

## MICHELLE N. MICHAEL

ASSOCIATE



### AREAS OF PRACTICE

Employment Law  
Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation

### CONTACT INFO

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### ADMISSIONS

New Jersey  
2018

U.S. District Court District of New Jersey  
2018

### EDUCATION

Rutgers Law School (J.D., 2017)

Rider University (B.A., summa cum laude, 2013)

### YEAR JOINED

2018

### OVERVIEW

Michelle is a member of the Professional Liability Department. She focuses her practice on employment law and represents employers in the defense of matters involving allegations of discrimination based upon age, gender, race, and disability, as well as "whistle blowing" claims. Michelle also handles matters involving civil rights and discrimination claims in both federal and state courts.

In 2013, Michelle graduated *summa cum laude* from Rider University, earning her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology, with minors in Legal Studies and Political Communications. In May 2017, she earned her *juris doctor* degree from Rutgers Law School.

During law school, Michelle served as the Lead Research & Writing/Communications Editor of the Rutgers Journal of Law and Religion. Michelle was also semi-finalist in the Rutgers Law School Hunter Moot Court Appellate Advocacy Competition and served as a board member of the program during her final year of law school. Additionally, Michelle competed in the Jeffrey G. Miller National Environmental Law Moot Court Competition, serving as captain of her team. Michelle also participated in the Rutgers Law School Civil Practice Clinic.

Prior to joining Marshall Dennehey, Michelle clerked for the Honorable Richard J. Geiger of the Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division. Michelle also served as an intern to the Honorable Peter G. Sheridan, United States District Court Judge for the District of New Jersey, during law school.

## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

### New Jersey Appellate Division Addresses the Statute of Limitations Accrual Date in a Constructive Discharge Claim Brought Under the NJLAD and CEPA

**Mount Laurel**  
**Employment Law**  
**April 1, 2024**

This appeal involved the analysis of the accrual date in the context of a constructive discharge claim brought under the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD) and the Contentious Employee Protection Act (CEPA).

### Third Circuit Finds Paid Time Is Not Part of an Employees' Salary Under the Fair Labor Standards Act

**Mount Laurel**  
**Employment Law**  
**June 1, 2023**

Key Points: Defense Digest, Vol. 29, No.

### NJ Appellate Division clarifies applicability of CARES Act in context of unemployment benefits deemed erroneously awarded.

**Mount Laurel**  
**Employment Law**  
**April 1, 2022**

This matter involved the petitioner's application to receive unemployment benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), 15 U.S.C. 9021 §§ 9001 to 9141. Case Law Alerts, 1st Quarter, April 2022.

### Can a Documented COVID-19 Infection Lead to a Disability Claim Under the NJLAD?

**Roseland**  
**Employment Law**  
**March 9, 2022**

### NJ Appellate Division remands for a "more robust application" of Ullmann test in light of discovery demands seeking the production of business entity tax returns.

**Roseland**  
**Employment Law**  
**January 3, 2022**

This matter involved a discovery dispute in a wrongful discharge employment matter. During discovery, the plaintiff sought the production of the tax returns and financial statements of his former employer, a closely-held corporation. Case Law Alerts, 1st Quarter, January 2022.

## PUBLISHED WORKS

"Can a Documented COVID-19 Infection Lead to a Disability Claim Under the NJLAD?", *New Jersey Law Journal*, Co-Author, March 9, 2022

"NJ Supreme Court Confirms Scope and Application of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act," *New Jersey Law Journal*, April 14, 2021

"Can Employers Require Employees to Get a Vaccine, Once Approved?", *The Legal Intelligencer*, Employment Law Supplement, October 27, 2020

"A Case Law Update on the Status of Obesity as a Disability Under the NJLAD -- *Dickson v. Community Bus Lines, Inc.*", *New Jersey Labor & Employment Law*, a publication of the New Jersey State Bar Association, December 2019

## RESULTS

### Obtained a “No Cause” Verdict in an Employment Case in New Jersey

#### **Employment Law**

**September 20, 2024**

We recently obtained a “no cause” verdict in an employment case in the Superior Court of New Jersey. The plaintiff, an employee of a New Jersey State entity, asserted violations of the Contentious Employee Protection Act (CEPA). According to the plaintiff, after reporting purported deficiencies with an environmental permit, he was subject to a retaliatory and hostile work environment.

### New Jersey State University Successfully Defended in an Employment Discrimination Case

#### **Employment Law**

**February 8, 2024**

We obtained a “no cause” verdict in an employment discrimination case for a New Jersey state university. The plaintiff, seeking back pay, front pay, emotional distress, attorney fees, punitive damages and costs, alleged she was terminated from her position as director of the university’s performing arts center due to her age, gender and/or in retaliation for reporting internal complaints of age/gender discrimination.

### Summary Judgment Secured in a Racial and Sex-Based Discrimination Employment Case

#### **Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation**

#### **Appellate Advocacy & Post-Trial Practice**

**September 7, 2023**

We obtained summary judgment in an employment litigation case involving claims of racial and sex-based discrimination. The plaintiff alleged that she experienced a hostile work environment based solely on her race. We were able to prove that there was no evidence to substantiate these claims.

### Defense obtains a published New Jersey Appellate Division decision affirming that perception of having COVID-19 does not constitute perceived disability under NJLAD.

#### **Appellate Advocacy & Post-Trial Practice**

#### **Employment Law**

**June 7, 2023**

The New Jersey Appellate Division affirmed the dismissal our defense team obtained in a New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (NJLAD) perceived disability claim, alleging COVID-19 to be a disability under this statute. This employment discrimination claim involved a matter of first impression in New Jersey and established that COVID-19 infection, without more, does not constitute a disability under the NJLAD.

### Whistleblower claim against State Police dismissed.

#### **Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation**

**November 10, 2022**

Claims were brought against the state police organization and eight individual defendants (current and retired members of the state police). The plaintiff, a female State Trooper, alleged she was retaliated against for raising complaints about how male members of the State Police were treating other female employees and that her supervisors failed to take appropriate actions once her initial complaints were raised. She alleged she was denied promotion and transferred against her wishes in retaliation for making these complaints.