

## Yendelela Neely Holston

### Partner

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### Services

Employment Litigation & Class  
Actions  
Labor & Employment  
Litigation  
OSHA Compliance & Litigation  
Wage & Hour



Yendelela Neely Holston focuses her practice on labor and employment law and also serves as the firm's Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer. She litigates and counsels clients in the areas of employment discrimination, occupational safety and health, wage and hour, background checks, and credit reporting. Yendelela advises her clients through all aspects of the employment relationship including policy creation and implementation, resolution of difficult employment issues, and development of strategies to avoid employment disputes. She understands that a critical part of helping clients address employment issues is understanding the clients' business structure, values, and aspirations.

Yendelela is also an experienced litigator, having successfully defended employers in a variety of industries against discrimination, retaliation, harassment, wage and hour matters in federal and state courts. A significant portion of her litigation experience has involved multi-plaintiff and class and collective actions. Yendelela has also successfully represented numerous employers in negotiations with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and in administrative proceedings before the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission. Additionally, she has handled administrative charges, onsite investigations, and systemic investigations by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and various state Equal Employment Opportunity agencies.

Prior to rejoining the firm, Yendelela was Assistant Vice President-Senior Legal Counsel with AT&T Services, Inc. where she developed strategy and managed outside counsel in class and collective action litigation involving employment matters against AT&T-related entities. Yendelela also worked proactively with her business clients to determine ways to meet the needs of the business while avoiding practices that had previously resulted in litigation. Yendelela routinely assisted in mitigation of legal risk across the organization. She worked to increase diversity within the legal profession and AT&T's legal department through involvement of with the diversity



committee and creation of a two-day intensive law school readiness program. Yendelela also co-chaired the legal department's national internship program and the Company's pro bono efforts in the Southeast. Previously, Yendelela was an associate and then partner at Kilpatrick Townsend from 2006 through 2015 where she worked on employment discrimination, occupational health and safety, and wage and hour cases. Yendelela also actively counseled clients with policies and initiatives related to diversity and inclusion including guidance on Title VII and 42 U.S.C. §1981. She was also an active member of the firm's diversity and pro bono committees.

While in law school, Yendelela served as a Staff Editor of the *Duke Law & Contemporary Problems Journal* and the Community Service Director for the entire Southern Region of the National Black Law Students Association. She received the Duke University School of Law 2006 Award for Outstanding Achievement in Family Law. Yendelela worked on articles dealing with the latest trends in discrimination-colorism and intrarace discrimination as a research assistant.

Yendelela was selected by *Chambers and Partners* as its 2020 USA Diversity & Inclusion Lawyer of the Year. She was honored as a high-achieving in-house counsel at the 2018 Corporate Counsel Awards, sponsored by *Atlanta Business Chronicle* in partnership with the Association of Corporate Counsel Georgia Chapter. Yendelela is a recipient of Women Works Media Group's 2018 Law & Justice Award. She is also a recipient of AT&T's 2017 Southeast Pro Bono Award. Yendelela was recognized in 2013, 2014 and 2015 as a Georgia "Rising Star" in the area of Labor & Employment by *Super Lawyers* magazine. She is listed in the 2013, 2014 and 2015 editions of *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business* for Labor & Employment Law. In 2014, Yendelela was honored by the National Bar Association with its Trailblazers Under 40 Award. She was named one of Atlanta's "40 Under 40" in 2015 by the *Atlanta Business Chronicle* and a "40 under Forty Rising Star" in 2014 by the *Daily Report*. Yendelela was also named to "Lawyers of Color's Hot List" in 2014. She was honored with the 2015 Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Young Lawyer Award for going above and beyond her legal practice in furtherance of ADL's mission.

## **Experience**

Defended large corporation in baseless employment discrimination matter brought by former employee. Convinced plaintiff of the futility of his claim without conducting any discovery or incurring large costs for the client. Obtained a stipulated dismissal with prejudice without paying any damages to the plaintiff.

Represented a number of construction employers and general contractors in matters involving alleged major violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Applied nuanced Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission law to facts to successfully resolve cases in the clients favor, including on occasion convincing the Secretary of Labor to withdraw the citations and complaint.

Represented a provider of technology solutions to the financial world and successfully defended the corporation in race, age, gender, and disability discrimination litigation by former employee. Achieved dismissal of the matter



after filing for summary judgment on the basis of plaintiff's failure to list the action as an asset in prior bankruptcy proceedings. Obtained favorable resolution for the client with minimal discovery and without taking any depositions.

Successfully represented a national telecommunications company and an individual manager in a very sensitive case brought in North Carolina by six current or former employees who alleged claims of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation under Title VII, the ADA, and the FMLA.

Represented a major airline against an age discrimination and Railway Labor Act case brought by 21 former pilots in the Eastern District of New York. Confident that the law did not support the Plaintiffs' claims, despite a lack of case law to that affect, aggressively pursued and obtained dismissal of all of the plaintiffs' claims prior to any discovery.

Represented a number of employees in various industries against single plaintiff case actions asserting violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act. All of the matters have been resolved on very favorable terms prior to trial and with minimal discovery costs.

Conducted a wage and hour audit of 47 different positions in several states for a document management software company. Worked with the client to develop a low cost and efficient mechanism for conducting the audit, without alerting employees.

Audited a university's classification of all of its employees, working closely with the client to develop a strategy for rolling out the results of the audit with minimal impact. Prepared a thoughtful analysis of each position that the client could later use in defense of future litigation.

Represented a drilling company that used an alternative means of breaking rocks. The North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued citations to the client under the mistaken treatment of their operations as involving explosives. Although the material was recognized by some agencies as explosives, convinced the North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Administration to drop the explosives citations on the grounds that the client's methods were safer than explosives.

Represented a national chemical manufacturing company against Process Safety Management and various other citations resulting from a chemical spill. Convinced the North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Administration to completely withdraw the Process Safety Management citations and to significantly rewrite the other items in the citation.

Represented a drilling company against an Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("OSHA") citation for



an injury that occurred during down-hole entry. If OSHA succeeded in its position, it would have shut down the company's entire business because they would no longer be able to engage in down-hole entry. Obtained a settlement with a year-long abatement period to allow the company to continue operations while researching alternative methods.

Represented a major North American beverage company in a putative class action brought by several convenience store owners asserting violations of 42 USC 1981. Utilized creative discovery motion practice to bring the issues with class certification to the Court's attention early. Successfully defeated class certification and then settled the individual claims on terms favorable to the client.

Successfully represented an insurance company in jury trial brought by former employee alleging breach of contract and various torts under Georgia state law.

Successfully represented a large background check company in putative class action under the Fair Credit Reporting Act. Implemented creative discovery strategy positioning the matter for favorable resolution prior to class certification motion practice.

## **Education**

Duke University School of Law J.D. (2006) *cum laude*

Furman University B.A. (2003) Political Science and History, *magna cum laude*

## **Admissions**

Georgia (2006)

## **Court Admissions**

Georgia Court of Appeals (2007)

Supreme Court of Georgia (2007)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit (2016)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (2016)

U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia (2008)

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia (2007)

U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia (2014)

## **Professional & Community Activities**

Furman University, Secretary and Board of Trustees, Member



Jumpstart Atlanta, Advisory Board, Chair, and National Board of Directors, Member

Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Executive Committee, Member, and Board of Directors, Secretary

Families First, Board of Directors, Member

Leadership Atlanta, Class of 2020, Member

LEAD Atlanta, Class of 2013, Member

Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, 2014 Class of Fellows, Member

Atlanta Workforce Development Agency, Local Workforce Investment Board, Former Vice-Chair

Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, Former Community Service, Co-Chair and Former Working Mothers Section, Co-Chair

Triple Pink Foundation, Inc., Former Fundraising Chair

## Insights

### [In The News](#)

Q&A with Kilpatrick Townsend's Yendelela Neely Holston, a 2021 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Awards Honoree  
November 10, 2021

### [Alerts](#)

U.S. Department of Labor Issues New Rules Requiring Vaccination or Weekly Testing for Employees of Large Employers

November 4, 2021

### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend Celebrates Juneteenth

June 17, 2021

### [In The News](#)

Yendelela Neely Holston Interviewed in *Furman News* re: Talent, Tenacity and Timing Lead to Connection Between Trustee and Job-Seeking Senior

April 29, 2021

### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Megan Chung Named 2021 Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Fellow

February 1, 2021

### [News Releases](#)



Kilpatrick Townsend Earns Top Marks in Corporate Equality Index  
January 29, 2021

#### [News Releases](#)

Yendelela Holston Selected to Become Riley Fellow  
January 29, 2021

#### [Publications](#)

2020: An Opportunity for Change  
December 30, 2020

#### [Events](#)

COVID-19, Privacy and Civil Liberties in the U.S. and Germany  
October 22, 2020

#### [In The News](#)

These Firms Have The Most Women In Equity Partnerships  
October 19, 2020

#### [News Releases](#)

Yendelela Holston Wins Chambers Diversity & Inclusion Award for USA Diversity & Inclusion Lawyer of the Year  
September 28, 2020

#### [In The News](#)

New Facebook Legal Scholars Program Helps Diverse Students Navigate the First Year of Law School  
September 4, 2020

#### [Alerts](#)

Virginia Enacts the First Comprehensive COVID-19 Workplace Safety Standards  
July 30, 2020

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend and Facebook Present the Inaugural Facebook Legal Scholars Program  
July 30, 2020



### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend Hosts Fourth Annual AT&T Legal Scholars Program

July 28, 2020

### [Alerts](#)

COVID-19: School Reopening Jujitsu For Employers

July 27, 2020

### [Alerts](#)

Employer Leave Liability in the COVID-19 Era

July 2, 2020

### [Webinars](#)

Dealing with Anger and Anxiety when Reopening

June 23, 2020

### [Publications](#)

Recognizing Juneteenth

June 17, 2020

### [Webinars](#)

Getting Back to Work: Legal Considerations to Keep in Mind

May 28, 2020

### [Webinars](#)

Reopening Guidelines for Retailers

May 14, 2020

### [Alerts](#)

COVID-19: Re-Opening Issues Checklist

April 27, 2020

### [Alerts](#)

Department of Labor Releases FFCRA Regulations as Law Becomes Effective Nationwide

April 2, 2020

### [Alerts](#)

Update: Department of Labor Releases Additional FFCRA Guidance  
March 27, 2020

### [Alerts](#)

CARES Act | Summary of Key Labor and Employment Provisions  
March 26, 2020

### [Alerts](#)

Department of Labor Releases Guidance Regarding the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act"  
March 25, 2020

### [Perspectives](#)

Video | Understanding the Families First Coronavirus Response Act  
March 25, 2020

### [Perspectives](#)

Video | Understanding the Families First Coronavirus Response Act  
March 24, 2020

### [Alerts](#)

The "Families First Coronavirus Response Act" Becomes Law  
March 19, 2020

### [Alerts](#)

Update: U.S. House Amends the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act"  
March 17, 2020

### [Alerts](#)

Understanding the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act"  
March 16, 2020

### [Perspectives](#)

Video | KT International Women's Day 2020: Tamika Walters  
March 10, 2020





### [Perspectives](#)

Video | Kilpatrick Townsend Celebrates International Women's Day 2020

March 10, 2020

### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend: Servant Leadership in Law

February 3, 2020

### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend Once Again Earns Top Marks in Corporate Equality Index

January 21, 2020

### [Perspectives](#)

Video | In-House Lawyers' Expectations of Outside Counsel

January 14, 2020

### [Perspectives](#)

4 Key Takeaways | In-House Lawyers' Expectations of Outside Counsel

December 16, 2019

### [Perspectives](#)

3 Key Takeaways | Talk is Cheap: How Law Firms Can Affect Real Change Through Deliberate Diversity and Intentional Inclusion

December 16, 2019

### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend Receives 2019 AT&T Legal Department Diversity and Inclusion Progress Award

October 17, 2019

### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Joins Firms Letting Lawyers State Pronoun Preference

August 13, 2019

### [News Releases](#)

Charlie Galbraith and Yendelela Neely Holston Named to Lawyers of Color "Nation's Best List"

July 15, 2019



### [News Releases](#)

The Surge: Kilpatrick Townsend Hosts Inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Summit

July 12, 2019

### [Perspectives](#)

Spotlight on Diversity & Inclusion

July 10, 2019

### [News Releases](#)

Facebook Selects Kilpatrick Townsend for Inaugural Law Firm Diversity Award

June 24, 2019

### [News Releases](#)

Yale Law Women Ranks Kilpatrick Townsend Among Top Firms for Gender Equity and Family Friendliness

May 6, 2019

### [News Releases](#)

Lawyers of Color Names Kilpatrick Townsend a Diversity and Inclusion Leader

May 6, 2019

### [Alerts](#)

Ninth Circuit Expands FCRA Disclosure Requirements

February 12, 2019

### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Brenda Holmes Named 2019 Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Fellow

February 6, 2019

### [Perspectives](#)

Video | Kilpatrick Townsend Day of Understanding 2018

January 31, 2019

### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend Establishes Inclusive Coffee

January 22, 2019



#### [In The News](#)

TWLL Fireside Chat: How Focusing on Diverse Women Expands Prosperity

December 7, 2018

#### [In The News](#)

CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion Unveils Three Key Actions to Tackle Unconscious Bias, Build Inclusion and Broaden Impact Beyond the Business Community

November 16, 2018

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend Hires Chief Diversity Officer

October 2, 2018

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend Welcomes First Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer

October 2, 2018

#### [In The News](#)

The Atlanta Business Chronicle Honors Kilpatrick Townsend's Yendelela Anderson as One of Atlanta's "40 Under 40"

November 23, 2015

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Media Report November 6-19, 2015

November 20, 2015

#### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Yendelela Neely Anderson Named One of Atlanta's "40 Under 40"

November 13, 2015

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Media Report September 11-24, 2015

September 25, 2015

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Media Report August 28-September 3, 2015



September 4, 2015

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Media Report June 12-18, 2015  
June 19, 2015

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Media Report June 5-11, 2015  
June 12, 2015

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Media Report May 29 - June 4, 2015  
June 5, 2015

#### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend Once Again Achieves Recognition From Chambers USA 2015  
May 22, 2015

#### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Yendelela Neely Anderson Elected Vice-Chair of the Local Workforce Investment Board for the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency  
May 19, 2015

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Media Report April 17-23, 2015  
April 24, 2015

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Media Report March 27 - April 2, 2015  
April 3, 2015

#### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Media Report March 20-26, 2015  
March 27, 2015



### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Yendelela Neely Anderson Receives 2015 Anti-Defamation League Young Lawyer Award  
March 24, 2015

### [In The News](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Media Report March 6-12, 2015  
March 13, 2015

### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend Once Again Achieves Recognition for 2015 Georgia Super Lawyers  
February 26, 2015

### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Yendelela Neely Anderson Appointed to the Local Workforce Investment Board for the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency  
February 26, 2015

### [News Releases](#)

Kilpatrick Townsend's Yendelela Neely Anderson Honored by the Anti-Defamation League with the 2015 ADL Young Lawyer Award  
February 3, 2015