immigration Update: What to Expect in 2021," Higher Education Seminar CLE, December 2020
- "Navigating the Federal Sea Change: The Impact of the 2020 Election on Employers," Employment Law Alliance, December 2020
- "Business Immigration Options in the COVID-19 Climate," AILA Missouri-Kansas Chapter Meeting, August 2020
- "Managing a Global Workforce During the Pandemic: A U.S. Immigration Law Perspective," Panel Member, ELA (Employment Law Alliance), April 2020
- Panelist on Employment Law Alliance (ELA) COVID-19 Update – March and April 2020
- "I-9 Related Audits and Investigations," Panel Member, Missouri-Kansas AILA Chapter Conference (American Immigration Lawyers Association), November 2019
- "Politics, Economics and the Law Collide: How Global Businesses are Impacted by These Landmines," Panel Moderator, ELA (Employment Law Alliance) Annual Meeting in Lisbon, October 2019
- "H-1B Visas – What's on the Horizon," Global Career Accelerator Program at Washington University in St. Louis, February 2019
- "Hidden Dangers: New Evidence in Discrimination and Harassment Claims," Annual MUSIC (Missouri United School Insurance Council) Seminar, January 2019
- "Current Issues in School Law," Legal Panel Member, MSSA (Midwest Suburban Superintendents Association), January 2019
- "The Keys to Your Success – Employment and Immigration Issues Post Graduation," Washington University Olin School of Business, December 2018
- "Update on New Policies Impacting Foreign Workers," ACC (Association of Corporate Council), November 2018



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- "What You Need to Know About Employing Foreign Nationals Under the Current Administration," ACC - CCI (Association of Corporate Counsel – Corporate Counsel Institute), May 2018
- "Employment Discrimination Caselaw Update," COSA (Council of School Attorneys) Webinar, May 2018
- "Employing Foreign Nationals – What's New and on the Horizon," ACC (Association of Corporate Council), February 2018
- "Employing Foreign Nationals," HRMA (Human Resources Management Association), February 2018
- "Navigating Global Employee Migration – Legal Strategies and Practical Considerations," Panel Chair, ELA (Employment Law Alliance) Annual Meeting in Shanghai, October 2017
- "Impact of the New Administration's Immigration Policies on Public Schools," Safe Schools and Colleges Conference, Lake of the Ozarks, MO, October 2017
- "Immigration Law in a Changing World," Adjunct Professor, Washington University in St. Louis, April 2017
- "Town Hall Meeting on President Trump's Executive Order," Webster University, February 2017
- "Teacher Workshop on Current Immigration Law," Street Law, Inc., February 2017
- "The Keys to Your Success – Immigration Issues for Employment," Washington University Olin School of Business, February 2017
- "Year in Review & What to Expect in 2017," ELA (Employment Law Alliance), Webinar, January 2017
- "To Have and Hold: Document Preservation and Discovery," Annual MUSIC Seminar, January 2017
- "Sexual Assault on Campus: Student Safety Best Practices and Emerging Issues," Missouri Community College Association Convention, November 2016
- "Working 101: OPT, Academic Training, H-1B and Other Visa Options," Washington University Office for International Students and Scholars, October 2016
- "Basics: Business Non-Immigrant Visa Options," Missouri-Kansas AILA Chapter Conference (American Immigration Lawyers Association), April 2016
- "The Keys to Your Success – Immigration Issues for Employment," Washington University Olin School of Business, February 2016
- "Navigating the U.S. Business Immigration Maze: Practical Guidance for Employers," ELA (Employment Law Alliance) Webinar, November 2015
- "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace – The Do's, Don'ts and Defenses of Handling Sexual Harassment Claims," COSA (Council of School Attorneys), Miami, October 2015
- "Legal Limbo: Schools and Religion," MSBA (Missouri School Boards Association) Annual Conference, October 2015
- "Visas and Vulnerabilities," EMSI (Eastern Missouri-Southern Illinois) Rescue and Restore Regional Conference to Combat Human Trafficking, June 2015



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- "Coming to a District Near You: Unaccredited School Districts - The Latest Legal Update and Practical Consideration," MoASBO (Missouri Association of School Business Officials), April 2015
- "Basics: Business Non-Immigrant Visa Options," Missouri-Kansas AILA Chapter Conference (American Immigration Lawyers Association), March 2015
- "Hot Topics & Employment Immigration Law," AILA St. Louis Chapter CLE (American Immigration Lawyers Association), March 2015
- "Business Immigration Law," Guest Lecturer, Washington University in St. Louis, February 2015
- "Executive Action on Immigration: What Employers Should Know," Annual Corporate Counsel Institute, ACC (Association of Corporate Council), December 2014
- "What Every School Attorney Should Know About the First Amendment: A PG-13 Review of Hot Topics in Employee Online Research," North Dakota School Boards Association, Bismarck, October 2014
- "What Every School Attorney Should Know About the First Amendment: A PG-13 Review of Hot Topics in Employee Online Research," Council of School Attorneys (COSA), Denver, October 2014
- "Perils and Pitfalls of Electronic Media in the Workplace: Best Practices to Reduce Liability for Your District," MoASBO (Missouri Association of School Business Officials), April 2014
- "Careers in Immigration Law," Panelist, Washington University in St. Louis, February 2014
- "Business Immigration Law," Guest Lecturer, Washington University in St. Louis, February 2014
- "What All Board Members Need to Know About the First Amendment," MARE (Missouri Association of Rural Education), February 2014
- "Expert Panel" and "Judge Judy-School Liability Presentation," Annual MUSIC Seminar, January 2014
- "MSIP 5 and Unaccredited School Districts," MSBA (Missouri School Boards Association) Annual Conference, September 2013
- "The Anatomy of an MHRA Claim: From the Administrative Charge through Jury Verdict," ACC (Association of Corporate Council), November 2013
- "PERM and the Offsite Worker," AILA (American Immigration Lawyers Association), September 2013
- "I-9 and E-Verify Update – New ICE Guidance and Compliance Tips," Missouri Employment, Labor and Immigration Seminar, September 2013
- "Hot Topics in Employment Immigration (Hs, Ls, TNs, Os, Ps, And the Rest of the Alphabet)," Missouri Employment, Labor and Immigration Seminar, September 2013
- "Hot Topics in Immigration," Annual Corporate Counsel Institute, ACC (Association of Corporate Council), May, 2013
- "Responding to Reference Requests: What You Can Say; What You Must Say," MoASBO (Missouri Association of School Business Officials), April 2013
- "ADA / FMLA Update," CACUBO (Central Association of College and University Business Officers), February 2013



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- "Facebook, Texting, Teachers, and Students...Oh My!" MARE (Missouri Association of Rural Education), February 2013
- "New Expansion of the Public Policy Exception to the Employment At-Will Doctrine," MUSIC (Missouri United School Insurance Council), January 2013
- "Collective Bargaining: What the Missouri Supreme Court Now Requires," Cooperating School Districts, January 2013
- "Legal, Practical and PR Issues Surrounding Background Checks," MoASBO (Missouri Association of School Business Officials), November 2012
- "Sizzling Hot "Must Knows" for In-House Counsel – Turning Up the Heat!" ACC (Association of Corporate Council), November 2012
- "Green Cards" -- So Many Options, So Little Time . . .," NAFSA: Association of International Educators, October 2012
- "Facilities Use and the First Amendment in the Schools," MoASBO (Missouri Association of School Business Officials), April 2012
- "Sexual Harassment - What Every School Employee Must Know," MoASBO (Missouri Association of School Business Officials), April 2012
- "Use of Electronic Communications by School Athletic Personnel," MIAAA (Missouri Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association), April 2012
- "ADA/FMLA Update," Central Association of College and University Business Officers Indianapolis Winter Workshop, March 2012
- "Employment Law Update," Central Association of College and University Business Officers 43rd Annual Winter Workshop, February 2011
- "The Fair Labor Standards Act: Strategies for Prosecuting and Defending Claims," Missouri Bar CLE Labor & Employment Law Symposium, November 2010
- "Tips for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct," ACC (Association of Corporate Counsel), August 2010
- "Hot Topics in Immigration and Employer Sanctions Compliance," GAPP (Gateway Association of Payroll Professionals), May 2010
- "Monitoring Student Electronic Communications," United Educators Risk Management Counsel, February 2010
- "School Law: Teacher Termination, Student Discipline, and Emerging Issues," MASSP (Missouri Assistant Principal Association), January 2010
- "Hot Topics in Business Immigration: How to Get What You Want and Stay Out of Trouble!" HRMA (Human Resources Management Association), May 2009
- "Law and Legal Principles," PRIMA (Public Risk Management Association) 2009 Institute, October 2009
- "No Monkeying Around...I-9 and E-Verify Compliance Issues," Association of Corporate Counsel, October 2009
- "Employment Law 101," Association of St. Louis Women CPAs, September 2009
- "E-Verify Update," MoASBO (Missouri Association of School Business Officials) Spring Conference, April 2009
- "E-Verify and Missouri H.B. 1549," Cooperating School Districts and SLPPDA (St. Louis Personnel/Placement Directors' Assoc.)



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- "Working in America: OPT, Academic Training, H-1B and Other Visa Options," Washington University
- "Immigration Issues for Employers: What In-House Counsel and Human Resources Professionals Need to Know," ELA (Employment Law Alliance), Webinar, February 2009
- "I-9s, E-Verify and Your District's Responsibilities," MSBA (Missouri School Boards' Association) Practical Personnel Law Workshop, February 2009
- Employment Law Update – What's New and How to Stay Out of Trouble!" CACUBO (Central Assoc. of College and University Business Officers), February 2009
- "Update on Legal Issues Impacting Employment in Higher Education," University of Central Missouri, 2008
- "NCLB and IDEA: A Disgruntled Marriage", MOCASE Law Seminar, Tan-Tar-A Resort, Missouri, 2007
- "Ethical Implications of New E-Discovery Rules and Handling Related Conflicts-of-Interest Situations," KASB School Law Seminar, Kansas City, 2007 "Bullying: Lessons to Combat Cruelty," Webinar sponsored by United Educators, July 2008
- "Nightmare on Elm Street: New E-Discovery Rules and Implications for School Districts," KSBA School Law Seminar, Kansas City, 2007
- "Ethical Implications of New E-Discovery Rules and Handling Related Conflicts-of-Interest Situations," NSBA Council of School Attorneys Advocacy Seminar, Kansas City, 2006
- "Business Office Pot Luck," Cooperating School Districts Business Meeting, 2006
- "Update on Religion Issues Impacting Schools," Missouri School Boards Association Fall Conference, 2004, and Missouri United School Insurance Council Annual Meeting, 2005
- "Update on Staff and Student Issues," Missouri Lutheran Schools Association, 2004
- An Analysis of the Impact NCLB May Have on Placement Decisions Under the IDEA," National School Boards Association's Council of School Attorneys Annual Conference, 2004
- "Tips For Employees Traveling Abroad And Other Post 9/11 Issues," St. Louis Employee Relocation Council, 2003
- "Legal Issues in the Area of School Liability," Lutheran High Schools, 2003
- "Legal Issues in the Area of Staff and Student Management," St. Louis Lutheran Elementary School Association, 2003
- "Church and State," Co-Editor, Chapter 9 of The Missouri Bar Association's Mo Bar CLE Deskbook, 2003
- "Policing Cybermisconduct and Other Hot First Amendment Topics," Missouri United School Insurance Council, 2003
- "State Criminal Records Checks: Scope, Cost and Procedure," BAMSL Not-For-Profit Sector, 2002
- "Legal Goulash – Pre/Post Employment and Cyber Liabilities," Missouri United School Insurance Council, 2002
- "Post September 11th Issues," AAIM Executive Roundtables, St. Louis, St. Charles, and Edwardsville, 2001-2002



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- "Proving Discrimination: Evidence and Discovery Issues," American Bar Association, 2001
- "Issues Involving Students with Limited English Proficiency," COSA Annual Seminar, 2001
- "Legal Issues and Liabilities," Missouri Community College Association Conference, June 2000

