

Eddie Speas

PARTNER

t: 919.783.2881

The focus of Eddie's work over the years has been the application of legal principles in a courtroom setting to disputes concerning legislative and congressional redistricting, educational policies and practices, tax policy, and employment practices.



OFFICE LOCATION

301 Fayetteville St., Suite 1900
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JURISDICTIONS LICENSED

North Carolina, Supreme Court of the United States, US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

BIOGRAPHY

Eddie is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and received the first Distinguished Service Award from the Education Section of the North Carolina Bar Association. For decades he has represented clients in significant matters regarding legislative and congressional redistricting, educational and tax policies and practices, employment practices, and other issues.

Eddie joined Poyner Spruill in 2003 after 32 years in the Office of the Attorney General of North Carolina where he served as Chief Deputy Attorney General and led those sections of the Attorney General's Office responsible for representing public officials in complex and controversial litigation, for representing North Carolina's public school system and for representing the University of North Carolina. In 2008, he was appointed General Counsel for Governor Bev Perdue. He returned to Poyner Spruill in 2011.

He served in the US Army Reserve and the NC National Guard from 1969 to 1981.

AREAS OF FOCUS

LITIGATION

Representative Experience

Common Cause v Lewis, 18 CVS 04001 (Wake County) (Sept. 3, 2019). Represented plaintiffs in state court in this partisan gerrymander challenge to the legislature's 2017 legislative redistricting plan.

Common Cause v Rucho, 588 US ____ (2019). Represented plaintiffs in federal court in this partisan gerrymander challenge to the legislature's 2016 congressional redistricting plan.

Covington v North Carolina, 585 US ____ (2018) and *Cooper v Harris*, 581 US ____ (2017). Represented plaintiffs in federal court in these racial gerrymander challenges to the legislature's 2011 legislative and congressional redistricting plans.

[*Richardson v. State of North Carolina*](#) (July 23, 2015) – Constitutionality of private school voucher program; whether the Opportunity Scholarship Program, which provides educational scholarships to eligible children in lower-income families to attend non-public schools, violates the North Carolina Constitution

[*Shaw v. Hunt*, 517US899 \(1996\)](#) – Represented the North Carolina legislature in these cases in decade-long litigation concerning the validity of North Carolina's 1st and 12th Congressional District

[*Stephenson v. Bartlett*, 355 NC 354](#) (2002) – Represented the North Carolina legislature in validity of North Carolina's State Senate and House redistricting plans

[*Leandro v. State*, 346 NC 336](#) (1997) – Represented State agencies and officials in this case upholding the constitutionality of the North Carolina's system for funding public schools and declaring that all students have a constitutional right to the opportunity to obtain a sound basic education

[*Bailey v. State*, 348 NC 130 \(1998\)](#) – Authority of the legislature to reduce tax exemption for public employee pensions

[*S-I v. Spangler*, 21 F3d 49](#) (4th Cir. 1994) (en banc) cert. den. 143 US 649 (1995) – The “catalyst” theory for attorney fees in civil rights cases

[*Smith v. the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, 632 F2d 1316](#) (4th Cir. 1980) – Age, gender and religious discrimination in faculty employment decisions

[*Duro v District Attorney*, 712 F2d 96 \(4th Cir. 1983\)](#), cert. den. 465 US 1006 (1984) – Religious based exemptions from compulsory school attendance laws

CREDENTIALS

EDUCATION

Wake Forest University School of Law, J.D., 1971

Wake Forest University, B.A., 1967

NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recognized as “State Litigation Star” by Benchmark Litigation (2023)

Recognized in The Best Lawyers in America (Litigation-Land Use and Zoning) 2024

Chair, Governor's Judicial Nominating Commission, 2012

Member, State Judicial Council, 2007-09 and 2012

Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers

North Carolina Chairman, American College of Trial Lawyers

Distinguished Service Award, Education Law Section, North Carolina Bar Association, 1990

Ranked among [*Super Lawyers*](#) Top 100 North Carolina "Super Lawyers" (General Litigation), 2009, and a *Super Lawyer*, 2006 – 2009 (General Litigation)

Named 2018 State Litigation Star by Benchmark Litigation

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

North Carolina Bar Association

Board of Visitors, Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of North Carolina

Member, North Carolina Education Lottery Commission, 2006-2008