Katie Graham

515-283-8026
KGRAHAM@NYEMASTER.COM
DES MOINES OFFICE

Katie Graham is an Iowa employment attorney and management-side litigator who defends employers in high-stakes workplace disputes. A Fellow of the Iowa Academy of Trial Lawyers, Katie brings courtroom-tested judgment to every engagement—whether advising on a single personnel decision or defending a company-wide class action. She represents Iowa employers, school districts, governmental entities, and Fortune 500 companies in state and federal courts throughout the state.

Employment Litigation & Class Action Defense. Katie defends employers in sophisticated disputes involving discrimination, failure to accommodate, harassment, retaliation, and wrongful discharge. Her litigation experience spans Title VII, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Iowa Civil Rights Act (ICRA), and Iowa's Wage Payment Collection Act. She has significant class action defense experience, including FLSA collective actions and was lead counsel in a disparate-impact race discrimination class action brought against Iowa's largest school district. Katie also handles high-stakes governmental and constitutional litigation, including defending the State of Iowa and its former governor in a six-week jury trial alleging constitutional and sexual orientation discrimination claims, securing complete dismissal on appeal of an adverse jury verdict.

Employer Counsel. As trusted outside counsel, Katie delivers practical, business-minded advice on employment decisions, workplace investigations, employee relations, discrimination and harassment prevention, disability accommodations, FMLA compliance, and litigation avoidance. She partners with clients through every stage of an employment matter—from day-to-day counseling and internal investigations through administrative proceedings, trial, and appeal—and regularly defends employers before the EEOC, Iowa Civil Rights Commission, U.S. Department of Labor, and other state and federal agencies.

Workforce Training & Executive Coaching. Katie designs and delivers respectful-workplace, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and anti-retaliation training for employers and management teams—both on-site and virtually. She also provides C-suite executive coaching on risk avoidance, workplace conduct, and leadership accountability. Drawing on firsthand hospitality-industry experience, Katie offers specialized counseling to restaurant and foodservice clients on FLSA compliance, tip pooling, and wage-and-hour issues.

Governmental/Municipal Litigation & Crisis Management. Katie regularly represents governmental entities in politically sensitive litigation, including election-law disputes and constitutional challenges. She has particular experience defending institutions in high-profile, "headline" matters that demand careful management of admissions against interest, public statements, and reputational exposure. Katie advises municipalities and other institutions on crisis management and institutional liability following critical incidents—including acts of violence—addressing litigation exposure, employment issues, communications, internal investigations, and response strategy in compliance with Iowa's Open Records law.



PRACTICE AREAS

- Labor & Employment
- Employment Counseling & Risk Avoidance
- Employment Litigation
- Workplace Investigations
- Litigation
- Class Actions
- Employment, Labor & Discrimination
- Product Liability

EDUCATION

- University of Iowa (B.A.)
- Drake University (J.D., with high honors)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Iowa
- Admitted to practice in all state and federal courts in Iowa

Products Liability. Katie defends manufacturers in product-liability, breach-of-warranty, and lemon-law matters. Her clients include vehicle, roofing, construction equipment, and agricultural equipment manufacturers facing complex product claims.

Katie is a Shareholder at Nyemaster Goode, P.C., former Chair of the firm's Litigation Department, and a current member of its Board of Directors. Katie serves on the Drake Law Board of Counselors and, beginning January 2027, will teach Labor & Employment Law as an Adjunct Professor at Drake University Law School.

Outside the office, Katie enjoys spending time with her family at Table Rock Lake.

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

American Bar Association

Iowa State Bar Association

Polk County Bar Association

Iowa Defense Counsel Association
Board Member

Drake Law School Board of Counselors
2023-25

Des Moines Music Coalition
- Former President
- Former Board of Directors Member

RECOGNITION

Best Lawyers in America®
- Employment Law—Management, 2025–2027
- Litigation—Labor & Employment, 2025–2027

Best Lawyers in America®: Ones to Watch

Labor and Employment Law—Management, 2021–2024

Benchmark Litigation
Future Star

Martindale-Hubbell
AV Preeminent

Great Plains Super Lawyers
Rising Stars, 2016–2021

Iowa Academy of Trial Lawyers
Fellow

***Des Moines Business Record* Forty Under 40**
Honoree, 2015

Iowa Defense Counsel Association

Rising Star Award
President's Award (2021)

Drake Legal Clinic
Student Attorney, 2010–2011

U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa
Law Clerk

Drake Journal of Agricultural Law
Executive Editor

SIGNIFICANT CASES

As lead counsel, obtained complete defense verdict for school district in case involving allegations of race harassment, retaliatory constructive discharge, and tortious discharge in violation of public policy. Defense verdict affirmed on appeal.

As trial and appeal co-counsel, obtained complete dismissal of adverse six-week jury verdict on appeal in case against former governor and State of Iowa involving claims of constitutional due process and procedural due process violations.

As co-counsel, obtained defense verdict for farm implement dealer in case involving allegations of age- and sex-based harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.

As co-counsel, obtained defense judgment for manufacturing client on claims of pregnancy discrimination and retaliation.

As co-counsel, obtained defense judgment for plasma donation facility on claim of professional negligence.

As co-counsel, obtained defense verdict for client in case involving allegations of disability discrimination and retaliation.

As co-counsel, successfully obtained defense verdict for manufacturing client in allegations of race discrimination and retaliation.

Obtained summary judgment for banking client in claims of retaliatory discharge.

Obtained summary judgment for school district on claims of retaliatory discharge in violation of public policy.

Obtained summary judgment for nursing home in a case involving allegation of retaliatory discharge in violation of Iowa public policy.

Obtained summary judgment for long-term care facility on constructive discharge claim.

Obtained motion to dismiss in favor of church based on Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of Federal and Iowa Constitutions.

Obtained motion to dismiss in favor of county defendent involving claims of unconstitutional COVID-19 private Federal election grants.

Obtained summary judgment on behalf of school in a case involving allegations of age discrimination and retaliation.

Represented client in appeal to Iowa Supreme Court in which it was determined punitive damages were not available under the Iowa Civil Rights Act.

Represented local municipality in more than 50 bench trials prosecuting simple misdemeanor and traffic charges.