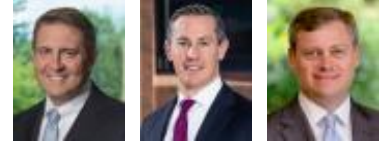


Benchmark Litigation Ranks Ward and Smith, Names 5 Attorneys as 2022 'Litigation Stars'

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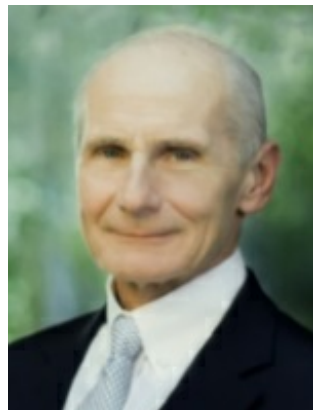
***Benchmark Litigation* has recognized Ward and Smith and five of the firm's attorneys in its 2022 annual guide.**

Ward and Smith was ranked as a "Recommended" firm for dispute resolution." *Benchmark* also named Alex Dale, Don Eglinton, Brad Evans, Michael Parrish, and Gary Rickner "Local Litigation Stars" for 2022.

Every year, *Benchmark Litigation* conducts research over a six-month period during which researchers conduct extensive interviews with litigators and clients to identify the leading litigators and firms. According to the publication, the guide reflects only those attorneys "who are highly regarded by their peers and possess a strong case record and positive client feedback."



Alex's practice experience encompasses a broad range of business law matters, including experience representing individuals, start-ups, small businesses, and multi-national companies in a variety of fields. His experience includes intellectual property transactional matters, corporate governance, business organization and succession planning, contract negotiation, and complex business litigation. Alex also has taken numerous cases to final decision in the areas of breach of contract litigation, trusts and estates litigation, securities and investment advisor litigation, corporate litigation, and complex business litigation. He leads the firm's Appellate Practice Group and Business Litigation Practice Group.



Don's practice focuses primarily in the area of commercial litigation. This includes, among other matters, disputes involving patent, trademark, and copyright infringement; trade secrets; covenants not to compete; franchise and license agreements; construction; organizational and business matters; and the purchase, sale, and warranty of goods. He has represented parties in some of the most complex and contested trademark and copyright actions filed in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina. Don also has represented parties

in patent infringement actions filed in North Carolina, Texas, and California, and he has represented parties in cancellation proceedings before the United States Trademark Trial and Appeal Board.



Brad is one of the firm's Managing Directors. His experience encompasses various areas of civil litigation in both the federal and state courts. He has experience in all aspects of civil litigation, including depositions, hearings, mediations, arbitrations, jury trials, and appeals. Brad advises clients and litigates cases involving all forms of commercial, business, estate, professional licensing, and intellectual property disputes. He regularly represents contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers in construction litigation in state and federal courts.



Michael is a civil litigator with a diverse practice before various federal and state courts, including bankruptcy courts and the North Carolina Business Court. He has significant experience at all stages of litigation in cases involving a broad range of commercial, organizational and business, contract, landlord-tenant, collections, trusts and estates, tax, and bankruptcy issues. Michael also frequently handles appellate matters in those areas.



Gary is a diverse trial lawyer whose litigation practice includes all forms of commercial and business disputes and product liability defense. He has tried to verdict in excess of 70 jury trials, including a wide variety of jury cases in state and federal courts in North Carolina and before the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority. Gary regularly defends banking, development, and private institution clients in matters such as contract breaches, business disputes, fraud, and class action litigation of all types. He also represents manufacturers in product liability matters.

Benchmark exclusively covers the litigation and disputes market in North America, covering the U.S., Canada, and Mexico which differentiates them from other legal directories that cover a broader spectrum of legal services and geography. This allows them to provide a much more in-depth analysis of the litigation and disputes market. *Benchmark* is also editorially driven, rather than statistically driven, and strives to avoid being over-inclusive.