

### Five Additional Labor And Employment Attorneys From Seyfarth Join New Partners At Sheppard Mullin

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#### Press Contact

Ralph Richardson

T: +1.213.617.5571

F: +1.213.620.1398

[rrichardson@sheppardmullin.com](mailto:rrichardson@sheppardmullin.com)

Five more labor and employment attorneys join Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP from Seyfarth Shaw LLP. Special counsel David Van Pelt and associates Jennifer Abramowitz, Laurie Barnes, Paul Berkowitz and Kate Visosky and class action clerk Erica Ibsen reunite with partners Thomas Kaufman, Michael Gallion and Gregg Fisch who joined Sheppard Mullin last month. The group joins Sheppard Mullin's Los Angeles/Century City office from Seyfarth Shaw's LA office, where Kaufman was co-chair of Seyfarth's national wage/hour class action practice group and Gallion was a former hiring partner.

"The new team's wage-and-hour and discrimination class action expertise enhances Sheppard Mullin's already prestigious practice in California," said Labor and Employment practice group co-chair, Kelly Hensley. "The group is top notch and has hit the ground running."

"We are thrilled these top-ranked attorneys from Seyfarth's Los Angeles office decided to join us at Sheppard Mullin," Gallion stated. "Our team has amazing talent at all levels, from partners to staff. Our efficiency and personal attention to clients is consistent with Sheppard Mullin's emphasis on client service."

"Our entire team is excited to join Sheppard Mullin's exceptional labor and employment practice – with the combined ranks, I believe we have the strongest labor and employment practice in California," Kaufman commented.

Van Pelt is a seasoned labor and employment attorney with over 15 years experience representing management. He has been ranked as a leading labor and employment lawyer by Chambers & Partners. Currently, Van Pelt devotes most of his time to providing advice and counsel to employers on all aspects of employment law, including terminations and discipline, wage-hour issues, reductions in force, employee leave matters, accommodation of disabilities, employee relations and the myriad of employment law issues surrounding mergers and acquisitions. He has considerable experience in drafting employment policies, agreements, and handbooks. Van Pelt also handles both single plaintiff and significant wage-hour matters. He received a J.D. and L.L.M from Duke University in 1992 and a B.A., High Honors, *cum laude*, from Davidson College in 1987.

Abramowitz is a senior associate with significant experience defending companies in wage and hour class actions. She has defended virtually every type of claim in these cases, including misclassification, overtime pay, meal and rest period violations, vacation pay, reporting time pay, and unpaid business expenses. With a number of dismissals and class certification denials under her belt, Abramowitz has enjoyed an impressive record of success in fighting these cases on behalf of employers. Abramowitz also has extensive experience defending employers in single plaintiff lawsuits. She received a J.D. from the University of Southern California in 2004 and a B.A., *summa cum laude*, from the University of Arizona in 2001.

Barnes is a senior associate who specializes in defending management in single-plaintiff litigation. Barnes also frequently provides advice and counsel to employers on the gamut of employment law issues. Her practice includes representation of a broad array of employers in single-plaintiff and multi-plaintiff wrongful termination, employment discrimination, harassment, retaliation and breach of contract cases. Recently, Barnes obtained several impressive victories for clients, including summary judgment and an award of attorneys' fees in a high profile case. Barnes was very active in Seyfarth's Women's Affinity Group before joining Sheppard Mullin. Barnes received her J.D. from the University of Southern California in 2003 and a B.S., *cum laude*, from Northwestern University in 1997.

Berkowitz is a junior associate who has experience handling class actions, single-plaintiff cases and traditional labor matters. He has litigated and obtained summary judgment, as well as favorably resolved cases involving allegations of sexual harassment, age, race, gender, national origin, and disability discrimination, and claims of wrongful termination, harassment, and retaliation. Berkowitz has extensive experience with wage and hour matters involving claims relating to overtime, meal and rest breaks, misclassification, violations of the Los Angeles Living Wage Ordinance, and improper wage statements. Berkowitz received a J.D., *Order of the Coif*, from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2007 and a B.A., *cum laude*, from the University of Arizona in 2004.

Visosky is a mid-level associate who represents employers in both single-plaintiff and class action litigation. She has litigated and obtained dismissal, as well as favorably resolved cases involving allegations of sexual harassment, age, race, gender, national origin, military, and pregnancy discrimination, and claims of wrongful termination, harassment, and retaliation. Visosky's experience with wage and hour matters involves claims relating to overtime, meal and rest breaks, misclassification, and improper wage statements, *qui tam* actions, and matters involving collective bargaining agreements. She received a J.D. from the University of Southern California in 2006 and a B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1997.

## **About Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP**

Sheppard Mullin is a full service AmLaw 100 firm with 550 attorneys in 11 offices located in the United States and Asia. Since 1927, companies have turned to Sheppard Mullin to handle corporate and technology matters, high stakes litigation and complex financial transactions. In the U.S., the firm's clients include more than half of the Fortune 100.

## **Practice Areas**

Labor and Employment