
EUGENE H. MATTHEWS

Shareholder | Columbia Office

803.576.3733



Practice Areas

Employment Law
Governmental Relations
Mediation and Arbitration

Education

Furman University (B.A., *summa cum laude*, 1986)
Yale University (M.A., 1989)
University of Virginia (J.D., 1995)

Bar Admission

1995, South Carolina
1995, North Carolina
U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit
U.S. District Court, District of South Carolina
U.S. District Court, Middle District of North Carolina
U.S. District Court, Eastern District of North Carolina
U.S. District Court, Western District of North Carolina

Eugene H. Matthews joined Richardson Plowden in March 2004 as special counsel in the Columbia office and was elected shareholder in December 2005. He heads the firm's employment law practice

group. In addition to employment law, Mr. Matthews also concentrates his practice in the areas of administrative and regulatory law, civil rights litigation, and appellate litigation. Certified by the S.C. Supreme Court as a specialist in employment and labor law, he has extensive experience advising clients and litigating claims concerning a variety of employment and other business, administrative, and appellate issues. He also has significant experience as a state government executive and in-house General Counsel. Mr. Matthews is a member of the North Carolina Bar and South Carolina Bar, and represents clients in both states.

Prior to practicing law, he served as an intelligence officer with the Central Intelligence Agency. Since 1989, he also has served as an intelligence officer in the United States Navy Reserve. He currently holds the rank of Navy Captain in the United States Navy Reserve. He served on active duty during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, and in Iraq during Operation New Dawn from 2010 to 2011.

Mr. Matthews' experience includes:

- Litigating Title VII and other federal and state employment claims (discrimination, harassment, retaliation); "restrictive covenant" issues such as trade secret, non-competition and non-solicitation claims; wage and hour claims; FMLA and benefits claims; employee handbook claims; teacher and state employee grievances and employment contract claims; civil rights issues, such as fair housing, First Amendment retaliation and 42 USC § 1983 claims.
- Serving as General Counsel and Deputy Director for the South Carolina Department of Public Safety (DPS) from 2000 to 2004.
- Serving as Deputy Director for Labor for the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation (LLR) from 1999 to 2000, where he was primarily responsible for enforcing the state's wage payment laws, administering the state's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) programs, and managing the state's labor mediation and migrant labor programs.
- Routinely representing clients before LLR's professional licensing boards and other state administrative agencies.
- Routinely representing clients in state, federal and administrative appeals.

Awards, Honors, and Accolades

- 2026, Selected as a *South Carolina Super Lawyer* for Employment & Labor Law
- 2026, Selected to the "Employment Law Power List" by *South Carolina Lawyers Weekly*
- 2026 & 2024, Selected as "*Legal Elite*" for Employment Law by *Greater Columbia Business Monthly*
- Recognized by The President of the United States with the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services in the United States Navy from

December 2013 to November 2015

- 2023-2009, Selected as *South Carolina Super Lawyer* for Employment and Labor Law
- Named 2012 Leadership in Law Recipient by *South Carolina Lawyers*
- "AV Preeminent" rating in Martindale-Hubbell's peer review rating system
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Scholarly Lectures and Speaking Engagements

- Presenter and Organizer, Richardson Plowden's Annual Employment Law Seminar

Certifications

- Certified by S.C. Supreme Court as a Mediator
- Certified by S.C. Supreme Court as an Arbitrator
- Certified by S.C. Supreme Court as a Specialist in Employment and Labor Law

Previous Experience

- Legislative Aide, U.S. Rep. John M. Spratt, Jr. (SC-5th) (1986-87)
- Central Intelligence Agency (1988-93)
- U.S. Naval Reserve (1989-Present)
- Deputy Director for Labor, S.C. Dept. of Labor, Licensing & Regulation (1999-2000)
- General Counsel and Deputy Director, S.C. Dept. of Public Safety (2000-2004)

