



Edward Buckley, Buckley Bala Wilson Mew, Atlanta. Photo: John Disney/ALM

NEWS

**Fierce, Compassionate and Genuine:
Buckley Bala Wilson Mew Announces**

Passing of Founding Partner Edward D. Buckley

"Ed was not only a ferocious fighter for the civil rights of disadvantaged workers but he was a generous soul—a compelling storyteller with an endless curiosity and a love, respect and optimism who believed all human beings have the capacity to do good works in this world," said Michael Kramer, of counsel to Buckley Bala Wilson Mew.

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Employment Law



By Michael Marciano

Regional Managing Editor

Buckley Bala Wilson Mew has announced that founding partner Edward D. Buckley, a leader in civil rights and employment law, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, March 19, following a battle with cancer.

From precedent-setting decisions and record-breaking verdicts to crucial humanitarian work in Haiti, Buckley was remembered by close friends and colleagues as an inspiring figure who earned admiration and respect from attorneys across the nation.

"Ed was not only a ferocious fighter for the civil rights of disadvantaged workers but he was a generous soul—a compelling storyteller with an endless curiosity and a love, respect and optimism who believed all human beings have the capacity to do good works in this world," said Michael Kramer, of counsel, who joined the firm in 2010.

"The best trial lawyers are great storytellers, and Ed was so relatable. He just had an internal joy that I think was just infectious to people, and I think it drew people in," Kramer said.

Fellow friend and firm partner Anita Bala called Buckley a lawyer "we all aspired to be—fierce in the courtroom while building genuine relationships with his clients" who brought a unique mix of intellect and showmanship. He gave me passion for this type of work and was it just an honor to work with someone like that. He always lifted me up. He's just the kindest, most honorable man and lawyer I have ever worked for. I couldn't overstate the impact he's had on my life and my career."

Buckley's four-decade career focused on employment law and constitutional protections for clients ranging from blue-collar workers to chief executives. He was remembered as a relentless advocate for the underdog who spent his career fighting on the front lines for those facing discrimination, harassment and retaliation, often taking cases that other shied away from.

"He was proud of the firm he built and all of the advances he made in the law, because generally it's quite an uphill battle for plaintiffs in employment law in this part of the country," Bala said. "What he built was such a reputation of being a civil rights beacon. The courts respected him, defense counsel respected him and he pushed the law forward for plaintiffs."

Numerous cases reached federal district courts nationwide, including a \$3.47 million, record-setting verdict in *Marshall v. Tital Wave* in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia and the historic *Bostock v. Clayton County* case, which reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Buckley was also credited with the development of the "convincing mosaic" evidentiary standard, enshrined in *Smith v. Lockheed Martin Corp.* in the Eleventh Circuit, which allows plaintiffs to bring an overall story, or patchwork, of employer conduct to demonstrate evidence of discrimination on the job. "It has helped countless people move the ball," Bala said.

"He was so proud of our Supreme Court victory, and we had a lot of victories in Eleventh Circuit and in district courts throughout the state.

The cases helped the firm become one of the biggest plaintiffs work and civil rights firms in the Southeast, with many attorneys attracted to the firm by his legendary status," Bala added.

Beyond his legal career, Buckley made a global impact through his nonprofit organization, Water Life Hope, which builds sanitized water stations to underserved communities in Haiti—totaling than 300 to date. He also authored two books, "All the Way Home" and "Pope Hope."

Buckley Bala Wilson Mew will carry on under the same name in Buckley's honor. In a statement, the firm said Buckley's passing "marks the conclusion of a remarkable life dedicated to justice, fairness and compassion. His influence will continue to inspire future generations of attorneys, advocates, and all those who fight for civil and human rights."

The Daily Report and Law.com recently announced that Buckley will be honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at its upcoming 2025 Southeastern Legal Awards in May. Buckley is also the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award and Advocacy Award from the National Employment Lawyers Association of Georgia.

In the days before Buckley passed away, he was asked at his bedside by his longtime legal assistant Fatisha Martinez to share some of his life's insights:

"From a very young age, Buckley's parents instilled in their children the importance of valuing and protecting human and civil rights," Martinez noted. "Buckley frequently recalled that while growing up, the important issues of the day were discussed at his family's dinner table. Buckley's father, an accomplished lawyer in his own right, would host luminaries of the Civil Rights movement in the family's residence. There, they discussed issues related to social injustice, as Buckley and his siblings sat and listened. These moments were a guidepost for his life."

Asked what lasting mark he would like those who knew him to carry forward. Buckley's response was simple. "Be compassionate.

Compassion is not something you leave at the office. We need to find places for compassion in all areas of our lives. Sometimes, compassion and the need to fight overlap. You go to bat for someone and do everything you can to help them whether you're a lawyer helping a client, a mother going to bat for her child, or a child on a schoolyard standing up to a bully for another kid.”

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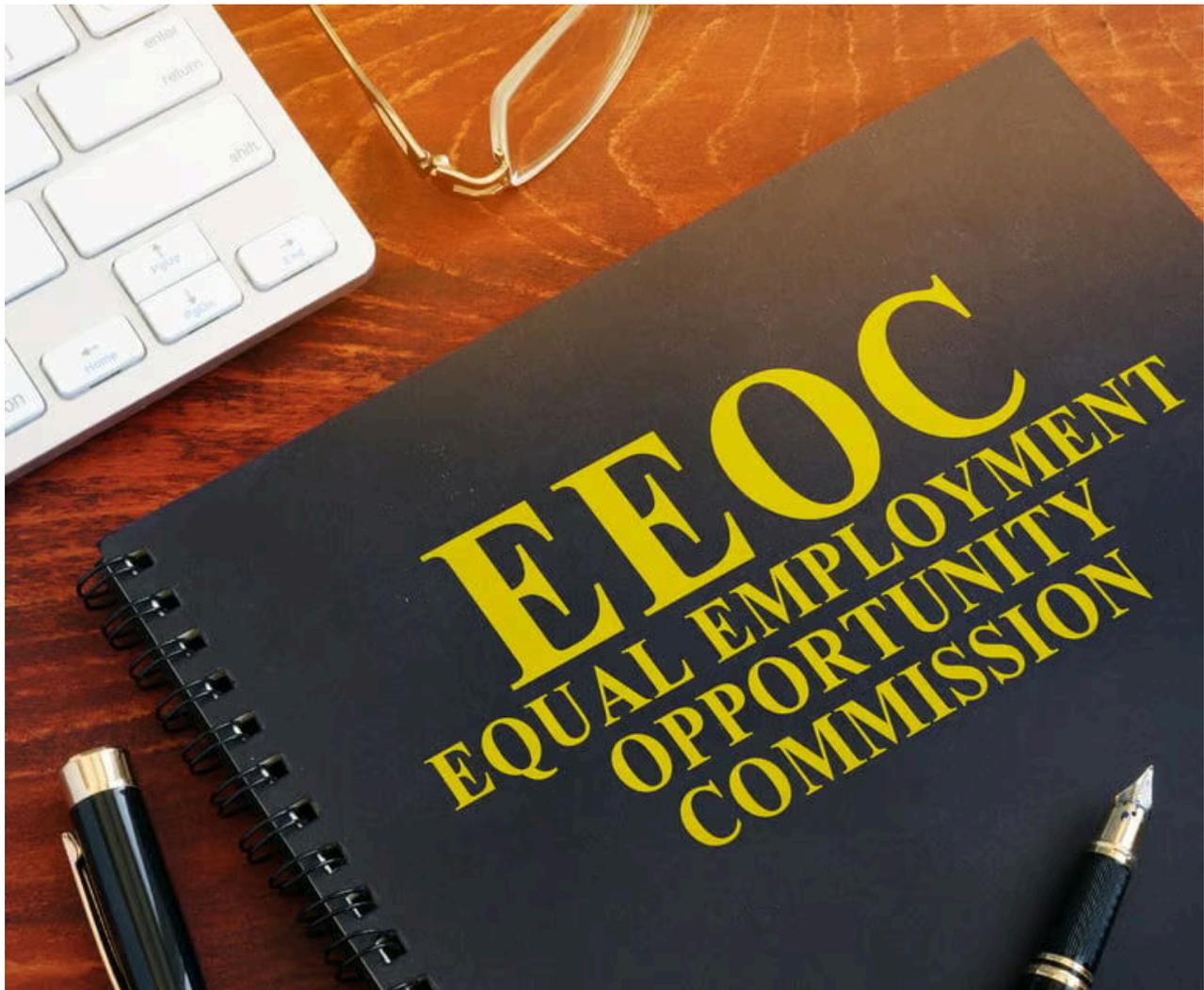


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