

**Debbi Cohen C.V. Mediator-Arbitrator- Atlanta, Georgia**

## **Educator, Labor and Employment Attorney, Mediator and Arbitrator**

**Atlanta's John Marshall Law School**

**Vanderbilt University Law School**

**Atlanta, Georgia**

I have spent over 30 years engaged in all aspects of traditional labor law, labor and employee relations, employment law, litigation and alternative dispute resolution. After starting my career with the National Labor Relations Board, I have since been an outside counsel, the sole in-house labor and employment lawyer, the lead and managing subject matter expert, and a member of the corporate human resources leadership team. In short, I know how to help businesses maximize their operations by avoiding workforce disruptions; by resolving employment-related disputes at the earliest possible opportunity and lowest possible cost, and by implementing industry best practices. I have worked with a wide variety of employers and my clients have included manufacturing, construction, distribution, oil and gas, power industry, technology, and service-oriented companies and encompassed small family-owned businesses, nonprofit organizations, large well-known Fortune 500 corporations, and international conglomerates.

In addition to successfully utilizing my skills in the employment, labor relations, and human resources fields, I am a special education advocate providing services on a volunteer basis for students with disabilities (including in particular, those who have been impacted by early childhood trauma, abuse and neglect) to help ensure they receive the educational opportunities and supports they need and to which they are entitled by law.

I am a mediator and registered neutral with the Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution, and a public arbitration panelist with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA).

I sculpt in clay and I regularly donate art or the proceeds from art sales to charitable organizations or causes.

## **Experience**

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**Staff Professional, Office of Academic Achievement**

**Company Name Atlanta's John Marshall Law School**

**Dates Employed Aug 2017 – Present**

**Employment Duration 3 mos**

## **Location Greater Atlanta Area**

Atlanta's John Marshall Law School provides the opportunity for legal education to both traditional and non-traditional students who show promise of making positive contributions to the profession, legal system or society. It is dedicated to preparing highly skilled, ethical, and professional lawyers who possess a strong social conscience. I help students succeed by providing instruction, advice, and other program services to foster scholastic development, skills attainment, and the intellectual growth that promotes academic achievement.

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## **Workplace Consultant/Trainer/Mediator**

**Company Name Debbi M. Cohen**

**Dates Employed Jul 2015 – Present**

**Employment Duration 2 yrs 4 mos**

Provide counsel, strategic support, investigations, and alternative dispute resolution services to businesses, government entities, and others seeking to enhance operations by minimizing workforce disruptions and resolving workplace disputes at the earliest possible opportunity and lowest possible cost.

Services include, but are not limited to:

- Labor and employee relations strategic planning
- Investigations of employee complaints, including harassment and discrimination
- Employment Practices Audits
- Effective employee communications
- Employment and related policy development – Best Practices
- Conflict management and early dispute resolution
- Assistance with collective bargaining negotiations, all stages
- Legal and HR project management practices
- Mediation
- Training such as Diversity and Inclusion, New Employee Orientation, Workplace Issues for Managers, One-on-One Executive Coaching related to HR Policies

See my blog at <http://laborandemploymentreview.com/>

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## **Arbitrator**

**Company Name Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA)**

**Dates Employed Apr 2017 – Present**

**Employment Duration 7 mos**

**Location Greater Atlanta Area**

Member of the public roster of arbitrators for FINRA, the largest dispute resolution forum in the United States for resolving disputes arising between and among investors, securities firms and individual brokers.

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## **Senior Counsel - Lead Employment Attorney**

**Company Name Siemens Industry, Inc.**

**Dates Employed Jun 2010 – Jul 2015**

**Employment Duration 5 yrs 2 mos**

Successfully managed departmental budgets, and improved operational efficiencies such that year over year cost savings for practice group exceeded goals. Changed how decisions were made in the provision of legal services to the businesses, which reduced the use of outside counsel by helping attorneys and clients to identify and respond to issues leading to a sustainable 80% reduction in outside counsel costs for general labor and employment advice. Increased legal team and client productivity across the US businesses by leading standardization efforts in human resources policies and practices and implementing practices to utilize technology to provide clients with faster access to legal resources and consistent answers to common and recurring questions, which also decreased costs, minimized legal risks and increased client satisfaction. Instituted litigation management strategies that resulted in lower legal fees and expenses, and earlier resolutions at lower settlement amounts when cases settled saving the Company hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

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## **Associate General Counsel for HR**

**Company Name Mirant**

**Dates Employed Jul 2006 – Jun 2010**

**Employment Duration 4 yrs**

Sole attorney for all labor relations and employment matters. Supported development and implementation of a corporate-wide, multi-state drug testing program. Helped create and implement a business continuity plan for a critical infrastructure business to ensure continuing operations in the event of natural disaster, biohazard, terrorism or other emergency circumstances. Facilitated restructurings, including divestiture of business units as necessary, without labor disruption.

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**Director, Labor & Employment Practices**

**Company Name NRG Energy, Inc.**

**Dates Employed Jun 2004 – Nov 2005**

**Employment Duration 1 yr 6 mos**

Served as the labor relations strategic partner in developing, communicating, and overseeing processes to ensure a successful labor relations environment. Developed employee relations strategies to align employment practices, including policies, training programs, and communication tools, with business objectives following the Company's emergence from bankruptcy and the move of its corporate headquarters to Princeton, NJ. Implemented Sarbanes-Oxley controls and worked closely with Risk Management and Compliance.

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**Attorney**

**Company Name Law Office of Debbi M. Cohen**

**Dates Employed Jul 1992 – Jun 2004**

**Employment Duration 12 yrs**

**Location Washington, DC.**

Solo management side labor and employment law practice. Clients included manufacturing, construction, distribution, and service-oriented companies and encompassed small family-owned businesses, nonprofit organizations and large well-known Fortune 500 corporations.

Active in the DC Bar, leader in the Law Practice Management Section Solo and Small Firm Division. Developed and co-taught highly regarded courses for the DC Bar and other organizations on how to start and run a law practice, which included fundamentals of marketing; developing business plans; financial planning and budgeting; law office management; ethics; law office technology; client communications; and collecting fees, among other topics.

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**Contract Labor Attorney**

**Company Name Mobil/Exxon Mobil Corporation**

**Dates Employed 1995 – 2000**

**Employment Duration 5 yrs**

Provided labor and employment law support, including advice related to contract negotiations and interpretation; handled grievances and represented the Company in arbitrations and before the National Labor Relations Board and other administrative agencies and courts.

Assisted in ensuring no labor disruptions during the 1999 merger of Mobil and Exxon, the largest corporate merger in US history at the time.

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**Adjunct Professor**

**Company Name Georgetown University Law Center**

**Dates Employed 1993 – 1994**

**Employment Duration 1 yr**

**Location Washington, DC**

Taught Legal Research and Writing for Foreign Lawyers

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**Staff Attorney, Office of Representation Appeals**

**Company Name National Labor Relations Board**

**Dates Employed 1985 – 1988**

**Employment Duration 3 yrs**

**Location Washington D.C. Metro Area**

## Education

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**Vanderbilt University Law School**

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**Washington University in St. Louis**