



## *Brenda E. Lee*

**PARTNER**

Vice Chair, Anti-Discrimination Practice

---

WASHINGTON DC

+ 1 202 663 6786

BRENDA.LEE@WILMERHALE.COM

Brenda Lee represents companies, universities, and individuals in a broad range of investigations and related proceedings, including white collar criminal, securities enforcement, anti-money laundering (AML), and anti-discrimination matters. She has extensive experience representing financial institutions, tech companies, and individuals in parallel proceedings, including overlapping criminal and civil investigations. The vice-chair of the firm's Anti-Discrimination Practice, Ms. Lee regularly conducts sensitive internal investigations and reviews of company culture following reports of sexual misconduct, harassment, and discrimination and advises clients on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Ms. Lee has represented clients in investigations and enforcement proceedings brought by the Department of Justice, the Securities and Exchange Commission, FINRA, FinCEN, state Attorneys General, and various Inspectors General. She has defended financial institutions, corporations, and individuals against allegations of securities fraud, Bank Secrecy Act/AML program violations, government contracting fraud, and other state and federal violations. She has conducted numerous internal investigations, both in the US and abroad, often involving allegations of fraud or financial reporting violations.

Ms. Lee has substantial experience representing companies and universities in anti-discrimination matters and advising on issues related to gender and race. She regularly handles internal investigations and broader racial equity audits or workplace culture reviews in the wake of allegations of harassment and discrimination across a broad range of industries, including financial institutions, technology and social media companies, and non-profit organizations. Ms. Lee also advises clients on best practices for effectively responding to harassment and discrimination complaints and developing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Ms. Lee shares the firm's commitment to pro bono work, with an emphasis on children's law issues. In addition, she has represented multiple criminal defendants in Maryland state courts, including an individual who successfully challenged his life-term prison sentence on

constitutional grounds.

## *Professional Activities*

Ms. Lee serves on the Board of Directors of the Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. She also has a longstanding relationship with the Children's Law Center and previously served on its Advisory Board. She is a member of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of DC.

Ms. Lee is co-hiring partner for the DC office and a member of the firm's Diversity Committee and Pro Bono and Community Service Committee.

---

## *Solutions*

Anti-Discrimination

Bank Regulation and Enforcement

Education

Securities Litigation

AML and Economic Sanctions Compliance and Enforcement

Consumer Financial Services

Investigations

State Attorneys General

Litigation

Crisis Management and Strategic Response

Securities Enforcement

White Collar Defense and Investigations

---

## *Experience*

### **GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT**

- Representing a global financial institution in parallel DOJ, FINRA, and state regulatory investigations of potential fraud committed by a registered representative
- Represented the former CEO of a public company in obtaining voluntary dismissals of all criminal and civil securities fraud charges brought by the DOJ and SEC
- Represented a global financial institution in parallel SEC, FINRA, and FinCEN investigations of the institution's AML program
- Represented a technology company in parallel investigations by over a dozen state Attorneys General, the FTC, the US Congress, and numerous international regulators regarding data privacy and consumer protection issues
- Represented a major telecommunications company in an investigation by more than 40 state Attorneys General
- Regularly represent a global financial institution in response to DOJ criminal investigations of the institution's customers for fraud, money laundering, and bribery
- Regularly represent a broker-dealer in response to SEC and FINRA investigations of registered representatives
- Represented multiple companies and individuals in investigations conducted by various Inspectors General
- Represented the president of a global financial services firm in an SEC investigation
- Represented a major global oil and gas company in connection with parallel SEC and DOJ criminal investigations and in other executive branch inquiries arising from an accident in the Gulf of Mexico

### **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PRACTICE**

- Conducting an equity audit for a large asset manager, including an assessment of policies and procedures and investigatory practices
- Conducting an independent review on behalf of a Special Committee of the Board of Directors of a large international nonprofit dedicated to helping refugees
- Conducted an independent workplace culture review of a large technology company, including the company's policies and practices concerning discrimination, harassment, and other workplace issues; how the company evaluates, promotes, and compensates employees; and how the company responds to and investigates complaints of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation
- Conducted a culture review for the New York Mets under the direction of new ownership, including a review of its anti-harassment policies and procedures, its processes for addressing workplace concerns, and interviews of employees about their workplace experience, to develop recommendations to enhance workplace culture

- Conducted a corporate culture review of a financial institution’s sexual harassment policies and procedures and how to improve the firm’s culture and foster best practices following the filing of a lawsuit alleging gender discrimination
- Conducted internal investigations of a financial institution and related mediations in response to threatened lawsuits involving allegations of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, and disability

#### HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICE

- Conducted an independent investigation for the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan into allegations of a decades-long pattern of sexual misconduct by an athletics team physician
- Conducted an internal investigation of a state university regarding potential fraud
- Represented a major research university in multiple Department of Education investigations under Title IX and in collateral criminal litigation

---

## Recognition

- Recognized by *DCA Live* as an Emerging Woman Leader in Law (2022)
- Named an Asian Leader Worth Watching by *Diversity Journal* (2022)
- Selected by peers for inclusion in *Best Lawyers in America* for white-collar criminal defense (2020–2024)
- Recognized by *The National Law Journal* as a 2020 DC Rising Star

---

## Credentials

#### EDUCATION

JD, Harvard Law School, 2007

*cum laude*

*Executive Editor, Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review, David Westfall Memorial Dean’s Award for Community Leadership*

AB, Biochemical Sciences, Harvard College, 2004

*magna cum laude*

#### ADMISSIONS

District of Columbia

New York

#### CLERKSHIPS

The Hon. Richard J. Leon, US District Court for the District of Columbia, 2009 - 2010

The Hon. Alan D. Lourie, US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, 2008 - 2009