

Trisha M. Earls

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

05/2022 — present -- **The Hawkins Firm LLC**, Atlanta. Partner with a focus on employment law counseling, compliance and independent investigations.

9/2016 — 03/2022 -- **Terga LLC**, Atlanta

Held Chief People, Legal and Compliance executive role in private equity, manufacturing company with 12,000+ employees in four countries. Assisted company with aggressive M&A and organic growth phase. Oversaw all litigation and agency matters as well as commercial contracting, labor negotiations, and U.S. Customs and other international compliance matters.

9/2009 --- 9/2016 -- **EDMC & South University**, Atlanta, Pittsburgh & Savannah

Held numerous Legal, Regulatory Affairs, HR, and Compliance roles for South University, comprised of 9 campuses in the U.S and its parent corporation EDMC, a higher education system comprised of 110 campuses in the U.S and Canada with 24,000 employees. Managed and all student and employee agency complaints (including Title IX, OCR, EEOC, DOL, OFCCP, OSHA, etc..) and litigation.

6/2007 --- 9/2009 -- **Savannah College of Art & Design**, Savannah, Atlanta

Held chief HR position. Oversaw all HR administration and agency matters for SCAD's campuses in Savannah, Atlanta, Lacoste, France & Hong Kong.

01/20001 – 5/2007-- **Equifax, Inc.**, Atlanta

Served as Associate Group Counsel for a \$1.4 Billion public, financial services company with over 10,000 employees in 8 countries. Managed all employment law matters before federal and state agencies and litigation. Managed commercial contracting and FCRA compliance emerging business unit. Served as the first Compliance Officer and oversaw implementation of a robust Compliance and Ethics program, including anonymous hotline. Subsequently served in various senior HR leadership roles.

05/1994 -- 1/2001-- **Fisher Phillips LLP** Atlanta

Summer Associate and Associate in a national employment law boutique, with a focus on defending employers from discrimination, harassment, wage-hour, and other claims brought by their employees under state and federal employment laws.

REPRESENTATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

- Represented auto dealers throughout the U.S. in multiple sexual harassment and age discrimination claims, resulting in summary judgment or nominal settlements, avoiding mounting litigation costs.
- Negotiated multiple ADA settlements for unionized, national freight carrier after defeating various theories of recovery at summary judgement.
- Obtained summary judgment in denial of tenure case for a university.
- Investigated over 500 hotline complaints a year for a large employer, alleging violations of Title VII, FLSA, Title IX, Department of Education, and state laws. Ensured thorough and documented investigations occurred and implemented sound remedial action. Reduced number of complaints by over 50% by implementing management training and other pro-active employee engagement initiatives.
- Investigated claims from 17 State Attorneys General and assisted with implementation of consent decree and monitorship to resolve the AG matters as well as 4 Qui Tam actions.
- Directed investigation of FCPA and U.S. Customs matters for acquired subsidiary operating in numerous countries.
- Implemented alternative dispute resolution program for a large employer resulting in an immediate reduction of EEOC charges and legal claims and resulted in more positive work environment by amicably resolving matters in early stages.
- Oversaw two plant closures and numerous other sizable reductions-in-force with no resulting litigation by successfully navigating WARN Act, OWBPA and other state law issues.
- Assisted a client in multiple states and countries overhaul safety protocols during COVID-19 pandemic and comply with evolving regulations around employee screening, mask mandates, contact tracing, workplace injury reporting, and vaccination mandates.

EDUCATION

- J.D. 1995 The Ohio State University, College of Law, Order of the Coif
- B.A. 1992 The College of Charleston, Major in Political Science; Minor in English

BAR ADMISSIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Member of the State Bar of Georgia
- Admitted to U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia