

J.M. Durnovich

PARTNER

t: 704.342.5344

John Michael ("J.M.") serves as co-Chair of the firm's Litigation group and concentrates his practice on complex business disputes and high-stakes government conflicts.



OFFICE LOCATION

301 S. College St., Suite 2900
Charlotte, NC 28202

JURISDICTIONS LICENSED

North Carolina, South Carolina

"I pride myself on working hard to accomplish intelligent and cost-effective solutions to my clients' most pressing challenges."

BIOGRAPHY

J.M. serves as Co-Chair of the firm's Litigation department. He represents professionals, businesses, and government bodies facing a wide range of challenges. J.M. has successfully prosecuted and defended cases in state and federal trial courts across the Carolinas, with a concentration in complex business disputes and high-stakes government conflicts. In addition to his trial experience, J.M. also maintains a robust appellate practice and crafts compelling arguments at all levels, including at the U.S. Supreme Court.

J.M.'s legal successes have been widely recognized by his clients and peers. *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly* profiled J.M.'s practice and honored him as a "Rising Star"—a designation bestowed upon just 26 attorneys in the state. In addition, *Super Lawyers* magazine has identified J.M. among North Carolina's "Rising Stars" for business litigation, while *Best Lawyers in America* has acclaimed J.M.'s appellate and litigation practices and identified him as "One to Watch."

J.M. also maintains a substantial pro bono practice. Recently, J.M. served as lead counsel in federal litigation that successfully overturned an unconstitutional state policy concerning religious freedoms. J.M. also serves as an appellate attorney for North Carolina's Guardian ad Litem program and the Appellate Pro Bono Program. In recognition of his public service, the North Carolina Supreme Court inducted J.M. into the Pro Bono Honor Society.

When he's not advocating for his clients, J.M. enjoys hunting and cooking wild game, golfing, and spending time outdoors with his wife, two boys, and spoiled bird dog.

AREAS OF FOCUS

GOVERNMENT & CONSTITUTIONAL LITIGATION

- Successfully obtained a complete defense jury verdict as lead trial counsel in federal civil rights litigation against a Fortune 500 company
- Successfully represented craft breweries in a closely watched constitutional challenge to the application of North Carolina's beer distribution and franchise laws
- Successfully represented a government whistleblower in a lawsuit against two now-convicted district attorneys and the State of North Carolina
- Successfully represented physical therapists and patients in a federal antitrust lawsuit over patients' access to a form of physical therapy known as dry needling
- Successfully petitioned state government agency to repeal as "untenable" its own tax rule that had been enforced for more than six years

BUSINESS LITIGATION

- Successfully defended and prosecuted federal False Claims Act claims
- Obtained dismissal of multiple claims against national bank in federal litigation
- Obtained dismissal of wrongful-death lawsuit against trucking company
- Successfully obtained dismissal of lawsuit against mortgage servicer in a challenge to the validity of a mortgage assignment
- Successfully obtained dismissal of all claims including fraud, unfair trade practices, and punitive damages against real estate developer on the eve of a jury trial while preserving the developer's counterclaims against the plaintiff
- Successfully obtained dismissal of class action lawsuit against a national lender in case alleging thousands of violations of the federal Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act
- Representing employers and employees with respect to non-compete, non-solicitation, and trade secret disputes
- Defending against claims of fraud, misrepresentation, unfair trade practices, mortgage assignment challenges, and breaches of warranties arising from real estate transactions
- Representing and counseling companies and individuals regarding contractual liability, both

under common law and the Uniform Commercial Code

APPELLATE PRACTICE

- Successfully [petitioned](#) the U.S. Supreme Court to decide the scope of the State's tax authority in a case with hundreds of millions of tax dollars at stake
- Represented multiple members of Congress in submitting an [amicus brief](#) to the U.S. Supreme Court a case involving restitution for art lost during the Holocaust
- Represented five European business organizations in filing an [amicus brief](#) before the U.S. Supreme Court in *U.S. v. Microsoft*, a closely-watched case concerning cross-border data transfers and international investigations
- Successfully appealed trial court's order denying an investor's motion to dismiss a products-liability lawsuit, resulting in the Court of Appeals directing the trial court to dismiss all claims against client.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY

- Regularly defending and advising attorneys regarding legal malpractice claims and ethical issues
- Successfully obtained dismissals of federal antitrust claims and constitutional claims against former members of the state licensing boards
- Successfully obtained dismissal of federal statutory and constitutional claims relating to attorney's representation of confidential informant to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency

CREDENTIALS

EDUCATION

University of North Carolina School of Law, JD, *with honors*, 2014

University of Virginia, BA in Foreign Affairs, 2010

NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Super Lawyers Magazine, Rising Star – Business Litigation (2019-2024)
- The Best Lawyers in America Commercial Litigation (2025); and The Best Lawyers in America “Ones to Watch,” Appellate Practice (2021, 2024), Litigation – Trusts and Estates (2021, 2024), Litigation and Controversy – Tax (2021, 2023-2024), Commercial Litigation (2023-2024), Professional Malpractice Law (2023-2024), Tax Law (2023-2024)
- *Business North Carolina magazine's* Legal Elite (Young Guns), 2023
- *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly*, Rising Star (2021)
- [North Carolina Pro Bono Honor Society](#), 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020
- Executive Editor, N.C. Journal of Int'l Law & Commercial Regulation
- Recipient of Eugene Gressman & Daniel H. Pollitt Oral Advocacy Award

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Board Member, City of Charlotte's Privatization/Competition Advisory Committee

Co-President, Justice William Bobbitt Inn of Court

Pro Bono Appellate Counsel, NC Guardian ad Litem Program

“Treemaster,” TreesCharlotte

Volunteer Attorney, Pro Se Settlement Assistance Program

The Good Fellows Club

American Bar Association

North Carolina Bar Association

South Carolina Bar Association

Mecklenburg County Bar Association