



Lynnette D. Espy-Williams

Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer
Member

Washington, D.C.

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Lynnette serves as the firm's chief diversity officer. She has experience in litigating a wide variety of civil and commercial matters, including matters pertaining to mass and complex torts, professional liability, premises liability, product liability, contract disputes, and extracontractual disputes, including defending bad faith claims.

Lynnette has extensive experience in defending many high-exposure product liability and premises liability matters. With respect to product liability cases, Lynnette routinely represents manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of allegedly defective products in negligence actions stemming from allegations, including, but not limited to, failure to warn, breach of implied and express warranties, and any other theory in tort or contract. She also frequently defends various entities in premises liability matters involving acts of negligent third parties, negligent or improper maintenance of premises, and inadequate security. Lynnette is thoroughly versed in tender and indemnification issues and routinely assists companies in determining where the risk of liability can be shared or absolved completely.

Lynnette handles cases in state and federal courts and she has been involved in every phase of litigation including, taking and defending fact and expert depositions, preparing and arguing key motions, negotiating with opposing counsel, drafting motions for summary judgment and motions in limine, and participating in pre-trial conferences. She has substantial experience handling consumer class action litigation, including cases involving alleged violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA) and Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).

Lynnette is the former president of the Gate City Bar Association, the oldest African-American bar association in the state of Georgia. She is also actively involved with the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, American Bar Association, Atlanta Bar Association, the Atlanta Council of Younger Lawyers, and a member of the Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel.

Named as a Georgia Rising Star (2012-2016), Lynnette was included in *Atlanta Business Chronicle's* 40 Under 40 for 2018, *Georgia Trend's* Legal Elite and also *Georgia Trend's* 40 Under 40 for 2016. She is also a member of LEAD Atlanta (2013), Outstanding Atlanta (2012), was selected as one of Atlanta's Power 30 Under 30 (2010) and, most recently, was recognized as one of Georgia's 40 Under 40 (2013), a list developed by *The Daily Report* that showcases the top Georgia lawyers under 40 who should be on readers' radar.

Prior to earning her JD from the University of Maryland, Lynnette graduated from Spelman College, *cum laude*, with honors in economics. While at the University of Maryland, Lynnette was a staff member for *The Business Lawyer* as well as an associate articles editor for the *Journal of Business and Technology Law*. Following law school, Lynnette served as a judicial intern to former Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears of the Supreme Court of Georgia.

Experience

Won summary judgment on behalf of a financial institution specializing in debt collection that faced

Practice Areas

- Commercial Litigation
- Casualty & Specialty Lines Coverage
- Professional Liability
- Product Liability
- Government Relations - Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

Industry Sectors

- Insurance

Education

- University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, J.D., 2006
- Spelman College, B.A., *cum laude*, 2003

Bar Admissions

- Georgia
- District of Columbia
- Maryland

Court Admissions

- Georgia Court of Appeals
- Georgia Superior Court
- Georgia Supreme Court
- U.S. District Court -- Middle District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court -- Northern District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court -- Southern District of Georgia
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

Affiliations

- American Bar Association
- Atlanta Bar Association
- Gate City Bar Association
- Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys
- Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel

Awards & Honors

- *The Women's Executive Network*, 2024 Canadian Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (CEDI) Award
- *The Chief Navigators Magazine*, 2023 Top 10 Most Influential Women in Diversity & Inclusion
- *Savoy Magazine*, 2022 Most Influential Black Lawyer

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- *Atlanta Business Chronicle* 2018 40 Under 40
- *Georgia Trend's* 2016 40 Under 40
- Outstanding Atlanta's Class of 2012

more than 100 claims of alleged violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA) and Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). We were engaged to replace prior counsel, entered the case just before summary judgment motions were due, and secured dismissal of all claims with prejudice. This win was affirmed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

Obtained summary judgment in favor of client insurance company wherein client's denial of certain health benefits under a cancer policy was upheld where the plaintiff couldn't prove her expenses fell within the policy's limited coverage.

Assisted in complex interpleader matter wherein client insurance company sought to interplead an insurance policy (property) into the court in order to determine the rightful owner of same. This matter set precedent in Georgia.

Obtained extremely favorable settlement for a client distributor in a products liability case involving a paper shredder, where a four year old child sustained injuries to her index, middle, and ring fingers.

Obtained favorable settlement for a client manufacturer and distributor in a products liability case stemming from a wrongful death claim involving a space heater.

Assisted in obtaining extremely favorable settlement for client hotel management in a premises liability case involving a shower seat detaching from the wall and allegedly significantly injuring the plaintiff.