Alan S. King

Partner and First Deputy General Counsel

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For more than three decades, private and public employers have turned to Alan King for sound and practical advice on complex and sensitive employment-related issues and to defend them in individual and class action litigation arising under federal, state, and local employment laws. An experienced trial lawyer, Alan has successfully advised and represented companies in high-stakes employment litigation and investigations across nearly every industry.

Alan litigates individual and class action employment cases in federal and state courts around the country, and has vast experience representing employers before federal, state, and local administrative agencies, across numerous industries, including retail, airlines, healthcare, telecommunications, education and financial services, as well as municipalities and minority-owned businesses. He regularly advises and advocates for clients on employment law issues, including matters involving discrimination and harassment, retaliation and whistleblower claims, wage and hour, breach of contract, non-competition and trade secrets, employment-related defamation, tortious interference, negligent hire, fraudulent inducement, and other common law claims. Alan also conducts high-stakes and sensitive workplace investigations, often involving C-Suite and senior management personnel.

A certified mediator and a member of the American Arbitration Association's (AAA) National Panel of Employment Arbitrators, Alan has developed a unique expertise and passion for helping parties resolve employment-related disputes and has advocated for clients in more than 100 arbitrations, mediations, and settlement conferences. As a third-party neutral arbitrator and mediator, parties frequently choose Alan based on his experience, expertise, and reputation for fairness and civility.

Clients view Alan as bringing a unique combination of skills to the attorney-client relationship – he is an experienced and talented litigator and a thoughtful counselor with the unique ability to guide clients to favorable resolutions of employment-related disputes when protracted and costly litigation may not be in the client's best interests.

Alan is the Lead of the firm's Labor & Employment Practice Team.

In addition to spending family time with his wife, two daughters, and granddaughter, Alan is an internationally acclaimed house music DJ in his spare time.

EXPERIENCE

Representative Engagements

- Defended Fortune 100 national retailer in two cases brought by four former employees alleging national origin discrimination, hostile work environment harassment, retaliation, and constructive discharge. Obtained summary judgment on all claims in both cases.

- Led team defending major international airline in case brought by former long-term employee alleging race discrimination and retaliation in his discharge. Obtained summary judgment on both claims.
- Obtained dismissal of numerous claims, including all class claims, in putative nationwide class action against Fortune 100 retailer alleging race, national origin, and ethnicity discrimination against Cuban employees.
- Defended hospital in action brought by former employee alleging age and national origin discrimination and hostile work environment. After obtaining summary judgment in the district court on all counts, Alan argued the appeal in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, which affirmed the district court in all respects.
- Defended hospital system in two age discrimination actions brought by former employees who were terminated from different system hospitals. Following discovery, the courts granted the hospitals' motions for summary judgment and dismissed both cases with prejudice.
- Led trial team on behalf of major municipality and high-ranking police department personnel in employment discrimination action filed by a female police officer alleging gender discrimination and retaliation under Title VII and Section 1983. The case received significant media attention prior to trial, and the plaintiff was seeking several million dollars in damages. After a two-week jury trial, the jury returned verdicts for the City and all individual defendants on all counts. All verdicts were affirmed on appeal by the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Defended international ink company in American Arbitration Association case brought by former sales rep alleging she was sexually harassed and subjected to discrimination in her compensation. After a two-day arbitration hearing in Atlanta, Georgia, the arbitrator ruled in favor of our client on all claims.
- Represented major municipality and the City's Mayor in high-profile litigation in federal and state courts arising from plaintiff's separation from employment as the City's Fire Commissioner. The United States District Court granted defendants' motion to dismiss the federal action, including dismissal with prejudice of plaintiff's federal constitutional claims under 42 U.S.C. Section 1983. Subsequently, after plaintiff re-filed certain tort claims in state court, the state court granted defendants' motion to dismiss and dismissed all pending claims with prejudice.
- Served with the consent of both parties as court-appointed Consent Decree Monitor in connection with a four-year Consent Decree resolving race and national origin hiring discrimination lawsuit filed by the EEOC.
- Defended major municipality and negotiated favorable settlement without class certification in putative class action alleging race discrimination against African-Americans; negotiated "no action" termination of related investigation by U.S. Department of Labor Civil Rights Division.

CREDENTIALS

Education

Northwestern University, School of Professional Studies, Mediation Skills Training Program, Certified Mediator, 2017
University of Illinois College of Law, J.D., 1988
Augustana College, B.A., Political Science, 1985

Bar Admissions

Illinois
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

Professional Memberships

American Arbitration Association
National Panel of Employment Arbitrators
American Bar Association
Law360, Employment Authority Discrimination Editorial Board (2024)
Resolution Systems Institute
Board Member
Federal Bar Association
Chicago Chapter, Former Board Member
Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms
Former Board Member

Honors & Awards

The Best Lawyers in America, *Best Lawyers®* (Employment Law - Management, 2012-2027)
Lawdragon 500 Leading Corporate Employment Lawyers, *Lawdragon Inc.* (2021-2026)
Chicago's Notable Black Leaders, *Crain's Chicago Business* (2021-2022, 2024)
Chicago's Notable Litigators & Trial Attorneys, *Crain's Chicago Business* (2025)
Illinois Leading Lawyer in Employment: Management, *Law Bulletin Media Leading Lawyers* (2004-2025)
Illinois Super Lawyer in Employment Litigation and Employment & Labor, *Thomson Reuters* (2005-2026)
Top 500 Employment Lawyers in America, *Lawdragon Inc.* (2020-2021)
Chicago's Notable Minorities in Law, *Crain's Chicago Business* (2018, 2020)
Nation's Best, *Lawyers of Color* (2019)
40 Illinois Attorneys Under Forty, *Law Bulletin Media* (2003)

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

"7th Cir. Panel Mulls Applying Adverse Job Action Standard," (quote), *Daily Labor Report®* (April 10, 2025)
"President Trump's Executive Orders on DEI and Their Potential Impact on the Private Sector," (co-author) *RSHC Client Alert* (February 25, 2025)
"3 COVID-19 Vaccine Cases To Keep An Eye On In 2025," (quote) *Law 360* (January 1, 2025)
"5 Key Decisions In COVID-19 Vaccine Battles From 2024," (quote) *Law 360* (December 18, 2024)
"Life Cycle of an Employment Case," (speaker) presentation at Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP (May 2020)
"Arbitration and Other ADR Issues," (speaker) presentation at Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP (June 2019)
"Litigation Potpourri: A Mixture of Aromas from Hot Topics in Class Actions to Managing Litigation in a Hashtag World," (speaker) presentation at Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP (May 2018)
"The Interplay between Rule 23(c)(4) and the Other Provisions of Rule 23, Including Damages Issues at the Certification Stage," (speaker) ABA Section of Labor and Employment Law 9th Annual Conference (November 2015)

"Medical Inquiries and Exams Under the Americans with Disabilities Act," (speaker) In-house legal department client presentation (January 23, 2015)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Civic and Charitable Memberships

Children First Fund: The Chicago Public Schools Foundation, Board Chairman
Ounce of Prevention Fund, Board Member
Frankie Knuckles Foundation, Board Member
Mayor Daley's 21st Century Leadership Council, Former Member
Chicago Public Schools, Former Interim Director of Labor Relations
Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities, Former Board Chair