

Year in Review: New Roles, New Faces, and Growth at Ward and Smith in 2020

January 8, 2021



Looking back, it's clear none of us knew the extent of the change that was to come in 2020.

We sent a firmwide email on March 13 letting our team know we would all be working remotely until March 27. We wanted to reassure our team that we already had the technology, the hardware, and the training to work remotely for the next two weeks while the nation got the

pandemic under control. We previously had worked remotely during hurricanes and floods of the past, and we told each other that this would be over quickly, with no disruption to client service or internal processes.

While most of us worked virtually well past March 27, our team, like so many of our clients, persevered and continued providing the services our clients needed, all the while enhancing the firm's ability to respond during the pandemic.

New Roles



Amidst the pandemic, several attorneys took on new leadership positions within the firm in 2020.

Bill Durr and Evan Musselwhite became the leaders of our Construction Practice Group, and new litigator Amy Wooten and government relations attorney Whitney Campbell Christensen were named Licensing Practice Group co-chairs.

Hemp law attorney Tyler Russell became co-leader of our Raleigh Geographic Team in March, working with established co-leader Whitney Campbell Christensen.

New Faces

We welcomed eight new attorneys to Ward and Smith in 2020.



Litigator Amy Wooten and business attorney Michael Kohagen joined us in the Raleigh office in late March. Joining during the initial stay-at-home phase of the pandemic meant these new attorneys on boarded in a completely remote environment. Their ability to jump in and immediately play a valuable role for our clients was both impressive and process-affirming. Amy's experience was featured in the *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly* article "After a Lull, Recruiting Poised to Rev Up Again" by Bill Cresenzo in November.



In the fall of 2020, Ward and Smith welcomed first-year attorneys Payton Collier, Justin Hill, and Madeline Lipe, who all reside in the firm's Raleigh office. Each of our first-year attorneys joined us as a result of our 2019 summer program, so they had a sense of what life at Ward and Smith was like pre-pandemic.

Justin explained, "I am thankful I had the summer experience here, so I was already familiar with the team and comfortable with the people. Starting a new job via Zoom is not easy, but this team made it easier, and embraced me right away. As a matter of fact, I was part of a client-facing webinar on my fourth day here. It was seamless!"



We also welcomed lateral attorneys Clint Cogburn, Mike McIntyre, and Jordan Spanner. Clint, a litigation and land use attorney, is resident in the Asheville office, and Jordan, also a litigator, practices out of our Raleigh office.

We've learned that Mike McIntyre, a former US Congressman from Eastern North Carolina with an active legal and government relations practice, tends to work anywhere he has a cell phone signal (and that's not an exaggeration). Mike brings a wealth of insight about the regulation and renourishment of North Carolina's beaches and waterways, the close relationships our local municipalities have with our nation's armed forces, and grants for economic development and small businesses throughout the state. He also has an active sports law practice.

Jamie Norment, the firm's Government Relations Practice Group Leader, welcomed the new addition. "I've known Mike for decades. His dedication, commitment, and extensive knowledge of local, state, and federal issues are unparalleled." Jamie continued, "The caliber of our Government Relations team was extensive before. With Mike joining the team, our capacity to represent clients in and out of North Carolina is bar none."

Despite COVID-19's disruption, the firm has experienced growth in our client needs. In 2021, we plan to continue to be responsive to those needs by hiring smart, experienced, and creative attorneys to help our clients reach their goals.

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