

Rachel Pusey

Mediation

rachel@mediationcollab.com
athenaresolutions.com

EDUCATION

- JD, University of San Francisco School of Law
- BA in History, Lewis and Clark College

EXPERTISE

- Individual Employment Disputes Involving Fortune 500 Companies + Nationally Recognized Institutions
- High Stakes Single and Multi-plaintiff Employment Cases
- Single Plaintiff FEHA Claims
- Whistleblower, Wrongful Termination and Retaliation Cases

MEMBERSHIPS

- San Francisco Bar Association, Labor & Employment Sector
- Association of Workplace Investigators (AWI)
- Hellenic Law Society
- Ladder Down, Class of 2017
- Moms Demand Action

INTRO

After an accomplished legal career on both sides of the bar, Rachel transitioned to becoming a mediator to help others resolve complex employment disputes with a focus on single-plaintiff cases. Rachel built her over 20-year career exclusively in employment law, representing both plaintiffs and high-profile defense clients, successfully handling trials, arbitrations, and investigations while providing trusted legal counsel to businesses. Her leadership and expertise led her to become Managing Partner at Villarreal Hutner, where she spent 11 years driving the firm's success. Notably, in 2024, under her guidance, the firm secured a landmark \$20 million verdict. Now, as a mediator, Rachel leverages her multifaceted legal and business experience to help parties navigate and resolve challenging employment cases.

BUSINESS

Rachel has been intimately involved in running a small business as managing partner of a law firm and as a partner in operating Lacuna Wines, a family run wine label. She developed mindful financial strategies, engaged in problem solving with compassion and made difficult risk management decisions.

MEDIATION

Having served on both sides of the table allows Rachel to understand the unique challenges each party faces and provide equanimity in the mediation process. Rachel prides herself on guiding people through their challenges with sensitivity, thoughtfulness and care and ensuring that all parties feel heard. Rachel enjoys the cooperative, solution-oriented nature of mediation.

LEGAL

- Managing Partner, Villarreal Hutner PC – San Francisco, 2014 - 2025
- Elevated from Senior Counsel to Managing Partner, leading firm growth and management including effective financial strategy, operations, business development, risk mitigation, goal setting, development of firm culture and human resources.
- Served as lead counsel on all litigation matters to determine strategy, successfully manage discovery, dispositive motion practice and develop creative resolution for a range of clients from Fortune 500 companies to small and midsize employers.
- Provided time sensitive, decisive and empathetic counseling, advice and crisis management for employment-related issues.
- Acted as a neutral, fact-finding investigator for sensitive investigations.
- Instrumental in maintaining positive and productive client relations throughout complex and lengthy suits.
- Defended two matters as lead counsel in arbitration resulting in defense awards.
- Trial strategy team for the firm's first plaintiff's case in hard fought, eight-week jury trial.
- Senior Counsel, Gordon & Rees – San Francisco, 2010-2014
- Managed defense-side employment matters for banking, education, nonprofit, public entity, technology, retirement communities, hospitals, restaurants and grocery stores.
- Successfully represented clients in state and federal courts across California.
- Thoughtfully positioned cases for resolution.
- Mediated numerous matters employing creativity and connection.
- Attorney, The Dolan Law Firm – San Francisco, 2002 – 2009
- Responsible for all aspects of heavy caseload of plaintiff-side employment and personal injury cases in federal and state court.
- Member of team that won \$61 million judgment for two current employees in a race harassment suit.
- Led employment practice group.
- Managed year-round law clerk program and support staff.
- Human Resources and risk management.

SERVICE

Rachel is a committed supporter and advocate for a variety of causes that give back to our local and national communities. She supports organizations as a donor and volunteer including Moms Demand Action and the San Francisco - Marin Food Bank.



Rachel is a proud member of The Mediation Collaborative