Reinhart

Michael J. Gentry

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Michael Gentry is a shareholder in Reinhart's Labor and Employment Practice, representing employers in noncompete, non-solicitation and trade secret disputes and related business disputes involving data theft and insider threats. He is also a member of the firm's Data Privacy and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Groups, and a Certified Information Privacy Professional (CIPP/US). In that role, he counsels businesses on artificial intelligence adoption and emerging technology governance, negotiates vendor and procurement contracts for AI-enabled and emerging technology tools, and advises companies on data privacy compliance.

Michael litigates and negotiates restrictive covenant disputes for employers, including noncompete agreements and confidentiality and trade secret claims. He represents companies pursuing or defending against injunctions, temporary restraining orders and damages claims when a departing employee takes proprietary information, joins a competitor, or solicits former clients or workers. His experience spans state-specific noncompete enforceability rules, garden-leave and forfeiture-for-competition provisions, and disputes that cross into computer fraud and trade secret misappropriation claims under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act and state trade secrets statutes, matters that increasingly hinge on defensible e-discovery strategy and sound management of large, complex data sets.

Michael counsels employers and businesses on the adoption and governance of artificial intelligence, including generative AI tools, algorithmic decision-making systems and AI-based workforce management platforms. He helps clients build AI governance frameworks and implement human-oversight and transparency measures required under emerging state AI laws and evolving federal guidance. His AI counseling includes drafting AI use policies and training management on compliant AI rollout in hiring, performance review and monitoring.

Michael also helps clients build defensible data governance and e-discovery programs, applying his grounding in emerging AI technologies to advise information security (InfoSec) teams on litigation hold compliance and the recovery of evidence from insider-threat employees, often a central feature of modern employment disputes involving departing employees, data exfiltration and trade secret theft. He advises on employment counseling matters such as discipline, leave and termination decisions, tailoring handbooks and employee agreements to

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meet employment, privacy, cybersecurity and information-retention needs, and helps clients prevent data theft and wire fraud while complying with U.S. and international data privacy laws.

Before joining Reinhart, Michael worked for the State of Wisconsin where he counseled and represented state agencies in labor and employment law matters. His previous experience representing the interests of management, individuals and government agencies brings unique insight to his practice. He is adept at anticipating issues, understands how parties are incentivized and often finds solutions short of litigation.

In a field where negotiation and compromise are key, his down-to-earth, authentic personality is an asset. He works to become an integral part of his clients' teams, fostering open communication and familiarity with their plans and concerns.

Michael is part of the firm's cycling group and regularly supports charity rides and races. Along with cycling, he enjoys spending time with his family, being outdoors and traveling.

Education

- J.D., cum laude, Marquette University Law School
- B.S., Anderson University

Bar Admissions

Wisconsin

Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit

Practices

- Labor and Employment

Services

- Employment Litigation
- Data Privacy and Cybersecurity
- Artificial Intelligence
- Employment Counseling, Advice and Compliance
- Wage and Hour
- FMLA Leave and Disability Management
- Financial Institutions

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Matters

- Works with businesses to proactively develop employment strategies, policies and procedures, drafting and reviewing employee handbooks, contracts and other documents to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations
- Advises clients and represents them in litigation with respect to a variety of employment-related issues including employment aspects of sales and acquisitions, employment contracts, noncompete and confidentiality agreements, discrimination, retaliation, wrongful discharge, breach of contract, wage and hour, WARN compliance, worker's compensation, unemployment compensation, sexual and other workplace harassment, family and medical leave laws, the Wisconsin Concealed Carry law, and the Fair Credit Reporting Act
- Helps clients with rollout of AI-based workforce performance review systems and advises them on AI-related compliance issues
- Advises information security and IT teams on litigation hold implementation and evidence preservation strategy when an employee departure raises insider-threat concerns, including recovering and authenticating data from company systems, devices and cloud platforms to support trade secret and computer fraud claims.
- Negotiates vendor and procurement agreements for AI-enabled and emerging technology tools on behalf of employer clients, addressing data use, licensing, liability allocation and compliance terms before deployment.

Examples of reported decisions:

- *Eaton v. J. H. Findorff & Son, Inc.*, F.4th 508 (7th Cir. 2021)
- *Sanford v. Preferred Staffing Inc.*, 447 F. Supp. 3d 752 (E.D. Wis. 2020)
- *Murphy v. City Wide Insulation of Madison, Inc.*, No. 2017CV000219 (Wis. Cir. Ct. Dane Cnty. Apr. 11, 2019)
- *Cleland v. Mortara Instrument, Inc.*, No. 17-C-0275, 2018 WL 3014833 (E.D. Wis. June 15, 2018)

Honors & Affiliations

Honors

- Certified Information Privacy Professional/United States (CIPP/US) designation from the International Association of Privacy Professionals
- "Ones to Watch" by *Best Lawyers in America* (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025)
- *Best Lawyers in America* (Employment Law - Management; Litigation - Labor and Employment)
- Selected for inclusion in Wisconsin Super Lawyers – Rising Star (2015; 2017; 2018; 2020-2023)
- CALI Awards in Employment Discrimination, Appellate Writing and Advocacy

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- Wagner National Labor & Employment Law Moot Court Competition

Affiliations

- State Bar of Wisconsin
- Milwaukee Bar Association
- Midwest Athletes for Childhood Cancer Fund (MACC), Emerging Leaders Board

Presentations

- "Unlock the Power of AI," *Milwaukee Business Journal* (May 2024)
- "Contracts, Handbooks, & Non Competes," Beyond the Shears (April 2025)
- "Technology and Privacy in Employment," State Bar of Wisconsin Labor and Employment Section 2022 Health, Labor and Employment Law Institute (August 18, 2022)
- "New and Recurring Issues with Remote Workforces," 2021 Reinhart Labor and Employment Seminar (February 2021)
- "Administering New Emergency Federal Sick Leave and Public Health Emergency FMLA Leave," 2020 Reinhart Labor and Employment Seminar (March 2020)
- "The Future of Employee Privacy," 2019 Reinhart Labor and Employment Seminar (February 2019)

Publications

- "The AI Governance Gap and Why It Matters," *BankBeat* (April 2026)
- "Table of Experts: Succeeding with AI," *Milwaukee Business Journal* (May 2025)
- "AI Wild West: Employers Must Be Policy-Proactive in the Generative Era," Milwaukee Business Journal (January 15, 2024)
- "True Grit: Milwaukee Adapting to Remote Working," *Milwaukee Commerce Magazine*, published by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (Spring 2022; Vol. 101; No. 1)
- "Moving Past the Great Resignation: Employer Strategies for the New Normal," *BizTimes Milwaukee* (March 2022)
- "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like … Fair Credit Reporting Act Disclosures are Destined to be Alone for Now," *State Bar of Wisconsin* (December 2017)

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