

Former Clayton County Sheriff's Deputy Receives \$400,000 in Disability Discrimination and Retaliation Settlement

The Atlanta-based law firm Buckley Bala Wilson Mew LLP today announced it has settled a disability discrimination and retaliation case against Clayton County Sheriff Levon Allen. The lawsuit alleges numerous acts of discrimination and retaliation by former Sheriff Victor Hill in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The plaintiff, Vincent Handsford, received \$400,000 from his former employer for alleged violations of his civil rights by, and at the direction of, former Sheriff Victor Hill.

Mr. Handsford was employed by the Clayton County Sheriff's Office between 2012 and 2019 as a law enforcement officer. Mr. Handsford's Complaint, stating his claims in the lawsuit, alleges that Sheriff Hill discriminated and retaliated against Mr. Handsford because of his disability status by:

- Repeatedly failing to promote Mr. Handsford to a lieutenant position in favor of numerous less qualified candidates;
- Subjecting Mr. Handsford to discriminatory discipline by demoting him four ranks from a P.O.S.T. mandated Deputy Sergeant to a Corrections Officer in the Clayton County Jail;
- Retaliating against Mr. Handsford by subjecting him to various adverse employment actions after Mr. Handsford filed and repeatedly amended an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Charge of Discrimination, which continued for months thereafter at the expense of Mr. Handsford's physical and emotional health;
- Denying Mr. Handsford an accommodation for his disability while he was working in the Clayton County Jail;
- Unlawfully terminating Mr. Handsford for discriminatory and retaliatory reasons;
- Retaliating against Mr. Handsford by issuing him a criminal trespass warning at the time of his termination which specifically threatened Mr. Handsford with "arrest and/or prosecution" if he entered the premises of the Clayton County courthouse – the location of the Superior Court of Clayton County where the lawsuit was originally filed before being removed to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, Atlanta Division; and
- Personally interfering with Mr. Handsford's ability to obtain new employment in law enforcement to further retaliate against Mr. Handsford after unlawfully terminating him.

[Ashley Wilson Clark](#)—who led the case at Buckley Bala Wilson Mew over the past six years--says getting the settlement for her client was worth the fight. Her partner, [Kyle Brooks](#), also worked on the case since 2023.

"After meeting Mr. Handsford and hearing his story, we knew we had to fight for him," said Ms. Wilson Clark. "We've faced two significant adverse changes in the law from the United States Supreme Court

and the Georgia Court of Appeals during the course of this long case, which makes this resolution even more satisfying for our client and us. Mr. Handsford’s courage and steadfast belief in the cause of justice has been an incredible inspiration, and we’re thrilled he can finally move forward in his law enforcement career with this chapter behind him.”

The settlement agreement and release is between Mr. Handsford and the current Clayton County Sheriff, Levon Allen, in his official capacity. Sheriff Allen inherited the lawsuit when he became Sheriff in 2023 and became the defendant. The case was based on four counts of discrimination, Count I – discrimination in violation of the Rehabilitation Act, Count II – discrimination in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Count III – retaliation in violation of the Rehabilitation Act, and Count IV – retaliation in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

About Buckley Bala Wilson Mew LLP

Buckley Bala Wilson Mew LLP is a preeminent employment and civil rights law firm headquartered in Atlanta. With an outstanding reputation for winning cases at trial and on appeal, the firm handles cases on behalf of employees and other individuals involving discrimination, retaliation, harassment, and other civil rights matters. For more information about us, visit www.bbwmllaw.com.

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