

# 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.

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Mariel originally joined the Columbus office of HBS in 2011 after

## Services

[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.

## Experience

### 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

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sexual harassment, discrimination, special education, and even motor vehicle collision occurring within the scope of a district employee's job duties.

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## 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.

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## Credentials

### Admitted

State Courts:

- Georgia
  - Court of Appeals, Supreme Court

U.S. District Courts:

- 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

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## 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)

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

## Recognition

- [\*Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America\*](#), Education Law, Best Lawyers®, 2021-2024
- On The Rise, Daily Report's Georgia Legal Awards, 2020
- Top 40 Under 40, National Black Lawyers, 2015-2017
- Top 100, National Black Lawyers

## 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

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

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- **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

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- **Placing Commercial and Economic Loss Problem in the Construction Industry Context**

The John Marshall Law Review, 2007

## In the Press

### **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. “The unparalleled methodology of Best

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### **HR Dive: Mariel Smith 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](#)

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 honor is based on Best Lawyers®’ highly selective

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