

# NC Favorite Things



By Kevin Ellis

Photography Becky & Bert VanderVeen

This marks the 25th class of *Business North Carolina's* Legal Elite, which honors the state's top lawyers as chosen by their peers.

Fewer than 1,100 made the list, compared with more than 30,000 attorneys regulated by the North Carolina State Bar. Those receiving the most votes in each of 17 categories are recognized as Hall of Fame members. More than 4,000 attorneys received at least one vote.

We asked the 17 category winners of this year's Legal Elite class to share words of wisdom they recall when things get tough. Some shared practical guidance, related to a specific decision or task. Others passed on more philosophical words of wisdom like "this too will pass" and "don't borrow trouble."

The messages came from both familiar sources, such as parents, mentors and diverse authorities, ranging from Theodore Roosevelt to rapper Kendrick Lamar, who performed at the most recent Super Bowl.

## CATEGORY WINNERS

## Legal Elite Business North Carolina 2026

ANTITRUST & COMPLEX BUSINESS DISPUTES | Robert King III  
 APPELLATE | Preston Odom III  
 BANKRUPTCY | Lance Paul Martin  
 BUSINESS | Brian McMillan  
 CONSTRUCTION | Carl Jeffress Burchette  
 CORPORATE COUNSEL | Janet Thoren  
 CORPORATE LAW | Marc Bishop  
 CRIMINAL | Joe Zeszotarski  
 EMPLOYMENT | Marc Gustafson

ENVIRONMENTAL | Billy Clarke  
 FAMILY | Theresa Viera  
 IMMIGRATION | Helen Parsonage  
 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY | Shawna Cannon Lemon  
 LITIGATION | Clint Morse  
 REAL ESTATE | S. Leigh Rodenbough  
 TAX AND ESTATE PLANNING | Sara Vizithum  
 YOUNG GUNS | Zechariah Etheridge

*Business North Carolina* thanks the attorneys who took time to vote on their peers, and we appreciate those who participated in this feature.

Responses have been edited for length and clarity. Previous Hall of Fame members are listed by their firm at the time of selection, unless otherwise noted.

*Business North Carolina* contracted DataJoe Research to facilitate an online peer-voting and internet research process. DataJoe Research is a Boulder, Colorado-based software and research company specializing in data collection and verification, and it conducts various nominations across the nation on behalf of publishers. DataJoe confirmed that each published winner had, at the time of review, a current, active license status with the appropriate state regulatory board. If unable to find evidence of a lawyer's active registration with the state regulatory board, that lawyer was excluded from the list. In addition, we checked available public sources to identify lawyers disciplined for an infraction by the state regulatory board. They were excluded from the list. DataJoe presented the tallied results to *Business North Carolina* for its final review and adjustments.

# Legal Elite

Business North Carolina 2026



**FEWER THAN 4% OF  
NC'S ATTORNEYS ARE  
INCLUDED IN *BUSINESS*  
NORTH CAROLINA'S  
LEGAL ELITE**



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Family

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Business

**Al Clyburn**  
Family

**Phillip Cowan**  
Family

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Business

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Appellate

**Angela Doughty**  
Intellectual

**Chris Edwards**  
Appellate

**Brad Evans**  
Litigation

**Paul Fanning**  
Bankruptcy

**Lily Faulconer**  
Bankruptcy

**Alexandra Ferri**  
Construction

**Sam Franck**  
Real Estate

**Michelle Gonzalez**  
Real Estate

**Justin Hill**  
Employment

**Lee Hodge**  
Corporate Counsel

**Matthew Jones**  
Business

**Justin Lewis**  
Real Estate

**X. Lightfoot**  
Employment

**Avery Locklear**  
Employment

**Evan Musselwhite**  
Construction

**Michael Parrish**  
Litigation



**Lauren Quinn**  
Family

**Erica Rogers**  
Intellectual

**John Sloan**  
Tax and Estate Planning

**Jeff Stoddard**  
Construction

**Jason Strickland**  
Construction

**Matthew Thompson**  
Tax and Estate Planning

**Hayley Wells**  
Employment

**Devon Williams**  
Employment



**Jeremy Wilson**  
Litigation

**Cameron Winfrey**  
Real Estate

**WE ARE PROUD TO COUNT  
38 OF THEM AS OUR OWN**

**HALL OF FAME**

**Joanne Badr**  
Real Estate Law

**Jim Creekman**  
Corporate Counsel  
(retired)

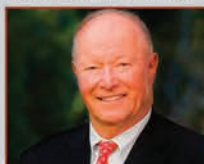
**Brad Evans**  
Antitrust

**Lance Martin\***  
Bankruptcy  
\*2026 Inductee

**Will Oden**  
Employment

**Amy Wang**  
Environmental

**David Ward**  
Corporate Counsel  
(Counsel Emeritus)



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See [businessnc.com/special-sections/legal-elite](http://businessnc.com/special-sections/legal-elite)  
for an explanation of the standards of membership.

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The Sanderson Law Firm  
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Robinson Bradshaw & Hinson  
Charlotte

**Nathan C. Chase Jr.**  
Robinson Bradshaw & Hinson  
Charlotte

**Clinton R. Pinyan**  
Brooks Pierce  
Greensboro

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Asheville

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**Bonnie Lynn Keith**  
Green Lewis Brisbois  
Charlotte

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Wyrick Robbin  
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Davis Hartman Wright Attorneys  
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North Carolina Advocates For Justice  
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Collins Family & Elder Law Group  
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**Erik Randall Zimmerman**  
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Ellis & Winters  
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Jackson Family Law  
Raleigh

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Round 2 Legal  
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Wyrick Robbins  
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Robinson Bradshaw & Hinson  
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  - Linda B. Sayed** Family
  - Jessie B. Boylan** Young Guns
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  - J. Dickson McLean** Business
  - Jeffrey P. Keeter** Real Estate
  - Christopher K. Behm** Construction
  - Colin J. Tarrant** Litigation
  - Brody M. O'Neal** Young Guns

We salute  
our 2026  
Legal Elite  
Attorneys

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### ROBERT KING III

#### ANTITRUST and COMPLEX BUSINESS DISPUTES

BROOKS PIERCE

GREENSBORO

**HOMETOWN:** Charlotte

**UNDERGRAD:** UNC Charlotte

**LAW SCHOOL:** Wake Forest University School of Law, 1988

**PRACTICED LAW:** 37 years

**FAMILY:** Wife, Julie Davis, son, Rhyne King, and daughter, Grace King

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** A tie between Texas Pete and sweetpotatoes

**FIRST JOB:** Delivering newspapers on my bike taught me that I don't want to deliver newspapers on my bike.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Running or walking, depending on the condition of my knees; yoga; gardening; doing what my dog tells me to do.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** Representing Wake Forest University in a wrongful death case, it was an honor to work with the folks at that school.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** I was born with few talents, but arguing and writing are two of them.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** My screened-in porch, which looks out over several acres of woods.

**BEST ADVICE:** [Brooks Pierce partner] Ed Winslow on writing briefs: "No one wants to read what you are writing, so make it as easy as possible."

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** I have stolen Ed's advice. Also, life and the practice of law are difficult enough without making things worse by being unnecessarily difficult and ugly to others. Read every document one more time than other people would think rational — you will often find mistakes that you missed the first few readings.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** I start early each day and make sure to tie off things like timesheets before the new day really starts.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Less stress, more ice cream

**BIGGEST RISK:** Concentrating on litigation vs. non-courtroom work. I am at heart an introvert and (when young), uncomfortable talking publicly; building a career based on dealing with stressful situations in front of a crowd is not in my DNA.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** The Who; Talking Heads; the Kinks



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Raleigh

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Smith Anderson  
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Allen Stahl + Kilbourne  
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Everett Gaskins Hancock  
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Waldrep Wall Babcock & Bailey  
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**Melanie Raubach**  
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*Congratulations*  
to our  
**2026 Legal Elite!**



Steven Bader



Vince Eisinger



Patrick Flanagan



Kara Gansmann



Deedee Gasch



Dan Katzenbach



Rebecca Knudson



Patrick Mincey



Dominic Totman



Benton Toups



Marshall Wall

### PRESTON ODOM III

#### APPELLATE

GARDNER SKELTON

CHARLOTTE

**HOMETOWN:** Tallahassee, Florida

**UNDERGRAD:** Florida State University

**LAW SCHOOL:** Florida State University School of Law, 1997

**PRACTICED LAW:** 28 years

**FAMILY:** Son, Elijah Odom, daughters, Grace and Avery Odom

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Mt. Olive products – I love pickled cucumbers, jalapeno peppers, banana peppers (hot and mild), okra, red peppers, and pepperoncini.

**FIRST JOB:** Mowing lawns taught me both the value of hard work and the severe nature of my allergies to most grasses.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Playing pickleball, walking or flatwater kayaking.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** Helping the late Bill Diehl Jr. and John Buric represent driver Jeremy Mayfield in a drug-testing policy dispute against the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing. We managed to persuade U.S. District Court Judge Graham C. Mullen to issue a preliminary injunction against NASCAR.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER?:** A “Street Law” class during my sophomore year in high school. I then decided during my junior year at Florida State that becoming a lawyer would align with both my desire to help people and my aptitude for critical thinking.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** It used to be Cork and Cask in Cornelius, which regrettably closed last year. Currently, Pins Mechanical in Charlotte.

**BEST ADVICE:** It's actually both the best and worst advice I've ever received: “Remember, there are 24 hours in a day.” The late Bill Diehl Jr.

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Love yourself well so you can love others well.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Being curious about everything – which sometimes spawns wild goose chases, also often fosters favorable results for my clients.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Integrating more standard processes in my practice to become more efficient.

**BIGGEST RISK:** Leaving my former firm, James, McElroy & Diehl, after nearly 25 years to join my new firm, Gardner Skelton, in August.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** Run DMC



BUSINESS

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Smith Dickey & Dempster  
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Atkins Angell & Davis  
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Butler & Butler  
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Parker Poe  
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Coffield Heedy Kilgore  
Asheville

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Robinson Bradshaw & Hinson  
Charlotte

**Patrick S. Bryant**  
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Charlotte

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Player Mclean  
Fayetteville

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Wyrick Robbins  
Raleigh

**Elizabeth E. Lane**  
McGuireWoods & Bissette  
Asheville

**Fred Parker**  
Gardner Skelton  
Charlotte

**Robert B. Womble**  
K&L Gates  
Raleigh

**Scott Jackson**  
Maynard Nexsen  
Greensboro

**Curtis C. Brewer IV**  
Smith Anderson  
Raleigh

**Matthew S. Black**  
Pinna Johnston & Burwell  
Raleigh

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Ward and Smith  
Wilmington

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Brooks Pierce  
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Raleigh

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Alexander Ricks  
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NC PPlanning  
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Greensboro

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Bishop Dulaney Joyner Abner  
Charlotte

**William P. Bray**  
Bray & Long  
Charlotte

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Wyrick Robbins  
Raleigh

**Paul A. Steffens**  
Troutman Pepper Locke  
Charlotte

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Hutchens Law Firm  
Fayetteville

**Ross Fulton**  
Rayburn Cooper & Durham  
Charlotte

**Richard Crow**  
Ward and Smith  
Wilmington



**Ryan Beaver**  
Construction

**Matthew DeAntonio**  
Litigation

**Rob Marcus**  
Litigation

**Brian Rowilson**  
Construction

**Mike Wilson**  
Tax

*Congratulations to Ryan Beaver, Matthew DeAntonio, Rob Marcus, Brian Rowilson, and Michael Wilson for being named to Business North Carolina's 2026 Legal Elite*

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### LANCE PAUL MARTIN BANKRUPTCY

Ward and Smith

ASHEVILLE

**HOMETOWN:** Chauvin, Louisiana

**UNDERGRAD:** Spring Hill College (Mobile, Alabama)

**LAW SCHOOL:** Tulane Law School, 1995

**PRACTICED LAW:** 31 years

**FAMILY:** Married to Anne Conquest for 30 years and two sons, Max and Leo

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** East Fork Pottery because Rice Krispies really pop in their bowls.

**FIRST JOB:** My dad was a crane operator for a drilling company in Louisiana and got me a summer job as a deckhand on a 65-foot crew boat moving personnel and supplies to rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. I learned how to tie knots, swab decks, navigate in fog and fend off roughnecks eager to haze a future "college boy."

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Long walks

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** Representing victims of Hal Brown, who played the bongo drums for Up With People, then ran a Ponzi scheme in Biltmore Forest before taking residence at a federal prison in Talladega, Alabama. Talk about a life in full.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** I was a liberal arts major in college. To paraphrase Robert Frost, when I graduated, two roads diverged in the woods. I took the one more traveled. Also, I liked the TV show "LA Law."

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Asheville

**BEST ADVICE:** Omit needless words. From "The Elements of Style" by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White.

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Prioritize your spouse's career over your own.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** I finish each workday with an empty email inbox. Most of the time, I can delete all my unread emails without consequence.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** A substantial increase in salary and reduction in billable hours based on receiving this honor.

**BIGGEST RISK:** I know people do it all the time, but moving from New Orleans to Greenville (North Carolina) in 1999.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** The Cure and I have the eyeliner stains to prove it.



**Rob Rust**  
Moore & Van Allen  
Charlotte

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Robinson Bradshaw & Hinson  
Chapel Hill

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Arnold & Smith  
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Robinson Bradshaw & Hinson  
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Villmer Caudill  
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Wyrick Robbins  
Raleigh

**Sophia Pappalardo**  
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Charlotte

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Robertson & Associates  
Charlotte

**Patrick T. Strubbe**  
Womble Bond Dickinson  
Charlotte

**Scott Cooper**  
Rayburn Cooper & Durham  
Charlotte

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Searson, Jones, Gottschalk & Cash  
Asheville

**Richard C. Stephenson**  
Stephenson Law  
Cary

**Steven Carr**  
Ellinger & Carr  
Raleigh

**Marshall Wall**  
Cranfill Sumner  
Raleigh

**Cory Andrew Rayborn**  
Tuggle Duggins  
Greensboro

**Jeffrey R. Wolfe**  
Davis Hartman Wright Attorneys  
New Bern

**Katherine Kliebert**  
Kliebert Law  
Charlotte

**Grant Sigmon**  
Sigmon Klein Bennington  
Greensboro

**Jesse Hofers Jones**  
Fourscore Business Law  
Raleigh

**Peter Singh**  
Fourscore Business Law  
Raleigh

## CONSTRUCTION

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Charlotte

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Wyrick Robbins  
Raleigh

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Allen Stahl + Kilbourne  
Asheville

**Jon P. Carroll**  
Gardner Skelton  
Charlotte

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Block Crouch Keeter Behm & Sayed  
Wilmington

**B. David Carson**  
Johnston Allison & Hord  
Charlotte

**Nancy Stewart Litwak**  
Rosenwood Rose & Litwak  
Charlotte

**Evan Musselwhite**  
Ward and Smith  
Raleigh

**Gary J. Welch**  
Johnston Allison & Hord  
Charlotte

**Keith E. Coltrain**  
Wall Templeton Haldrup  
Raleigh

**Matthew C. Bouchard**  
Poyner Spruill  
Raleigh

**Judson A. Welborn**  
Manning Fulton & Skinner  
Raleigh

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NC DRC Certified Mediator  
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Maynard Nexsen  
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Hamilton Stephens Steele + Martin  
Charlotte

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Mays Johnson Law  
Asheville

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Johnston Allison & Hord  
Charlotte

**Steele B. Windle III**  
Windle | Terry | Bimbo  
Charlotte

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Raleigh

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Charlotte

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Baker Donelson  
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**Steven Allen Bimbo**  
Windle | Terry | Bimbo  
Charlotte

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Johnston Allison & Hord  
Charlotte

**Dave Levy**  
Gardner Skelton  
Charlotte

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Charlotte

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Moore & Van Allen  
Charlotte

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Charlotte

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Moore & Van Allen  
Charlotte

**Whitaker Boykin Rose**  
Rosenwood Rose & Litwak  
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### **BRIAN J. McMILLAN** **BUSINESS**

BROOKS PIERCE

GREENSBORO

**HOMETOWN:** Manhattan Beach, California

**UNDERGRAD:** University of Denver

**LAW SCHOOL:** UCLA School of Law, 1996

**PRACTICED LAW:** 29 years

**FAMILY:** Wife, Caroline, three stepchildren, Alexandra, Harrison and Carter

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** "Fall"—I grew up in southern California and never really experienced the season until I moved to North Carolina. I love the colors of fall. I hate cleaning up the leaves.

**FIRST JOB:** Assistant buyer for Case Goods, a 15-store chain in southern California, dealing with furniture. Buyers run their own businesses within the larger store businesses, and so that job taught me every aspect of running a business: inventory control and purchasing, advertising, staffing, cost control.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Walking in the woods with my dog, Daisy.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** NCDOT v. 74 Holdings, et al. It was an eminent domain case in Brunswick County. NCDOT offered our client \$140,000. The jury gave us \$2.6 million plus interest.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** After working in sales and marketing for eight years, I wanted a different intellectual challenge.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Wrightsville Beach

**BEST ADVICE:** My father: "Success" equals achieving to the best of your abilities; accomplishing as much as you have the ability to accomplish; and working as hard as necessary to achieve your potential.

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Do not worry about things or people that you can't control.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Attention to detail.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Involve the firm's associates more to try and pass my expertise in a couple of niche areas to the next generation.

**BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL RISK YOU'VE TAKEN:** At age 36, I left a job where I was successful and making a significant amount of money to attend law school and change careers.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** Loggins & Messina or the Eagles.



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LEGAL ELITE 2026

### CARL JEFFRESS BURCHETTE CONSTRUCTION

ROSENWOOD, ROSE & LITWAK

CHARLOTTE

**HOMETOWN:** Charlotte

**UNDERGRAD:** University of Alabama

**LAW SCHOOL:** UNC School of Law, 2014

**PRACTICED LAW:** 11 years

**FAMILY:** Wife, Katie Burchette, daughter, Clara, 4, and son, Jack, 1

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Texas Pete tastes great on everything. North Carolina barbecue — making it, visiting the restaurants and eating it with friends — reminds me of home and family.

**FIRST JOB:** Working as a laborer for Crowder Construction in Charlotte taught me the value of hard work and the teamwork required on a construction project.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Fly fishing in the mountains.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** I tried a case that resulted in a settlement prior to jury deliberation. We were able to have six members of the jury come back, sit in the box, and have them deliberate in front of all attorneys and the judge on the major issues and give us feedback. We then had the judge give us feedback. It was a learning experience on what worked and didn't work at trial.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER?:** Growing up in a family full of attorneys, I saw the value an attorney can bring in helping clients solve problems. I really enjoy helping clients at all stages, particularly when negotiating and drafting contracts with the benefit of having litigated the issues you're trying to avoid.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Asheville

**BEST ADVICE:** Don't borrow trouble. I grew up hearing it from my parents. It's a reminder to focus on the issues in front of you that you can control or work to solve.

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Tom Hanks said, "This too shall pass." Give yourself grace to understand tough times in a case or in life will pass. Take advantage of the times when work is slow, and celebrate even the little victories you or others experience.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Taking a walk around the block to get up, move and clear my head.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Pick key times during the work day to check emails.

**BIGGEST RISK:** Joining a small firm my partners started.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** Red Hot Chili Peppers.



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NORTH CAROLINA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

RALEIGH

**HOMETOWN:** Fayetteville

**UNDERGRAD:** Pembroke State University

**LAW SCHOOL:** UNC School of Law, 1988

**PRACTICED LAW:** 37 years

**FAMILY:** Husband, Bruce Crisp, daughter Kristine, son Zach, stepsons Austin and Logan. Dogs Bailey and Easton.

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Carolina Hurricanes. My son and stepsons played hockey in various leagues and travel leagues and all three played in college. I've spent a lot of very early mornings in some very cold ice rinks.

**FIRST JOB:** Making and dishing out soft-serve yogurt at a little stand in Fayetteville. I learned a lot about customer service and solving problems because the machines broke down a lot. Most of the time I was working alone. Those are the times you learn the best and the most.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** It's hard to be stressed when you get outside, look around and feel a little sunshine.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** A broker allowed a tenant to move into a property without permission from the absent owner, an older woman. The owner found out when the neighbors started gossiping because he had moved a heart-shaped jacuzzi onto the property. She was embarrassed to think her neighbors thought the jacuzzi was hers. She drove to Raleigh to personally thank me.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** I was a business major and when my business law class ended, the professor gifted me with the LSAT prep course materials. He pointed me in a direction, and I followed the path all the way.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** It became a dream for us to build a house on Lake Gaston. We moved in last year, and I wouldn't trade it for anything. The sunsets are amazing, and it's hard to be stressed when you can grab dinner and go out on the lake for a few hours.

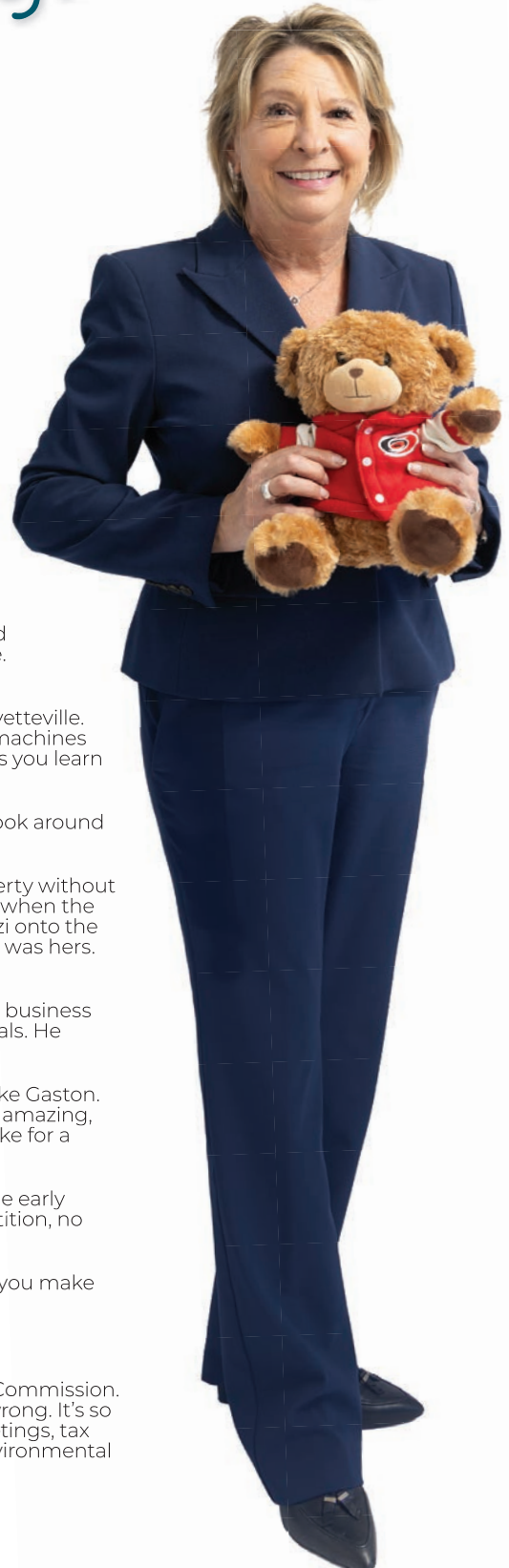
**BEST ADVICE:** A partner in the firm I worked for, Doug Hargrave, taught me early on that being the most prepared person in the room equalizes the competition, no matter how well-known or how long they have been practicing.

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** You only learn from your mistakes. Own them when you make them and fix things. They are there to teach you.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Always over prepare.

**BIGGEST RISK:** I left private practice and went to work for the Real Estate Commission. I wanted a better work-life balance, but worried it would box me in. I was wrong. It's so much more than real estate. It's employment law, open records, open meetings, tax law, insurance, contracts, timeshares, legislative issues, education laws, environmental laws. On any given day, I need to know at least a little about a lot of things.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** The Rolling Stones and Bruce Springsteen still top my list.



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Hatch Little Bunn  
Raleigh

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Tin Fulton Walker & Owen  
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BROOKS PIERCE

GREENSBORO

**HOMETOWN:** Chapel Hill

**UNDERGRAD:** UNC Chapel Hill

**LAW SCHOOL:** UNC School of Law, 1984

**PRACTICED LAW:** 41 years

**FAMILY:** Wife, Diane, adult children, Scott and Sarah

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** My formative years, ages 9 to 24, were spent in Chapel Hill, which exposed me to experiences and opportunities I otherwise would not have been exposed to, much less explored.

**FIRST JOB:** Weekend dishwasher and busboy at Ye Olde Waffle Shop taught me I should pursue work that was more mental than physical in its demands.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Running for many years, and tennis for many more.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** Three years out of law school, represented the seller in a large, complicated business sale transaction that was planned, negotiated and closed over a period of about one year. I still consider it to have been one of the most intense transactions I've ever handled. After 38 years, the client is still with our firm.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** It matched my relative strengths: writing, reasoning and counseling.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Chapel Hill

**BEST ADVICE:** "Go to law school." My father's immediate response during my junior year when I was debating law school or business school.

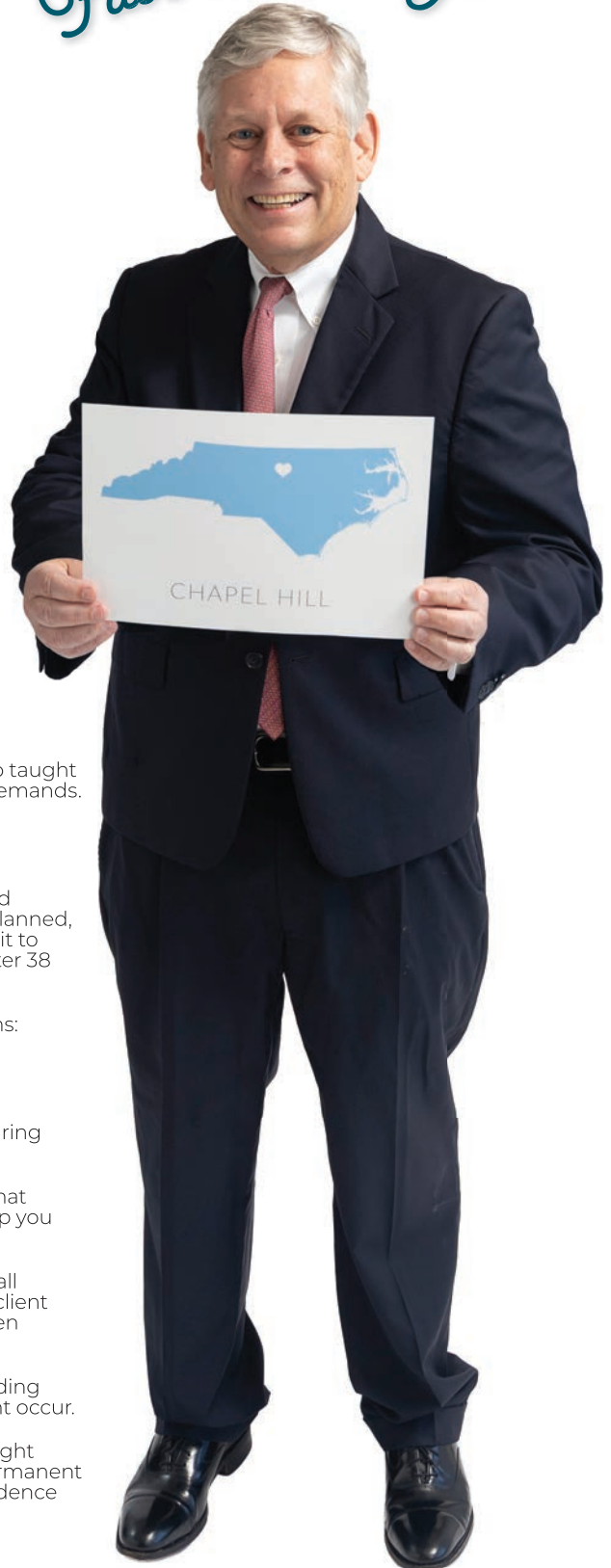
**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Pursue a variety of relationships and activities that are meaningful to you. They will make your life more fulfilling and help you become a more effective lawyer.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Trying to put myself in the shoes of the client in all communications, and being proactive in trying to stay current on all client matters, large and small, so as to reduce the risk of falling behind when unexpected matters arise.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Work on developing a clearer plan regarding "retirement," whatever form that might take and whenever that might occur.

**BIGGEST RISK:** At the time, it felt like a risk joining Brooks Pierce straight after law school. I clerked with two other firms that had extended permanent offers. I had less firsthand knowledge of Brooks Pierce and less confidence that I would meet the firm's expectations.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** The Who



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of Trial Lawyers

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Business North Carolina  
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Hall of Fame 2024:  
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### JOE ZESZOTARSKI CRIMINAL

GAMMON & ZESZOTARSKI

RALEIGH

**HOMETOWN:** Green Brook, New Jersey

**UNDERGRAD:** Muhlenberg College  
(Allentown, Pennsylvania)

**LAW SCHOOL:** Wake Forest, 1994

**PRACTICED LAW:** 31 years

**FAMILY:** Wife Dana, daughters Anne and Amelia, dog Ted.

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Bertie County peanuts salted in the shell. Good and good for you.

**FIRST JOB:** Laborer for a plumbing company

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** My doctor would want me to say exercise, but red wine is probably more accurate.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** Tie between representing my law partner in the NC Supreme Court when the district attorney filed a petition to try to force disclosure of what his deceased client had told him in a murder investigation. (I lost.) Also, representing Dr. Jeffrey MacDonald in the Fourth Circuit on a habeas corpus petition to overturn his convictions for the murder of his family that took place in 1970 (I lost). I guess I learn more from the losses than the wins.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER?:** I ask myself that question most every day.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Back porch of our family's condo at Atlantic Beach.

**BEST ADVICE:** Seeing my father work multiple jobs for meager pay on days, nights and weekends in an effort to support a large family. It leaves an impression on a young person.

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** I stole this from (the late Sampson County attorney and judge) Doug Parsons. I remind (almost) every criminal defendant client who wants to testify at trial, "I can probably explain this to the jury better than you can — that is why you hired a lawyer."

**BEST WORK HABIT:** My motto is that no one ever drowned in sweat.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Resuming my sorry golf game after a 15 year or so hiatus.

**BIGGEST RISK:** Leaving a comfortable partnership at a great firm to start my own firm, when I had a small child and a pregnant spouse.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** That is easy for someone who grew up in New Jersey — Bruce Springsteen.



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Kornbluth Ginsberg Law Group  
Durham

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Constangy Brooks Smith Prophete  
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# Legal Elite

Business North Carolina  2026

## MARC GUSTAFSON EMPLOYMENT

BELL, DAVIS & PITT

CHARLOTTE

**HOMETOWN:** Monroe

**UNDERGRAD:** UNC Chapel Hill

**LAW SCHOOL:** Indiana University Maurer School of Law

**PRACTICED LAW:** 24 years

**FAMILY:** Wife, Jane, children, Knox, 12, and William, 10

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Lance crackers, or as my dad would say, a pack of nabs. They bring back so many childhood memories.

**FIRST JOB:** Cutting grass in my neighborhood. Doing the work wasn't always the hard part, getting paid sometimes was.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Tennis

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** I represented a large national jewelry chain where the CEO stood in his conference room and told us he would fire the person responsible for the fraud that had been committed. A few days later, we were in the same conference room firing him. He went to jail.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** The people I looked up to in my hometown were lawyers.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Top of Grandfather Mountain

**BEST ADVICE:** "Don't get cute," my Dad would say.

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** "Don't worry about anything because it will change. For the same reason, you should enjoy things while they last."

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Responsiveness

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** To work out more during the workday

**BIGGEST RISK:** Sold an old Land Rover to a partner I worked for.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** Pearl Jam

# NC Favorite Things



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Wyrick Robbins  
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Dasher Law  
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Godley Glazer & Funk  
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Connell & Gelb  
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The Mueller Law Firm  
Raleigh

**Amy Lynn Britt**  
Parker Bryan Family Law  
Raleigh

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Easterling Law  
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Kurtz Whitley Guy Sanders & Rainey  
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Law Firm Carolinas  
Greensboro

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Jeffrey Marshall - Legal Elite 2025, 2022 and 2021

## BILLY CLARKE ENVIRONMENTAL

ROBERTS & STEVENS

ASHEVILLE

**HOMETOWN:** Fairview, just outside Asheville

**UNDERGRAD:** Princeton University

**LAW SCHOOL:** UNC School of Law, 1982

**PRACTICED LAW:** 43 years

**FAMILY:** Wife, Cynthia Williams Clarke, five children, seven grandsons

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Many years ago, I would have said tobacco. Today I will say sweetpotatoes

**FIRST JOB:** Working on the family farm, milking cows, baling hay, cutting silage. It taught me the value of hard work and working together with family and neighbors.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Hiking and being outdoors with my dog, Prince. Wife, Cindy, and son, Will, also pictured.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** We had to try a sedimentation and erosion case twice because the Court of Appeals affirmed the first verdict on liability but sent the damages issue back for retrial. We tried it again and got more money the second time

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** Many of the people I knew growing up who were doing good things in North Carolina were lawyers, not necessarily practicing ones. I thought I might practice for a few years, then do something else, but here I am 40-plus years later.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Too many to name. Many places in the west, but North Carolina has so many interesting and beautiful places, including the cities and towns.

**BEST ADVICE:** My long-time partner and mentor, Jack Stevens, told me, "Do good work, and the rest will follow."

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Sometimes when I get discouraged about the position a client finds itself or him or herself in, I remind myself and others, "They got themselves in this mess. My job is to do the best I can to get them out."

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Do not take yourself too seriously.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Work a little less.

**BIGGEST RISK:** Deciding to work in Asheville in 1982 when unemployment was 11% and the town looked like it was closing down.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** Creedence Clearwater Revival and Johnny Cash



**Jeffrey E. Marshall**  
Marshall & Taylor  
Raleigh

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Monroe

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McIlveen Family Law  
Gastonia

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Caulder & Valentine Law  
Shelby

**Josh Valentine**  
Caulder & Valentine Law  
Shelby

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Sodoma Law  
Charlotte

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Easterling Law  
Matthews

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Business North Carolina  2026

## NC Favorite Things

### **THERESA VIERA** FAMILY

MODERN LEGAL

CHARLOTTE

**HOMETOWN:** Multiple cities and towns, including Edison, New Jersey; Washington Heights in New York City; Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania; Cary

**UNDERGRAD:** George Washington University

**LAW SCHOOL:** UNC School of Law, 2012

**PRACTICED LAW:** 13 years

**FAMILY:** Husband, Sangeet

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Cheerwine. I don't drink soda often, but when I do, I prefer the best.

**FIRST JOB:** Retail, where patience and customer care are the cornerstone of service.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Meditation

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** Every case where a child is in a safe, healthier situation afterward.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** To help children and families.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** On my rooftop deck

**BEST ADVICE:** Be humble, sit down — Kendrick Lamar

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Consistency allows you to overcome most, if not all, obstacles.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Deep breaths

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Grow my business and my family.

**BIGGEST RISK:** Open a law firm in the midst of a pandemic.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** I became a professional ballroom dancer, so anything dance related.



## LITIGATION

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Roberson Haworth & Reese  
High Point

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Parker Bryan Britt Tanner & Jenkins  
Raleigh

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David Self Law  
Cornelius

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Gastonia

**Megan E. Spidell**  
Spidell Family Law  
Greensboro

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Charlotte Collaborative Divorce  
Charlotte

**Courtney Lynn**  
Carter Arnold & Smith  
Charlotte

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Wray Law Firm  
Charlotte

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James, McElroy & Diehl  
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Camino Law  
Greensboro

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Ward Family Law Group  
Cary

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Noland Arnold & Smith  
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Tharrington Smith  
Raleigh

## IMMIGRATION

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Maynard Nexsen  
Raleigh

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Garfinkel Immigration  
Charlotte

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Clawson and Staubes  
Charlotte

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Aziz Law Firm  
Charlotte

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Garfinkel Immigration  
Charlotte

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Charlotte Immigration  
Charlotte

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Tedesco Legal  
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**Colleen Forcina Molner**  
Garfinkel Immigration  
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Sanders Otis Winston-Salem

### HELEN PARSONAGE IMMIGRATION

ELLIOT MORGAN PARSONAGE

WINSTON-SALEM

**HOMETOWN:** London

**UNDERGRAD:** University of Birmingham,  
United Kingdom

**LAW SCHOOL:** North Carolina Central,  
2006

**PRACTICED LAW:** 19 years

**FAMILY:** Husband, three sons and a  
granddaughter.

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Seagrove pottery.  
I am a collector of art pottery.

**FIRST JOB:** Being a line server in a cafeteria  
taught me that's not what I want to do.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Spinning and  
knitting

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** In *Nasrallah  
v. Barr*, I was successful in a U.S. Supreme  
Court case in 2020 where my client, Nidal  
Khalid Nasrallah, sought protection using  
Convention Against Torture in a court battle  
not to send him back to Lebanon.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** I  
love picking issues apart and winning  
arguments.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:**  
Blue Ridge Mountains or Oak Island

**BEST ADVICE:** Just do it.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Keeping a balance and  
not working evenings or weekends

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Cutting back some.

**BIGGEST RISK:** Going back to law school with three children at home.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** Pink Floyd



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Lincoln Derr  
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### SHAWNA CANNON LEMON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

STANEK LEMON CROUSE + MEEKS

CHARLOTTE

**HOMETOWN:** Columbia, South Carolina

**UNDERGRAD:** Wofford College, Spartanburg, South Carolina; doctorate in biomedical science/pharmacology from the University of South Carolina

**LAW SCHOOL:** UNC School of Law, 2001

**PRACTICED LAW:** 24 years

**FAMILY:** Husband of 31 years, Brian, children Claudia, 29, Grayson, 26 and Nicholas, 21

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Basketball. I'm a die-hard football mom, but I love basketball and we have so much talent in the Triangle.

**FIRST JOB:** In high school, I was on the Rich's (now Macy's) Teen Board as a student ambassador. Through this experience, I discovered my passion for empowering other women.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Watching "Days of Our Lives" and "The Young and The Restless" like I did with my grandparents when I was growing up. Makes me feel safe and deeply loved.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** I had to convince an examiner at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in Alexandria, Virginia, to drink a bottle of Gatorade to evaluate my client's drug properly after first convincing security to let me bring it inside the building. I cleared every hurdle and the patent was issued.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** Law was my first passion, even though it was my second career. I remember playing the role of advocate on behalf of other students in elementary school.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Golf & spa at The Grandover Resort in Greensboro.

**BEST ADVICE:** My mentor [Raleigh attorney] Mike Sajovec told me early in my career that client development takes time and not to be discouraged by unsuccessful attempts.

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Stay true to your morals and values, understanding that sometimes only a few will stand with you.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Plan my day the night before, using notes and calendar reminders to set goals and prioritize tasks.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** I would like to join another corporate board. I believe that my multidisciplinary background in law, science, leadership, and entrepreneurship would be an asset. I also want to write a book that chronicles my journey in overcoming workplace toxicity.

**BIGGEST RISK:** Leaving a firm in 2016 after 16 years to start over. In 2019, I co-founded an intellectual property firm with three extraordinary partners and three exceptional support staff members.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** Prince



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### CLINT MORSE LITIGATION

BROOKS PIERCE

GREENSBORO

**HOMETOWN:** Grew up in Roanoke, Virginia, as a seventh-generation Texan born in Houston.

**UNDERGRAD:** James Madison University

**LAW SCHOOL:** Wake Forest University School of Law, 2008

**PRACTICED LAW:** 17 years

**FAMILY:** Wife, Diana Morse, Shepperd Morse, 12, Brady, 9

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** The American Chestnut. I love being a part of the effort to bring this tree back that was nearly wiped out by a terrible blight in the early 1900s. Contributing what you can to a cause, even if success will only be obtained decades in the future, is inspiring.

**FIRST JOB:** Being a Division I tennis player taught me goals can only be reached with dedication, focus, hard work and desire.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Tending to the chestnut trees at our property in Grayson County, Virginia.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** I get the best result by taking on my client's problem as if it is my own. To that end, it is impossible to choose one "most memorable case," because, win or lose, each of my clients become part of my family for that case.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** As a third-generation lawyer, I believe that my dad, perhaps unwittingly, trained me to be a lawyer from a young age. -All the work he put in making me speak in public, keeping arguments logical and teaching me about competition made me an attorney.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Proehlific Park to watch Brady play football. And the tracks and cross-country courses to watch Shep run for the High Point Blaze.

**BEST ADVICE:** From Theodore Roosevelt: "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena . . . so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat." One of the many quotes Dad made us memorize.

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Do not be afraid to lose. Litigation is inherently risky. Advise your clients about the risks, and then go and do everything you can to win.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Fighting for what I believe is important, while relaxing when facing the insubstantial. Also, giving high fives around to my office teammates.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Get more associates arguing matters earlier.

**BIGGEST RISK:** Taking on \$100,000 in student-loan debt to become an attorney.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** Dave Matthews Band



**Matthew S. DeAntonio**  
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Charlotte

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Charlotte

## S. LEIGH RODENBOUGH IV REAL ESTATE

BROOKS PIERCE

GREENSBORO

**HOMETOWN:** Greensboro

**UNDERGRAD:** UNC Chapel Hill

**LAW SCHOOL:** UNC School of Law, 1980

**PRACTICED LAW:** 45 years

**FAMILY:** Married Melanie Hyatt Rodenbough in 1980, and lost Melanie to metastatic breast cancer in 2021; I found new love and married Kelly Peterson in November 2024; four children, Andy Rodenbough, Anna L. Rodenbough, Libby Rodenbough, MK Rodenbough; two grandchildren

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Mipso, the Chapel Hill-based band that my daughter Libby, has toured with for about 13 years.

**FIRST JOB:** Priming tobacco at age 12 and caring for 20,000 adolescent chickens for local farmers in the Rockingham County town of Madison. You can not imagine the amount of methane produced by 20,000 chickens.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Working out in the morning with my trainer, Nicholas Kimps.

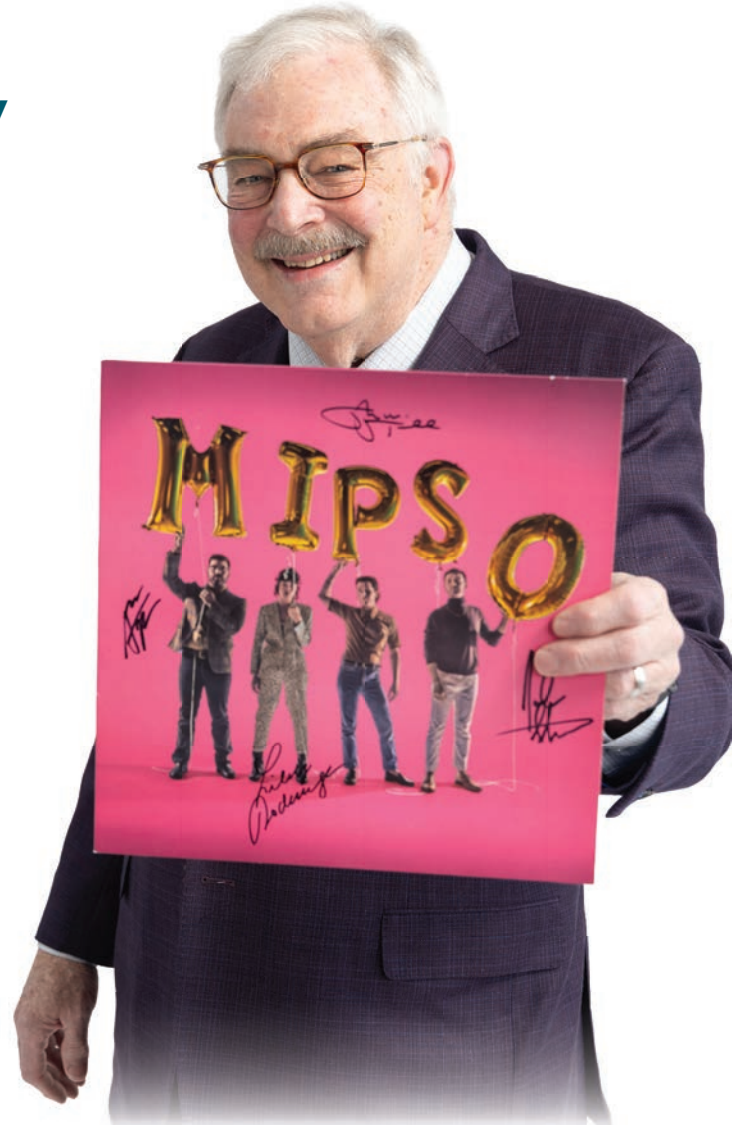
**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** A series of land title cases involving thousands of acres on Hatteras Island acquired in 1929 by Andrew Carnegie's partner, John H. Phipps, and his son, John S. Phipps. They used the land for hunting, fishing and gun clubs at Avon and Buxton. For about a decade, I traveled there every other week with my partners, Randy Underwood and Bill McNairy, to search titles in Dare, Hyde and Currituck counties. We ate a lot of seafood, met colorful characters and made friends as we came to love Hatteras Island.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** My father was a solo practitioner who would let me observe court proceedings from age 10. From high school to when I was in law school, I worked in his office. So becoming a lawyer was in my DNA.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Holden Beach. Melanie and I honeymooned there in 1980, and my family and I have rented oceanfront houses there all but a handful of summers since.

**BEST ADVICE:** From my late partner, Edgar B. Fisher: "There are no gray areas in the practice of real estate law – it is either right or it is wrong. But good and thoughtful lawyering can cure any error in a chain of title or the drafting of an instrument."

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Law truly is a jealous mistress that can consume you all day, every day, so make time first for your family, your faith and your community.



**BEST WORK HABIT:** Doing whatever it takes to solve a problem and get the best result for our client, without regard to how long it takes or how much of that time gets billed to the client.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Delegate more, get to bed earlier and travel with my wife, Kelly.

**BIGGEST RISK:** Forgoing opportunities to go in-house to continue practicing law with Brooks Pierce, a decision I have never regretted.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** Brice Street, a band from Greensboro that I saw perform at the Town Hall my first night in Chapel Hill.

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Davidson

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nCino  
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### SARA VIZITHUM TAX And ESTATE PLANNING

BROOKS PIERCE

GREENSBORO

**HOMETOWN:** Big Rapids, Michigan

**UNDERGRAD:** Hope College (Holland, Michigan)

**LAW SCHOOL:** UNC School of Law, 2002

**PRACTICED LAW:** 23 years

**FAMILY:** Husband, BJ, children, Lily and Will

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** UNC Chapel Hill. My husband and I are both graduates. We love the school and rooting for the Tar Heels.

**FIRST JOB:** Legislative correspondent for U.S. Representative Dave Camp of Michigan. I learned to always be prepared and to never walk into someone else's office without paper and pen.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** A walk, preferably on the beach or the woods. Even better if it is with someone who makes me laugh.

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** Sitting at the counsel table at the NC Court of Appeals a few weeks after passing the bar and holding the watch for my (now) partner. It was my only time in a courtroom other than for a swearing in.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** I loved Nancy Drew books. I wanted to be a private investigator (like Nancy) or an attorney (like her dad). The more I learned about what I could do as an attorney and how I could help people, I realized that was what I wanted to do for a living.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Anywhere in the mountains.

**BEST ADVICE:** My mentor, [Brooks Pierce partner] Bill McNairy, taught me that you always get a better answer when you collaborate.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** Trying to learn and improve every day.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** Making time for exercise daily

**BIGGEST RISK:** Working part-time while my kids were young. It was worth it.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** Depeche Mode



**Rebecca Lane Smitherman**  
Craig Jenkins Lipfert & Walker  
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## YOUNG GUNS

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Katten Muchin Rosenman  
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## ZECHARIAH ETHERIDGE YOUNG GUNS

ETHERIDGE LAW

CHAPEL HILL

**HOMETOWN:** Morven (Anson County)

**UNDERGRAD:** UNC Greensboro

**LAW SCHOOL:** Elon University School of Law, 2021

**PRACTICED LAW:** 3 years

**FAMILY:** Wife, Kendall, dog, Clover, cats Lavender and Willow

**FAVORITE NC PRODUCT:** Hole Doughnuts in Asheville has set the bar so high. They are made to order and you can't go wrong with any of them.

**FIRST JOB:** Bagging trash, cleaning bathrooms, working the pool and checking families in for sporting events at Little Park in Wadesboro at age 15 taught me how important community spaces are to the people that live in that community, to work independently and be a team member. Plus, spending time goofing off with my older brother.

**GO-TO STRESS RELIEVER:** Weightlifting

**MOST MEMORABLE CASE:** I drafted a petition for clemency for a woman incarcerated, seeking early release due to the circumstances of her conviction, pro bono. She was 17 at the time of the offense and under immense pressure. I am still holding out hope for her.

**WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER:** I enjoy making complicated concepts easy to understand. Many bad situations (insolvency, criminal and civil violations) are more or less avoidable with the right knowledge and guidance.

**FAVORITE NC HANGOUT:** Battleground Park, Greensboro

**BEST ADVICE:** Attitude determines altitude. My late grandfather, Theodore Carr II.

**YOUR BEST ADVICE:** Take risks to become someone you are proud of and live a life you enjoy. Tomorrow isn't promised, and a life of regrets is worse than 1,000 failures. Have a reasonable backup plan that you can be comfortable with if plan A does not fully pan out.

**BEST WORK HABIT:** After losing valuable physical notes, I started taking electronic notes for meetings with opposing counsel or clients. Chapel Hill lawyer Jim White shared this tip with me, and I'm very grateful for it.

**2026 WORK-LIFE CHANGE:** More speaking engagements for small business owners on contracts and loan documents, so they do not have to come see me for a bankruptcy consultation later.

**BIGGEST RISK:** I narrowly failed my first attempt at the bar exam. I had a job offer at my first law firm and moved to Raleigh, even though I didn't know whether I would pass on my second attempt. I restarted my life, while fully aware I could lose the law firm job. It all worked out and I thank my wife for the courage to make that move.

**YOUR FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT AT 18:** The Lion King

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Charlotte

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Wallace & Graham  
Salisbury

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Manning Fulton & Skinner  
Raleigh

**Amanda S. Hawkins**  
Brooks Pierce  
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**Diane B. Burks**  
Katten Muchin Rosenman  
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**Jack R. Magee**  
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**Chanon M. Smith**  
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**Lindsey Umin**  
David Self Family Law and Mediation  
Cornelius

**Cameron S. Williams**  
SKUFCA Law  
Charlotte

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Block Crouch Keeter Behm & Sayed  
Wilmington

**Jessie Boylan**  
Block Crouch Keeter Behm & Sayed  
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Wake Family Law Group  
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McGuireWoods  
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Essex Richards  
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Stanton P. Geller is Co-Chair of the Audit and Tax Controversy practice group and practices in the areas of federal and state income, estate, and gift tax planning; corporate, partnership and business law; succession planning; estate planning; federal and state tax audit, appeal, and controversy; and commercial real estate transactions. Stanton focuses on minimizing taxes, preserving wealth, and managing risk for his clients.



## Sabrina Winters

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Sabrina Winters, Esq. has delivered over two decades of compassionate estate planning and probate guidance to Charlotte families. Motivated by her own experience with loss, she offers a warm, client-centered approach that simplifies difficult decisions. As a respected attorney, speaker, and educator, she empowers families to plan confidently and protect their most important assets.



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Julie M. Bradlow is the Chair of DarrowEverett's Tax Practice Group, and a Practice Leader for its Government Investigations Practice Group. Her background encompasses federal, state, and international tax planning, tax controversy, employee benefits, executive compensation, corporate law, and regulatory matters. Together with an understanding of such broad-based subject matter, Julie brings practical experience to solving complex problems for her clients. Prior to joining the DarrowEverett team, Julie served as in-house tax counsel at Fortune 500 aerospace and transportation companies, as well as at two Am Law 200 law firms and a boutique law firm, where she advised on a wide variety of federal, state, and international tax and employee benefits matters. While at the University of Chicago Law School, Julie was an Associate Editor for the University of Chicago Law Review.



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The law is always the foundation in her cases, but this is the LOWEST standard of conduct. Families do better with resolutions that fit their specific needs. Processes like Collaborative Law help families transition from the title of Husband and Wife while remaining Mom and Dad forever.



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Allie Petrova concentrates her practice in complex tax planning for businesses. She guides clients on business purchases and sales, transitions of healthcare practices, and intergenerational business transfers. Allie also represents business owners before the Internal Revenue Service and in the U.S. Tax Court. Ms. Petrova holds J.D. and LL.M. in Taxation degrees from the Georgetown University Law Center and an LL.M. from The Sorbonne. Allie is a Past Chair of the Tax Section of the North Carolina Bar Association.



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Matt Joyner helps business owners with their corporate and transactional legal needs, including asset purchases and sales, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, franchises, "business divorces," non-competition agreements, LLC operating agreements, corporate shareholder agreements, employment agreements and negotiating and drafting contracts for businesses. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Dartmouth College and a former Editor of the University of Pennsylvania Law Review, Matt also shares real world, practical business experience with his clients from his time as General Counsel and Vice President of Administration of an international chemical manufacturing company. He is a former judicial clerk on the US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, past Chair of the NC Bar Association's Corporate Counsel Section and currently serves as President of the Mecklenburg Historical Society. Matt welcomes referrals of conflicts from other firms.



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Kate Kliebert serves as the go-to fractional general counsel for small and medium-sized growing businesses across North Carolina. With a strong record of advising companies in the tech sector, she provides practical, business-minded legal guidance that helps leaders navigate growth, manage risk, and respond strategically when challenges arise. Kate's clients rely on her ability to understand their operations, their risk tolerance, and the realities of day-to-day decision making. She offers direct, steady counsel when business questions surface without warning, helping teams think clearly, plan their next steps, and keep momentum moving forward.

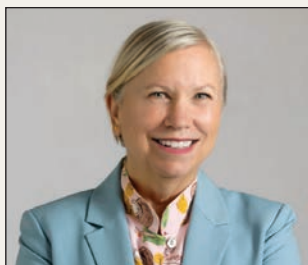


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Kathryn's passion for law stems from her desire to help individuals and families on a personal level. Her natural ability to build strong relationships with clients, attorneys, and other professionals enables her to find solutions and effectively reduce conflict for clients in or outside of court or as a Family Mediator.



## Lucy Inman

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Lucy is a former North Carolina appellate and trial judge who represents clients in state and federal appellate courts. She also serves as an arbitrator of commercial disputes.



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Jennifer has vast experience representing clients at all stages of development from entity selection, contract negotiation, due diligence, complex financing and land use planning to permitting and advocacy with agencies and municipalities. Recognized as a dual Real Property Law Specialist by the NC State Bar together with being educated at UNC and The Stonier School of Banking at the Wharton School, she is a credentialed and experienced advocate for her clients statewide.



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Lonnie Player practices in the areas of civil and business litigation and commercial transactions. He has his B.A. from Duke University, his M.A. from The University of Texas at Austin and his J.D. from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Lonnie is a past president of the Cumberland County Bar Association, and has served as North Carolina State Bar Councilor for the Fourteenth Judicial District and as a member of the North Carolina Judicial Standards Commission. Mr. Player also currently sits on the local Advisory Board of First Citizens Bank.



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Jeffrey J. Schwartz is the founder and owner of Schwartz Law Firm, P.C. based in Charlotte, North Carolina with clients throughout the United States and internationally. Jeff is a registered patent attorney with more than 30 years of experience in the field of intellectual property law. His patent services involve a broad range of technologies including computer software, wireless communications, medical devices and processes, military products and equipment, mechanical devices, textiles and textile machinery, sports equipment, and more. Jeff has also been certified by the North Carolina State Bar as a specialist in Trademark Law.



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She has been licensed and practicing in the state of North Carolina since 1994. She obtained her North Carolina bar license immediately after graduating from North Carolina Central University School of Law. While at North Carolina Central University, she received several American Jurisprudence awards for academic excellence. In 1999 she established The Law Office of Tamela T. Wallace, P.A. Attorney Wallace believes relationships with her professional peers are important as well. Therefore, she is a member of the following legal organizations: NC Bar Association, American Bar Association, North Carolina Black Lawyers Association, John S. Leary Bar, the Mecklenburg County Bar Association and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.



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With over a decade of experience in estate planning and estate administration, Holly Simpson founded Simpson Law Firm to deliver elevated, client-centered legal services. She leads the firm with a focus on integrity, excellence, and the consistent delivery of well-crafted estate plans that support North Carolina families through every stage of life.



## Chrissy Clarke-Peckham

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Chrissy Clarke-Peckham, a University of Maryland and Washington & Lee Law alumna, has served North Carolina since 1999. A former Council for Children's Rights juvenile defender, she remains committed to indigent defense. Chrissy currently represents clients in high level criminal cases (both North Carolina and federal) and juvenile delinquency matters.

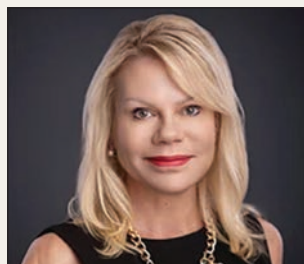


## Lawrence J. "Larry" Shaheen, Jr.

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Lawrence J. "Larry" Shaheen, Jr. is an attorney with The McIntosh Law Firm. His practice focuses on commercial real estate development, property valuation appeals, corporate law, as well as government & corporate affairs. His experience makes him a tremendous resource and advocate for commercial real estate clients. Larry attended the University of Carolina at Chapel Hill and received his JD from the University of South Carolina School of Law.



## Roberta King Latham

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Your employment law and litigation referrals are in good hands with Roberta and King Latham Law, PLLC. Roberta is a Martindale-Hubbell AV rated attorney who has been recognized consistently for her work in employment law and litigation for both defendants and plaintiffs, including recognition in US News and World Report Best Lawyers in America and North Carolina Business Magazine Super Lawyers. Her law firm, King Latham Law, PLLC was selected by Chamber and Partners in 2025 for a Spotlight in Commercial Litigation. In addition to professional recognitions, Roberta has served in numerous leadership positions, including with the North Carolina Bar Association and Susan G. Komen.

## HALL OF FAME

### ANTITRUST AND COMPLEX BUSINESS DISPUTES

Matthew W. Sawchak, Ellis & Winters, Cary (2002, 2003); Rodrick J. Enns, Enns & Archer, Winston-Salem (2004); Larry B. Sitton, Smith Moore, Greensboro (2005); Everett J. Bowman, Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, Charlotte (2006); Douglas Wayne Kenyon, Hunton & Williams, Raleigh (2007); Mark W. Merritt, Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, Charlotte (2008); Mark J. Horoschak, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, Charlotte (2009); Jennifer K. Van Zant, Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey & Leonard, Greensboro (2010); Catharine B. Arrowood, Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein, Raleigh (2011); Jonathan Heyl, Smith Moore Leatherwood, Charlotte (2012); Noel L. Allen, Pinnix & Nichols, Raleigh (2013); John F. Graybeal, Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein, Raleigh (2014); Press Millen, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, Raleigh (2015); W. Andrew "Andy" Copenhaver, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, Winston-Salem (2016); Stephen Feldman, Ellis & Winters, Raleigh (2017); Brad Evans, Ward and Smith, Greenville (2018); Henry "Hal" L. Kitchin Jr., McGuireWoods, Wilmington (2019); Brian Hayles, Bradley Arant Boult Cummings, Charlotte (2020); Alan Duncan, Turning Point Litigation, Greensboro (2021); Dhamian Blue, Blue, Raleigh (2022); Denise M. Gunter, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, Winston-Salem (2023); John A. Price, Calhoun, Bhella & Sechrest, Durham (2024); Cassandra J. Creekman, Wyrick Robbins Yates & Ponton, Raleigh (2025); Robert J. King III, Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2026)

### APPELLATE

Matthew Nis Leerberg, Smith Moore Leatherwood, Raleigh (2018); Toby Hampson, Wyrick Robbins / NC Court of Appeals, Raleigh (2019); Drew Erteschik, Poyner Spruill, Raleigh (2020); Beth Brooks Scherer, Fox Rothschild, Raleigh (2021); Michelle D. Connell, Fox Rothschild, Raleigh (2022); Angela Farag Craddock, Young Moore and Henderson, Raleigh (2023); Troy D. Shelton, Fox Rothschild, Raleigh (2024); Matthew W. Sawchak, Robinson Bradshaw & Hinson, Raleigh (2025); Preston O. Odom III, Gardner Skelton, Charlotte (2026)

### BANKRUPTCY

J. Michael Booe, Kennedy Covington, Charlotte (2002, 2003); Gregory B. Crampton, Nicholls & Crampton, Raleigh (2004); Richard M. Hutson II, Hutson Hughes & Powell, Durham (2005); C. Richard Rayburn Jr., Rayburn Cooper & Durham, Charlotte (2006); Terri L. Gardner, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, Raleigh (2007); John A. Northen, Northen Blue, Chapel Hill, (2008); Holmes P. Harden, Williams Mullen, Raleigh (2009); Christine Myatt, Nexsen Pruet, Greensboro (2010); Gerald A. "Jeb" Jeutter Jr., Gerald A. "Jeb" Jeutter Jr. Attorney at Law, Raleigh (2011); Kenneth M. Greene, Carruthers & Roth, Greensboro (2012); Trawick H. "Buzzy" Stubbs Jr., Stubbs & Perdue, New Bern (2013); Benjamin Kahn, Nexsen Pruet, Greensboro (2014); James S. "Charlie" Livermon, Poyner Spruill, Rocky Mount (2015); Richard S. Wright, Moon Wright and Houston, Charlotte (2016); Heather W. Culp, Essex Richards, Charlotte (2017); William P. Janvier, Janvier Law Firm, Raleigh (2018); Richard D. Sparkman, Richard D. Sparkman & Associates, Angier (2019); George Sanderson, The Sanderson Law Firm, Raleigh (2020); John "Woody" C. Woodman, Essex Richards, Charlotte (2021); Rebecca Finch Redwine, Hendren Redwine & Malone, Raleigh; (2022); Matt Tomasic, Rayburn Cooper & Durham, Charlotte (2023); Jeffrey E. Oleynik, Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2024); Jason L. Hendren, Hendren Redwine & Malone, Raleigh (2025); Lance Paul Martin, Ward and Smith, Asheville (2026)

### BUSINESS

Russell M. Robinson II, Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, Charlotte (2002, 2003); Doris R. Bray, Schell Bray, Greensboro (2004); J. Norfleet Pruden III, Kennedy Covington, Charlotte (2005); William M. Flynn, Hunton & Williams, Raleigh (2006); Robin L. Hinson, Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, Charlotte (2007); Peter C. Buck, Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, Charlotte (2008); Gerald F. Roach, Smith, Anderson, Blount, Dorsett, Mitchell & Jernigan, Raleigh (2009); Mark Davidson, Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey & Leonard, Greensboro (2010); Stephen M. Lynch, Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, Charlotte (2011); Amalie L. Tuffin, Whitmeyer Tuffin, Raleigh (2012); Grayson S. Hale, Morningstar Law Group, Morrisville (2013); David D. Beatty, Myers Bigel Sibley & Sajovec, Raleigh (2014); Charles S. Baldwin IV, Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey & Leonard, Wilmington (2015); James R. Forrest, Forrest Firm, Durham (2016); Gregory S. Connor, The Connor Law Firm, Raleigh (2017); John Babcock, Waldrep Wall Babcock & Bailey, Winston-Salem (2018); M. Keith Kapp, Williams Mullen, Raleigh (2019); Matthew Marcellino, Marcellino & Tyson, Charlotte (2020); George Stephen Diab, Murchison, Taylor &

Gibson, Wilmington (2021); Daniel Stephen Trimmer, Skufca Law, Charlotte (2022); John M. Cross Jr., Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2023); Heather Culp, Essex, Richards, Charlotte (2024); Milton Heath Gilbert Jr., Baucom, Claytor, Benton, Morgan & Wood, Charlotte (2025); Brian J. McMillan, Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2026)

### CONSTRUCTION

James A. Roberts III, Lewis & Roberts, Raleigh (2004); Jeffrey J. Davis, Moore & Van Allen, Charlotte (2005); John L. Shaw, Poyner Spruill, Raleigh (2006); Dudley Humphrey, Kilpatrick Stockton, Winston-Salem (2007); James S. Schenck IV, Conner Gwyn Schenck, Raleigh (2008); Michael Wilson, Johnston Allison Hord, Charlotte (2009); John B. "Jack" Taylor, Nexsen Pruet, Charlotte (2010); Peter J. Marino, Smith, Anderson, Blount, Dorsett, Mitchell & Jernigan, Raleigh (2011); William H. Gammon, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, Raleigh (2012); Richard D. Conner, Conner Gwyn Schenck, Greensboro (2013); Joseph H. Nanney Jr., Meynardie & Nanney, Raleigh, (2014); Bob Meynardie, Meynardie & Nanney, Raleigh (2015); Harper Heckman, Nexsen Pruet, Greensboro (2016); Nan E. Hannah, Hannah Sheridan Loughridge & Cochran, Raleigh (2017); James Johnson, Smith Terry & Johnson, Asheville (2018); Tracy James, Hamilton Stephens Steele & Martin, Charlotte (2019); Jason James, Bell, Davis & Pitt, Charlotte (2020); Bentford "Ben" Martin, Hamilton Stephens Steele & Martin, Charlotte (2021); Erik Rosenwood, Rosenwood, Rose & Litwak, Charlotte (2022); Arty Bolick II, Brooks Pierce, Raleigh (2023); Greg C. Ahlum, Johnston Allison Hord, Charlotte (2024); Neale T. Johnson, Fox Rothschild, Greensboro (2025); Carl Jeffress Burchette, Rosenwood, Rose & Litwak, Charlotte (2026)

### CORPORATE COUNSEL

James E. Creekman, First Citizens Bank & Trust Co., Raleigh (2003); Douglas R. Edwards, Wachovia, Charlotte (2005); Stephen K. Coss, Sonic Automotive, Charlotte (2006); Keith Smith, Carolinas HealthCare System, Charlotte (2007); John Taggart, Genworth Financial, Raleigh (2008); B. Judd Hartman, Pharmaceutical Product Development, Wilmington (2009); Gaither M. Keener, Lowe's, Mooresville (2010); Meredith B. Stone, NACCO Materials Handling Group, Greenville (2011); Lisa D. Inman, Waste Industries USA, Raleigh (2012); Robert Wicker, General Parts International, Raleigh (2013); Michael A. Springs, Bank of America, Charlotte (2014); Santiago Estrada, Quintiles Transnational Holdings, Durham (2015); Jeffrey M. Davis, Lincoln Financial Group, Greensboro (2016); Gerald L. Walden Jr., The Fresh Market, Greensboro (2017); Andrew Spainhour, Replacements Ltd., Greensboro (2018); Chris Matton, Bandwidth, Raleigh (2019); Jennifer

Venable, Capitol Broadcasting, Raleigh (2020); Greg Murphy, Nucor, Charlotte (2024); Christopher F. Buchholtz, RTI International, Research Triangle Park (2025); Janet Thoren, NC Real Estate Commission, Raleigh (2026)

### CORPORATE LAW

Russell M. Robinson II, Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, Charlotte (2002); David L. Ward Jr., Ward and Smith, New Bern (2004); John M. Cross Jr., Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2021); Jonathan Jenkins, Jenkins Haynes, Greensboro (2022); Rob Rust IV, Moore & Van Allen, Charlotte (2023); John David Love, Michael Best & Friedrich, Raleigh (2024); Anne E. Croteau, McGuireWoods, Raleigh (2025); Marc Bishop, Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2026)

### CRIMINAL

Wade M. Smith, Tharrington Smith, Raleigh (2004); James F. Wyatt III, Wyatt & Blake, Charlotte (2005); David Freedman, White and Crumpler, Winston-Salem (2006); Joseph B. Cheshire V, Cheshire, Parker, Schneider, Bryan & Vitale, Raleigh (2007); James P. Cooney III, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, Charlotte (2008); Stephen T. Smith, McMillan, Smith & Plyler, Raleigh (2009); T. Patrick Matus II, Essex Richards, Charlotte (2010); David S. Rudolf, Rudolf, Widenhouse & Fialko, Charlotte (2011); Locke T. Clifford, Clifford Clendenin & O'Hale, Greensboro (2012); Peter C. Anderson, Beveridge & Diamond, Charlotte (2013); Michael J. Greene, Goodman, Carr, Laughrun, Levine & Greene, Charlotte (2014); Robert K. Corbett III, Law Offices of Harold Cogdell Jr., Charlotte (2015); Ryan T. Smith, RTS Law Group, Charlotte (2016); George V. Laughrun II, Goodman, Carr, Laughrun, Levine & Greene, Charlotte (2017); Les Robinson, Robinson Law Firm, Greenville (2018); Wes J. Camden, Ward and Smith, Raleigh (2019); Kearns Davis, Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2020); Cristopher L. Oring, Oring Law, Wilmington (2021); Elliot Abrams, Cheshire Parker Schneider, Raleigh (2022); Rob Heroy, Goodman Carr Laughrun Levine & Greene, Charlotte (2023); Caitlin Poe, Williams Mullen, Raleigh (2024); Russell D. Babb, Tharrington Smith, Raleigh (2025); Joe Zeszotarski, Gammon & Zeszotarski, Raleigh (2026)

### EMPLOYMENT

Philip M. Van Hoy, Van Hoy, Reutlinger, Adams & Dunn, Charlotte (2002); George J. Oliver, Smith Moore, Raleigh (2003); Penni Pearson Bradshaw, Constangy, Brooks & Smith, Winston-Salem (2004); Jonathan R. Harkavy, Patterson Harkavy, Greensboro (2005); Patricia L. Holland, Jackson Lewis, Cary (2006); Louis L. Lesesne Jr., Essex Richards, Charlotte (2007); Robert M. Elliot, Elliot Pishko Morgan, Winston-Salem (2008); Sarah J. Kromer, Sara J. Kromer, Charlotte (2009); Susan Brown Grady, SPX, Charlotte (2010); Lisa Grafstein, Disability Rights North

Carolina, Raleigh (2011); N. Renee Hughes, Essex Richards, Charlotte (2012); W. Randall Loftis Jr., Constangy, Brooks & Smith, Winston-Salem (2013); Amie F. Carmack, Morningstar Law Group, Morrisville (2014); Nicole Gardner, Gardner Skelton, Charlotte (2015); Mike Okun, Patterson Harkavy, Chapel Hill (2016); Bryan L. Tyson, Marcellino & Tyson, Charlotte (2017); Susie Gibbons, Poyner Spruill, Raleigh (2018); Denise Smith Cline, Law Offices of Denise Smith Cline, Raleigh (2019); Kyle R. Still, Wyrick Robbins, Raleigh (2020); David C. Lindsay, K&L Gates, Charlotte (2021); Meredith Jeffries, Alexander Ricks, Charlotte (2022); Patti W. Ramsour, Ramsour Maultsby, Greensboro (2023); Alex Maultsby, Ramsour Maultsby, Greensboro (2024); William Augustus Oden III, Ward and Smith, Wilmington (2025); Marc Gustafson, Bell, Davis & Pitt, Charlotte (2026)

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Charles D. Case, Hunton & Williams, Raleigh (2002; 2003); H. Glenn Dunn, Poyner Spruill, Raleigh (2004); George W. House, Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2005); William D. Dannelly, Hunton & Williams, Raleigh (2006); Benne C. Hutson, Helms Mulliss & Wicker, Charlotte (2007); Amos C. Dawson III, Williams Mullen, Raleigh (2008); Richard C. Gaskins Jr., Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation, Charlotte (2009); Stephen W. Earp, Smith Moore Leatherwood, Greensboro (2010); Ramona Cunningham O'Bryant, Smith Moore Leatherwood, Greensboro (2011); William Clarke, Roberts & Stevens, Asheville (2012); Grady L. Shields, Wyrick Robbins, Raleigh (2013); Craig A. Bromby, Hunton & Williams, Raleigh (2014); Garry S. Rice, Duke Energy, Charlotte (2015); Sean M. Sullivan, Troutman Sanders, Raleigh (2016); Carol Jones Van Buren, Van Buren Law, Charlotte (2017); Steve Berlin, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, Winston-Salem (2018); Keith Johnson, Poyner Spruill, Raleigh (2019); Amy Wang, Ward and Smith, New Bern (2020); Susan H. Cooper, Womble Bond Dickinson, Charlotte (2021); Mary Katherine Stukes, Moore & Van Allen, Charlotte (2022); Amy Rickers, Johnston Allison Hord, Charlotte (2023); Natalie D. Potter, Essex Richards, Charlotte (2024); F. Bryan Brice Jr., Law Offices Of F. Bryan Brice Jr., Raleigh (2025); Billy Clarke, Roberts & Stevens, Asheville (2026)

## FAMILY

John H. Parker, Cheshire, Parker, Schneider, Bryan & Vitale, Raleigh (2007); Carlyn Poole (retired), Tharrington Smith, Raleigh (2008); Richard D. Stephens, Dozier, Miller, Pollard & Murphy, Charlotte (2009); Lana S. Warlick, Law Office of Lana S. Warlick, Jacksonville (2010); Michael F. Schilawski, Wake Family Law Group, Raleigh (2011); D. Caldwell Barefoot Jr., Barefoot Family Law, Raleigh (2012);

Stan Brown, Hamilton Stephens Steele + Martin, Charlotte (2013); Lori M. Vitale, Vitale Family Law, Raleigh (2014); Kimberly Bryan, Cheshire Parker Schneider & Bryan, Raleigh (2015); Rob Blair, Essex Richards, Charlotte (2016); Afi S. Johnson-Parris, Ward Black Law, Greensboro (2017); Chris Eatmon, Eatmon Law Firm, Wake Forest (2018); Kristin M. Hampson, Hampson Family Law, Raleigh (2019); Mariana Godwin, Barefoot Family Law, Raleigh (2020); Cary Close, Close Smith Family Law, Raleigh (2021); Richard Gantt, Gantt Family Law, Raleigh (2022); Ketan P. Soni, Soni Brendle, Charlotte (2023); Heidi C. Bloom, Wyrick Robbins, Raleigh (2024); Janet Haney Amburgey, GHMA Law, Asheville (2025); Theresa E. Viera, Modern Legal, Charlotte (2026)

## IMMIGRATION

Laura Edgerton, Edgerton Immigration Law, Raleigh (2018); Gerard M. "Gerry" Chapman, Chapman Law Firm, Greensboro (2019); Murali Bashyam, Bashyam Shah, Raleigh (2020); Gigi Gardner, Gardner Gordon, Charlotte, Raleigh (2021); Devon Senges, Dummit Fradin Attorneys at Law, Greensboro (2022); Benjamin A. Snyder, Chiesa Shahinian & Giantomasi, Charlotte (2023); Laura Deddish Burton, Fox Rothschild, Greensboro; Ana Sofia Nunez, Fay Grafton Nunez, Raleigh (2025); Helen Parsonage, Elliot Morgan Parsonage, Winston-Salem (2026)

## INTELLECTUAL

Mitchell S. Bigel, Myers Bigel Sibley & Sajovec, Raleigh (2002; 2003); Kenneth D. Sibley, Myers Bigel Sibley & Sajovec, Raleigh (2004); Wesley Thaddeus Adams III, Adams Evans, Charlotte (2005); J. Scott Evans, Yahoo!, Charlotte (2006); Philip Summa, Summa, Allan & Additon, Charlotte (2007); Susan Freya Olive, Olive & Olive, Durham (2008); David M. Carter, Carter & Schnedler, Asheville (2009); David M. Krasnow, Smith Moore Leatherwood, Raleigh (2010); William J. Mason, MacCord Mason, Wilmington (2011); E. Eric Mills, Ward and Smith, New Bern (2012); Anthony Biller, Coats & Bennett, Cary (2013); Larry L. Coats, Coats & Bennett, Cary (2014); Sarah E. Nagae, Triangle Trademarks, Raleigh (2015); Maury M. Tepper III, Tepper & Eyster, Raleigh (2016); John C. Nipp, Additon, Higgins & Pendleton, Charlotte (2017); Matthew Ladenheim, Trego, Hines & Ladenheim, Charlotte (2018); Julie H. Richardson, Myers Bigel, Raleigh (2019); Russ Racine, Cranfill Sumner, Charlotte (2020); Rick McDermott, McDermott IP Law, Charlotte (2021); Rebecca Crandall, McGuire Wood & Bisette, Asheville (2022); Kimberly Bullock Gatling, Fox Rothschild, Greensboro (2023); John R. Owen, Coats & Bennett, Cary (2024); David W. Sar, Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2025); Shawna Cannon Lemon, Stanek Lemon, Charlotte (2026)

## LITIGATION

James T. Williams Jr., Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2002; 2003); Clarence W. Walker, Kennedy Covington Lobdell & Hickman, Charlotte (2004); Gary S. Parsons, Brooks Pierce, Raleigh (2005); William K. Davis, Bell, Davis & Pitt, Winston-Salem (2006); Dan J. McLamb, Yates, McLamb & Weyher, Raleigh (2007); Robert D. Walker, Walker, Allen, Grice, Ammons & Foy, Goldsboro (2008); J. Donald Cowan Jr., Ellis & Winters, Greensboro (2009); G. Gray Wilson, Wilson, Helms and Cartledge, Winston-Salem (2010); James H. Kelly Jr., Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, Winston-Salem (2011); Daniel L. Brawley, Williams Mullen, Wilmington (2012); Lee M. Whitman, Wyrick Robbins, Raleigh (2013); Michael J. Byrne, Byrne Law, Raleigh (2014); Jonathan D. Sasser, Ellis & Winters, Raleigh (2015); Jean Sutton Martin, Law Office of Jean Sutton Martin, Wilmington (2016); Greg Merritt, Harris, Creech, Ward & Blackerby, New Bern (2017); Ward Davis, Bell, Davis & Pitt, Charlotte (2018); Elizabeth Scott, Williams Mullen, Raleigh (2019); Clay A. Campbell, Marcellino & Tyson, Charlotte (2020); Kristen L. Beightol, Edwards Kirby, Raleigh (2021); Fred W. DeVore III, DeVore, Acton & Stafford, Charlotte (2022); Ross Fulton, Rayburn Cooper & Durham, Charlotte (2023); W. Scott Jones, Searson, Jones, Gottschalk & Cash, Asheville (2024); J. Scott Flowers, Hutchens Law Firm, Fayetteville (2025); Clint Morse, Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2026)

## REAL ESTATE

Alfred Adams, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, Winston-Salem (2004); Barry D. Mann, Manning, Fulton & Skinner, Raleigh (2005); Brent A. Torstrick, Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, Charlotte (2006); Samuel T. Oliver Jr., Manning, Fulton & Skinner, Raleigh (2007); Charles Gordon Brown, Brown & Bunch, Chapel Hill (2008); C. Steven Mason, Smith, Anderson, Blount, Dorset, Mitchell & Jernigan, Raleigh (2009); Timothy G. Sellers, Sellers, Hinshaw, Ayers, Dortch & Lyons, Charlotte (2010); Frank M. Bell Jr., Bell, Davis & Pitt, Winston-Salem (2011); George W. Sistrunk III, Hamilton Stephens Steele & Martin Charlotte (2012); Robert Charles Lawson, Williams Mullen, Raleigh (2013); Michael G. Winters, Ellis & Winters, Raleigh (2014); Holly H. Alderman, Schell Bray, Chapel Hill (2015); Brian W. Byrd, Smith Moore Leatherwood, Greensboro (2016); Anna P. McLamb, Wyrick Robbins, Raleigh (2017); Beth Voltz, Weatherspoon & Voltz, Raleigh (2018); Annika M. Brock, The Brock Law Firm, Asheville (2019); Allen York, Smith Anderson, Raleigh (2020); Diana R. Palecek, Fox Rothschild, Charlotte (2021); Philip Hackley, Wyrick Robbins, Raleigh (2022); Joanne Badr, Ward and Smith, Asheville (2023); Julian Robb, Blanco, Tackabery & Matamoros,

Winston-Salem (2024); Marc L. Isaacson, Isaacson Sheridan, Greensboro (2025); S. Leigh Rodenbough IV, Brooks Pierce, McLendon Humphry & Leonard, Greensboro (2026)

## TAX & ESTATE PLANNING

Robert C. Vaughn Jr., Vaughn Perkinson Ehlinger Moxley & Stogner, Winston-Salem (2002; 2003); W. Curtis Elliott Jr., Culp Elliott & Carpenter, Charlotte (2004); Ray S. Farris, Johnston Allison Hord, Charlotte (2005); Elizabeth L. Quick, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, Winston-Salem (2006); James W. Narron, Narron, O'Hale & Whittington, Smithfield (2007); E. William Kratt, Herring Mills & Kratt, Raleigh (2008); Christy Eve Reid (died May 8, 2014), Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, Charlotte (2009); Michael H. Godwin, Schell Bray Aycock Abel & Livingston, Greensboro (2010); Maria M. Lynch, Lynch & Eatman LLP, Raleigh (2011); Graham D. Holding Jr., Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, Charlotte (2012); Andrew H. Veach, Edwards Craver Veach, Winston-Salem (2013); Robert H. Haggard, Van Winkle Lam, Asheville (2014); Michael A. Colombo, Colombo, Kitchin, Dunn, Ball & Porter, Greenville (2015); Jason Walls, The Walls Law Firm, Apex (2016); Debra L. Foster, Foster Royal, Charlotte (2017); Elizabeth "Liz" K. Arias, Womble Bond Dickinson, Raleigh (2018); Jean Gordon Carter, McGuireWoods, Raleigh (2019); Rudy Ogburn, Young Moore and Henderson, Raleigh (2020); Jessica Mering Hardin, Robinson Bradshaw, Charlotte (2021); Brooks Jaffa, Cranford, Buckley Schultze, Tomchin, Allen & Buie, Charlotte (2022); Michael Cory Howes, Strauss Attorney, Raleigh (2023); Amy H. Kincaid, Schell Bray, Greensboro (2024); Heidi Elizabeth Royal, Heidi Royal Law, Charlotte (2025); Sara Vizithum, Brooks Pierce, Greensboro (2026)

## YOUNG GUNS

J. Christian Stevenson, Kirk Palmer & Thigpe, Charlotte (2012); George Mason Oliver, Oliver Friesen Cheek, New Bern (2013); Michael F. Easley Jr., McGuireWoods, Raleigh (2014); Alvaro R. De La Calle, Calle Law, Greensboro (2015); Aaron Lay, Hamilton Stephens Steele & Martin, Charlotte (2016); Elie Foy, Wyrick Robbins, Raleigh (2017); Matthew T. Marcellino, Marcellino & Tyson, Charlotte (2018); Nancy S. Litwak, Rosenwood, Rose & Litwak, Charlotte (2019); Antonia A. "Toni" Peck, Nelson Mullin, Raleigh (2020); Holden B. Clark, Holden B. Clark, Attorney at Law, Gastonia (2021); Carl Burchette, Rosenwood, Rose & Litwak, Charlotte (2022); Keith Boyette, Director of State Government Relations, North Carolina Healthcare Association, Raleigh (2023); Katarina "Katie" Wong, Brooks Pierce, Raleigh (2024); Carlie Anne Smith, Manning Fulton, Raleigh (2025); Zechariah Etheridge, Etheridge Law, Chapel Hill (2026)