

GILBERT HARRELL

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GILBERT, HARRELL, SUMERFORD & MARTIN, P.C.

Gilbert, Harrell, Sumerford & Martin (GHSM) is pleased to announce that Ryan Germany, Rob Fortson and Lauren Greer have joined the firm as Partners in the Atlanta Office. Most recently, Mr. Germany served as General Counsel to the Georgia Secretary of State and Mr. Fortson and Ms. Greer led the Education Practice group in McGuireWoods' Atlanta office.

Mr. Germany has over 9 years' experience serving as General Counsel to both Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and his predecessor, former Secretary of State and current Georgia Governor Brian Kemp. In that role, Mr. Germany successfully guided the office through some of the most fiercely contested and heavily litigated elections in the state's history. He now joins former Chair of the Georgia Ethics Commission Hillary Stringfellow to lead the firm's Elections and Political Law practice.

Mr. Fortson and Ms. Greer bring to GHSM a combined 25 years of expertise advising charter schools and other education organizations around the state on a full spectrum of academic, operational and governance issues. Mr. Fortson is also a seasoned lobbyist who has successfully represented dozens of clients across multiple industries at the over the past 15 years at the Georgia State Capitol. Ms. Greer has significant legislative experience herself, previously serving in the Office of Legislative Counsel drafting legislation for the Georgia General Assembly and as an analyst in the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office.

"We are thrilled to have Ryan, Rob and Lauren join our Atlanta Office. They bring valuable expertise in Elections and Education law, which adds to our current regulatory practices and bolsters the firm's Atlanta presence. Combined with GHSM's established flagship presence on the Georgia coast, it strengthens our ability to serve any client anywhere in the state," said Rees Sumerford, GHSM's Managing Partner. Added Jud Turner, who leads GHSM's Atlanta Office, "These additions confirm our firm's status as one of the strongest regulatory practices in the state. We now offer a full spectrum of legal services in the Environmental, Election, Education, Insurance and Procurement law arenas."

Gilbert, Harrell, Sumerford & Martin, P.C., is one of the oldest law firms in Georgia, providing quality legal services that spans across three centuries. Today, with lawyers specializing in all areas of law, the firm assists clients in virtually all aspects of civil and commercial law, maintaining practice groups dedicated to a range of specific practice areas. Within each practice group, our attorneys work closely together, sharing information and lending expertise in order to provide the most effective and affordable legal representation for our clients.

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About Ryan Germany

Ryan Germany is a partner in the firm's Atlanta office, where he leads the Political and Election Law Group. Prior to joining Gilbert Harrell, Ryan served as general counsel to the Georgia Secretary of State, where he guided the office through some of the most fiercely contested and heavily litigated elections in the state's history.

Ryan's practice includes all aspects of government and regulatory law, particularly election law, government investigations, and state regulatory enforcement actions. He is also experienced in complex commercial disputes. He advises businesses, elected officials, candidates, state and local governments, independent and candidate committees, and non-profit organizations on all aspects of election and campaign finance law. He also advises businesses and non-profit organizations in regulatory and compliance matters.

Ryan previously served as the Assistant Commissioner of Securities for the State of Georgia. In that role, he oversaw the state's regulation of the securities and charities industries, including investigations and enforcement actions under the Georgia Uniform Securities Act and Georgia Charitable Solicitations Act. He has advised clients involved in Congressional oversight investigations and Department of Justice inquiries, as well as other government enforcement actions.

Ryan graduated cum laude from Washington & Lee University School of Law, where he served on the Executive Committee of the Student Body and currently serves on the Law Council. He received his undergraduate degrees, magna cum laude, from the University of Georgia.

About Rob Fortson

Rob joined GHSM as a Partner in the Firm's Atlanta office. Rob has extensive experience in education, healthcare, legislative and regulatory law, and labor and employment issues. He regularly advises public sector clients on matters related to administrative and regulatory policy, bid protests and procurement, and legislative lobbying.

Prior to joining GHSM, Rob was a Partner with McGuireWoods LLP, where he was co-chair of the Charter School Group in McGuireWoods' Education practice. Additionally, while a senior vice president with McGuireWoods Consulting, he served as head of the MWC education team in Georgia, which represents online universities and charter schools, academic services companies, and curriculum and assessment providers.

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Through his education practice, Rob advises schools and education service providers on a variety of corporate and operational issues including board governance, facilities acquisition, financing and leasing, charter applications and renewals, FTE allotment and appropriations, employment disputes, IDEA and 504 compliance, student disciplinary issues, and vendor negotiations. He has also represented both charter schools and school systems board members in litigation related to board governance, school system accreditation and school funding. Rob is a certified charter school board governance trainer and has served on the Atlanta Public School's charter school petition interview committee, which reviews all applications for approval by the school district.

A former teacher and coach in the Baltimore City School System and Teach For America alumnus, Rob stays involved with Teach For America and several other educational organizations. He and his wife, Meeghan, are both Atlanta natives and reside in East Atlanta with their two sons.

About Lauren Greer

Lauren joined GHSM as a Partner in the Firm's Atlanta office. She has an extensive background in legislative policy and government affairs. Her legal practice focuses on education with a special concentration on charter schools.

Prior to joining GHSM, Lauren was of counsel at McGuireWoods LLP and Vice President of State Government Affairs with McGuireWoods Consulting, where she developed her education legal practice and assisted clients across a spectrum of industries with lobbying and multi-state policy monitoring, respectively.

She began her career with the Georgia General Assembly drafting legislation in the Office of Legislative Counsel and as an analyst in the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office and Senate Research Office. As a program analyst in the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office, she worked with multiple Appropriations subcommittees, to develop comprehensive budget recommendations for 13 state agencies with combined budgets of more than \$1 billion in public funding.

Lauren is a member of the Junior League of Atlanta, Lawyer's Club of Atlanta, Advance Atlanta, and the 2019 Class of the Zell Miller Foundation Leadership Institute. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Georgia and Juris Doctorate from the University of Mississippi.