



# Lara A. H. Shortz

## Office Managing Partner

### Hospitality

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### Profile

Lara Shortz is the Office Managing Partner in M&R's Los Angeles office and the firm's Employment Advice, Counsel & Executive Disputes Chair. Previously, she led the Labor & Employment Practice Group.

Named multiple times as one of the most influential women attorneys in L.A. by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*, Lara handles the full spectrum of employment-related issues on behalf of management. She is especially recognized for advising domestic and international companies on major growth, hiring initiatives, and workforce reductions. Additionally, Lara is sought after for her expertise in negotiating complex employment agreements, navigating restrictive covenants, and litigating executive disputes. Over the years, numerous C-suite professionals have turned to her for guidance when transitioning to new companies.

In litigation, Lara has built an extraordinary record of wins, representing high-profile businesses in state and federal cases involving gender-based claims, including pay equity and #MeToo-related actions. She has also successfully defended scores of clients in the hospitality industry and other sectors in wage and hour class and collective actions (PAGA). This is in addition to her many successes litigating single-plaintiff discrimination, harassment, and retaliation matters at both the state and federal levels.

Beyond the courtroom, a significant portion of Lara's practice involves providing advice and counsel, as reflected in her chair designation. She offers guidance on various legal and human resource issues, including lawful hiring practices, leaves of absence, employee classification, and wage and hour compliance. Her experience extends to conducting investigations (related to sexual harassment, discrimination, and executive misconduct), overseeing administrative and internal compliance audits, and delivering supervisor and management training, including sexual harassment prevention. Lara also helps emerging companies establish employment infrastructure, policies, best practices, and operational mechanisms that support growth and attract investment.

As Office Managing Partner, Lara leads the implementation of M&R's strategic growth plans, expanding the firm's reach and talent base in L.A. She inspires employee engagement and integration as well, maintains active relationships with local businesses and the L.A. legal community, fosters a positive workplace culture, and provides overall leadership within the firm's headquarters.

## **Associated Industries**

Hospitality

## **Associated Practices**

Labor & Employment

## **Representative Matters**

Counseling & Negotiation: Audited approximately 400 positions at major gaming company to determine exempt and non-exempt employment status of workforce., Counseling & Negotiation: Advised hotel client regarding best practices relative to complex and sensitive employee leave (pregnancy and disability) issues., Counseling & Negotiation: Advised mortgage bank client regarding best practices relative to misclassification (exempt/non-exempt employee) issues., Counseling & Negotiation: Conducted major audits on behalf of emerging companies concerning the classification of hundreds of employees, and implemented changes informed by the results of the audits to limit potential liability., Litigation: Successfully defended multiple television and production companies against wage and hour

misclassification and related PAGA claims., Litigation: Defended class action lawsuit on behalf of hotel sued for multiple wage and hour violations as well as violation of the Los Angeles Hotel Minimum Wage Ordinance, an issue of first impression., Litigation: Acted as second chair in bench trial representing private high net worth investor in a technology company that created English language learning software distributed to the Chinese market. Recovered multi-million dollar verdict on behalf of client against principal who hid assets overseas and failed to deliver returns on investment., Litigation: Negotiated a highly favorable settlement for hotel client facing a pregnancy discrimination action prosecuted by a former employee., Litigation: Defended age discrimination and hostile workplace environment claims against a start-up company having a predominantly young workforce. Resolved the case for nuisance value following a multi-million dollar demand., Litigation: Defended a wage and hour claim based on the misclassification of an exempt employee, and prosecuted a cross-complaint against that employee for breach of fiduciary duty and duty of loyalty and trade secret violations, among other things. Commanded the employee's six-figure payment to the employer, with no liability on the underlying wage and hour action., WARN Act: Successfully represented media and marketing business conducting mass layoffs, requiring exhaustive federal and state (California and New York) WARN Act analysis and transition to bankruptcy counsel that led to the ultimate restructuring of the company., WARN Act: Advised large food production company conducting mass layoffs under the WARN Act in coordination with the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation., and Whistleblower Litigation: Successfully defended environmental consultant in an employment retaliation and discrimination lawsuit while concurrently defending a Qui Tam whistleblower case that involved a related criminal investigation.

### **Bar & Court Admissions**

- State Bar of California
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California

### **Industry Associations Industries**

- Hotel Association of Los Angeles (Board of Directors)

### **Community Involvement**

- Los Angeles Country Club Employee Scholarship Organizing Committee
- Brentwood School (Parents Committee)

### **Education**

- Southwestern University School of Law, J.D.
- University of Southern California, M.A.
- University of Southern California, B.A.

### **Award & Special Recognition**

- Most Influential Women Attorney, *Los Angeles Business Journal* (2019-2024)
- Inspirational Women Leadership Awards Nominee, *Los Angeles Times Studio* (2024)
- Rising Star, *Super Lawyers Magazine* (2014-2015)
- Super Lawyer, *Super Lawyers Magazine* (2024-2025)

## Newsroom

Publications - 05/08/2025 9:43am

How LA hoteliers can prepare for the global stage amid a complex operating environment

Publications - 03/31/2025 10:47am

Managing The Midsize Law Firm: Meeting Today's Challenges Head-On

Media Mentions - 03/10/2025 10:35am

Smart Tech, Smart Policies: Legal Must-Knows for AI in Hospitality

Media Mentions - 01/30/2025 1:49pm

How the NLRB's Uncertain Future Could Impact Hotels

Media Mentions - 01/22/2025 3:01pm

How I Made Office Managing Partner

Media Mentions - 11/17/2024 10:23am

On the Rise: Lara Shortz Elevated to Office Manager Partner for Westwood Firm

Publications - 11/04/2024 1:12pm

Affordable compliance: essential employment law guide for small businesses

Media Mentions - 11/04/2024 1:02pm

Shortz Now Runs Local M&R Office

Media Mentions - 10/14/2024 6:53pm

Avoid Retaliation 'Witch Hunts'

Media Mentions - 10/04/2024 10:43am

Calm and Measured

Media Mentions - 09/26/2024 10:33am

Law Firm Michelman & Robinson Names Lara Shortz as Los Angeles Office Managing Partner

Headlines - 09/17/2024 2:32pm

Michelman & Robinson Names Lara Shortz as Office Managing Partner in Los Angeles

Media Mentions - 07/25/2024 10:06am

Calif. Justices Save Prop. 22, But Legislature Could Still Act

Media Mentions - 11/17/2023 12:45pm

Hotel Industry Players Challenge NLRB Joint Employer Rule

Media Mentions - 07/14/2023 10:22am

Post-Pandemic Hospitality Trends To Watch At Midyear 2023