

Moderator: Kevin Koronka, Partner, Husch Blackwell

Kevin advises and defends employers inside and outside of the courtroom in a wide range of labor and employment law issues. He provides guidance to executives and HR professionals concerning executive employment agreements and compensation issues, wage and hour compliance, leave and accommodation concerns, internal investigations, personnel discipline and discharge decisions, reductions in force, risk reduction, workplace safety and litigation prevention strategies. Additionally, Kevin regularly advises corporate clients in structuring the employment aspects of complex merger and acquisition transactions.

Kevin also represents his clients in employment-related disputes in state and federal courts, as well as before administrative agencies, including claims related to discrimination, retaliation, harassment, wage and hour, and family and medical leave. He has obtained injunctive relief in numerous cases involving noncompetition agreements and other restrictive covenants. Kevin has tried multiple jury and bench trials, all of which returned verdicts in favor of his clients. In other cases, he obtained summary judgment for the defense on age, race, disability, discrimination, harassment and retaliation cases. Kevin also represents employers in arbitrations and mediations and has achieved favorable results for his clients before a variety of appellate courts.

His litigation experience extends beyond employment matters, where he has represented wide variety of businesses in complex commercial litigation in areas such as real estate disputes, contracts, insurance coverage and partnership conflicts.

Kevin serves as the lateral recruiting partner for the firm's Dallas office and is a member of the firm's hiring committee.

HR Generalist: Melissa Kessler, Vice President of Human Resources, Careington International Corporation

Melissa Kessler currently services as the Vice President of Human Resources for Careington International Corporation, a health and wellness company that markets and administers discount healthcare programs, improving consumer access to affordable care.

With over twenty years of extensive experience in her field, Melissa has applied her passions and skills at Careington since 2003 where she leads all HR initiatives for the company, including HR strategy and planning, staffing, talent management, employee relations, and compensation and benefits.

Melissa is an active contributor to the human resources community, serving on the Collin CountyHR Committee and with Frisco HR. With a strong focus on connectivity and engagement, Melissa is committed to helping employees improve their working and personal lives.

HR Executive: Phillip Humphries

Phillip Humphries has over 20 years of experience in all aspects of human resources, but with a focus on employee relations, talent development, and the human resources aspects of mergers and acquisitions. This includes pre-acquisition due diligence, carve-outs and post-acquisition integration both domestically and internationally. He has worked for companies as an employee and as a consultant for companies ranging in size from 10 to over 40,000 employees. He also has a focus on HRIS implementation from bid stage to "go live" and end user training. He has also developed and conducted Management and employee development training. Phillip holds a Bachelors Degree from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and an MBA with a focus in international business from the University of Miami and is currently pursuing his Six Sigma Black Belt designation. He is a member of the Dallas HR Employment Law and HR Committee and volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America and Dallas Life Homeless Shelter.

Outside defense counsel: Brad Howard, Attorney, Brown & Fortunato, P.C.

Bradley W. Howard is a litigator with an emphasis in health and employment law and he is a shareholder in the firm. Brad began his work as a trial attorney in Albuquerque. For two years he focused on commercial litigation at Hinkle, Cox, Eaton, Coffield & Hensley. He then joined Burg & Eldredge, P.C., a Denver based firm, where he prepared and tried numerous lawsuits.

At Brown & Fortunato, P.C., Brad continues his work in litigation, focusing on health and employment law. Brad handles governmental investigations, business disputes, and litigation involving health care providers including DME companies, home health agencies, pharmacies, and hospitals. Brad is board certified in Labor and Employment Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Brad counsels companies on business and contract issues, employee situations including terminations, and risk mitigation strategies. In summary, Brad serves as a legal problem solver and is regarded by many clients as their outside General Counsel. Brad routinely handles health care investigations by the Department of Justice, the OIG, various boards of pharmacy, the Department of Defense, and other regulators.

Brad is active in many trade organizations, including the American Health Lawyers Association, the New Mexico Health Law Section Board of Directors, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the Amarillo Area Bar Association, and the Panhandle Human Resources Association.

Brad grew up in Texas and considers it home, but he works with clients around the country. Brad received his B.A. from Texas Tech University in 1988, graduating summa cum laude. After college, Brad continued his education at the University of Texas School of Law. He wrote for the American Journal of Criminal Law and enjoyed success in mock trial. He received his J.D. in 1991 and is admitted to practice law in Texas, New Mexico, and Iowa.

Plaintiff's lawyer: Matthew Scott, Managing Partner, Scott | Perez LLP

For the first 17 years of his practice, Matt Scott represented management exclusively in all types of employment cases. During that time, he represented dozens of Fortune 100 and Fortune 500 companies in every type of employment matter. In 2012, Matt left his position as Managing Partner of the Dallas office of national labor and employment law firm Ford & Harrison LLP, and joined former federal judge Joe Kendall at the Kendall Law Group LLP. There, he started that firm's employment section, focused his practice exclusively on representing individuals in employment discrimination, retaliation, wrongful termination, and wage and hour/overtime lawsuits. In just 3 years, Matt established one of the premier plaintiff's side employment practices in Dallas. Now, along with Javier Perez, Matt has opened Scott Perez LLP.

In 2013, Matt was named one of the Top 50 Employment Lawyers in the country by eBossWatch, in part because of three jury verdicts he obtained for his clients in 2013. Matt obtained a \$451,000.00 verdict against Kroger on behalf of a mentally disabled worker, a \$522,000.00 judgment against Dallas County Schools on behalf of a wrongfully terminated disabled bus monitor, and a \$212,000.00 verdict against Morningstar Foods on behalf of a pregnant employee who was wrongfully terminated because of her pregnancy.

Matt is board certified in labor and employment law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. He chaired the Fifth Circuit Labor & Employment Law Pattern Jury Charge Advisory Committee from 2001 to 2009, which was responsible for drafting the pattern jury charges use in employment discrimination cases tried in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Matt formerly served as a member of the Rockwall City Council in Rockwall, Texas, from June 2005 until May 2011, and as an Ex Officio Director of the Rockwall Economic Development Corporation.