



MARY RUTH HOUSTON

PARTNER

MHouston@shutts.com

1-407-835-6939 - [Orlando](#)

300 South Orange Avenue, Suite 1600, Orlando, FL 32801

Mary Ruth Houston is Co-Managing Partner of the Orlando office and Chair of the firm's Labor & Employment Law Practice Group. She is certified as a mediator in Florida courts and the Middle District of Florida. She was selected as Orlando's 2025 "Lawyer of the Year" in Litigation - Labor and Employment, by *Best Lawyers in America*®, and received the same honor in 2020. She was also included by *Florida Trend* in its 2024 Legal Elite NOTABLE Labor & Employment Lawyers list.

Mary Ruth focuses on business and employment-related issues using a problem-solving approach that helps clients concentrate on their core business. With over 30 years of experience handling complex disputes, her understanding of business issues outside the courtroom enables her to advise companies how to avoid litigation, or, if required, handle it effectively. Mary Ruth assists companies throughout Florida and beyond with legal challenges that may permanently affect their businesses. Corporations of all sizes turn to Mary Ruth for her experience in pretrial, trial (including trying multiple cases to verdict), and appellate work.

Mary Ruth's practice encompasses a broad range of labor and employment issues. These involve employee discharge and discrimination cases, including age, sex, race, national origin, religion and disability claims, as well as cases involving restrictive covenants and wage-hour matters (individual and collective). She also has extensive experience in negotiating and drafting complex employment and severance agreements. Mary Ruth teaches labor and employment law in the Master of Human Resources Program at Rollins College, and speaks frequently at seminars on employment related matters and conducts training on employment issues for businesses.

Her litigation practice also encompasses a wide variety of commercial, contract, intellectual property, and business tort disputes.

Mary Ruth is an avid mountain climber and hiker, and has summited two of the Seven Summits, as well as Cotopaxi, Ecuador, the highest active volcano in the world, and Stok Kangri, a 6,194 m (over 20,000 feet) mountain in Ladakh, India.

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Practice Areas

Labor and Employment

Litigation

Industry Focus

Hospitality

Health Care

Accolades

- *Florida Super Lawyers*, Employment & Labor, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023
- *Best Lawyers in America®*, Employment Law - Management, Labor Law - Management, Litigation - Labor and Employment, 2016—2025
 - Lawyer of the Year, Litigation - Labor and Employment, 2020, 2025
- *Orlando Magazine*, "The Best Lawyers in Orlando: Lawyer of the Year," 2020

Education

- Harvard Law School, J.D., *cum laude*, 1986
- Georgetown University, A.B., *magna cum laude*, 1983

Bar Admissions

Florida

Court Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals, 11th Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida