



C. EDWARD WATSON, II

PARTNER

WICHITA OFFICE

1551 N. Waterfront Parkway, Suite 100
Wichita, KS 67206-4466

T: 316.291.9589

F: 316.267.6345

[cewatson@foulston.com](mailto:cwatson@foulston.com)

PROFILE

C. Edward “Eddie” Watson II is a Wichita-based Foulston Siefkin partner with more than 30 years’ experience. Eddie’s practice presently focuses on real estate leasing, owners associations, and clients either doing business with or seeking legal representation before governmental entities.

Eddie’s leasing practice includes advising landlords, tenants, and developers on commercial leases. He reviews, negotiates and revises commercial lease agreements, extensions and amendments; letters of intent; subordination and non-disturbance agreements; and estoppel certificates for retail, office, and industrial spaces. Additionally, he represents homeowners’ and business associations in managing developments; dealing with covenants, conditions, and restrictions for properties; transfers and control of ownership; and establishing boundaries.

Governmental affairs and public policy law also comprise a large part of Eddie’s practice. He has built and maintained relationships with key individuals – including lobbyists, elected and appointed officials, and staff members – that prove valuable in advancing clients’ interests and issues. Drawing on his experience as a regional governmental affairs attorney for AT&T in Chicago, he helps clients navigate the maze of federal policies and agencies, advises on how processes work in Washington, and provides introductions to those who can help them accomplish their goals.

Eddie often represents clients in matters before state regulatory commissions, courts, and local governmental bodies. His representation of a natural gas company before the Kansas Corporation Commission allowed it to obtain a Certificate of Service Authority in Kansas, and he continues to assist the company in filing its annual compliance dockets and rate matters. On behalf of a wireless broadband company, Eddie negotiated multiple franchise agreements with municipalities, allowing it to operate and develop business in Kansas. This representation increased the value of the company, which later sold to a national wireless infrastructure developer for a significant premium. Earlier in his career, Eddie’s negotiation and settlement of a client’s claim with a municipal entity allowed the company to avoid bankruptcy.

Eddie represents religious institutions in their real property disputes stemming from intra-ecclesiastical conflicts. A Kansas appellate decision stemming from one of these cases has since been cited in matters

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across the country. Eddie also spent a substantial part of his career advising both employers and employees in complex litigation cases involving employment discrimination.

Eddie and his wife are the parents of three children. Outside of his law practice, he enjoys honing his cooking skills, is an ordained elder in the Church of God in Christ, and serves on the board of directors of the Kansas African American Museum.

Education

- Georgetown University Law Center (J.D., 1990)
- University of Kansas (BA in Political Science, 1987)

Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas (2007)
- U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado (2011)
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (1990)
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin (2004)
- Illinois (1990)
- Kansas (2007)

PRACTICE AREAS

- Real Estate
- Governmental Affairs & Public Policy Law
- Administrative/Regulatory
- Employment & Labor
- Renewable Energy, Electric Storage & Transmission
- Energy
- Startup/Entrepreneurship

INDUSTRIES

- Real Estate
- Energy & Natural Resources

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Kansas African American Museum, Board of Directors, (2012-present); President-elect (2023-present)
- Kansas Appleseed, Board of Directors (2018-present); President-elect (2023-present)
- City Council Ethics Advisory Board, City of Wichita (2021-present)

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- Leadership Wichita, Wichita Area Chamber of Commerce
- American Red Cross, Past Board of Directors
- Make-A-Wish Foundation, Past Board of Directors

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Government Relations / Regulatory

- Represented business enterprises on regulatory and legislative issues advanced by municipal governments, state legislatures and Congress.
- Negotiated multiple franchise agreements with municipalities to install Digital Antenna Systems.
- Represent national gas supplier and retailer in multiple dockets before state regulatory commission.
- Negotiated an Intergovernmental Agreement on behalf of state highway authority to provide access of its right-of-way for development of broadband fiber optic ring.
- Represented broad band telecommunications provider in settlement of a reciprocal compensation dispute with incumbent local exchange provider.
- Successfully defended small reseller of wireless telecommunications services in contract action brought by much larger incumbent local telephone company with considerable more resources.
- Served as sole Regional Attorney for the AT&T Corporation for the Central Region: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin and the Southern Region: Florida, Georgia and North Carolina.
- Represented electric utility in dispute before the state regulatory commission brought by customers requesting rate relief.
- Led efforts to obtain telecommunication enforcement legislation in Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin.
- Represented AT&T in negotiations in state legislative matters on various matters impacting the business interests of AT&T, including the Wireless and Broadband entities.
- Negotiated interconnection contracts with local exchange companies.
- Negotiated contracts with large customers and suppliers, including all contracts with state and local government for telecommunications services for AT&T.
- Engaged in strategic business planning for arbitration proceedings related to interconnection agreement negotiations.
- Negotiated with owners of right-of-way for agreement for use of property, poles, ducts and conduit.
- Served as lead counsel in numerous regulatory hearings throughout the Midwest.

Employment Law

- Obtained dismissal of multiple administrative charges lodged at stated administrative agency and EEOC where individual alleged racial discrimination.
- Obtained significant settlement and permanent injunction against former manager of business where manager's actions decimated business enterprise.
- Represented employer in approximate \$1 million claim brought by former general manager alleging breach of contract and Wage Act Claim.
- Obtained permanent injunction against former employee pursuant to Non-Compete Agreement.

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- Defended multiple employers in race and sex discrimination charges brought before state agencies and EEOC.

Commercial Litigation

- Successfully litigated action against foreign manufacturer of industrial freezers to obtain judgment in excess of \$30 million dollars.
- Successfully litigated section 1983 and Title VII claim alleging racial discrimination against municipality.
- Successfully defended small reseller of wireless telecommunications services in contract action brought by much larger incumbent local telephone company with considerable more resources.

Religious Disputes

- Drafted Rules of Procedure on behalf of COGIC Board of Bishops
- Successfully represented congregation in claim by former member to have access to over \$2 million in church assets.
- Preserved local congregation's assets in excess of \$1 million from action of former member brought in state court alleging that board of trustees and pastor had engaged in fraudulent real estate transactions.
- Represented religious denomination in trial and appeal related to unauthorized property transfer.

Prior Legal Experience

- Partner – Freeborn & Peters, LLP., Chicago, IL, 2004-2006
- Regional Attorney –AT&T Corp., Chicago, IL, 1994-2004
- Associate – Jones, Day, Reavis & Pogue, Chicago, IL, 1990-1994

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS, AFFILIATIONS, AND HONORS

- Selected by peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® in the area of Employment Law – Management, 2016-2025
- American Bar Association
- National Bar Association
- Kansas Bar Association
- Illinois Bar Association
- Wichita Bar Association, Board Member, 2016; Secretary, 2017; Vice-President, 2018; President-elect, 2019; President, 2020; Chester I. Lewis Diversity Achievement Award, 2022; Real Estate Committee, Diversity Committee
- Wichita Business Journal, #DEICT Member, 2023
- Wichita Business Journal Diversity & Inclusion Awards Honoree, 2023
- Client Protection Fund Commission appointed by the Kansas Supreme Court, 2014; Chair, 2016-Present
- Kansas Board of Law Examiners
- State Law Resources, Board Secretary

PRESENTATIONS

2024

- The State of Religious Accommodation (Foulston Siefkin LLP, Employment Law Institute)

2019

- The State of the Law: LGBTQ Rights and Religious Freedom (Foulston Siefkin LLP, Kansas Employment Law Institute)

2015

- Lobbying and Governmental Relations- Ethical Issues for In-House Counsel (Foulston Siefkin LLP, Ethics Seminar for Corporate Counsel)
- Keeping the Company out of Hot Water: Conducting Effective Investigations (Foulston Siefkin LLP, Employment Law Seminar)

2014

- How to Have Difficult Conversations with Employees (Foulston Siefkin LLP, Employment Law Seminar)
- Religion in the Workplace (Foulston Siefkin LLP, HR Box Lunch Series)
- Lobbying and Governmental Relations- Ethical Issues for In-House Counsel (Foulston Siefkin LLP, Ethics Seminar for Corporate Counsel)
- How to Have Difficult Conversations with Employees (Foulston Siefkin LLP, Employment Law Seminar)

2013

- Employment Law Update: A Quick Look at Recent Religious Accommodation Decisions (Foulston Siefkin LLP, Employment Law Seminar)

2010

- Implementing Sexual Misconduct Policies in the Church (Kansas Southwest Jurisdiction COGIC)
- What to Do After the Employee Complains: The Anatomy of the Investigation Process (HR Basics) (Foulston Siefkin, Employment Law Seminar - Overland Park)
- What to Do After the Employee Complains: The Anatomy of the Investigation Process (Foulston Siefkin, Employment Law Seminar - Wichita)

2009

- Dealing with a Diversified Workplace: How to Avoid Claims for Religious and National Origin Discrimination (Foulston Siefkin Employment Law Seminar)

2008

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- What You Need to Know About Employment Agreements (Foulston Siefkin Employment Law Seminar)

PUBLICATIONS

2010

- 'Merry Christmas!' I mean 'Happy holidays!' Oh, just have a nice day
-Kansas Employment Law Letter
- Easy like Sunday Morning - Worship in the Workplace
-Kansas Employment Law Letter

2009

- Church Leadership Compensation
-The Whole Truth

2008

- Court Expands Title VII To Recognize 'Godfather' Retaliation Claims
-Kansas Employment Law Letter

ISSUE ALERTS

2020

- Coronavirus: COVID-19 Guidance for Religious Institutions

2019

- Kansas Legislature Passes New Law Giving Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault New Protections; Directly Impacts Landlords of Residential Properties

2008

- IRS Again Warns Charities About Political Campaign Activity