



M. Gray Styers Jr.

Partner

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Wherever business strategy intersects with government regulation and public policy issues, Gray assists clients in navigating the political and legal environments to achieve their objectives.

He currently serves as Co-Chair of both Fox Rothschild's Infrastructure & Development Practice Group and its Energy and Natural Resources Practice Group.

Gray practices in the areas of regulatory and administrative law, energy/utilities law, zoning/land use, government relations and large infrastructure matters. He represents numerous energy, telecommunications and project development clients before state government agencies, permitting officials and local zoning boards as well as in appeals to both state and federal courts. He has served as regulatory counsel for renewable energy facilities, two natural gas distribution companies as well as municipal natural gas systems, advises independent power producers and major wireless telecommunications service providers and handles zoning and permitting for large commercial and residential developments and infrastructure projects. Gray is a "Utilities Law Specialist" as recognized by, and meeting the criteria of, the North Carolina State Bar [Board of Legal Specialization](#).

A mediator certified by the North Carolina Dispute Resolution Commission, Gray is often asked by other attorneys across the state to help mediate disputes in his areas of experience.

Before Fox Rothschild

Gray was a partner and Infrastructure and Development Practice Area Leader at Smith Moore Leatherwood LLP, which combined with Fox Rothschild in 2018. Gray began his legal career as a judicial clerk for Chief Judge Sam J. Ervin III on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

Beyond Fox Rothschild

Gray is active in his community and the profession. He serves as chair of the North Carolina Museum of History Associates, has chaired the Wake County Industrial and Pollution Control Facilities Financing Authority since 2000 and has been a member of the Board of Visitors of Wake Forest University's School of Divinity since 2012. He has also served on the Government Affairs Board for the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce and is active in the Kiwanis Club of Raleigh, the North Carolina Supreme Court Historical Society and the Regional Transportation Alliance. He is a member of Raleigh Moravian Church and has served in various roles with the Moravian Church of America, Southern Province.



In 2014, he was elected to serve as President of the Wake County Bar Association (2,200+ members) and the Tenth Judicial District Bar (5,000+ members).

Honors & Awards

- North Carolina Pro Bono Honor Society 2017
- North Carolina State Bar [Board of Legal Specialization](#) "Utilities Law Specialist" (2016)
- North Carolina Bar Association's Citizen Lawyer Award (2013)
- *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly* "Leaders in the Law", (2016)
- North Carolina *SuperLawyers*, Listed Utilities Law (2006, 2009-2021)
- Selected by his peers as Raleigh's *Best Lawyers* Lawyer of the Year (Woodward/White, Inc.), Energy Law (2014, 2017), Litigation-Land Use & Zoning (2012, 2016)
- Named Raleigh *Best Lawyers* Litigation - Land Use and Zoning Lawyer of the Year (2019,2020)
- Named to "The Best Lawyers in America" list for Energy Law, Land Use & Zoning Law, Litigation-Land Use & Zoning in North Carolina by *Best Lawyers*, named more than 12 years
- Named to "The Best Lawyers in America - Lawyer the Year" list for Land Use and Zoning Law (2020)
- Rated AV Preeminent™ by Martindale-Hubbell®
- Recognized by the *Triangle Business Journal* as a "40 Under 40" Leader, 2002

Practice Areas

- Corporate
- Infrastructure & Development
- Energy & Natural Resources
- Government Relations
- Zoning & Land Use
- Energy Regulation & Compliance
- Renewable Energy & Project Development

Bar Admissions

- North Carolina

Court Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of North Carolina
- U.S. District Court, Middle District of North Carolina
- U.S. District Court, Western District of North Carolina

Education

- University of North Carolina School of Law (J.D., *with honors*, 1989)
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (M.B.A., 1989)
- Wake Forest University (B.A., *magna cum laude*, 1985)



- Political Science

Memberships

- Wake County Bar Association and Tenth Judicial District Bar
 - President (2014)
 - Board of Directors (2006-2008)
 - President's Award of Excellence (2007, 2011)
- North Carolina Bar Association
 - Board of Governors (2006-2010)
 - Administrative Law Section Council (2000-2003; Chair, 2002-2003)
 - Litigation Section Council (1995-1998)
 - CLE Committee (1997-06; Chair, 2004-2006)
- North Carolina State Bar
 - Ethics Committee (Advisory Member, 2000-2002)
 - Authorized Practice Committee (Advisory Member, 2002-03)
- UNC School of Law
 - Law Alumni Association Board of Directors (2007-2013)
 - UNC Law Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors (1995-2007)
 - Adjunct Professor (2003-2005)
- Inns of Court, Chief Justice Susie Sharpe Chapter

Board of Directors

- North Carolina Symphony Society, Inc.

Representative Work

Energy

- Regulatory approvals for new renewable energy facilities
- Special electric service contracts and energy supply agreements for large electric energy customers
- Purchase Power Agreement (PPA) and Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) Agreements for new renewable energy facilities
- Litigation of contested terms of PPA under Public Utility Regulatory Policy Act (PURPA) before state utilities commission
- Ongoing regulatory compliance for natural gas local distribution companies
- Organization of and general counsel to Carolinas Public Gas Association
- Defense of multiple challenges to construction of 43-mile natural gas transmission pipeline
- Representation of regional transmission organization

Land Use/Zoning



- Local government permits for 1600-acre master-planned, mixed use development
- Settlement of multi-year litigation regarding controversial non-conforming mining use
- Permits for hundreds of wireless telecommunications facilities and networks across multiple jurisdictions
- Appeals for judicial review of denials of land use permits
- Conditional rezonings for various commercial real estate projects
- Variances to accommodate property hardships

Administrative Law (Other)

- Contested Case Hearings and appeals of regulatory enforcement actions to Office of Administrative Hearings
- Contested hearings before professional licensing boards and agencies
- Complaint proceedings before the North Carolina Utilities Commission
- Litigation of scope of municipal utility authority and governance structure
- Public-private partnership for construction of new road/bypass