



Karen M. Nissen, Esq.
*Department Managing
Attorney*

Vernis & Bowling of Palm
Beach, P.A.
618 U.S. Highway One
North Palm Beach, FL 33408

Phone: (561) 775-9822
Email: KNissen@Florida-
Law.com
Fax: (561) 775-9821
Website:
www.national-law.com

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Appellate Practice
Business and Real Estate Law
Civil Litigation
Community Based Care
Condominium and Homeowners' Association Litigation
Director & Officer Liability (D&O)
Employment Law/Employment Litigation
Errors & Omissions Liability (E&O)
First and Third Party Property and Casualty Claims
General Liability Defense Litigation
Government Law
Liability Defense
Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution
Professional Liability/E & O

BAR & COURT ADMISSION

Florida, 1991
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida
U.S. Court of Appeals, 11th Circuit

EDUCATION

Graduate:
University of Florida College of Law, Gainesville, FL, 1990
J.D., Doctor of Jurisprudence

"Karen is a wonderful problem solver. We just concluded a case that never would have settled if not for her patience and ability to work well with others."

Karen M. Nissen was born in 1956 in Newton, Massachusetts. She graduated from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida with a degree in Behavioral Science in 1978 and received a Masters Degree in Student Personnel in Higher Education from the University of Georgia in 1981. After graduating from the University of Georgia, Karen worked at the University of Florida as the Assistant Director of Housing for Staff and Student Development. Karen received her *Juris Doctorate* degree from the University of Florida in 1990. She served as President of the Federal Bar Association, Palm Beach County Chapter from 2002-2003 and previously served the group as vice president, secretary and treasurer. Karen is a member of the Palm Beach County Bar Association, the Florida Bar, and the American Bar Association.

Karen's areas of practice include: community based care including, but not limited to, representation of the Florida Department of Children & Families, director and officer liability, employment law, condominium and homeowner association disputes, liability defense, and appeals. Specifically, she has experience in handling cases from defending clients involved in Federal and State Agency charges of discrimination, handling pre-suit demands, responding to preparing and arguing motions, preparing and responding to discovery, conducting hearings, depositions, settlement negotiations, mediations, trials and appeals. Karen has appellate experience on both the state and federal level and was responsible for all aspects of the appeals including writing briefs, reply briefs and preparing for oral argument.

Karen's approach to litigation is based on her background in education and counseling which often leads to early and unique resolutions to her cases. Her ability to connect to both clients and the opposing party assist her in obtaining resolution of cases that are complex and personal to all people involved. She has been called the "condo whisperer" by some clients and has been selected to represent clients in emotionally charged employment and child welfare cases due in part to her approach to litigation which is not found in many firms.

University of Georgia, Athens, GA, 1981
M.Ed., Student Personnel in Higher Education

Undergraduate:

Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, 1978
B.A. Behavioral Science

MEMBERSHIPS

Florida Bar
Palm Beach County Bar Association
American Bar Association

REPORTED DECISIONS

Harris v. Monds, 696 So.2d 446 (Fla. 4th DCA 1997)
Nationwide v. Farley, 197 F.3d 1322 (11th Cir. 1999)
Rosenfeld v. Seltzer, 993 So.2d 557 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008)
Petit-Dos v. School Board of Broward County, 2 So.3d 1022 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009)
Cardany v. Lowes Home Centers, Inc. 7 So.3d 1114 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009).

Karen enjoys spending time in the Bahamas as well as the mountains of North Carolina.

VERNIS & BOWLING
ATTORNEYS AT LAW • EST. 1970



Karen M. Nissen, Esq.
Department Managing Attorney

Vernis & Bowling of Palm Beach, P.A.
618 U.S. Highway One
North Palm Beach, FL 33408

Phone: (561) 775-9822
Email: KNissen@Florida-Law.com
Fax: (561) 775-9821
Website: www.national-law.com

Chelsey M. Edgerly was raised in Birmingham, Alabama. She graduated *summa cum laude* with Honors from the University of Alabama in 2007, with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management. In 2010, Chelsey earned her J.D. from Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, Alabama, where she was awarded a presidential merit scholarship. She was admitted to the Alabama Bar in 2010 and is licensed to practice before all state and federal courts in Alabama.

During law school, Chelsey served as Research and Writing Editor of the American Journal of Trial Advocacy and the President of Defense Research Institute. She participated in a number of school competitions and became a member of the Cumberland Trial Advocacy Board.

Chelsey's areas of practice primarily include general insurance

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Appellate Practice
Business and Real Estate Law
Civil Litigation
Community Based Care
Condominium and Homeowners' Association Litigation
Director & Officer Liability (D&O)
Employment Law/Employment Litigation
Errors & Omissions Liability (E&O)
First and Third Party Property and Casualty Claims
General Liability Defense Litigation
Government Law
Liability Defense
Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution
Professional Liability/E & O

BAR & COURT ADMISSION

Florida, 1991
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida
U.S. Court of Appeals, 11th Circuit

EDUCATION

Graduate:

University of Florida College of Law, Gainesville, FL, 1990
J.D., Doctor of Jurisprudence
University of Georgia, Athens, GA, 1981
M.Ed., Student Personnel in Higher Education

Undergraduate:

Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, 1978
B.A. Behavioral Science

MEMBERSHIPS

Florida Bar
Palm Beach County Bar Association
American Bar Association

REPORTED DECISIONS

Harris v. Monds, 696 So.2d 446 (Fla. 4th DCA 1997)
Nationwide v. Farley, 197 F.3d 1322 (11th Cir. 1999)
Rosenfeld v. Seltzer, 993 So.2d 557 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008)

defense, automobile defense, commercial vehicle liability, and premises liability. She is a member of the Alabama Bar Association as well as the Birmingham Bar Association. Her outside interests include running outdoors and playing piano.

Petit-Dos v. School Board of Broward County, 2 So.3d 1022 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009)

Cardany v. Lowes Home Centers, Inc. 7 So.3d 1114 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009).

VERNIS & BOWLING

ATTORNEYS AT LAW • EST. 1970



Karen M. Nissen, Esq.
Department Managing Attorney

Vernis & Bowling of Palm Beach, P.A.
618 U.S. Highway One
North Palm Beach, FL 33408

Phone: (561) 775-9822

Email: KNissen@Florida-Law.com

Fax: (561) 775-9821

Website:
www.national-law.com

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Appellate Practice
Business and Real Estate Law
Civil Litigation
Community Based Care
Condominium and Homeowners' Association Litigation
Director & Officer Liability (D&O)
Employment Law/Employment Litigation
Errors & Omissions Liability (E&O)
First and Third Party Property and Casualty Claims
General Liability Defense Litigation
Government Law
Liability Defense
Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution
Professional Liability/E & O

BAR & COURT ADMISSION

Florida, 1991
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida

Len Hackett was born in Fall River, Massachusetts. He majored in Criminal Justice at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts where he graduated with a B.A. in 1986. Thereafter, he enlisted in the United States Army where he earned his commission as a Lieutenant. While in the Army, he participated in and was decorated for his performance during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Following his tour in the Army, he attended Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. During law school, he served on the Cleveland State Law Review and Law Review Editorial Board. He graduated cum laude in May of 1996.

Len's practice areas include employment law, labor law, condominium/homeowner association law, and personal injury litigation that involves catastrophic injury and/or wrongful death. He has extensive experience in defending both public and private employers in all aspects of employment litigation that involve claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful discharge, family and medical leave, equal pay violations, wage-hour, and civil rights. Len also provides guidance and legal advice to employers with regard to problem prevention and employment-related issues. He has represented and defended numerous business owners, commercial and residential property management companies, and homeowners in lawsuits involving serious personal injury and wrongful death arising from liability associated with the ownership and/or control of premises. Len also represents and defends condominium and homeowners' associations in such areas as covenant enforcement litigation, fair housing discrimination claims, service and/or emotional support animal issues, director and officer liability, breach of fiduciary duty claims, and ADA matters.

Mr. Hackett is a Florida Bar Board Certified Labor and Employment Attorney and is currently a member of the Florida and Jacksonville Bar Associations.

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida
U.S. Court of Appeals, 11th Circuit

EDUCATION

Graduate:

University of Florida College of Law, Gainesville, FL, 1990

J.D., Doctor of Jurisprudence

University of Georgia, Athens, GA, 1981

M.Ed., Student Personnel in Higher Education

Undergraduate:

Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, 1978

B.A. Behavioral Science

MEMBERSHIPS

Florida Bar

Palm Beach County Bar Association

American Bar Association

REPORTED DECISIONS

Harris v. Monds, 696 So.2d 446 (Fla. 4th DCA 1997)

Nationwide v. Farley, 197 F.3d 1322 (11th Cir. 1999)

Rosenfeld v. Seltzer, 993 So.2d 557 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008)

Petit-Dos v. School Board of Broward County, 2 So.3d 1022 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009)

Cardany v. Lowes Home Centers, Inc. 7 So.3d 1114 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009).



VERNIS & BOWLING
ATTORNEYS AT LAW • EST. 1970



Karen M. Nissen, Esq.
*Department Managing
Attorney*

Vernis & Bowling of Palm
Beach, P.A.
618 U.S. Highway One
North Palm Beach, FL 33408
Phone: (561) 775-9822
Email: KNissen@Florida-
Law.com
Fax: (561) 775-9821
Website:
www.national-law.com

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Appellate Practice
Business and Real Estate Law
Civil Litigation
Community Based Care
Condominium and Homeowners' Association Litigation
Director & Officer Liability (D&O)
Employment Law/Employment Litigation
Errors & Omissions Liability (E&O)
First and Third Party Property and Casualty Claims
General Liability Defense Litigation
Government Law
Liability Defense
Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution
Professional Liability/E & O

BAR & COURT ADMISSION

Florida, 1991
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida
U.S. Court of Appeals, 11th Circuit

EDUCATION

Graduate:
University of Florida College of Law, Gainesville, FL, 1990
J.D., Doctor of Jurisprudence
University of Georgia, Athens, GA, 1981
M.Ed., Student Personnel in Higher Education

Undergraduate:
Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, 1978

Michelle was born and raised in Quincy, Illinois. In 1996, she graduated, with honors, from the University of Southern Mississippi with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. She attended Tulane University School of Law and received her *Juris Doctor* degree in 1999. She began her legal career with the Office of the Public Defender, First Judicial Circuit, in Pensacola, Florida, in 1999, where she practiced until joining Vernis & Bowling in

MEMBERSHIPS

Florida Bar
Palm Beach County Bar Association
American Bar Association

REPORTED DECISIONS

Harris v. Monds, 696 So.2d 446 (Fla. 4th DCA 1997)
Nationwide v. Farley, 197 F.3d 1322 (11th Cir. 1999)
Rosenfeld v. Seltzer, 993 So.2d 557 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008)
Petit-Dos v. School Board of Broward County, 2 So.3d 1022 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009)
Cardany v. Lowes Home Centers, Inc. 7 So.3d 1114 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009).

2001. Michelle was awarded an AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell, which identifies attorneys with preeminent legal ability and is a reflection of expertise, experience, integrity and overall professional excellence. She is recognized in Martindale-Hubbell's Bar Registry of Preeminent Lawyers in America. Michelle has also been awarded an AV Preeminent Peer Review Rating by the Judiciary.

Michelle is the Managing Attorney for Vernis & Bowling of Northwest, Florida, P.A. She has over two decades of trial experience and handles a variety of cases, including automobile liability, trucking and transportation, hurricane, first and third property claims, premises liability (including negligent security and slip and fall), labor and employment, construction defect, director and officer liability, product liability, and wrongful death. Michelle has tried over 50 jury trials in both federal and state court and has conducted countless depositions and argued a wide range of motions. Michelle's most talked about trial continues to be a lawsuit where she successfully defended Hanes regarding a claim of defective manufacturing of a package of men's briefs. The plaintiff claimed that the briefs gaped open during normal wear and caused personal injury, ruining his dream Hawaiian vacation.

Michelle is a member of the Florida Bar, the Alabama Bar, and the Escambia/Santa Rosa Bar Association. She is admitted to practice in all Florida and Alabama State Courts, the Northern and Middle Districts of Florida, the Southern and Middle Districts of Alabama, and the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Outside of the office, Michelle enjoys traveling, boating, scuba diving, and snow skiing with her husband of over 30 years.



Karen M. Nissen, Esq.
*Department Managing
Attorney*

Vernis & Bowling of Palm
Beach, P.A.
618 U.S. Highway One
North Palm Beach, FL 33408
Phone: (561) 775-9822
Email: KNissen@Florida-
Law.com
Fax: (561) 775-9821
Website:
www.national-law.com

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Appellate Practice
Business and Real Estate Law
Civil Litigation
Community Based Care
Condominium and Homeowners' Association Litigation
Director & Officer Liability (D&O)
Employment Law/Employment Litigation
Errors & Omissions Liability (E&O)
First and Third Party Property and Casualty Claims
General Liability Defense Litigation
Government Law
Liability Defense
Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution
Professional Liability/E & O

BAR & COURT ADMISSION

Florida, 1991
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida
U.S. Court of Appeals, 11th Circuit

EDUCATION

Graduate:
University of Florida College of Law, Gainesville, FL, 1990
J.D., Doctor of Jurisprudence
University of Georgia, Athens, GA, 1981
M.Ed., Student Personnel in Higher Education

Undergraduate:
Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, 1978

William F. (Bill) Smith, II was born in Winfield, Alabama in 1962. Raised in the Birmingham area, he was valedictorian at Shades Valley High School in 1980, where he played basketball and baseball. He received a B.S. in Mineral Engineering, Petroleum specialization, from the University of Alabama in 1984. During college, Bill worked as an engineering intern for Alabama Power Company at the E. C. Gaston Steam Plant. In 1987, he earned a J.D. from the University of Alabama School of Law. Bill has been

MEMBERSHIPS

Florida Bar
Palm Beach County Bar Association
American Bar Association

REPORTED DECISIONS

Harris v. Monds, 696 So.2d 446 (Fla. 4th DCA 1997)
Nationwide v. Farley, 197 F.3d 1322 (11th Cir. 1999)
Rosenfeld v. Seltzer, 993 So.2d 557 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008)
Petit-Dos v. School Board of Broward County, 2 So.3d 1022 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009)
Cardany v. Lowes Home Centers, Inc. 7 So.3d 1114 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009).

married to Suzann Sherer Smith since 1984. They have two adult children, Kathleen, an ICU nurse, and Parker, an insurance agent.

Bill is admitted to practice in Alabama (1987), U.S. District Court, Northern (1988), Middle (1997) and Southern (2004) Districts of Alabama, and the U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit (1999). Bill is a member of the Birmingham Bar Association and the National Retail & Restaurant Defense Association.

Bill has practiced exclusively in insurance defense litigation for more than 30 years, having successfully tried, as first chair, a diverse range of cases in state and federal courts, including automobile & commercial trucking, insurance & bad faith claims, wrongful death, premises liability, product liability, employment cases (race and pregnancy discrimination, sexual harassment, and workers compensation), and disputes between business entities.

From 2014 - 2020, Bill tried more than 30 cases to verdict.

He has previously served in-house as senior litigation counsel for a major property & casualty insurer.

Bill is a frequent speaker at seminars on a variety of civil litigation topics. He is active in his church and outside interests include gardening, hiking, backpacking basketball and all youth sports.