

# Patrice O.

Lawyer / Compliance - Direct Hire

Canton, CT

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## PROFILE

Accomplished **lawyer** and **human resources professional** with multiple advanced degrees, exceptional leadership skills, and broad international experience honed over twenty years in the U.S. Air Force (retired, 2015). A civil and military legal expert recognized for successfully prosecuting 20 courts-martial cases, streamlining and accelerating operational processes, negotiating complex and delicate personnel situations, and routinely eliminating administrative backlog. A personable, rational, highly trusted professional whose career is marked with superlative reviews and accelerated advancement.

## FUNCTIONAL EXPERTISE

- Civil/Military Litigation & Management
- Employee and Labor Relations
- Compliance and Audit
- Performance Management
- Negotiation and Mediation
- Process Improvement and Organization
- Employee Training and Development
- Technical Writing and Computer Fluency
- Financial Management
- Proficiency in German

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs, Rocky Hill, CT** (current)

***Staff Attorney***

- Serves as sole legal counsel on all legal aspects for the Agency and its Directors and Commissioner
- Drafts and reviews all advisory opinions, rulings, decisions, regulations and other related legal documents
- Provides legal oversight on all inspections and audit findings

**University of Connecticut, School of Law Mediation Clinic, Hartford, CT** (2 years)

***Student Mediator***

- Mediated cases for the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CCHRO)
- Analyzed documents in connection with all aspects of employment discrimination law and retaliation
- Successfully facilitated communications between opposing parties to reach mutually agreeable terms

**U.S. Air Force, Judge Advocate General's Corps, Andrews Air Force Base, MD** (3 years)

***Litigation Attorney, Air Force Legal Operations Agency***

- Served as Counsel on Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Privacy Act and Constitutional Tort litigation
- Prepared all final action on FOIA and Privacy Act appeals for the Secretary of the Air Force
- Provided legal counsel to subordinate legal offices on subpoenas, witness and representation requests
- Eliminated three-year backlog of FOIA appeals in just 4 months, reducing processing time by >80%
- Successfully represented the AF in a high profile FOIA/Intellectual Property litigation case in which \$1M in damages was sought for alleged fraud/theft. Case was dismissed by the US District Court

**U.S. Air Force, Judge Advocate General's Corps, The Pentagon, Washington, DC** (3 years)

***Air Staff Counsel, Office of the Judge Advocate General***

- Functioned as sole legal advisor to the Inspector General's (IG) Complaints Resolution Directorate

- Advised Air Staff and senior personnel on IG complaints policy and protocol for misconduct investigations
- Authored legal reviews for approval by the Department of Defense (DoD)
- Trained and counseled investigators and attorneys on the Congressionally mandated topics of reprisal/retaliation, restriction and improper mental health referral cases
- Eliminated five-year backlog of investigations in one year, directing a team of 20 in investigative technique and report-writing
- Drafted 100+ top-level legal reviews for Congressionally mandated cases; 100% of recommendations and actions were approved and implemented by the DoD

**U.S. Air Force, Judge Advocate General's Corps, Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX** (3 years)

***Chief Labor Lawyer, USAF Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance Agency (AFISRA)***

- Served as legal counsel to AFISRA advising on labor and personnel issues (e.g. discipline, termination) and information operations in a classified, 'Top-Secret' environment
- Resolved labor matters with the EEO and Merit Systems Protection Board, and ensured compliance with DoD and USAF regulatory standards
- Improved classified law office procedural compliance ratings from 43% to 100%, earning an 'Outstanding' score from AFISRA evaluators during a major regulatory inspection
- Secured early dismissal of a Merit System Promotion Board case, avoiding costly litigation

***Chief of Operations and General Law, 37<sup>th</sup> Training Wing*** (1 year)

- Served as federal/military prosecutor and in-house counsel for base of 72,000 military personnel, retirees and dependents on diverse matters from family law to contracting
- Conducted Law of War training for all deployed personnel on the fourth largest USAF base
- Wrote guidelines on Operations Law for the entire AF JAG corps and handled HR legal reviews, FOIA requests and ethics investigations
- Was Special Assistant to the United States Attorney for the Western District of Texas, prosecuting cases against civilians accused of allegations committed against the Air Force
- Won a complex arbitration case involving a sex discrimination charge and the local Air National Guard unit, saving the Air Force >\$10K in litigation costs

**U.S. Air Force, Judge Advocate General's Corps, Ramstein AFB, Germany** (2 years)

***Chief Counsel, Claims, General Law and Adverse Actions, 435<sup>th</sup> Air Base Wing***

- Led the largest claims operation in the USAF's European Command, investigating and advising on multi-million dollar tort claims against the U.S., providing legal services to a European community of >43,000.
- Authored 200+ legal opinions in areas of Civil Law and Command-level issues, drafted 300+ wills and consulted on a myriad of civil issues (e.g. family, contract law) with over 400 clients
- Prosecuted 15 courts-martial which imposed strong punitive sentences for drug abuse, rape, possession of child pornography, child molestation and fraud

**U.S. Air Force Personnel and Intelligence Departments on bases in LA, MD and CA** (6 years)

***Positions of increasing responsibility from Executive Officer to Commander to Resource Management Chief***

- Oversaw the Performance Appraisal, Recognition and Discipline of 300 enlisted soldiers and, later, of a diverse organization of 350 military and civilian members, earning a 97% score on DoD audit inspection
- Managed wellness and fitness for 350-person squadron earning 100% Inspector General compliance rating
- Functioned in a Top-Secret civilian setting, handling all HR and administrative duties for a multi-site/multi-branch office, leading a senior team of six, and managing a budget of >\$1 M in funds and hard assets

## EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

**Master of Laws (LLM) in Human Rights and Social Justice** 2016  
University of Connecticut, School of Law, Hartford, CT

**Juris Doctor**, University of Maryland School of Law, Baltimore, MD 2004  
*(one of only four officers selected to attend law school while serving in the USAF)*

**Master of Science in Human Resources Management** 2002  
University of Maryland, College Park, MD

**Degree in Paralegal Studies**, Kaplan College, Boca Raton, FL 2000

**Officer Training School**, United States Air Force, Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, AL 1995

**Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice/Pre-Law** 1994  
Lamar University, Beaumont, TX

**Bar Memberships:** Connecticut, 2018; U.S. Supreme Court, 2013; Texas (inactive) 2013; District of Columbia, 2009; 2005; Maryland (inactive) 2005