

Ethics Lawyer | Former Disciplinary Prosecutor

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MICHAEL VIRZI

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LAW PRACTICE

Virzi Law Firm

2006-present

Solo practitioner

- Ethics Consultation & Law Firm Risk Management
- Attorney Discipline Defense
- Standard-of-care Testimony in Legal Malpractice, Attorney Disqualification, and Ethics-related Matters

TEACHING

University of South Carolina School of Law

2006-present

Legal Writing Instructor

- Various courses in Legal Writing, Professional Responsibility, Motions Practice, Law Practice and Professionalism
- Guest lectures in lawyer ethics, discipline, and professionalism

ADMISSIONS

South Carolina

North Carolina (inactive)

United States Court of Appeals:
Fourth Circuit

United States District Courts:

District of South Carolina

Western District of North Carolina

Middle District of North Carolina

Eastern District of North Carolina

NATIONAL MEDIA

Low Country: The Murdaugh Dynasty (HBO Max broadcast Nov. 3, 2022).

Closing Arguments with Vinnie Politan (Court TV broadcasts Aug. 8, 2022, Aug. 17, 2022, Sep. 16, 2022, Sep. 19, 2022).

Murdaugh Murders: Deadly Dynasty (Investigation Discovery broadcast June 19, 2022) (3 episodes).

Alex Murdaugh: Death. Deception. Power. (Oxygen True Crime broadcast Dec. 12, 2021).

Stephanie Francis Ward, *Coupon, You're On: 3 Opinions Say Lawyers May Participate in Daily-Deal Websites*, ABA Journal, May 2012, at 24.

Stephanie Francis Ward, *Grade Anxiety*, ABA Journal, Feb. 2010, at 52.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Bar Association:
Center for Professional Responsibility
Association of Professional Responsibility Lawyers
South Carolina Association of Ethics Counsel
South Carolina Association for Justice
(Ethics Chair 2017-2021)
Phi Delta Phi

South Carolina Bar:
House of Delegates
Judicial Qualifications Committee
Professional Responsibility Committee
(Chair 2018-2020)
Ethics Advisory Committee
(Chair 2007-2010)
Member Benefits Task Force
Richland County Bar Association

EDUCATION

University of South Carolina School of Law

J.D., *cum laude*, 2000

- Order of the Coif
- Order of Wig & Robe
- Roy Webster Scholar
- Dean's List
- CALI Award, Business Corporations
- *ABA Real Property, Probate and Trust Journal*, Articles Editor

University of South Carolina

B.A., Political Science, 1991

PUBLICATIONS

New "Fish or Cut Bait" Rule Lets Lawyers Off the Hook for Disputed Trust Funds, S.C. Lawyer, March 2024, at 35.

Clients Are Not Property: ABA Formal Opinion 489 & Phantom Rule 5.8, S.C. Lawyer, May 2020, at 39.

Copy That: The Pitfalls of CC'ing Clients in Email, S.C. Lawyer, May 2019, at 38.

Breaking the Tie: Court Declares One-Client Model for Insurance Defense, The Justice Bulletin, Summer 2018, at 21.

Quality Control: In re Wells and the Regulation of Adverbs and Adjectives in Lawyer Advertising, S.C. Lawyer, July 2011, at 27.

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS: CASES AND MATERIALS (2d ed. 2010) (with Stephen A. Spitz).

Who Can You Trust? How the TLGP, CDARS, FDIC and NCUSIF Affect the Safekeeping of Client Funds, S.C. Lawyer, May 2009, at 14.

If It Walks Like a Duck...: Ethics Advisory Opinion 06-11 & the Attorney-Client Relationship in Real Estate Transactions, S.C. Lawyer, Mar. 2007, at 30.

RECENT LECTURES & PRESENTATIONS

Prospective Clients & Disqualifying Information, SC Bar Ethics Hot Tips, Feb. 21, 2024
Deposited Funds & the New 90-day Notice Rule, SC Bar Ethics Hot Tips, Feb. 21, 2024
Confidentiality and Privilege, SC Bar Ethics Essentials CLE, Feb. 15, 2024
Ethics 2023: A Year in Review, Hilton Head Island Bar CLE, Feb. 5, 2024
Lawyers in the Media, SC Bar Convention, YLD CLE, Jan. 19, 2024
Practicing Lawyer Ethics & Grievance Defense (guest lecturer), USC School of Law, Jan. 8, 2024
Ethics 2023: A Year in Review, Richland County Bar CLE, Oct. 27, 2023
Professionalism & Ethics for Aspiring Lawyers (guest lecturer), USC Honors College, Apr. 3, 2023
Fee Splitting, Fee Sharing, & Referral Fees, SC Bar Ethics Hot Tips, Feb. 22, 2023
Ethics 2022: A Year in Review, Hilton Head Island Bar CLE, Feb. 6, 2023
Practicing Lawyer Ethics & Grievance Defense (guest lecturer), USC School of Law, Jan. 4, 2023
Emerging Trends in the Regulation of the Legal Profession, John Belton O'Neil Inn of Court
CLE, Nov. 15, 2022
Ethics 2022: A Year in Review, Richland County Bar CLE, Oct. 21, 2022
Great Debates: Points & Counterpoints on Recent Legal Ethics Issues (panelist), APRL Annual
Meeting - Chicago, Aug. 6, 2022
The Case for Tighter Regulation of Client Funds, APRL Annual Meeting - Chicago, Aug. 5, 2022
Ethics 2021: A Year in Review, Hilton Head Island Bar CLE, Feb. 7, 2022
Practicing Lawyer Ethics & Grievance Defense (guest lecturer), USC School of Law, Jan. 5, 2022
Confidentiality and Privilege, SC Bar Ethics Essentials CLE, Oct. 29, 2021
Ethics 2021: A Year in Review, Richland County Bar CLE, Oct. 22, 2021
Advertising School, S.C. Bar & Supreme Court LEAPP Program, Sep. 14, 2021

PRIOR EMPLOYMENT

Office of Disciplinary Counsel, Supreme Court of South Carolina Assistant Disciplinary Counsel Commissioned Investigator <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lawyer Misconduct Prosecution Discipline-related Civil Litigation	2003-2006
Midlands Technical College Adjunct Instructor, Paralegal Degree Program <ul style="list-style-type: none">Business Law I & II	2003-2005
Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte, L.L.C. Associate <ul style="list-style-type: none">Business Litigation Creditors' Rights Bankruptcy	2001-2003
Gallivan White & Boyd, P.A. Associate <ul style="list-style-type: none">Business Litigation General Litigation Bankruptcy	2000-2001

LOCAL MEDIA

Ali Rockett, *Charleston lawyer accused of leaking documents, prompting threats against witness, feds say*, Post & Courier, Oct. 18, 2022.

Avery Wilks, *Questions, complaints linger over state judge's role in Murdaugh saga*, Post & Courier, Oct. 2, 2022.

Avery Wilks, *SC Supreme Court moves to disbar disgraced attorney Alex Murdaugh*, Post & Courier, June 16, 2022.

John Monk, *Was Bank of America an accomplice in Murdaugh's schemes?*, The State, Dec. 7, 2021.

Joseph Cranney, *The Untouchables: inside SC's secretive process for disciplining judges*, Post & Courier, Jul. 8 2021.

Joseph Cranny & Avery G. Wilkes, *Uncovered: SC Judges Remain on the Bench for Years Despite Alleged Crimes, Ethical Lapses*, Post & Courier, July 1, 2021.

Warren Hughes, *Ask Us at The Star – Lawyer Advertising*, Columbia Star, Mar. 10, 2017.

Paul Tharp, *Lawyers: Ruling Muddied Proper Handling of Flat Fees*, S.C. Law. Weekly, Mar. 14, 2011, at 1.

Diana Smith, *E-mail Marketing Presents Opportunities for Firms but Perils if Done Wrong*, S.C. Law. Weekly, Oct. 4, 2010.

Tim Smith, *High Court Puts Lawyers on Notice about Relationships*, Greenville News, Sep. 15, 2010.

Adam Parker, *Complaint Filed in Diocese Settlement Case*, Post & Courier, Feb. 26, 2009.

Sandy Hodson, *After Mortgage Fraud Cases, Federal Leaders Urge Caution*, Augusta Chronicle, Dec. 28, 2008.

Bess Battle, *Battle Zone*, S.C. Law. Weekly, Sep. 1, 2008, at 6.

Gregory Froom, *Attorneys May Threaten Criminal Action While Trying to Collect on Bad Checks*, S.C. Law. Weekly, Sep. 24, 2007, at 1.

Kristy Eppley Rupon, *Lawyers Required to Oversee Refinancing*, The State, Nov. 6, 2006, at H23.

Michael Dayton, *Disbursement of Closing Funds Requires Attorney Supervision*, S.C. Law. Weekly, Oct. 30, 2006, at 1.