



## J. Walker Coleman IV

### Partner

Charleston  
+1.843.579.5627

walker.coleman@klgates.com

### OVERVIEW

Walker Coleman is a partner in the firm's Labor, Employment, and Workplace Safety practice. He served as the Managing Partner of the Charleston office from 2011-2024, and he also has served on the firm's Management Committee and global Advisory Council. He is an experienced litigator, who primarily litigates complex employment, labor, restrictive covenant, and trade secret misappropriation disputes throughout the United States and abroad. He has significant class and collective action experience. He also represents companies in government investigations, and represents domestic and international companies in connection with economic development projects in South Carolina and throughout the United States.

Walker is adept at identifying unique legal solutions for his client's disputes while also paying careful attention to their business needs and objectives. He has successfully handled cases for numerous local, national, and international companies in industries including: automotive, aerospace, beverage, broadcast media, chemical, computer software, construction, defense, energy, entertainment, environmental, financial services, government contracts, healthcare, healthcare diagnostics, intellectual property, life sciences, manufacturing, maritime, medical device, paper and packaging, pharmaceutical, retail, resort and hospitality, restaurant, shipping, snack food, steel, telecommunications, textiles, and trucking.

Walker's labor and employment practice primarily consists of defending companies in litigation relating to employment discrimination, all forms of harassment, wage and hour, wrongful termination, trade secret misappropriation, restrictive covenant enforcement, and unfair labor practices. He also represents companies when the government comes knocking at their door. In addition, Walker routinely counsels employers on leave issues, positive and legally viable employment practices and policies, reductions in force and plant closings, the sale and acquisition of domestic and foreign businesses, executive terminations and severance packages, and union avoidance. Walker has successfully represented numerous domestic and foreign employers before the EEOC, the US Department of Labor, the National Labor Relations Board, and the S.C. Department of Labor, Licenses and Regulation.

In the economic development area, Walker assists companies with myriad tax and other incentive arrangements, all employment-related issues, and all immigration-related issues.

Highly-regarded and globally recognized in his field, Walker has been recognized by his peers and corporate counsel as a leader in the labor and employment practice area through his inclusion in *Chambers USA*, *Best Lawyers in America*®, and the South Carolina Super Lawyers list for fifteen years.

## PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Prior to going to law school, Walker served as an intelligence officer in the US Navy, ultimately attaining the rank of Lieutenant Commander. Prior to joining the firm, Walker was a partner at other regional law firms.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- Recognized by *Chambers USA* for Labor & Employment in South Carolina, 2010-2025
- Recognized by *The Best Lawyers in America*® in Charleston, SC, 2011-2026
  - Employment Law - Management
  - Litigation - Labor and Employment
- Named a Thomson Reuters Stand-out Lawyer, 2023-2026
- Named "Lawyer of the Year" by *The Best Lawyers in America*® in Charleston
  - Litigation-Labor and Employment, 2022
  - Employment Law-Management, 2021
- Charleston Business Magazine's Legal Elite - Corporate Investigations and Labor & Employment, 2017
- Named to South Carolina Super Lawyers list, 2009-2010 and 2013-2016
- Litigation Counsel of America, since 2020
- Martindale Hubbell, AV Preeminent, Peer Review Rating, since 2000

## PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- Charleston Regional Development Alliance, Board of Directors, 2012-present
- Porter-Gaud School, Board of Trustees, 2011-2019; Chairman 2019-2022
- Clemson University Senior Advisory Board of Directors, 2012-2019
- Charleston Regional Development Alliance, Executive Committee, 2016-2018
- Chairman, Clemson University, Accounting, Finance, and Legal Studies Board of Directors, 2010-2016
- Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors, 2007-2015

- Defense Research Institute, Panel Counsel Committee Chair and South Carolina Liaison, Employment Law Committee, 2005-2011
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Board of Directors, Mid-Atlantic Chapter, 2003-2008
- Leadership Charleston, Class of 1996
- Defense Trial Lawyers Association, Member

## SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Charleston Metro Chamber: Labor Climate Outlook
- Mebane Surgery Center: Professional Conduct Training
- South Carolina & Georgia Society of Ambulatory Surgery Centers Annual Meeting: FMLA and ADA Update
- Self Regional Healthcare: Professional Conduct Training
- Roper St. Francis Healthcare: Professional Conduct Training
- South Carolina Federal Credit Union: Harassment & Diversity Training
- Lowcountry Manufacturer's Counsel: Hot Wage & Hour Issues
- Home Depot USA: Image & Appearance Based Discrimination
- SC Home Care Association Leadership Conference: Employment Law Highlights
- Myrtle Beach Hospitality Association: How to Legally Control Overtime
- Lorman Education Services: FMLA – Tips and Traps
- Coastal Organization of Human Resources: Workplace Violence
- National Restaurant Association: Costs of Employment Litigation
- Coastal Organization of Human Resources: Proper Use of Employee Handbooks
- Charleston Tri-County Human Resources Management Association: Conducting Internal Investigations

## EDUCATION

- J.D., University of South Carolina School of Law, 1993
- B.A., Clemson University, 1986

## ADMISSIONS

- Bar of South Carolina

- United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- United States District Court for the District of South Carolina
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
- United States District Court for the Northern District of Alabama
- United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia
- United States District Court for the Southern District of Georgia
- United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana
- United States District Court for the Southern District of New York
- United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania

### THOUGHT LEADERSHIP POWERED BY HUB

- March 2026, February and March 2026 Accolades
- 22 December 2025, AI in Healthcare: Employee Whistleblower and Retaliation Complaints—What You Need to Know
- 30 September 2025, Navigating FLSA Overtime Exemptions in AI-Integrated Positions
- 12 July 2021, What Does President Biden's Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy Mean for Employer Noncompete Clauses?

### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- Association of Corporate Counsel South Carolina: [Playing it Safe: Corporate Counsel's Role in Reopening Businesses During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), March 2021
- How to Get Ready for the Tsunami of New Overtime Claims, with Henry W. Frampton, IV, published in South Carolina Corporate Counsel Newsletter and as K&L Gates Client Alert, August 2012
- Defense Research Institute: Employment Litigation Handbook: *Post-Trial Motions*, 2011
- Post-Trial Motions in Employment Litigation, in DRI Employment Law Trial Tactics, with Henry W. Frampton, IV, 2010
- Charleston Regional Business Journal: Charleston Lifestyle Lures Young Lawyers from Big Cities, 2007
- Charleston Regional Business Journal: *Image-Based Discrimination*, 2005

- Charleston Regional Business Journal: *Protect Your Assets: Craft a Non-Compete That Won't Let You Down*, 2005
- Co-author, *Protect Your Assets: Craft a Non-Compete That Won't Let You Down*, published in Charleston Regional Business Journal, 2005
- For the Defense (Defense Research Institute): *Evidence of Employment Discrimination: The Impact of Desert Palace*, 2004
- Co-author, *Evidence of Employment Discrimination: The Impact of Desert Palace*, published in DRI's For the Defense, 2004
- John M. Olin Institute for Employment Practice & Policy, George Mason Univ.: *Government Protection of Employees Involved in Mergers & Acquisitions*, 1998

## NEWS & EVENTS

- 2 February 2026, Nearly 50 K&L Gates Lawyers Recognized on *Thomson Reuters* Stand-out Lawyers List
- 5 June 2025, K&L Gates Receives More Than 240 Firm, Individual Rankings in 2025 *Chambers USA* Guide
- 11 March 2025, Nearly 50 K&L Gates Lawyers Receive Global Recognition in *Thomson Reuters'* Stand-out Lawyers List
- 6 June 2024, K&L Gates Receives More Than 200 Firm, Individual Rankings in 2024 *Chambers USA* Guide
- 1 June 2023, K&L Gates Receives Firm, Individual Rankings in 2023 *Chambers USA* Guide
- 18 August 2022, More Than 350 K&L Gates Lawyers Named Among 2023 Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch
- 1 June 2022, K&L Gates Receives Firm, Individual Rankings in 2022 *Chambers USA* Guide
- 10 February 2022, K&L Gates Expands Private Equity Practice With Charleston Partner Addition
- 19 August 2021, Nearly 300 K&L Gates Lawyers Named Among 2022 Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch
- 21 May 2021, *Chambers USA* 2021 Guide Recognizes K&L Gates Labor, Employment, and Workplace Safety Practice, Lawyers Among Leaders
- 7 December 2020, K&L Gates Continues to Bolster Firmwide Litigation Practice With Addition of Charleston Partner
- 23 April 2020, K&L Gates, Lawyers Recognized in 2020 *Chambers USA* Guide
- 13 April 2020, K&L Gates Expands Health Care Practice With Charleston Partner Addition
- 26 April 2019, *Chambers USA* 2019 Guide Ranks K&L Gates, Lawyers Among Leaders
- 23 June 2016, K&L Gates, Lawyers Recognized as Leaders in *Chambers USA* 2016 Guide

- 20 May 2015, Chambers USA 2015 Guide Recognizes K&L Gates, Lawyers as Industry Leaders

## AREAS OF FOCUS

- Labor, Employment, and Workplace Safety
- Class Action Defense
- Commercial Disputes
- Contract Workers
- Global Location Strategies
- Internal Investigations
- Mass Tort
- OFCCP and Affirmative Action Compliance
- Product Liability
- Trade Secrets Litigation

## INDUSTRIES

- Healthcare
- Life Sciences