



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 - 2020

- Listed in [The Best Lawyers in America](#)® for Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law - 2018, 2019, 2020
- 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](#)
- American Bar Association – Litigation Section; Business Law 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

March 20, 2019

[Four Ways to Avoid Hiring a Lawyer...From a Lawyer!](#)

October 5, 2018

[A Higher Calling: Hurricane Florence Relief From Above](#)

July 18, 2017

[Where She Has Practiced Her Entire Career](#)

June 20, 2017

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

June 29, 2016

[NC Banks: Has The \(Deficiency\) Worm Turned?](#)

May 20, 2016

[Call it Political Correctness – It's What North Carolina Businesses are Doing](#)

June 26, 2015

[WAIT. WHAT? NC Business Court Throws A Wrench Into Settlement Discussions](#)

January 27, 2012

[Making Nice: The Benefits of Positive Peer Review](#)

June 1, 2004

[None of Your Business? NOT HARDLY!](#)

NEWS

January 22, 2020

[Smith Debnam Attorneys Listed in the 2020 Edition of North Carolina Super Lawyers](#)

January 8, 2020

[Smith Debnam Attorneys Caren Enloe and Bettie Sousa Named Among North Carolina's Legal Elite](#)

November 1, 2019

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

August 15, 2019

[Eleven Smith Debnam Lawyers Named in 2020 Best Lawyers® List](#)

January 29, 2019

[Meet our Attorneys Listed In the 2019 Edition of North Carolina Super Lawyers](#)

September 7, 2018

[Smith Debnam Laces Up for Backpack Buddies at 2018 North Hills 5k](#)

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

August 15, 2017

Seven Smith Debnam Lawyers Named to 2018 Best Lawyers® List

August 14, 2017

Smith Debnam Releases its Summer 2017 Enforcement and Compliance Update

June 20, 2017

Smith Debnam Hosting the 2017 North Carolina Creditors Bar Association Annual Meeting

January 5, 2017

Four Smith Debnam Attorneys Recognized in Business North Carolina's "2017 Legal Elite"

January 26, 2016

NC Super Lawyers Selects Nine Smith Debnam Attorneys

June 19, 2015

NC Creditors' Rights Attorneys Unite!

January 26, 2015

Smith Debnam Attorneys Named to the 2015 North Carolina Super Lawyers and Rising Stars Lists

February 12, 2014

Four Smith Debnam Attorneys Selected as 2014 North Carolina Super Lawyers®

February 6, 2014

Bettie Kelley Sousa named Emeritus Director of The American Board of Certification

February 14, 2013

Four Smith Debnam Attorneys selected as 2013 North Carolina Super Lawyers®

September 10, 2012

Bettie Kelley Sousa to teach at Wake Forest University

May 11, 2012

[Bettie Kelley Sousa featured in North Carolina Lawyer](#)

March 30, 2012

[Four Smith Debnam Attorneys Selected as 2012 North Carolina Super Lawyers®](#)

February 14, 2012

[Bettie Kelley Sousa elected Chair of The American Board of Certification](#)

December 7, 2011

[Smith Debnam's Partner, Bettie Kelley Sousa receives 2011 Woman Extraordinaire Award](#)

April 14, 2011

[Smith Debnam Partner Hosts Wake Forest Law Alumni Reception](#)

January 20, 2011

[Four Smith Debnam Attorneys Selected as 2011 North Carolina Super Lawyers](#)

November 15, 2010

[Bettie Kelley Sousa named President of the American Board of Certification](#)

January 4, 2010

[Smith Debnam's Bettie Kelley Sousa President-Elect of National Board](#)

April 30, 2009

[Smith Debnam's Bettie Kelley Sousa Elected Officer of National Board](#)

April 24, 2009

[Smith Debnam Attorney Elected Officer of National Board](#)

CONTACT US

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