



**Genevieve Kiernan, Esq.**  
*Attorney*

Vernis & Bowling of St.  
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#### AREAS OF PRACTICE

Liability Defense

#### BAR & COURT ADMISSION

Florida Bar

#### EDUCATION

*Graduate:*

Florida State University College of Law

*Undergraduate:*

St. Petersburg College, Bachelors of Science in Biology and a  
Bachelors of Science. in Public Policy and Administration

Genevieve is a New York native but has called Florida home since she was one-year old. After graduating from Florida State University, Genevieve accepted a fellowship position with the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) administered by Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) and worked on site in Las Vegas to fulfill the mission of strengthening our nation through nuclear security. The fellowship introduced Genevieve to the field of National Nuclear Security and allowed for continuous learning and advancement. After much contemplation, she made the decision to move back to Florida to be closer to family and joined Vernis & Bowling.

Genevieve is very thorough and takes pride in her work. “I want everyone to feel comfortable when they are talking to me and know that I am someone that is trustworthy and approachable.”

Genevieve loves being a part of the community and enjoys volunteering in efforts to keep Florida’s beautiful beaches and waterways clean. She enjoys all kinds of outdoor activities and spending time with her siblings and nieces and nephews.

Genevieve also enjoys her annual trip to the Florida Keys to go diving and often travels abroad.



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Nina was born and raised in Eastern Europe. She discovered her passion for law in the aftermath of the 2008 war that deeply impacted her community. Witnessing firsthand the importance of justice and legal advocacy, Nina dedicated herself to pursuing a

career in law to effect positive change. Before entering law school, she gained invaluable experience working at a criminal defense law firm, which solidified her commitment to defending clients' rights. Nina further honed her legal skills while working with Virginia's Commonwealth Attorney's Office, where she gained a deeper understanding of the prosecutorial side of the justice system.

Nina distinguished herself as a top student during law school. In addition to earning the award for highest grade in her criminal law class, her academic excellence was consistently recognized, as she made the Dean's List every semester and graduated in the top 10% of her class. Her dedication to legal scholarship also led to her being selected as a teaching assistant for multiple classes, including Professional Responsibility, Criminal Law, and Criminal Procedure. In these roles, she was responsible for designing syllabi, creating exams, and providing one-on-one tutoring to students.

As a summer associate, Nina gained valuable experience in wills and estate planning, as well as in personal injury cases. This exposure to civil litigation ignited her passion for this area of law, broadening her interest beyond criminal litigation. Nina's commitment to excellence is further demonstrated by her membership in various honor societies, including Phi Delta Phi. She also completed a judicial clerkship, which provided her with a unique perspective on the inner workings of the judiciary and further refined her legal acumen.

Nina speaks fluently in English even though it is her fourth language. Outside of her professional life, Nina enjoys a variety of activities that showcase her diverse interests. She is an accomplished pianist, a thrill-seeker who loves skydiving, an avid video gamer, and a car racing enthusiast. Nina also has a passion for solving mysteries and engages in spirited debates with her husband about the existence of aliens.



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Darrien is an Ohio native but decided to take his talents to Wake Forest University School of Law for law school and has remained a North Carolina resident ever since. During Darrien's time in North Carolina, he was a mentor and classroom assistant at

multiple schools both in Winston-Salem and in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Area. Soon after graduating law school, Darrien practiced Mass Tort Pre- Litigation, and Litigation. Since joining Vernis & Bowling his primary areas of practice have been General Liability Defense and Insurance Defense. Darrien's goal as a defense attorney is to provide responsive, efficient, and practical advice to clients, while also offering creative and innovative strategies to meet the individual clients' needs.

When outside of the office, Darrien enjoys taking his Chocolate Lab, Caesar, on long walks on Charlotte's Rail Trail, or at the nearby US National Whitewater Center. As a former athlete, Darrien tries to stay in shape by participating in local adult intramural flag football and basketball leagues, but equally enjoys sitting in the stands and watching the Carolina Panthers, and Charlotte Hornets in action.

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Jacob O. Malatesta is the Managing Attorney of the Jackson, MS and Memphis, TN offices. He is a native of the Mississippi Delta where he began his legal career practicing in Clarksdale, then Greenville, and settling with his family in Jackson.

After obtaining an undergraduate degree in Spanish and English at the University of Mississippi, Jacob graduated *cum laude* from the University of Mississippi Law School. While in law school, Jacob was a member of *Phi Delta Phi*, an honorary legal fraternity. He was selected by his peers as a member of the Moot Court Board and later elected as a member of the Executive Board where he served as Appellate Advocacy Chairman. Jacob was also selected by his professors to participate in the Duberstein National Bankruptcy Moot Court Competition. He was later named Moot Court Member of the Year by the Moot Court Executive Board and inducted into the Order of Barristers.

Jacob has successfully litigated general liability claims (including property damage, automobile liability, dram shop, and premises liability), professional liability (including medical malpractice and employment discrimination), and extra-contractual liability claims. Jacob's appellate practice includes numerous victories based on both procedural and substantive law.

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Jacob has experience litigating cases in both state and federal courts in Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas and Alabama, at both the trial and appellate levels and holds the AV Preeminent® Peer Review Rating from Martindale-Hubbell, its highest rating for ethical standards and legal ability. Jacob has also twice been named a Rising Star by the SuperLawyers publication, making him only one of three Rising Star SuperLawyers in medical malpractice litigation in Mississippi. In 2018, he was selected as an official member of the Lawyers of Distinction, a national organization that recognizes excellence in the legal field, and as one of the top 40 legal professionals in the state when named a Leadership in Law honoree by the Mississippi Business Journal.

Jacob went to law school because he loved language and rhetoric. While there, he grew to love trial and appellate advocacy and the ability to solve problems by presenting compelling stories.

Jacob lives in Jackson, Mississippi, with his wife, Christy, their sons, Peter and Andrew, and their dog, Yazoo. He is a member of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. In his free time, Jacob enjoys hunting, fishing, and serving as a beleaguered Ole Miss fan by spending warm fall Saturdays in The Grove.

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Bryan Ashlock was born in Kansas City, Missouri. He graduated from the University of Missouri's School of Journalism with a Bachelor of Journalism with a focus in Strategic Communications. He then went on to attend the Ohio State University where he obtained a Master of Arts in Sports Management. Bryan went on to attend law school at the University of Miami School of Law, where he received his Juris Doctorate degree. While in law school Bryan served as Writing and Research Editor of the University of Miami International and Comparative Law Review.

Bryan began his law career practicing insurance defense at West Palm Beach law firm, where he handled all varieties of civil litigation, including but not limited to insurance coverage disputes, professional malpractice, extra-contractual liability (bad faith), premises liability, personal injury, and wrongful death. He practiced extensively in first-party property insurance defense relating to coverage disputes throughout the State of Florida.

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Bryan's goal as a defense attorney managing his own team is to provide not only the best legal advice he can, but also to go above and beyond to ensure clients feel supported. Bryan prides himself on his ability to effectively communicate the best path forward and to consistently exceed client expectations with inventive solutions. Bryan's years of experience in the first-party property field here in Florida have taught him that being solution-oriented not only gets the best results but ensures that clients' costs are minimized.

Since joining Vernis & Bowling of Palm Beach, Bryan has focused his practice on first-party property insurance defense, commercial property, construction/construction defect and general liability claims. He has set up systems to support client experience and results, ensure communication is as timely as possible, and has specifically trained the staff on their role in creating a seamless process for clients. Clients can know that any case that lands on Bryan's desk will receive world-class service and support to ensure their legal matter is handled in the most efficient and beneficial way possible.

When not practicing law, Bryan can often be found on the golf course or spending time with his wife and their menagerie of animals.