



Taunja Willis-Miller

Counsel

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Taunja Willis-Miller is Counsel in the Health Care and Public Finance industry groups. She practices out of the Firm's office in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Taunja has a broad-based business practice, where she represents hospitals and healthcare providers, 501(c)(3) organizations, and higher-education institutions in financial and business transactions, including tax-exempt financings.

She has assisted in the transition of several health care facilities from public to private status and has been involved in many hospital financings throughout West Virginia. She regularly represents government entities in economic development initiatives and engages in commercial transactions including bank financings, the purchase and sale of assets, and low-income housing tax credits.

As someone who's never afraid to take the lead, Taunja has had several "firsts" in her career. She was the first female partner of Jackson Kelly and West Virginia's first secretary of the Department of Health and Human Resources, where she oversaw one of the state's largest agencies and was a member of the Governor Gaston Caperton's cabinet.

She is the former managing member of the Firm's Bridgeport, Martinsburg, Morgantown, and Wheeling, West Virginia offices and was instrumental in the development and growth of the Firm's presence in the northern part of the state.

Taunja received both her undergraduate and law degrees from West Virginia University, where she earned academic honors and was a varsity cheerleader. She still enjoys cheering on WVU sports teams, now from the stands instead of the sidelines. She's also a big admirer of West Virginia-oriented works of art. She is regularly included in *The Best Lawyers in America*®, has been ranked in *Chambers USA*, and was named a West Virginia "Super Woman" in *West Virginia Living*.

Awards

- Ranked in *Chambers USA, America's Leading Lawyers for Business* in the area of Healthcare Law in West Virginia (2021, 2023)
- Selected by her peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Health Care Law and Public Finance Law (1999-2021)
- Named in the *Best Lawyers*® Business Edition "Women in Law" (2017)
- Included in West Virginia Super Women (2015)
- Ranked in *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business* in the area of Corporate/Commercial: Healthcare Law in West Virginia (2010-2020)
- West Virginia Bar Foundation Fellow (2012)
- American Bar Foundation Fellow
- Award for Leadership in Rural Health from the Center for Rural Health Development, Inc. (2011)

Work History

- Jackson Kelly PLLC (1992-Present)
- West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, Secretary (1989-1991)
- Jackson & Kelly (1977-1988)

Practices

- Business Law
- Appellate
- Municipal & Tax-Exempt Bonds
- Opportunity Zones
- Public-Private Partnerships

Industries

- Banking
- Financial Services
- Education
- Health Care
- Manufacturing
- Public Finance

Education

- West Virginia University College of Law (J.D., 1977)
- West Virginia University (B.A. in Political Science, 1974)

Admissions

- West Virginia (1977)
- West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals

Professional Organizations

- West Virginia University Board of Governors, Secretary
- West Virginia Economic Development Council
- Branch Banking and Trust Company Advisory Board, Morgantown, WV
- American Bar Association, Health Law, Business, and State and Local Government Sections
- American Health Lawyers Association
- Healthcare Financial Management Association
- National Association of Bond Lawyers
- West Virginia Bar Association
- Rural Health Association
- Association of Governing Boards

Speaking Engagements & Publications

Speaking Engagements

- Moderator, "Negotiating the P3 Contract," Kentucky Chamber of Commerce (2016)
- Spoke on Financing Economic Development to the Business Law meeting of the WV Bar Association (2016)

- Spoke on Financing Economic Development to the WV Economic Development Council (2010)
- "Stark II Phase II is here. Are you ready?," West Virginia Hospital Association (July 1, 2004)
- "Physicians - Know and Understand Your Managed Care Contracts"
- "Hospitals and Health Systems: Change in Ownership Issues/Implications - A Look at West Virginia Law"
- Post-Closing Considerations for Tax-Exempt Financings, HFMA Regional Conference (2001)
- West Virginia University Masters of Legal Studies, Health Law (2001-2002 Term)

Writings and Publications

- Head of production, *West Virginia Economic Development Incentives*, Jackson Kelly booklet

Community

- West Virginia University Board of Governors, Chair
- Tomblin for Governor 2012, Treasurer
- Arts Monongahela, Former Board of Directors member
- Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center, Former Board of Directors member
- Cheat Lake Rotary Club, Former Board of Directors member
- Loan Committee of the Center for Rural Health Development
- United Way of Central West Virginia, Former Board of Directors member and Secretary
- Schoenbaum Family Enrichment Center, Former Chairman and Board of Directors member
- Health Right of West Virginia, Former Board of Directors member
- Imagine West Virginia