

Mary Kristen Kelly

Counsel

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OVERVIEW

Mary Kristen Kelly is counsel in the firm's Labor, Employment, and Workplace Safety practice. She works as a strategic ally to employers, both local and multistate, and strives to provide practical and solutions-oriented advice. Her experience includes counseling management and human resources professionals on a wide range of labor and employment law issues, including hiring, disciplinary action, termination, policy and process development and implementation, disability and leave management, restrictive covenants, and internal investigations. She also defends employers against charges of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation before federal and state administrative agencies throughout the United States.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Prior to joining the firm, Mary Kristen served as assistant general counsel for global employment law with a Fortune 500 company based in Durham. Previously, she was in-house counsel to a multinational biotechnology company and an associate at a boutique litigation firm in Raleigh.

During law school, Mary Kristen served as a teaching assistant in the Legal Analysis, Research, and Writing program. She also was a student attorney in the Duke Children's Law Clinic where she provided legal representation to low-income, at-risk children in cases involving special education, school discipline, and children's disability benefits.

PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- North Carolina Bar Association

EDUCATION

- J.D., Duke University School of Law, 2010 *(Executive Editor, Duke Journal of Gender Law and Policy; Content Editor, Duke Law and Technology Review)*
- B.A., Smith College, 2004 *(cum laude, First Group Scholar, Ruth Alpern Leipziger Prize for Excellence in French)*

ADMISSIONS

- Bar of North Carolina
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina

LANGUAGES

- French

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP *POWERED BY HUB*

- January 2026, 14th Annual "Under the Wire" CLE Webinar
- January 2025, 13th Annual "Under the Wire" CLE Webinar

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- (Trans)forming Traditional Interpretations of Title VII: “Because of Sex” and the Transgender Dilemma, 17 Duke Journal of Gender Law and Policy, 219-239, 2010

NEWS & EVENTS

- 29 October 2026, K&L Gates Advises WilliamsMarston on Acquisition of Charted's NetSuite Services Business
- 25 June 2026, K&L Gates Recognized by ABI for Innovation and Technology Sale of the Year
- 2 March 2026, K&L Gates Advises Walex Products Company on Sale to Riverarch Equity Partners
- 26 September 2025, K&L Gates Advises CDSG HoldCo on Sale of CRU Data Security Group
- 22 May 2025, K&L Gates Advises Akoustis Technologies in its Sale of Assets to SpaceX

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Labor, Employment, and Workplace Safety