



Bettie Kelley Sousa

PARTNER

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919.250.2105

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Business Litigation
- Consumer Financial Services Litigation & Compliance
- Creditors' Rights & Collections
- Employment Law
- Commercial Creditor Bankruptcy
- Appellate Law

GET IN TOUCH

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Raleigh

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MY PROFILE

Bettie Kelley Sousa has practiced 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 businesses — both large and small — in a variety of matters, including advising clients during business break-ups, contract drafting and review, and disputes involving sales of goods or services.

Bettie prides herself in efficiently finding peaceful resolutions for her clients. She is skilled at avoiding litigation and locking down agreements to avoid further disputes. But, if a case requires litigation, she is an accomplished trial lawyer, having represented both plaintiffs and defendants in her many years of practice. In 1993, Bettie was certified as a Creditors' Rights Specialist by the American Board of Certification (ABC), for which she served as President and Chair. She has chosen to not renew her certification but remains an ABC Emeritus Director. Bettie is listed in [The Best Lawyers in America](#)® for Bankruptcy, Creditor Debtor Rights, Insolvency and Reorganization Law, and [North Carolina Super Lawyers](#)® for Business Litigation. She created and taught a course in Business Litigation at Wake Forest University School of Law.

MY CREDENTIALS

Admissions

- North Carolina State Bar
- North Carolina Courts: Supreme Court; Court of Appeals; Superior Courts; District Courts
- Federal Courts: U.S. Supreme Court; U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit; U.S. District Courts and Bankruptcy Courts for the Eastern, Middle and Western Districts of North Carolina

Education

- J.D., Wake Forest University School of Law, 1981
- A.B. in Eng. Ed., the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1978

Awards & Recognition

- Listed in [North Carolina Super Lawyers](#)® for Business Litigation - 2011 - 2021

- Listed in [The Best Lawyers in America](#)® for Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law - 2018 - 2021
- Named a *Women Extraordinaire* 2011, Business Leader
- [Martindale-Hubbell AV PEER Rated and Special Edition Judicial Award, AV PREEMINENT Rated](#) for Highest Level of Professional Excellence
- Named to Business North Carolina, [Legal Elite](#) - 2017, 2020

Professional Affiliations

- Fellow of the [American Bar Foundation](#)
- Wake Forest Board of Visitors - Chair
- American Bar Association – Litigation Section
- American Board of Certification – Past Chair (2012), President (2011), President-Elect (2010), Treasurer (2009); Secretary (2008); Emeritus Director
- North Carolina Bar Association – Business Law Section
- Wake County Bar Association – Board of Directors (2 terms); Past President, Young Lawyers’ Division; Lawyers Support Committee
- Primerus Law Society – Business Law Institute, Commercial Law Group

Civic Involvement

- St. Michael’s Episcopal Church: Lay Reader, former Sunday School Teacher
- Community Advisory Board, Junior League of Raleigh
- *Wake Will Lead* Campaign – Triangle Committee
- Co-founder, UNC MJ-school Parents’ Council



ARTICLES & INSIGHTS

October 6, 2020

[“MAKE THE TURN” – Reflections on the life of Ruth Bader Ginsburg](#)

June 20, 2017

[When is a Question of Fact NOT a Question of Fact?](#)

June 26, 2015

WAIT. WHAT? NC Business Court Throws A Wrench Into Settlement Discussions

NEWS

January 19, 2021

Twelve Smith Debnam Attorneys Recognized in 2021 'Super Lawyers' and 'Rising Stars' Lists

January 15, 2021

Smith Debnam Podcast Creditors' Corner LEGAL TALK Ranked Top 15 Consumer Law Podcasts to Follow in 2021

November 1, 2019

Smith Debnam Named in 2020 "Best Law Firms" by U.S. News & World Report and Best Lawyers®

August 15, 2018

Nine Smith Debnam Lawyers Named to the 2019 Best Lawyers in America® List

January 25, 2018

Ten Smith Debnam Attorneys Listed in the 2018 Edition of North Carolina Super Lawyers

CONTACT US

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