



Gloria Estolano

Strategic Partner/Head of Employment Desk

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Areas of Practice

- UAE Labor Law, DIFC and ADGM Employment Law, earnings, compensation, workplace environment, Emiratization, termination and benefits schemes plans.
- Training and drafting Employer workplace policies and procedures
- Specialized training on UAE Labor Law, DIFC and ADGM Employment Law and Regulation overview for clients.

Summary Profile

Gloria is a Strategic Partner and Head of the Employment desk at M&CO Legal. She is a specialist in all matters involving employment in the UAE. An American lawyer she has extensive experience advising onshore and offshore companies and individual clients regarding UAE Labor Law, DIFC and ADGM Employment Laws. Her advisory includes legal advice and covers the entire life cycle of employment. From recruitment practices, Emiratization, offer letters, contracts, employee incentives, workplace environment policies and procedures (anti-discrimination, bullying, discipline), workplace disputes, pensions, termination, restrictive covenants (non-compete, non-solicitation and non-poaching), employee data protection, and regulatory issues.

Gloria provides in-house counsel and training for corporate, commercial, and individual clients regarding workplace compliance, and the development of work environment policies and procedures. With over 20 years of experience and a background in US Civil Rights investigation and enforcement. She is highly regarded for her work in training clients on compliance issues and on company best practices.

Education

- Bar Admission, Hawaii (1989)
- Juris Doctor University of San Francisco School of Law, San Francisco, CA (1986)
- Bachelor of Arts, Political Science and Specialization in Women's Studies University of California, Los Angeles (1983)

Experience

Gloria's initial work experience was that of a criminal prosecutor as a Special Assistant in the U.S. Attorney's Office at the Department of Justice (DOJ) in San Francisco in the United States. She worked with the DOJ Gloria for two (2) years and then moved into civil rights enforcement as a Civil Rights Attorney for the US Department of Education. It was in this position, she gained extensive experience in investigating discrimination complaints, reviewing policy and procedures for legal compliance. She further negotiated and resolved complaints, as well as drafting and training on the same. Gloria's work in the GCC now focusses on all matters involving employment in the UAE and provides personal and corporate advisory and managerial services in all matters of UAE Labor Law, DIFC and ADGM employment workforce compliance.

Her portfolio includes managing the HR/Administration department for a Qatar-based EPC oil and gas company, overseeing approximately 2,100 employees and reporting directly to the Executive General Manager. She has served as a panel member for employee discipline hearings in the UAE. Also has worked with individual clients and companies involving issues of earning, compensation and benefits schemes plans, Emiratization, termination and succession plans vis-à-vis organizational development.

Languages

- English
- Conversational Spanish

Gloria's vast areas of expertise span commercial and corporate law, employment law, regulatory issues, UAE Labor Law, DIFC and ADGM Employment Law, Human Resources and Administration, development of company policies and procedures (anti-discrimination, anti-bullying and discipline) and corporate best practices. As such, Gloria provides in-house advisory and training services in the above areas in addition to dispute resolution, policy and handbook development, and workplace environment compliance.

Publications/Speaker

- An Artificial Intelligence Primer - 2025
- Legal Insight II - FAQ regarding Emiratization-2025
- Women's Choice Organization - Panelist: Emiratization Requirements - 2025
- Curtin University - Speaker: Human Resources and Emiratization - 2025
- Legal Insight I - Non-Competition Clauses -2024
- Severance Pay and Continuous Service - 2024
- Why are Company Policies Important - 2024

Professional Memberships

- Women's Choice Organization - 2025
- Women in the Law - 2025
- Dubai Government Legal Affairs-Legal Consultant - 2017
- Bar Admission Hawaii - 1989
- Court license - United States District Court, District of Hawaii 1989, United States Court of Appeal for the 9th Circuit 1991

Professional Experience

- September 2016 to present - Strategic Partner and Head of Employment at M&CO Legal.
- September 2013 to September 2016 - Founding Partner at Team CG Legal & Management Consultancy FZC - UAE
- July 2012 to May 2013 - Human Resources Manager at Black Cat Engineering and Construction W.L.L - Doha, Qatar
- January 2011 to May 2012 - UAE Labor Law Consultant Knowledge Horizon - Dubai, UAE
- April 2005 to July 2009 - Employment Lawyer Hadeef & Partners - Dubai, UAE
- July 2002 to April 2005 - Educational Adviser at The Executive Office - EDAAD Scholarship Program - Dubai, UAE
- 2001 to 2002 - Lead Legal Trainer at Fullerton College, Ca and at the University of Hawaii, USA
- 1992 to 2002 - Civil Rights Lawyer at the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, SF, CA, USA
- 1990 to 1992 - Special Assistant at the US Department of Justice US Attorney's Office Criminal Division, DF, CA, USA