



## Melanie C. Walker

Shareholder

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Melanie Walker assists clients throughout the world with their business- and family-based temporary and permanent immigration status needs, dedicating a significant portion of her practice to the EB-5 immigrant investor category.

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As a shareholder in the Firm's Global Immigration Group, Ms. Walker provides strategic guidance and immigration counseling services to companies and their employees. These services include business immigration through investment and trade (E-1/E-2); labor certifications/PERM (including Special Handling and Supervised Recruitment cases); nonimmigrant and permanent resident petitions for religious workers (R-1/I-360); Blanket L and individual international transferee programs (L-1), including new office L-1 petitions; specialty occupations (H-1B, TN, E-3); and multinational manager petitions (EB-1); naturalization applications; immigrant and nonimmigrant visa processing; and other consular representations, including expedited processing and National Interest Exceptions through consular posts and USCIS. She has successfully challenged specialty occupation denials in federal court.

Ms. Walker's work with individual clients includes not only employment-related filings, but numerous petitions for family-based immigration benefits through marriage or adoption, including experience obtaining permanent residency for qualified individuals under provisions of VAWA, and as victims of criminal activity through the U-visa classification. She has advocated on behalf of her clients to achieve resolution on unduly lengthy filings, including interacting with governmental liaisons and in some cases, pursuing mandamus actions.

Ms. Walker is a skilled EB-5 immigration lawyer who has significant experience coordinating with other professionals in the disciplines of securities law, real estate, tax, health care, and corporate finance, to develop immigration-compliant offering documents. She has dedicated a significant portion of her practice to representing investors, working in collaboration with client representatives domestically and overseas to prepare clear and comprehensive funding documentation, overcoming complex USCIS requests for evidence challenging both project-related and individual source of funds aspects of filings originated by others and has a wide foundation of diverse I-526 and I-829 filing experience.

Prior to joining Baker Donelson, Ms. Walker was a law clerk to Chief Judge Curtis L. Collier in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee. During her clerkship, she provided extensive research and drafting support on decisions resolving various federal and state employment claims under FMLA, FLSA, ERISA, Title VII, Title VI and THRA. Ms. Walker worked as an immigration paralegal before attending law school and cultivated considerable experience serving clients with their employment and family immigration issues during her years in this position.



### Professional Honors & Activities

- Recipient – Baker Donelson Chattanooga Pro Bono Award (2019)
- Recognized as a "Top Author" on Immigration in the 2017 edition of JD Supra's Readers' Choice Awards
- Recognized as the 2015 Firm Associate of the Year
- Member – American Bar Association
- Member – Georgia Bar Association
- Member – Tennessee Bar Association

- Member – American Immigration Lawyers Association

## Publications

- "New Proclamation Suspends New H, L, and J Visas and Extends Immigrant Visa Suspension Through December," *Westlaw* (July 2020)
- "Updated: Trump Amends Proclamation to Expand Scope of Restrictions on Nonimmigrant Visas " (Originally Published June 23, 2020; Last Updated June 30, 2020)
- "Scary Rumors: H, L, and J Nonimmigrants Should Stay in or Quickly Come to USA" (June 2020)
- "H-1B Registration and FY21 – Planning Starts Now" (September 2019)
- "Immigration Update: The New Labor Condition Application ETA 9035/9035E and What It Means for Employers" (March 2019)
- "H-1B Cap Season is Here – Are You Ready to File? " (March 2019)
- "Immigration Update: Student Workers in Changing Times – What Employers Need to Know" (July 2018)
- "Immigration Update: Targeted Site Visits and Restrictions on Computer Programmers in the H-1B Program; Plan B Options If You Don't Win the H-1B Lottery" (April 2017)
- Contributing Author – "Immigration Practice," *Juris Publishing*, Fifteenth edition (2014)

## Speaking Engagements

- Panelist – "Immigration Law, What Multinational Employers Need to Know Now," German American Chamber of Commerce webinar (October 2020)
- Panelist – "Let My People Come," Baker Donelson webinar (September 30, 2020)
- Panelist – "International Forum: Options for Students After Graduation," Lee University, Diversity Council (April 2012)

## Webinars

- Immigration Law: What Multinational Employers Need to Know Now (October 2020)
- Let My People Come! (September 2020)

## Education

- University of Georgia School of Law, J.D., 2009, magna cum laude
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- Roosevelt University, B.F.A. in Acting, 1994

## Admissions

- Tennessee, 2011
- Georgia, 2009
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia