



VERNON M. STRICKLAND

Partner

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Vernon M. Strickland is an engineer turned attorney. Relying on both his strong analytical and seasoned legal backgrounds, he is a highly skilled problem solver specializing in the areas of complex commercial litigation, intellectual property, employment, and small business transactions. He frequently represents companies across various industries in complex high-value matters.

Vernon has experience representing private equity funds and their respective companies. Vernon also advises businesses on government contracts, including advice, consultation, public meetings and hearings, negotiation and litigation concerning the contracting and purchasing activities of governmental entities. He is often called on by clients to help them tackle their most challenging and complex disputes. He has successfully litigated cases and administrative matters involving complex commercial disputes, copyright, trade secret, patent infringement, intellectual property licensing, construction, real estate, employment discrimination, legal malpractice and federal partnership tax, and government purchasing activities.

Vernon has also represented educational institutions in connection with various matters involving student affairs, athletics, Title IX sex discrimination and harassment, the Clery Act and campus safety and security, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and student privacy issues, student conduct and discipline, faculty, staff and student policies, procedures and handbooks, as well as vendor contracts and relationship management.

He is often engaged by companies and colleges to handle internal investigations ranging from sexual misconduct to alleged NCAA infractions. He also assists artists, athletes and entertainment companies draft contracts, protect creative rights and litigate disputes.

Since 2018, Vernon is also a lecturer for Georgia Tech's School of Public Policy, where he teaches oral advocacy. Prior to Strickland Debrow LLP, Vernon was a Partner with the law firm of Wargo & French LLP, and prior to that, he was Senior Counsel with the multinational law firm of Holland & Knight LLP, with whom he commenced his legal career in 2006.

Vernon earned a Bachelor's degree in Textile Engineering from Georgia Tech, where he also played linebacker as a successful football walk-on. Following a short professional football career as an NFL journeyman with the New York Giants, San Francisco 49ers, Berlin Thunder of NFL Europe, and Berlin Adlers of the German League of American Football, Vernon worked as a mechanical engineer for a global automotive electronics company before law school.

Vernon is a member of Leadership Georgia, Class of 2020-21. He was recently selected to the Board of Directors for the Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce, beginning his term in 2023. He has also served as a director of organizations including Camp Sunshine, a non-profit organization devoted to enriching the lives of children with cancer and their families through recreational, educational and support programs; The Law Pipeline Program, Inc., a non-profit organization whose mission is to develop a legal pipeline for metro-Atlanta high school students by encouraging an interest in law and promoting the development of the skills necessary to succeed academically and professionally; and Newnan-Coweta Habitat for Humanity.

In the spring of 2012, Vernon was selected as one of 12 southeastern regional finalists for the White House Fellows program. In 2008, he was recognized as a Georgia Tech Living History honoree.

CONCENTRATIONS

- Appeals
- Complex Commercial Litigation
- Intellectual Property
- Internal Investigations
- Education Law
- Employment Law
- Entertainment & Sports Law

EDUCATION

- Mercer University, Walter F. George School of Law, Macon, Georgia
- J.D., with Honors, 2006
- Honors & Activities:
 - Dean's Distinguished Service Award
 - Dean's List
 - Faculty Award for Excellence in Legal Writing
 - Moot Court Board
 - Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia
 - Bachelor Textile Engineering, 1998
- Honors & Activities:
 - Dean's List
 - Varsity Football - Team Captain, Special Teams, Walk-on
 - National Comeback Player of the Year Nominee

BAR ADMISSIONS

- State Bar of Georgia
- Admitted to practice before the:
 - United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
 - United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia
 - United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia
 - Supreme Court of Georgia
 - Georgia Court of Appeals

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Member of the Entertainment & Sports Section of the State Bar of Georgia
- Member of the Labor & Employment Section of the State Bar of Georgia
- Member of the Intellectual Property Section of the Atlanta Bar Association
- Member of the Business Law Section of the State Bar of Georgia
- Member of the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA)
- NFL Players Association

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

- Leadership Georgia Class of 2020-21
 - "60 for 60" Student-Athletes Honoree by Georgia Tech Black Alumni Organization (Fall 2021)
 - White House Fellows Program regional finalist, 2012
 - Georgia Tech Living History Honoree
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PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Adjunct Professor – Georgia Institute of Technology, School of Public Policy
 - Advisory Board Member, Camp Sunshine
 - Former Board Member and Vice-President of Newnan-Coweta Habitat for Humanity
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REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Publications:

- Georgia's New Sexual Misconduct Policy, Inside Higher Ed, August 11, 2016
- Court Rules That Student-Athletes Are Not Employees Under the FLSA, Employee Benefit Plan Review, May 2016
- Hiring, Firing and Discipline for Georgia Employers, American Chamber of Commerce Resources, LLC, May 2008

Speaking Engagements:

- Speaker, "Managing Complex Litigation and Transactions: Dos and Don'ts," online CLE. (October 2020)
- Panelist, "Protecting the Privilege for In-House Counsel," CLE. (September 2019)
- Speaker, media industry client's legal summit, "SAG-AFTRA 101 – the union, its collectively bargained agreements and coverage as to employees, employers, child performers and non-SAG-AFTRA members." (April 2018)
- "Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Post-Weinstein Era" – Management and Employee Training for Entertainment Client, Atlanta Georgia. (February 2018)
- Keynote Speaker, Mercer University School of Law Empowerment Dinner. (February 2018)
- Keynote Speaker, 25th Transportation Battalion United States Army, Daegu, South Korea, "What Shall My Life and My Service to Humanity Be." (January 2017)
- Moderator, The Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA), Latest Trends in Sports Law in Europe and the United States, "Crossing Borders." (March 2016)
- Speaker, firm wide CLE, "Simplifying the eDiscovery Review." (July 2014)
- Speaker, Cannes (France) Film Festival, "Legal issues in Development, Producing and Delivering Your Film." (May 2014)
- Speaker, firm wide CLE, "Social Media as Evidence in Litigation." (January 2014)
- Speaker, Entertainment and Sports Law Symposium, John Marshal Law School, Atlanta, "Sports Law, Agency, and Venue." (February 2012)

Published Decisions:

- Martin v. Six Flags Over Georgia II, L.P., 801 S.E.2d 24 (Ga. 2017)
- Best Jewelry Mfg. Co., Inc. v. Reed Elsevier Inc., 780 S.E.2d 689 (Ga.App. 2015).
- Six Flags Over Georgia II, L.P. v. Martin, 780 S.E.2d 796 (Ga.App. 2015).
- Hermosilla v. Coca-Cola Co., 492 Fed.Appx. 73 (11th Cir. 2012).
- Hermosilla v. Coca-Cola Co., 446 Fed.Appx. 201 (11th Cir. 2011)
- City of Atlanta v. Benator, 714 S.E.2d 109 (Ga.App. 2011).
- Vergara Hermosilla v. Coca-Cola Co., No. 10-21418-CIV, 2011 WL 744098 (S.D. Fla. Feb. 23, 2011).
- Khattab v. Morehouse Sch. of Med., No. 07-CV-196, 2009 WL 2600523 (N.D. Ga. Aug. 20, 2009).
- Zyman v. O'Gara Aviation, L.L.C., 2008 WL 11411603 (N.D. Ga. Dec. 8, 2008)