Cate McCaffrey

Associate Attorney

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Washington, D.C.



Catherine (“Cate”) McCaffrey is an associate in the Washington, D.C. office of Gibson Dunn. She is a member of the firm’s Labor & Employment, Class Actions, and Litigation Practice Groups. In 2025, Cate was selected to the “2025 Washington DC Rising Stars list” by *Super Lawyers*®. She has also been recognized in the area of Labor and Employment Law by *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America*.

Cate has represented clients in a wide range of employment litigation matters, including cases involving allegations of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, and wage-and-hour violations. Cate has significant experience in defending against employment-related class and collective actions. She has represented employers in federal district and appellate courts across the country, in mediation, and before federal agencies including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission. Her practice also includes sensitive, internal workplace investigations into matters including sexual harassment, discrimination, and whistleblower retaliation.

Cate also has extensive experience helping employers to navigate the changing legal landscape of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) following the Supreme Court’s decision in *SFFA v. Harvard*. She has helped numerous clients conduct privileged audits of their DEI programs, assess litigation and reputational risks, and forge creative paths to accomplish their DEI objectives in a lawful manner. Cate also serves as the primary editor of Gibson Dunn’s bi-weekly DEI Task Force newsletter, available here.

Recent representative litigation matters include:

- Complete trial victory for major pharmaceutical company in an age discrimination jury trial;
- Won appeal of closely-watched COVID-safety and whistleblower retaliation action brought by New York Attorney General;
- Obtained partial dismissal of Occupational Safety and Health Administration citation before the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission on behalf of a major shipping and logistics company;
- Won summary judgment on behalf of a major food-delivery provider in a suit challenging the constitutionality of a New York City data collection law.

Before joining the firm, Cate served as a law clerk to the Honorable Jay S. Bybee of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and the Honorable Ronnie Abrams of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. Cate received her law degree *magna cum laude* from Harvard Law School in 2019, where she was an oralist for the winning team in the 2018 Ames Moot Court competition. She also served as a technical editor on the *Harvard Journal on Legislation* and worked as a student attorney as part of Harvard’s Criminal Justice Appellate Clinic.

Capabilities

Labor and Employment
Class Actions

Credentials

Education

Harvard University - 2019 Juris Doctor
Duke University - 2014 Bachelor of Arts

Admissions

New York Bar
District of Columbia Bar

Clerkships

USDC, Southern District of New York, Hon. Ronnie Abrams, 2020 - 2021
US Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit, Hon. Jay Bybee, 2019 - 2020

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Prior to practicing law, Cate served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mongolia. She graduated from Duke University in 2014 with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy Studies and in Asian & Middle Eastern Studies.

She is a member of the New York and the District of Columbia bars. She is admitted to practice before the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, as well as the U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York.

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