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**Nicole D. Tackett, Esq.**
*Department Managing Attorney*

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## VERDICTS AND DISPOSITIONS

*Jones v. Trailhead Auto Group*

## AREAS OF PRACTICE

Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution
Workers' Compensation Defense

## BAR & COURT ADMISSION

North Carolina Bar, 2001

## EDUCATION

*Graduate:*
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill School of Law, J.D., 2000
*Undergraduate:*
University of North Carolina at Charlotte, B.S., 1992

Nicole is an Ohio native, but has called North Carolina home since she was twelve years old. After graduating from UNC-Charlotte in 1992, Nicole taught world literature and served as community service coordinator in the International Baccalaureate program, which, at that time, was a newly integrated magnet program in the Charlotte Mecklenburg school district. Following the birth of her first son, Nicole attended law school at UNC-Chapel Hill, graduating in 2000. She has exclusively practiced workers' compensation defense since that time. Prior to joining Vernis & Bowling in 2013, Nicole was a partner in the Charlotte office of Cranfill, Sumner & Hartzog, LLP.

Nicole manages and defends cases through all stages of the workers' compensation process, from the initial determination of compensability through settlement. Additionally, Nicole litigates cases at the hearing level and at various stages of appeal, including appeals to the North Carolina Court of Appeals. Nicole has mediated well over 1000 cases and has taken dozens more to hearing. According to her, "My favorite part, though, is the initial appeal at the Full Commission. You have to be prepared to orally defend your position and ready to answer any question the three commissioners may have on the facts of the case, the statutes and any case either side has cited in briefs. It is a thrilling experience and an honor to be trusted with a case at this level."

Nicole's goal as a defense attorney is to provide consistent and responsive advice to clients, offering strategies and innovative solutions to meet clients' different objectives in workers' compensation claims. Nicole has worked for years to develop an in-house system using highly trained staff to prioritize client needs and guidelines, while maximizing outcome and minimizing cost to the client. Nicole has handled a wide variety of occupational disease and injury by accident claims for many industries, including retail, food processing, trucking, manufacturing, restaurant, nursing homes and construction.

Nicole often speaks at seminars for insurance companies, third party administrators and self-insured companies on topics such as successful claims handling, winning litigation, liens, Medicare set asides, social media, workers' comp 101, annual updates on legislative changes and case law, and employment law issues in workers' compensation claims. Nicole is also a certified mediator and enjoys the challenge of assisting parties in settlement.

Nicole mediates workers' compensation claims and also volunteers as a mediator in employment disputes between the State and State employees.  Nicole has been asked to serve as a mediator in a newly designed program by the NC Department of Labor to resolve REDA claims, a position which she enjoys and which she gives her additional insight when REDA claims arise in her workers' compensation cases.

Nicole resides in Union County and has five children. She and her family enjoy gardening, cooking, boating and fishing. Her dream is to retire on a farm and practice sustainable agriculture.