



CARMEN M. CATO

Associate

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PRACTICE FOCUS

Litigation
Automotive
Automotive Regulatory Compliance
Automotive Liability Litigation
Employment Law
Cybersecurity, Data Breach & Protection
Products Liability
Corporate Compliance and Investigations
Noncompetes & Business Divorce

EDUCATION

- Troy University, B.S., 1998
- Stetson University College of Law, J.D., 2021, *cum laude*
 - Stetson Law Review, Articles Editor
 - Outstanding New Associate 2019
 - Moot Court Board
 - Moot Court Board Excellence Award,

Carmen Cato is an associate in the firm's Commercial Litigation Group. Her primary areas of practice include automotive litigation and compliance, as well as employment defense of allegations of discrimination and harassment, non-compete litigation, wage-hour compliance, and advice and litigation concerning federal and state employment related statutes. She provides proactive solutions for clients on issues concerning employee handbooks and employment contracts. Carmen has defended businesses against class action lawsuits and consumer claims, and works with national automotive clients and retailers throughout the state of Florida in litigation and arbitration matters. Carmen also has experience assisting with internal investigations.

Carmen attended Stetson University College of Law and upon graduation was honored to receive the Dean's Excellence Award, the Moot Court Board Excellence Award, the Veterans Law Institute Award for Excellence, and be named to the Order of the Barristers. While in law school, Carmen served as an Articles Editor for Stetson Law Review and was named Outstanding New Associate during her tenure, she advocated in national competitions for Stetson's Moot Court Board and was also a member of Phi Delta Phi Legal Honor Society. Carmen earned the Book Award in Research and Writing II-Environmental Law and served as a teaching assistant for Research and Writing I, Research and Writing II, and Criminal Law. Carmen also interned in the United States District Court, Middle District of Florida for the Honorable William Jung, the Honorable Sean Flynn, and the Honorable Catherine Peek McEwen.

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2021

- Dean's Excellence Award, 2021
- Order of the Barristers' Award
- Veteran's Law Institute Award for Excellence
- Hopping Green and Sams Book Award, Research and Writing II – Environmental Law
- Phi Delta Phi Legal Honor Society
- Teaching Assistant: Legal Research and Writing I, Legal Research and Writing II, and Criminal Law

BAR ADMISSIONS

The Florida Bar

American Bar Association

Hillsborough County Bar Association

COURT ADMISSIONS

- All Florida State Courts
- U. S. District Court, Middle District of Florida
- U. S. District Court, Southern District of Florida
- United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

Prior to law school, Carmen worked in communications, primarily as a broadcast journalist. The skills she developed as a news reporter and anchor—attention to detail, problem solving, interviewing, and clear and concise communication—have also proven integral to her legal studies and practice.

Carmen has served as a volunteer and reading tutor for two area elementary schools, and outside of the office she enjoys spending time with family and traveling.

HONORS

Florida Super Lawyers Rising Star (2025)

COMMUNITY & PROFESSIONAL

- Defense Research Institute
 - Employment and Labor Law Committee
 - Commercial Litigation Committee
- National Association of Dealer Counsel
- Federal Bar Association, Tampa Bay Chapter
- Hillsborough County Bar Association
- Florida Association for Women Lawyers
- Hillsborough Association for Women Lawyers

NEWS & INSIGHTS

Fifty-Eight Hill Ward Henderson Attorneys Named to 2025 Florida Super Lawyers List
Firm News, 6.26.25

Hill Ward Henderson Welcomes Five Attorneys
Firm News, 10.6.21

CLIENT ADVISORIES

DEI Changes Could Leave Businesses Exposed to Discrimination Charges
Advisory, 3.25.25

**CARMEN M.
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President Trump Signals Friendly Perspective on Non-Compete Agreements and Begins Revamp of National Labor Relations Board Policy

Advisory, 2.24.25

President Trump Eliminates Affirmative Action for Federal Contractors and Subcontractors – What You Need to Know

Advisory, 1.30.25

Court Invalidates FLSA's Overtime Salary Increase

Advisory, 11.19.24

Final Rule Raises Salary Threshold for Employee Overtime Exemptions - Learn How This Could Affect You and Your Business

Advisory, 4.24.24

Proposed Rule Would Raise Salary Threshold for Employee Overtime Exemptions - Learn How This Could Affect You and Your Business

Advisory, 9.7.23

How the Recently Expanded Protections Under the Pregnancy Workers Fairness Act Could Affect You or Your Business

Advisory, 7.10.23

Florida's New Immigration Law and How It Could Impact Private Employers

Advisory, 5.22.23

PUMP Act and Pregnant Workers Fairness Act - New Legislation Expands Coverage

Advisory, 5.12.23