



Raleigh, N.C. (August 15, 2018) – The Raleigh-based law firm of Smith Debnam today announced that nine Smith Debnam lawyers are named in the 2019 Edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*, one of the most respected peer-review publications in the legal profession.

Best Lawyers publishes its list of lawyers by geographic region and practice area, and lawyers are neither required nor allowed to pay a fee to be listed. Instead, *Best Lawyers* bases its findings on an exhaustive peer-review survey where, on average, over 50,000 leading attorneys cast more than 5.5 million votes on the legal and professional abilities of other lawyers. For this reason, inclusion in *Best Lawyers* is considered a singular honor.

Smith Debnam congratulates the following attorneys named in the 2019 Edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*:

Thurston Debnam, Jr. – *Listed in Best Lawyers for Commercial Litigation / Corporate Law*

Debnam is one of the firm's founding partners and has more than 30 years of experience in commercial planning and business litigation.

Franklin Drake – *Listed in Best Lawyers for Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law*

Drake is a nationally recognized speaker on financial services regulation and compliance-related matters, with over 30 years of experience representing clients in the financial services industry.

Alicia Journey – *Listed in Best Lawyers for Family Law*

Journey is a Board-Certified Family Law Specialist by the North Carolina State Bar and serves as a collaborative attorney with the Integrated Accountability and Collaborative Transparency Program (IACT).

Lynn W. McNally – *Listed in Best Lawyers for Family Law*

McNally is a Board-Certified Family Law Specialist by the North Carolina State Bar and she is a Certified Family Financial Settlement Mediator by the North Carolina Dispute Resolution Commission.

John W. Narron – *Listed in Best Lawyers for Family Law*

Narron is a Board-Certified Family Law Specialist by the North Carolina State Bar and has been practicing law in North Carolina since 1977.

Lauren V. Reeves – *Listed in Best Lawyers for Real Estate Law*

Reeves is a partner inside Smith Debnam's real estate, foreclosure, and creditors' rights sections. She represents lenders, individuals, and businesses in real estate matters, including real estate closings, purchasing, leasing, selling, financing and all issues of title arising in both residential and commercial real estate transactions.

Jeff D. Rogers – *Listed in Best Lawyers for Real Estate Law*

Rogers has 30 years of experience representing creditors, lenders, and businesses of all sizes on matters of foreclosure, bankruptcy, and collections.

Byron L. Saintsing – *Listed in Best Lawyers for Banking and Finance Law*

Saintsing leads the firm's construction law practice group and has written and lectured on many topics about construction and equipment leasing.

Bettie Kelley Sousa – *Listed in Best Lawyers for Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law and Corporate Law*

Sousa is a Board-Certified Specialist in Creditors' Rights and has over 35 years of experience representing companies and their owners in business litigation and employment law.

About Smith Debnam

Founded in 1972, Smith Debnam is a leading, multi-practice law firm for institutions and private individuals who value a responsible and caring approach from an accomplished team of experienced legal professionals. Representing clients in Banking, Financial Services, Equipment Leasing, Construction, Mortgage Servicing, Manufacturing, and Professional Services industries, the firm has extensive experience in state and federal courts across a diverse list of practice areas, including Corporate and Business Law, Business Litigation, Commercial Bankruptcy and Reorganization, Foreclosures, Creditor Representation, Consumer Collections, Commercial & Residential Real Estate, Construction Law, Alcohol

Beverage Law, Employment Law, Equipment Leasing & Finance, Family Law, Elder Law & Advocacy Services, Trusts & Estates, and Probate Litigation.

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W. Thurston Debnam, Jr.

OF COUNSEL

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Thurston Debnam, who received his undergraduate and law degrees from Wake Forest University, is one of the founding partners of Smith Debnam and the Section Head of the Business Law practice group. He is certified as a civil Superior Court mediator.

Thurston concentrates his practice in the areas of business and corporate planning and real estate law, including land use planning and zoning. For more than thirty years, Thurston has maintained a broad-based business practice, assisting clients with business and corporate planning and handling land development and real property issues and transactions.

Alicia Journey

PARTNER

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Alicia Journey is a North Carolina Board Certified Family Law Specialist in the firm's family law practice group. She represents clients in child custody, child support, domestic violence, equitable distribution, and alimony matters. Her experience with domestic actions includes handling related complex civil litigation matters, such as tortious interference with child custody, alienation of affections, criminal conversation, and interstate child abduction. Her practice encompasses all levels of jurisdiction within North Carolina, including jury trial experience and appeals to both the North Carolina Court of Appeals and Supreme Court.

Franklin Drake

OF COUNSEL

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Frank Drake has more than 30 years of legal experience, with a concentration in bankruptcy and commercial litigation. Frank represents credit unions, banking and financial institutions, consumer and commercial lenders, and student loan agencies. Frank has taught classes on bankruptcy and commercial law for various Bankers Associations as well as the National Association of State-Chartered Credit Union Supervisors and various states' Credit Union Leagues.

Lynn Wilson McNally

PARTNER

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Lynn Wilson McNally is a partner in the firm and member of the firm's Family Law practice group. She is a Board Certified Family Law Specialist and certified Family Financial Settlement Mediator by the North Carolina Dispute Resolution Commission. She represents individuals in matters regarding separation, divorce, child custody, child support, alimony, equitable distribution, domestic violence, termination of parental rights, legitimation and other matters pertaining to family law.

John W. Narron OF COUNSEL

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John Narron is a Board Certified Family Law Specialist and has been practicing law in North Carolina since 1977, with a practice concentration in all manner of civil disputes that frequently involve complex equitable distribution proceedings, alimony trials, will caveats, employment disputes, personal injury trials and negotiations, and a wide variety of commercial business disputes. John has served as a mediator in more than 200 family law disputes in Wake County, Franklin County, Johnston County, Wayne County, Guilford County, Forsyth County, and Pender County.

Lauren V. Reeves PARTNER

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Lauren is a partner at the Firm and her practice is focused on transactional real estate law. She serves clients who are buying, selling, lending, leasing, developing, and investing in real estate.

Byron L. Saintsing

PARTNER

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Byron Saintsing leads a practice group focused on matters involving construction law, commercial and business litigation, representation of equipment lessors, charter schools, and education law, and commercial creditor bankruptcy. Byron has written and lectured on many topics pertaining to construction and equipment leasing, including editing materials on North Carolina's adoption of Article 2A of the Uniform Commercial Code.

Bettie Kelley Sousa

PARTNER

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Bettie Kelley Sousa has been practicing law with Smith Debnam since becoming licensed in 1981. She has a wealth of experience in state and federal courts, including bankruptcy courts, at both trial and appellate levels. She represents mostly business owners and businesses — large and small — in a variety of matters, including contract review, drafting and disputes.

Jeff D. Rogers

PARTNER

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Jeff Rogers is a partner in the firm and heads the firm's Foreclosure and Collateral Recovery Section. He concentrates his practice in the area of creditor representation, including collections, commercial litigation, real property litigation, foreclosure, collateral recovery, bankruptcy, and creditor defense. His clients include banks, credit unions, commercial lenders, finance companies, and businesses of all sizes.

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