harman claytor corrigan wellman
THE CIVIL LITIGATION FIRM

Melissa Y. York

Partner | Richmond

Direct Dial | 804.622.1131
myork@hccw.com



Missy, a Richmond, Virginia native, joined Harman Claytor in October 2014 after practicing at Morris & Morris for six years. She focuses her practice on defending school boards, as well as other public and private entities and their employees who are involved in litigation. Missy routinely represents school boards, government entities, and their employees in civil rights actions asserting constitutional violations and claims under federal law. She has experience defending claims under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the United States Constitution, and other state and federal statutes and regulations. She also has experience handling claims of employment discrimination and wrongful termination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disability Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Family Medical Leave Act. Additionally, Missy defends claims involving defamation, intentional torts, and negligence.

Assistant: Kim Barton
804.622.1124, kbarton@hccw.com

Paralegal: Quinn Rooney
804.622.1118, qrooney@hccw.com

Professional Activities & Honors

- Richmond Bar Association
- Henrico Bar Association
- Virginia Association of Defense Attorneys
    - Appellate Advocacy Section
        - Chair (2018 – 2019)
        - Vice-Chair (2017 – 2018)
- Defense Research Institute
- Virginia State Bar
    - Board of Governors, Litigation Section (2023 – present)
    - Faculty, Harry L. Carrico Professionalism Course (2023 – present)
    - Young Lawyers Conference
        - Immediate Past President (2021 – 2022)
        - President (2020 – 2021)
        - President Elect (2019 – 2020)
        - Secretary (2018 – 2019)
        - Board of Governors 3rd District Representative (2016 – 2018)
        - Co-Chair Bench Bar Dinner (2013 – 2016)
    - Outstanding Service Award (2011, 2014 – 2016)
- Virginia Super Lawyers – Rising Stars (2013 – 2023)
    - Civil Litigation: Defense
- Virginia Super Lawyers (2025 – 2026)
    - Employment Litigation: Defense
- Virginia Business Legal Elite (2017 – 2025)
    - Labor/Employment

    - Civil Litigation
    - Young Lawyer/Under 40
- Best Lawyers in America (2027)
    - Employment Law – Management
    - Litigation – Labor and Employment
- Local Government Attorneys of Virginia

Publications

- Melissa Y. York, #MeToo—The Impact of a Social Movement on Employment Law in the Fourth Circuit, Journal of Civil Litigation, Vol. XXXI, No. 4 (Winter 2019 – 2020).
- Sandra S. Gregor & Melissa Y. York, The Imposition of Sanctions Against Attorneys after *Ford Motor Co. v. Benitez*, Journal of Civil Litigation, Vol. XXV, No. 1 (Spring 2013).

Reported Cases

- *Blair v. Appomattox County School Board*, 147 F.4th 484 (4th Cir. 2025)
- *Town of South Hill v. Hawkins*, 82 Va. App. 801 (2024)
- *Balogh v. Virginia*, 120 F.4th 127 (4th Cir. 2024)
- *Ibanez v. Albemarle County School Board*, 80 Va. App. 169, 897 S.E.2d 300 (Va. Ct. App. 2024)
- *Kissinger-Stankevitz v. Town of Tappahannock*, 750 F. Supp. 3d 590 (E.D. Va. 2024)
- *Mais v. Albemarle County School Board*, 657 F. Supp. 3d 813 (W.D. Va. 2023)
- *Brackney-Wheelock v. City of Charlottesville*, 652 F.Supp.3d 603 (W.D. Va. 2023)
- *Hawkins v. Town of South Hill,* 301 Va. 416, 878 S.E.2d 408 (2022)
- *Western Star Hospital Authority, Inc. v. City of Richmond, et al.*, 986 F.3d 354 (4th Cir. 2021)
- *Hanover County Unit of the NAACP v. Hanover County, et al.*, 461 F. Supp. 3d 280 (E.D. Va. 2020)
- *Kessler v. City of Charlottesville, et al.*, 441 F. Supp. 3d 277 (W.D. Va. 2020)
- *PBM Nutritionals v. Lexington Ins. Co.*, 283 Va. 624, 724 S.E.2d 727 (2012)
- *Wintergreen Partners, Inc. v. McGuireWoods, LLP*, 280 Va. 374, 698 S.E.2d 913 (2010)

Representative Experience

- Summary judgment for a school board in two separate cases by former employees who alleged race discrimination and retaliation in violation of Title VII after they did not receive bus driver contracts for the following school year.
- Summary judgment for a school board on a claim of race discrimination in violation of Title VII by a probationary teacher whose contract was not renewed.
- Successfully defended School Board, former interim superintendent, and former superintendent on claims of race discrimination in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 1981, tortious interference with contract, and common law conspiracy, resulting in dismissal of the complaint.
- Successfully defended school board administrative employee for claim of malicious prosecution under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 arising out of charges filed against a subordinate employee, resulting in dismissal of the complaint.
- Summary judgment for city in a case by a former employee who alleged race discrimination and retaliation in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 1981, as well as violations of the 1st Amendment and the Virginia Fraud Against Taxpayers Act.
- Summary judgment for School Board in three companion cases in state court filed by former teachers who alleged that they should have been paid during the pendency of their post-termination grievance.
- Successfully defended School Board on claims of violations of First and Fourteenth Amendment Rights and of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act arising out of school names.
- Authored Amicus Curiae Brief successfully arguing that there can be no cause of action for negligent hiring or negligent retention for conduct that occurs after the termination of the employment relationship.
- Successfully defended school board against claims brought by a former employee for violations of Title VII and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, resulting in summary judgment.
- Successfully defended an ambulance authority against a competitor's request for preliminary injunction to compel the grant of a license to operate within the jurisdiction, as well as the substantive claims of antitrust and constitutional violations, resulting in dismissal of the Complaint.
- Successfully defended school board, school superintendent, and various school board employees against claims brought by a student for violation of 42 USC § 1983, resulting in dismissal of the Complaint.
- Successfully defended school board against an unsuccessful bidder's request for preliminary injunction to stop construction on a contract awarded pursuant to the Virginia Public Procurement Act.
- Defense verdict after a jury trial for a town manager against claim of battery arising out of a verbal altercation with a town resident.
- Successfully defended school board and school superintendent against claims brought by an employee for violation of Title VII and 42 USC § 1983, resulting in dismissal of the Complaint.
- Successfully defended school principal and division director of testing against claims brought by a former employee for a liberty interest violation and defamation, resulting in summary judgment.

- Successfully defended school board in a due process appeal arising out of the implementation of an individualized education plan.
- Successfully defended school board, superintendent, and school board member against claims of defamation and breach of contract, resulting in dismissal of the Complaint.
- Successfully defended school board and director of student services against claims of violation of the Virginia Public Procurement Act and tortious interference with contract, resulting in dismissal of the Complaint.
- Successfully defended town against claims of wrongful burial, resulting in dismissal of the Complaint.
- Successfully defended former chief of police against claims of conspiracy, tortious interference, and defamation, resulting in dismissal of the Complaint.
- Successfully defended maintenance company against claims from a former apartment tenant for violations of the fair housing act, resulting in dismissal of the Complaint.
- Successfully defended school superintendent, assistant principal, and director of communications against claims from a former employee for defamation, resulting in dismissal of the Complaint.
- Successfully defended rehabilitation center against claims of a former employee for violation of Title VII, resulting in dismissal of the Complaint.
- Defense verdict based on contributory negligence as a matter of law in a personal injury case arising out of a motor vehicle accident.
- Defense verdict after a jury trial in a personal injury case arising out of a motor vehicle accident involving a car and bicycle.
- Successfully defended manufacturer of HVAC equipment in a products liability case.
- Successfully defended trucking company and its driver in a personal injury case arising out of a motor vehicle accident.
- Successfully defended premises owner in a personal injury case arising out of a slip and fall.
- Successfully defended restaurant in a lawsuit filed by plaintiff who was allegedly injured after biting into a foreign object in food served at defendant's restaurant.

The cases referenced above do not represent the lawyer's entire record. Each case must be evaluated on its own facts. The outcome of a particular case cannot be based on past results.

Presentations

- #MeToo – The Impact of a Social Movement on Title VII Law in the Fourth Circuit
    - Local Government Attorneys of Virginia, Inc., Norfolk, VA, April 2019
    - Virginia Association of Defense Attorneys, Norfolk, VA, October 2019
- #MeToo – The Impact of Sexual Harassment Law under Title VII and Retaliation – A Not So Hidden Danger, Virginia Association of Community Services Boards, Inc. HR Committee, Richmond, VA, August 2019
- From Hugs and Kisses to Other Workplace Conduct: Understanding Sexual Harassment in 2018, Virginia Juvenile Detention Association, Charlottesville,, VA, March 2018

Education

- University of Virginia, B.A. (2005)
- University of Richmond, T.C. Williams School of Law, J.D., *summa cum laude* (2008)
    - Graduated 2nd in class of 171 students
    - Articles Editor, Law Review
    - Vice-Chancellor, Walter Scott McNeill Law Society

Bar & Court Admissions

- Virginia State Bar
- District of Columbia Bar
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
- United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia
- United States District Court for the District of Columbia
- United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
- United States Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Virginia
- United States Tax Court
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit