

# Donald W. Meaders

Partner | Los Angeles

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Don Meaders is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School and has practiced as an ERISA partner in several large law firms for decades. Accordingly, he has encountered virtually every aspect of employee benefits, and has extensive experience advising with respect to institutional pension and welfare plans, both private and public.

Don is an expert in fiduciary matters, tax compliance considerations as to both pension and welfare plans, and the concerns of institutional health plans as acquirors of managed and other health care services. He is familiar with institutional investment fiduciary processes and the separate account or pooled investment vehicles required to express conventional, alternative and specialty allocations such as real estate. Don has served as counsel to both private and public plan sponsors and has particularly extensive experience with collectively bargained plans, including multiemployer plans, with respect to which he has represented Boards of Trustees for more than 35 years.

## EXPERIENCE

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General Employee Benefits Representation of Single Employer Plan Sponsors with respect to:

- Defined contribution and defined benefit retirement plans, including drafting, restatement, amendment of individually designed and volume submitter plan documents, interpretive advice respecting same including controlled group, non-discriminatory cross-section, line-of-business analysis, “comparability” analysis in service firms, fiduciary responsibility delegations and allocations, Administrative Committee Charters and procedures, liability reduction measures from Board level downward through delegates, reporting and disclosure advice and troubleshooting such as annual reporting penalty abatement efforts, 401(k) platform risk reduction, service provider agreements including platform, investment consultant and investment management agreements, legal aspects of pooled investment vehicles and pension investment in real estate, tax advice respecting qualification, distributions and UBTI, prohibited transaction analysis from both the tax and labor sides, IRS and DOL corrective procedures and audits, fiduciary insurance coverage.
- All forms of welfare benefit plans, including self-funded, trust funded, and insured funding arrangements, managed health care administrative services and network access agreements, specialized provider agreements such as diabetes alleviation programs, VEBAs, ERISA welfare plan-adjacent non-ERISA payroll practices, substantive welfare compliance under ERISA and related statutes, mental health care parity requirements, HIPAA, COBRA, plan and trust documents, summary plan description and SMM drafting or legal review, reporting and disclosure troubleshooting, and IRS and DOL ruling, audit and corrective measures.

General Representation of Boards of Trustees, particularly Collectively Bargained Taft-Hartley Multiemployer Plan Boards, as Trust Counsel or Management Co-Counsel, with respect to:

- The same general matters as set forth above with respect to single employer plans.
- Best Practices in governance by Joint Boards, including fiduciary responsibility under ERISA or similar governing principles, Trust Agreement governance requirements, Board procedures, agreements with third party administrators, impact of collective bargaining agreements on Board responsibilities, legal aspects of institutional investment consultant and investment management arrangements and alternative asset class investment pooled vehicles, pension plan directly owned real estate, health regulatory matters, UBTI and tax considerations affecting participants.

Investigations as special counsel of fiduciary irregularities, including major experience in unwinding fiduciary breaches in real estate programs, as well as non-investigational recommendations with respect to Best Practices in governance or administrative areas.

## COMMUNITY & PROFESSIONAL

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American College of Employee Benefits Counsel, Fellow

California Bar Association, Member

Employee Benefits Committee, Tax Section, Los Angeles County Bar Association, Former Chairman

Western Pension and Benefits Conference, Los Angeles Chapter, Former President

Planning Committee, University of Southern California Tax Institute, 2003-2005, Member

## HONORS

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Included in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Tax Law and Employee Benefits (ERISA) Law, 2024

## PRACTICES

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Employment

Litigation

Pension Plan Litigation

Pensions, Benefits & Investments

Taxation

## EDUCATION

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Harvard Law School, J.D., 1973

Harvard University, B.A., 1969

## ADMISSIONS

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California