HALL BOOTH SMITH, P.C.

msmith@hallboothsmith.com

Partner

706.494.3818

BIOGRAPHY | EXPERIENCE | CREDENTIALS | MEMBERSHIPS | RECOGNITION | PRESENTATIONS | PUBLICATIONS | IN THE PRESS

Biography

Mariel E. Smith’s primary practice is comprised of education and employment law. Mariel regularly represents school districts in employment matters, drafting Board policies, handling due process hearings, and handling Title IX claims. She has years of experience in defending companies in lawsuits and pre-litigation investigations involving agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Georgia Department of Labor, and the United States International Trade Commission.

Her litigation experience in employment and labor law include defending employers in wage and hour, discrimination, and harassment claims. She also has experience in representing clients in mediation. She has assisted clients in workplace internal investigations as well as those involving employees charged with white collar federal crimes. She also has experience assisting private companies undergoing workforce reductions.

More +
Mariel originally joined the Columbus office of HBS in 2011 after

Services

Arbitration & Mediation

Education

Labor & Employment

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she worked for several years as a Superior Court Judicial law clerk and subsequently as an Assistant District Attorney, all for the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit. During her first few years at HBS, Mariel also served as the Associate Magistrate Judge for Muscogee County and occasionally filled in on the bench for Municipal Court, presiding over civil lawsuits, criminal first appearance hearings, truancy hearings, and warrant applications.

Mariel left HBS in 2017 to work as General Counsel for a global manufacturing company and returned in 2019. During her time as General Counsel, Mariel managed complex litigation, including lawsuits involving products liability matters, patent infringement, and trade secret theft and also maintained the company's trademark and patent inventory. She gained a significant amount of experience in negotiating, revising, and managing agreements including those with two of the largest multinational retail corporations.

She has also successfully negotiated international agreements as related to operations and procurement in the manufacturing industry. Mariel has unique expertise in consumer and commercial law, particularly as related to ecommerce, business compliance with consumer privacy laws, consumer products packaging/labeling, and international trade. She is also a member of the Diversity Committee at HBS.

Experience

Arbitration & Mediation

Mariel is trained civil mediation and is a registered mediator in Georgia. Her practice has included experience in a significant amount of mediation settings as an advocate, which prepared her to serve as a mediator. Through those experiences, she is able to offer alternatives to litigation in an environment which facilitates effective compromise and decision making empowerment for the parties.

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Education

In the context of education law, Mariel regularly researches various issues for school board members and administrators. She recognizes the importance of ensuring that board policies are up-to-date with the constantly changing state and federal education laws. In that regard, Mariel has drafted and revised many board policies related to governance, students, fiscal management, and personnel.

Additionally, Mariel provides representation to school districts and employees in defending and investigating lawsuits involving sexual harassment, discrimination, special education, and even motor vehicle collision occurring within the scope of a district employee's job duties.

Labor & Employment

Mariel has had the opportunity to defend public and private sector employers and Department of Labor hearings, write opinion letters regarding suspension and termination procedures, and offer guidance in connection with responding to lawsuits involving current and former employees. Clients frequently benefit from Mariel's familiarity with employment law, particularly in the context of litigation.

Credentials

Admitted

State Courts:

- Georgia
  - Court of Appeals, Supreme Court

U.S. District Courts:

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- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia

Education

- J.D., University of Arkansas
- B.A., *cum laude*, Mercer University

Memberships

- Columbus American Inn of Court, Barrister, 2011-2023
- Columbus Bar Association, 2009-2023
- Georgia Association for Women Lawyer (GAWL) Columbus Chapter; President (Former), Treasurer (Former); 2008-2023
- Defense Research Institute (DRI)

More +

- Society for Human Resource Management, Columbus Chapter
- Fountain City Bar Association
- Georgia Defense Lawyers Association

Recognition

- *Top Lawyers*, Labor & Employment Law, GaBiz Magazine, 2026
- Legal Elite, Labor & Unemployment; Georgia Trend Magazine; 2024
- *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America*, Education Law, Best Lawyers®, 2021-2024
- AV Preeminent® Peer Review Rated™, High Ethical Standing; Martindale-Hubbell
- On The Rise, Daily Report's Georgia Legal Awards, 2020
- Top 40 Under 40, National Black Lawyers, 2015-2017
- Top 100, National Black Lawyers

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Presentations

- **Getting Bias out of Our Systems**
  From Day One Forum, February 2020
- **Social Media and other Hot Topics in Law**
  Presented to Arch Insurance Claims Professionals, October 2019
- **Social Media in Claims and Litigation**
  RIMs, Great Plains Chapter, Omaha Nebraska; November 2019
- **Americans with Disabilities Act in the Workplace**
  Employer-client presentation, 2019

More +

- **Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace**
  Employer-client presentation, 2018-2019
- **How to Cover your Ass-ets**
  Creative South, Trademark and Copyright Law Presentation, 2017
- **Is Your Employee Handbook Up to Date?: Essential Components and Sample Policies for Today's Workplace; and Wage and Benefits Issues**
  National Business Institute, 2017

Publications

- **An intern program can pay dividends — if done correctly**
  HR Dive; May 9, 2023
- **Eleventh Circuit Holds Websites Are Not Places of Public Accommodation and Rejects the Nexus Standard**
  HBS Employment Updates Blog, April 2021
- **US Supreme Court Holds That Title VII Protects Homosexual And Transgender Employees**
  HBS Employment Updates Blog, June 2020
- **What Should Employers Do When Employees Refuse**

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To Return To Work For Fear Of COVID-19?
HBS Employment Updates Blog, May 2020

More +

- **Enactment Of The CROWN Act Warrants Review Of Employer Policies Governing Grooming And Appearance Standards**
  HBS Employment Updates Blog, January 2020
- **Department of Labor Issues New Overtime Rules**
  HBS Employment Updates Blog, September 2019
- **Recent Case Decision: Defining Workers Compensation Medical Benefits**
  HBS Worker's Compensation blog, June 2017
- **Some Good Deeds Do Go Unpunished: AED and Emergency Medical Response**
  DRI, 2013
- **Placing Commercial and Economic Loss Problem in the Construction Industry Context**
  The John Marshall Law Review, 2007

In the Press

27 HBS Partners Recognized as 2026 Top Lawyers by GaBiz Magazine

January 29, 2026

Hall Booth Smith is pleased to announce that 27 of the

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firm’s partners have been recognized as 2026 “Top Lawyers” by GaBiz Magazine in its Winter issue.

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34 Hall Booth Smith Lawyers Named to 2024 Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America

August 22, 2023

Hall Booth Smith is pleased to announce that 34 lawyers have been included in the 2024 edition of Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America. The award recognizes associates and other lawyers who are earlier in their careers for their outstanding professional excellence in private practice in the United States.

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HR Dive: Mariel Smith

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on Key Considerations for Companies Hiring Summer Interns

May 12, 2023

In an article published this week by HR Dive, Hall Booth Smith Columbus Partner Mariel E. Smith writes about key considerations for companies and firms hiring summer interns. “While the chance to contribute to a young professional’s future and gain some much-needed help in the office are exciting opportunities, employers must take time in advance

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Security Management: Mariel Smith on Remote Work and Office Relationships

October 10, 2022

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Even amid the growth of remote and hybrid work, intimate relationships among co-workers are on the rise, according to the Society of Human Resource Management. While banning workplace romances may not be the answer, Mariel Smith, Columbus-based partner, said leaders should have a policy in place to protect themselves. “Formal contracts can get a ‘little

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Hall Booth Smith Attorneys Recognized as 2023 Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch

August 18, 2022

Thirty-one lawyers from Hall Booth Smith, P.C. (HBS) have been honored as Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch. This recognition is given to attorneys, in a variety of practice groups, who are earlier in their careers for outstanding professional excellence in private practice in the United States. This

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honor is based on Best Lawyers®’ highly selective

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Inc.: Mariel Smith on Supporting Employees with Long-COVID

May 6, 2022

Hundreds of thousands of dollars spent to no avail. More than 70 rejections from rehabilitation clinics. Even more visits to hospitals, doctors, physical therapists, chiropractors, and other specialists. One long-Covid diagnosis. That’s been the reality for the Smith family for the past two years and counting, after Jason Smith, a psychologist and professor by trade, contracted long Covid.

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Forbes: Mariel Smith Advises Consulting

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Help to Ensure Compliance During Background Checks

February 17, 2022

In a Forbes article about how employee background checks can help companies avoid a crisis, Columbus Partner Mariel Smith advises business leaders to consult a legal professional to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations. “It is very important for employers and HR professionals to consult an employment attorney if they have any questions regarding

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Forbes: Mariel Smith on the Impact of OSHA’s Vaccine Rules & Unemploymen

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t Benefits

November 5, 2021

In an update published by Forbes on November 4, 2021, Columbus Partner Mariel Smith discusses how the Occupational Health and Safety Administration's (OSHA) vaccine rules could impact an employee's unemployment benefits if they get fired. Subscribers to Forbes.com may read the complete article here.

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Part B News: Mariel Smith Discusses Whether Practice Doctors Can Refuse Access to Unvaccinated Patients

September 20, 2021

In an article published by Part B News on September 20, 2021, Partner Mariel Smith is quoted discutssing whether

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practice doctors can refuse access to unvaccinated patients. “It’s a very slippery slope,” she cautions. “Think of someone at the door or in the waiting room, and you telling them, ‘Sorry, we can’t see you because

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Forbes Advisor: Mariel Smith on Consequences to Unemployment Benefits for COVID-19 Vaccine Refusal

September 7, 2021

In an article published by Forbes Advisor on August 31, 2021, Partner Mariel Smith is quoted discussing whether employees who refuse to get vaccinated for COVID-19 as per their employer’s policies might find themselves ineligible for unemployment benefits if they get fired.

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Employees have long understood that if they are fired, they can get unemployment

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Hall Booth Smith Attorneys Recognized as 2022 Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch

August 20, 2021

Thirty lawyers from Hall Booth Smith, P.C. (HBS) have been honored as Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch. This recognition is given to attorneys, in a variety of practice groups, who are earlier in their careers for outstanding professional excellence in private practice in the United States. This honor is based on Best Lawyers'® highly selective

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Part B News: Mariel Smith

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on How Physician Practices May Limit Liability Related to Patient Violence

July 23, 2021

In an article published by Part B News on July 19, 2021, Partner Mariel Smith is quoted discussing considerations for physician practices to limit liability related to patient violence. Recent news that a psychiatry resident at Penn Hospital in Philadelphia is suing the facility after a patient stabbed her brought questions of physician practice liability

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Eleventh Circuit Holds Websites Are Not Places of Public

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Accommodation and Rejects the Nexus Standard

April 15, 2021

Written by: Mariel E. Smith, Esq. In a recent decision, Gil v. Winn-Dixie Stores, Inc., the Eleventh Circuit held that websites are not “places of public accommodation” under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of

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Hall Booth Smith Names Blauvelt, Morrison, and Smith as Partners

February 3, 2021

ATLANTA – February 3, 2021 – Hall Booth Smith, P.C. (HBS) has named three new partners as the firm elevates leaders and recognizes their

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outstanding service to clients. Joining the firm's partnership ranks are Danielle S. Blauvelt in Nashville, Elizabeth F. Morrison in Charleston and Mariel E. Smith in Columbus. Danielle S. Blauvelt specializes in

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Hall Booth Smith Attorneys Recognized in the Inaugural Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch Edition

August 21, 2020

Twenty lawyers from Hall Booth Smith, P.C. (HBS) have been honored in the inaugural edition of the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch. This recognition is given to attorneys, in a variety of practice groups, who are earlier in their careers for outstanding professional excellence in private practice in the United States. This honor is based

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US Supreme Court Holds That Title VII Protects Homosexual And Transgender Employees

June 23, 2020

Written by: Melanie V. Slaton, Esq., Mariel E. Smith, Esq., and Nicholas J. Garcia, Esq. On June 15, 2020, the Supreme Court of the United States ("SCOTUS") delivered the landmark opinion in Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia and broadened Title VII liability to include actions by an employer based on the homosexuality or transgender status of the individual

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What Should Employers Do When Employees Refuse To

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Return To Work For Fear Of COVID-19?

May 8, 2020

Written by: Melanie V. Slaton, Esq., Mariel E. Smith, Esq., and Nicholas J. Garcia, Esq. As states struggle through the process of re-opening in the wake of COVD-19, many employers are also wrestling with the question of what to do about employees who refuse work due to safety concerns or in order to take advantage

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Enactment of the CROWN Act Warrants Review of Employer Policies Governing Grooming and Appearance Standards

January 30, 2020

Written by: Mariel Smith, Esq.

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Employers should take note that the CROWN Act is now law in several states and is being considered in many others. The CROWN Act, which stands for “Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair,” is a law that prohibits discrimination based on hairstyle and hair texture. It is

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Department of Labor Issues New Overtime Rules

September 27, 2019

Written by: Mariel Smith, Esq. On September 24, 2019, the Department of Labor (DOL) issued its final rule modifying the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) overtime rules for executive, administrative, professional, computing positions (white collar), and highly compensated employees. The rule goes into effect on January 1, 2020 and it increases the minimum salary that

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Mariel Williams Chosen as Associate Magistrate of Muscogee County

February 20, 2013

Mariel Williams, an associate at the Columbus Office of HBS, was recently chosen to be the new Associate Magistrate of Muscogee County. A graduate of the University of Arkansas School of Law, Mariel served as an assistant district attorney and as law clerk for the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit before joining the firm in June 2011. Mariel

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Mariel Williams Chosen as President of the Columbus Chapter of

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Georgia Association for Women Lawyers

June 28, 2012

On June 7, 2012, Mariel Williams, an associate in the HBS Columbus office, was sworn in as the new President of the Columbus Chapter of Georgia Association for Women Lawyers (GAWL) during the chapter's Judicial Reception. Mariel had served as the chapter's secretary since 2009. Mariel said in her speech that it is important to become involved

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