



**Ryan M. Benninger, Esq.**  
*Attorney*

Vernis & Bowling of the  
Florida Keys, P.A.  
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**Fax:** (305) 664-5414  
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## AREAS OF PRACTICE

Admiralty/Maritime Law  
Automobile Liability (PIP/PD/BI/UM)  
First and Third Party Property and Casualty Claims  
Maritime Law  
Municipal/Government Liability Defense  
PIP/Personal Injury Protection Litigation  
Premises Liability  
SIU/Suspicious & Fraudulent Claims

## BAR & COURT ADMISSION

Florida Bar  
United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida  
United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Bar  
United States District Court for the Western District of  
Pennsylvania

## EDUCATION

*Graduate:*  
University of Miami School of Law, Maritime LLM  
West Virginia University College of Law, *J.D.*  
*Undergraduate:*  
West Virginia University, M.S. Agriculture Resource Economics  
West Virginia University, B.S. Biology

Ryan Benninger was born in Morgantown, West Virginia. Before joining Vernis & Bowling, he worked for a maritime defense firm located in Miami, Florida, where he focused much of his practice assisting in the defense of cruise lines in crewmember personal injury claims before the ICDR. Mr. Benninger also assisted in the defense of maritime-related personal injury, wrongful death, and limitation of liability civil actions in Florida state and federal courts.

Previously, Mr. Benninger had served as an Assistant District Attorney under Richard E. Bower at the Fayette County District Attorney's Office located in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. He successfully prosecuted felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile criminal matters in one of the most active county-level district attorney's offices in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Mr. Benninger also has considerable appellate experience litigating matters in the Pennsylvania Superior and Supreme Courts. Prior to working as an ADA, Mr. Benninger served as judicial law clerk to the Honorable Judge Joseph M. George, Jr., in the Court of Common Pleas of Fayette County, Pennsylvania. He also served as a court-appointed member of the Fayette County Compulsory Arbitration Panel. He also spent time working alongside his lawyer-parents who operate a personal injury/medical malpractice Plaintiff's firm in Morgantown, West Virginia. Mr. Benninger utilizes his broad range of experience, skills, and experience to effectively represent his clients' interests. He is compassionate and cares about his client's outcome and performs his due diligence in researching to offer them solutions.

Mr. Benninger began his academic studies at West Virginia University, located in Morgantown, West Virginia, where he obtained his B.S. in Biology. He worked for a year as an Orvis-Endorsed fly-fishing guide for an outfitter and lodge located in Western Maryland. He returned to WVU to complete his M.S. in Agriculture Resource Economics. During his tenure in graduate school, Mr. Benninger was asked to participate in research projects funded by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Energy, which required that he undertake extensive legal research and perform lobbying activities, leading to his interest in pursuing a law degree. Mr. Benninger later completed law school at WVU College of Law in 2015, graduating in the top third of his class and excelling in the areas, of trial litigation, trial advocacy, and alternative dispute resolution. During law school, Mr. Benninger served as a Magistrate Court-

## MEMBERSHIPS

West Virginia University Alumni Association  
University Miami Alumni Association  
Pennsylvania Bar Association  
Florida Bar Association  
American Bar Association  
Fayette County Bar Association  
Miami-Dade County Bar Association  
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appointed mediator and received *Pro Bono* recognition at graduation. He then graduated from the University of Miami School of Law, located in Coral Gables, Florida, with an L.L.M. focused in Admiralty and Maritime law.

At Vernis & Bowling, Mr. Benninger's multi-discipline practice focuses on insurance defense, admiralty and maritime matters, personal injury and wrongful death, premises liability, recreational dive/snorkeling accidents, municipal code enforcement, and school board litigation. He utilizes his broad range of experience and skills to effectively represent his client's interests. He is compassionate and cares about the case outcome and performs his due diligence in researching to offer them solutions.

Mr. Benninger enjoys spending time with his wife and raising their two sons and can frequently be found chasing tarpon, sharks, and bonefish in the backcountry waters of the Florida Keys when he is not working to assist his clients.

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Skyler Trettis is a civil litigation attorney in the St. Petersburg office of Vernis and Bowling. He graduated *cum laude* from Stetson Law school and graduated *cum laude* from Florida State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Finance.

Skyler has a concentration in handling legal disputes involving commercial liability, products liability, automobile liability, premises liability (including negligent security), and a variety of professional negligence actions throughout Florida.

Prior to joining Vernis & Bowling in 2017, Skyler was a judicial intern for circuit court Judge Jack Day, where he researched complex civil litigation issues.

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Paulette Fouts was born in California and was raised in Ohio. She graduated *cum laude* from The Ohio State University. Following

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the completion of her undergraduate studies, she attended Georgetown University Law Center where she earned her *Juris Doctor*.

At Vernis and Bowling, she primarily works on First and Third Party Insurance Claims and Premises Liability.

Paulette is a former Assistant Public Defender in both Broward and Miami-Dade counties, with twenty years of litigation experience. She is admitted to practice in All State Courts in Florida, United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida, United States District Court for the District of Maryland, and a member of the bar in Washington, D.C.

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Jennifer Whitworth is an experienced insurance defense attorney representing insurers, insureds, and businesses in complex civil litigation. Licensed since 2011, her practice focuses on personal injury, personal and commercial auto and trucking liability, wrongful death, industrial accidents, products liability, strict liability, premises liability, construction defect, accounting malpractice, FLSA disputes, and first-party claims involving bad faith, UIM, and breach of contract. Jennifer also provides coverage opinions, drafts reservation of rights and denial letters for insurers, and handles declaratory judgment actions on behalf of insurers disputing coverage.

Jennifer delivers strategic, cost-effective legal representation with an emphasis on early evaluation, coverage analysis, strategic motion practice, and litigation efficiency. She has a strong record of securing favorable jury verdicts and summary judgments in high-exposure cases. Known for her responsiveness and practical insight, Jennifer is a valued partner to claims professionals across the insurance industry.

Outside of work, Jennifer enjoys hiking, traveling, cooking, and spending time with her husband, Bryan, their three sons—Logan, Ben, and Jake—and their pets, Annie and Whiskey.

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Paul is AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell. He was born in Miami, FL. After graduating from the University of Miami in 1973, Paul obtained a master's degree in library science from Florida State University in 1974. Paul worked as a reference librarian with the Defense Intelligence Agency in Arlington, VA and then with The University of the South in Sewanee, TN. While in Sewanee, Paul was very active in other endeavors including construction tradesperson, owner of a natural foods store, and a captain on the volunteer fire

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department. He then attended law school in California where he practiced from 1984 to March 2019, with his last position as the Managing Partner of the San Diego office of Borton Petrini, LLP for 13 1/2 years.

He has handled a variety of matters including construction defect litigation, construction site injury, wrongful death, employment, professional errors & omissions, director and officer liability, civil rights, UM/UIM, and fire loss cases via numerous jury trials and arbitrations. He has served as an arbitrator in binding arbitration matters. He has been a presenter at many seminars and lectures over the years. Paul has returned to Florida where he has been licensed to practice since 1985 and his extended family resides.