



J. Stephen Poor

Partner

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Biography

Practices & Sectors

Labor & Employment

Complex
Discrimination
Litigation

Workplace
Counseling &
Solutions

Employment Litigation

Mr. Poor is chair emeritus of Seyfarth Shaw LLP, serving as an advisor to the firm's leadership and as an executive sponsor of strategic initiatives focused on innovation and growth. He served as chair of the firm from 2001 - 2016, leading the transformation of Seyfarth into an international law firm at the forefront of innovation. During his 15-year tenure, Seyfarth grew from nearly 500 lawyers to more than 850 lawyers around the globe.

At the same time, Mr. Poor emerged as one of the most influential leaders in the legal industry. Focused on improving service delivery and the client experience, he pioneered the application of Lean Six Sigma in legal service delivery and the development of the Seyfarth's award-winning client service model, SeyfarthLean®. In recognition of this work, Poor was named the 2011 Legal Innovator of the Year by the Financial Times, as well as one of Law360's Most Innovative Managing Partners in 2012. Today, SeyfarthLean represents one of the industry's most recognized and successful client service models.

In 2016, Mr. Poor received the prestigious Flex Leader Award from the Diversity & Flexibility Alliance which is awarded annually to a general counsel or law firm chair who promotes a more diverse and inclusive workplace through holistic flexibility. He was honored for his demonstrated leadership, dedication and tireless efforts to ensuring that flexibility policies at Seyfarth are a part of the firm's culture.

Mr. Poor also served on the firm's Executive Committee from 1998 - 2016. During his career at Seyfarth, he was a partner in the firm's Labor & Employment department, and served as department chair from 1994 - 1998.

Mr. Poor started his career with Seyfarth as an employment lawyer with particular focuses on trial work and ERISA litigation. He regularly speaks on topics relating to law firm management, including partner compensation systems, change management in the law firm environment and the application of process improvement techniques to the practice of law.

Education

- J.D., University of Virginia School of Law (1980)
with Honors
Order of the Coif
- B.S., Indiana University (1977)
Phi Beta Kappa

Admissions

- Illinois

Courts

- United States Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Circuits
- U.S. District Court for the Central and Northern Districts of Illinois

Affiliations

- American Bar Association

Representative Engagements

Representative Reported Decisions

- *Caterpillar Inc. v. Williams*, 482 U.S. 386 (1987). (Leading Supreme Court case addressing the removal from state court to federal court of state law employment claims).
- *Lingle v. Norge, Division of Magic Chef*, 486 U.S. 399. (U.S. Sup. Ct. 1988) (Supreme Court case addressing the preemption of state law employment claims based on federal labor law).
- *Dempsey v. Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Co.*, 16 F.3d 832 (7th Cir. 1994). (Railway Labor Act case.)
- *Brotherhood of Railway Carmen v. Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Co.*, 956 F.2d 156 (7th Cir. 1992). (Railway Labor Act case.)
- *Pratt v. Caterpillar Inc.*, 149 Ill. App. 3d 588, 500 N.E. 2d 1001 (3rd Dist. 1986). (Involving retaliatory discharge case under Illinois state law.)
- *Kagan v. Caterpillar Inc.*, 795 F.2d 601 (7th Cir. 1986). (Title VII case involving religion and ADEA age discrimination claims.)
- *Schacht v. Caterpillar Inc.*, 213 Ill. App. 3d 169, 571 N.E.2d 1215 (3rd Dist. 1991). (Involving federal preemption of state employee contract.)
- *Hamilton v. Caterpillar Inc.*, 966 F.2d 1226 (7th Cir. 1992). (Reverse age discrimination claim.)
- *Rizzo v. Caterpillar Inc.*, 194 F.2d 1003 (7th Cir. 1990). (ERISA case interpreting early retirement plan.)
- *Clyde v. Illinois Human Rights Commission and Caterpillar Inc.*, 206 Ill. App. 3d 283, 564 N.E.2d 265 (4th Dist. 1990). (Age discrimination claim.)
- *Pierce v. Santa Fe Railway*, 110 F.3d 431 (7th Cir. 1997) (age and release case)
- *Bialas v. Greyhound Lines, Inc.*, 59 F.3d 759 (8th Cir. 1995) (age discrimination case)
- *Cutler v. Jewel Food Stores, Inc.*, 1998 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 19876 (USDC ND ILL, 1998) (ADA case)
- *Harper v. Computer Associates, Inc.*, 1998 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 13441 (ND ILL. 1998) (race discrimination case)
- *Gorence v. Eagle Food Centers, Inc.*, 1998 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 5076 (ND ILL, 1998) (three plaintiff age and sex discrimination case)

Jury Verdicts

- *Staples v. Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.*, U.S. District Court C.D. Illinois (1985). (race discrimination claim.)

- *Chester v. Continental Grain Corp.*, U.S. District Court, S.D. Illinois (1992). (age claim.)
- *Schutter v. Union Camp Corp.*, Michigan State Court, Kalamazoo, Michigan (1985). (implied employment contract case.)
- *Brooms v. Regal Tube Company*, 881 F.2d 412 (7th Cir. 1989). (race and sex harassment case.)
- *Horton v. Dixie-Narco, Inc.*, 908 F.2d 967 (4th Cir. 1990) and West Virginia state court. (sex discrimination, right of privacy, and breach of employment contract case in West Virginia.)
- *Pierce v. Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Co.*, U.S. District Court, N.D. Illinois (1993). (race and age discrimination claim; second trial on issue of a valid release)
- *Kolar v. National Association of Security Dealers*, U.S. District Court, N.D. Illinois (1993). (Defense verdict on breach of employment contract case.)
- *Rivera and Allen v. The Prudential Insurance Co.*, U.S. District Court, N.D. New York (1996) (two plaintiff sex harassment case)
- *Cooper v. Eagle Food Centers, Inc.*, U.S. District Court, N.D. Iowa (1997.) (Defense verdict on Equal Pay Act, sex discrimination claim.)
- *Ferguson & Minnigerode v. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company*, U.S. District Court, S.D. Illinois (1997.) (Defense verdict on two plaintiff sex harassment, sex discrimination claims.)
- *Watson v. National Association of Securities Dealers*, U.S. District Court, N.D. Texas (1998) (retaliation claim under USSERA)

Representative Reported Class Action Matters

- *Greenberger v. Computer Associates International* (S.D.N.Y.) (WARN case; settled in discovery phase)
- *Hamilton v. Caterpillar Inc.*, 966 F.2d 1226 (7th Cir. 1992) (reverse age discrimination class action dismissed for failure to state action)
- *Isaacs v. Caterpillar*, C.D. Illinois (Class action age discrimination case challenging Caterpillar's early retirement program)
- *Rogene Gorence, et. al v. Eagle Food Centers, Inc.*, (N.D. Ill.) (class certification denied in alleged sex and age promotion/pay discrimination case; summary judgment granted as to named plaintiffs' claims)
- *Schact v. Caterpillar Inc.*, 213 Ill. App. 3d 169, 571 N.E.2d 1215 (3d Dist. 1991) (class action dismissed on federal preemption grounds)
- *Timothy Washington, et. al v. Eagle Food Centers, Inc.*, (C. D. Ill.) (favorable settlement reached in company-wide class action brought by African-Americans claiming discrimination in promotion)
- *Williams v. Caterpillar*, N.D. California, 9th Cir., U.S. Supreme Court (Class action case challenging plant closing involving federal preemption/removal issues)
- *Jones v. Caterpillar Inc.*, 241 Ill. App. 3d 129, 607 N.E.2d 1348 (3d Dist.), leave to appeal denied, 151 Ill. 2d 564, 616 N.E.2d 335 (1993), cert. denied, 114 S. Ct. 386 (1993) (action by 165 union-represented plaintiffs alleging breach of contract and misrepresentation in connection with alleged breach of promises contained in individual apprenticeship agreements -- summary judgment granted on the basis of federal labor law preemption)