



**Brian W. Leeds, Esq.**  
*Attorney*

Vernis & Bowling of North  
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#### AREAS OF PRACTICE

Automobile Liability (PIP/PD/BI/UM)  
Business & Commercial Law  
Civil Litigation  
General Liability Defense Litigation  
Negligent Security  
Premises Liability  
Wrongful Death

#### BAR & COURT ADMISSION

Florida Bar  
United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida

#### EDUCATION

*Graduate:*  
Florida Coastal School of Law, J.D.  
*Undergraduate:*  
Maine Maritime Academy, B.S. in Marine Engineering

Brian is an associate attorney at Vernis & Bowling of North Florida, P.A., in Jacksonville, Florida. Born and raised in Gloucester City, New Jersey, and the grandson of a WWII Silver Star recipient, Brian attended Maine Maritime Academy in Castine, Maine where he served as the Delta Company Commander and graduated in 1995 with a B.S. in Marine Engineering. Brian immediately put his degree to work and spent nearly two decades employed around the world in the offshore oil and gas sector, including the Gulf of Mexico, South America, Europe, and Asia. During that time, he developed proficiency analyzing and solving technical matters related to the complex mechanical, electronic, and hydraulic systems that are integral to the most modern dynamically positioned drilling vessels in the world. Keeping his certifications active, he remains licensed by the United States Coast Guard as an Unlimited Chief Engineer.

Brian graduated from law school and has focused his practice on handling general liability, including automobile liability, premises liability, civil litigation, business & commercial law, wrongful death, and negligent security matters. Brian's experience as a marine engineer brings strong analytical thinking skills that serve his clients when identifying, analyzing, and solving critical issues and strategies, which is what he enjoys most about the practice of law.

Outside of the office, Brian occasionally finds time for golf or motorcycle riding, and often dreams of returning to the gym one day so he can go back to spending time on the beach.



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Jessica Berger is a dedicated litigation attorney based in Jacksonville, Florida, with a strong background in both federal and state court litigation. Jessica received her J.D. from Florida State University College of Law then earned her MBA at the University of Florida. Jessica was awarded the Distinguished *Pro Bono* Award at FSU Law and previously served in clinics and student groups advocating for human rights and trafficking survivors. She continues to support community legal outreach efforts in Jacksonville.

Her professional values are rooted in a commitment to justice, clear communication, and strategic legal advocacy. Her previous involvement in human rights work at Florida State University and in the Florida Senate has instilled a deep commitment to leveling the legal playing field to help those in need.

Jessica served as lead analyst on two bills that passed through the Florida Senate Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs, reflecting her legislative skill and legal insight.

Since joining Vernis & Bowling, she focuses her practice on general liability litigation, including the defense of personal injury, premises liability, and related tort claims.

Jessica is an avid traveler and baker who enjoys outdoor adventures, playing golf, cheering on her favorite college football and NHL teams, and spending time with her rescued Red Fox Labrador, Malibu Barkbie.



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Mike is an attorney at Vernis & Bowling of North Florida, P.A., in Jacksonville, Florida. He represents insureds, self-insureds, individuals, national corporations, domestic and public companies, and non-profit organizations in complex insurance and business litigation matters at both the state and federal levels. Mike maintains a concentrated practice in pre-trial litigation, including client interviews, drafting complex motions and pleadings, developing litigation strategies, and conducting and defending depositions. While he has second chaired jury trials in state and federal court, Mike understands the practical and economic factors associated with litigation and regularly obtains settlements that serve his client's interests at mediation.

Mike grew up in Johnstown, Pennsylvania where his family owned and operated a dairy business. The non-negotiable core values of honesty, accountability, and ethics were instilled in him at an early age and operate as the foundation for maintaining the reputations of he and his clients with courts, adversaries, and peers.

Prior to joining Vernis & Bowling, Mike worked for one of the nation's premier trial law firms, where he honed his litigation experience by handling all stages of high stakes civil litigation from investigations to discovery and throughout trial. Clients and colleagues alike have remarked on his aptitude for diagnosing problems, identifying innovative solutions, and making those solutions a reality. With a work ethic that is unmatched, Mike is adept at managing deadlines, multi-tasking, and coordinating litigation strategies in a fast-paced environment. He enjoys condensing otherwise-complex issues for the fact-finder through the effective and impactful presentation of information. And in every case, he is committed to efficiently and economically meeting his client's objectives.

Mike met his Wife, Melinda, in law school and attributes much of his professional success to her creativity and counsel over the years. Together, they are devoted to the community and cherish every day with their two young daughters playing golf, riding bikes, and taking family trips to the beaches along the First Coast.



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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.



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