

HALL BOOTH SMITH, P.C.



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Partner

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Biography

Joel grew up on a peanut, cotton, watermelon, hog, and cattle farm in Abbeville, Georgia. Instructed by those experiences on the farm, Joel now leads HBS' Agribusiness & Food Service Area. Joel counsels farm and agribusiness clients, both institutional and family-owned, during every stage of farm land and agricultural operations transactions, including negotiations, due diligence, closing, and post-closing integration and operations. Joel also handles commercial, business, and real estate transactions across several other industries.

Joel is also an experienced business litigator and regulatory advisor, with experiences across a wide range of agriculture-related legal issues. Representative matters include pesticide drift, the Packers and Stockyards Act, the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, Farm Service Agency programs, H2A and FLSA issues arising out of farm labor arrangements, and federal crop insurance arbitration proceedings.

More +

Joel currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Georgia

Services

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Foundation for Agriculture. He is a past President of the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Alumni Association and is a former member of the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Dean's Advisory Council. A former State President and National Vice President for the National FFA Organization (formerly Future Farmers of America), Joel was twice appointed by former Governor Sonny Perdue to the Agricultural Education Advisory Commission.

In August 2010, Georgia Trend listed him as one of the Movers and Shakers in the Georgia Agribusiness Industry. In 2011, Commissioner Gary W. Black appointed Joel to serve on the Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness task force for the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Joel was recognized in 2011 with the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Alumni Association Young Alumni Achievement Award.

Joel is active in the Georgia Agribusiness Council, a lifetime member of the National FFA Alumni Association, a member of the American Agricultural Law Association, and a member of the Agriculture Law Section and Real Estate Section of the Georgia Bar Association. Joel has been a guest speaker for the American Agricultural Law Association, the State Bar of Georgia Agriculture Law Section, the University of Georgia School of Law Annual Red Clay Conference, the Georgia Young Farmer Association, Georgia Farm Bureau, the Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetables, the Georgia Agricultural Labor Relations Forum, and the Georgia Agritourism Association. Joel and his wife are members of Oak Grove United Methodist Church in Decatur, Georgia.

Experience

Agriculture & Food

Joel is the leader of the HBS Agribusiness & Food Service Area, which provides a full range of transactional, litigation, and advisory services for farmers and agribusinesses. Joel has significant experience in assisting clients in acquiring and

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divesting farmland and related agricultural assets, including packing and processing facilities and trucking operations.

Such transactions regularly implicate a wide range of HBS' expertise, including water rights and the associated regulatory schemes, property tax abatements under programs such as Georgia's Conservation Use Valuation Assessments (CUVA), agricultural exemptions to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations and the Fair Standards Labor Act, and various food laws such as the Food Safety Modernization Act and the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

Joel regularly drafts operational agreements, including supply agreements and farm and hunting leases. Joel has represented a variety of clients in civil and administrative proceedings involving the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA), food adulteration, seed warranties, farm partitions, wrongful farm foreclosure, and contract disputes. Joel's background, knowledge, and understanding of agronomic principles, commodity markets, and overall industry practices assists in providing a positive outcome for HBS' clients in a variety of settings.

Business Litigation

Joel is an experienced civil litigator, focusing his current litigation practice primarily on issues in food and agriculture, real estate, energy and utilities, and construction. Joel regularly represents clients in proceedings arising out of the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA). Joel has handled claims for individuals and companies arising out of food adulteration, seed warranties, farm partitions, farm foreclosures, indemnities, and contract disputes.

Joel has experience representing contractors, subcontractors, developers, and insurance companies in various construction design and defect, delay, change orders and extra work, systems engineering, contract compliance, insurance coverage, personal injury, and property damage matters.

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Business Transactions

Joel drafts and negotiates a variety of agreements, including: asset purchase agreements, supply contracts, product guaranties and indemnities, hunting and farmland leases, commercial leases, cold storage agreements, water sharing agreements, and arbitration provisions. Joel prides himself on first understanding the business objectives of the transaction and then tailoring a solution that protects the interest of his client in the manner most likely to ensure successful completion of the deal.

Energy, Regulatory, & Utilities

A portion of Joel's practice involves the representation of energy and telecommunication clients. He regularly provides transactional and regulatory compliance counsel to an energy service provider in the drafting of customer terms and conditions and other end-user contracts. Joel has represented clients with matters before the Georgia Public Service Commission, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Government Affairs

Working with others in the firm's government affairs groups, Joel represents the Georgia Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association before the Georgia General Assembly. Joel also provides subject matter expertise and strategic counsel to the HBS Government Affairs team on a variety of agricultural and energy related matters.

Real Estate

Joel has assisted clients in the acquisition and divestiture of farmland and timberland, packing and processing facilities, livestock operations, storage warehouses, and other commercial

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properties. Acting both as local and lead counsel, Joel has drafted and negotiated purchase and sale agreements for diverse types of real properties, both in rural and suburban areas.

Joel assembles the right team of HBS subject matter experts and leads that group through due diligence (including title, survey, zoning, and environmental matters), closing, and integration. Joel has also litigated matters involving partition suits and real estate transactions, including one of the leading cases on wrongful farmland foreclosure in Georgia: *Clark v. AgGeorgia Farm Credit ACA*, 333 Ga. App. 73 (2015).

Credentials

Admitted

State Courts:

- Georgia
 - Court of Appeals, Supreme Court

U.S. District Courts:

- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia

U.S. Courts of Appeals:

- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

Education

- J.D., *cum laude*, University of Georgia
- B.S., *summa cum laude*, Agribusiness, University of Georgia
- A.S., highest honors, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

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Memberships

- Agriculture Law Section
- American Agricultural Law Association
- Georgia Agribusiness Council
- Georgia Foundation For Agriculture; Treasurer, Board Member

More +

- National FFA Alumni Association
- UGA College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Alumni Association, Former President

Recognition

- [Georgia Rising Star](#), Super Lawyers®, 2013-2023
- [40 Under 40](#), UGA Alumni Association, Class of 2022
- Young Alumni Achievement Award, UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Alumni Association
- Rising Star, *James Magazine*, 2010-2011

Presentations

- **Agriculture Law**
State Bar of Georgia CLE; March 28, 2024
- **Strategies for Protecting Your Assets from Legal Liability Based on Agritourism Pesticide Drift, and Other Farm Operations**
86h Annual Georgia Farm Bureau Convention; December 4, 2023
- **Beyond the Boilerplate: Drafting and Negotiating Producer and Grower Services Agreement**
American Agricultural Law Association's Agricultural Law Educational Symposium; November 10, 2023
- **Recent Developments in AG Product Sellers' and Farmers' Rights in Contracting**

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State Bar of Georgia's Agriculture Law CLE; March 24, 2023

Publications

- **Overcoming Bad Seed: Legal Protections for Farmers and Seed Dealer**
Growing Georgia, May 18, 2011

In the Press

10 HBS Attorneys Recognized as 2023 Super Lawyers® Georgia Rising Stars

February 9, 2023

GEORGIA - February 9, 2023
- Once again, Hall Booth Smith has been recognized for its outstanding legal work as ten of its attorneys have been honored as Georgia Rising Stars® in the 2023 edition of the Georgia Super Lawyers® magazine.
Attorneys Jacquelyn Smith Clarke, Jake Evans, Joel McKie, Jacob Raehn, Paul

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Trainor, and Tiffany

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[Nine Hall Booth Smith Attorneys Selected as Rising Stars in the 2022 Georgia Super Lawyers Magazine](#)

February 16, 2022

In the 2022 edition of the Georgia Super Lawyers magazine, the law firm of Hall Booth Smith (HBS) has once again been recognized for its outstanding legal work as nine of its attorneys are on the list of Rising Stars.

Attorneys Russell Britt, Brittanie Browning, Jacquelyn Clarke, Sean Cox, Jake Evans, Alex Kaufman, Joel McKie,

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[HBS Expands to 9th State as](#)

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Patrick Feilke Opens Office in Arkansas

July 1, 2021

LITTLE ROCK, ARK. – July 1, 2021 – Hall Booth Smith, P.C. is pleased to announce that Patrick B. Feilke is joining the firm as a Partner as the firm opens a new office in Little Rock, Arkansas to serve clients in the Southern United States. The new office is located at 400 W. Capitol

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Five Hall Booth Attorneys Selected as Rising Stars in the 2021 Georgia Super Lawyers Magazine

February 18, 2021

In the 2021 edition of the Georgia Super Lawyers magazine, the law firm of Hall Booth Smith (HBS) has once

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again been recognized for its outstanding legal work as five of its attorneys are on the list of Rising Stars. Attorneys Joel McKie, Sean Cox, Paul Trainor , Erin Coia and Jacob Raehn of the

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[HBS Attorneys Recognized as Rising Stars in 2020 Georgia Super Lawyers Magazine](#)

February 17, 2020

In the 2020 edition of the Georgia Super Lawyers magazine, the law firm of Hall Booth Smith (HBS) has once again been recognized for its outstanding legal work as four of its attorneys are on the list of Rising Stars. Attorneys Joel McKie and Sean Cox of the Atlanta office; Timothy Bishop of the Brunswick

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Smith **Attorneys** **Recognized as** **Rising Stars in** **2019 Georgia** **Super Lawyers** **Magazine**

February 15, 2019

In the 2019 edition of the Georgia Super Lawyers magazine, the law firm of Hall Booth Smith (HBS) has once again been recognized for its outstanding legal work as three of its attorneys are on the list of Rising Stars.

Attorneys Kawania James, Joel McKie, of the Atlanta office; and Jennifer Herzog, of the Tifton

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HBS Attorneys **Named Rising** **Stars in the** **2018 Georgia** **Super Lawyers**

February 23, 2018

In the 2018 edition of the Georgia Super Lawyers

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magazine, the law firm of Hall Booth Smith (HBS) has once again been recognized for its outstanding legal work as six of its attorneys are on the list of Rising Stars. Attorneys Sean Cox, Kawania James, Joel McKie, Michael Memberg and Ashley Gowder Mitchell, of the Atlanta office; and Sean Mims, of the Columbus office, have all received this honor.

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HBS Attorneys Named Rising Stars in the 2017 Georgia Super Lawyers Magazine

February 22, 2017

In the 2017 edition of the Georgia Super Lawyers magazine, the law firm of Hall Booth Smith (HBS) has once again been recognized for its outstanding legal work as six of its attorneys are on the list of Rising Stars.

Attorneys Sean Cox, Nichole Hair, Kawania B. James, Joel McKie, Michael Memberg and Ashley Gowder Mitchell, all of the Atlanta

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office, have

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[HBS Attorneys Named Rising Stars in Georgia Super Lawyers Magazine](#)

February 22, 2016

In the 2016 edition of the Georgia Super Lawyers magazine, the law firm of Hall Booth Smith (HBS) has once again been recognized for its outstanding legal work as four of its attorneys are on the list of Rising Stars.

Attorneys Ashley Gowder, Nichole Hair, Joel McKie and Denise Spitalnick, all of the Atlanta office, have received this honor multiple times.

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[Georgia Super Lawyers Magazine Honors Three](#)

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HBS Attorneys as Rising Stars in 2015

March 3, 2015

In the 2015 edition of the Georgia Super Lawyers magazine, the law firm of Hall Booth Smith (HBS) has once again been recognized for its outstanding legal work as three of its attorneys are on the list of Rising Stars.

Attorneys Nichole Hair, Joel McKie and Denise Spitalnick, all of the Atlanta office, have received this honor multiple times. Partner Nichole Hair was

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HBS Announces New Attorneys to the Firm's Partnership

August 5, 2014

Hall Booth Smith, P.C. (HBS) announces the election of six attorneys as partners, effective August 1, 2014. The new partners operate across

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a wide range of practice areas including agriculture, health care, long-term care, and general liability.

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Hall Booth Smith Attorneys Recognized by Georgia Super Lawyers Magazine “Rising Stars 2013.”

March 4, 2013

The law firm of Hall Booth Smith (HBS) placed seven attorneys on Georgia Super Lawyers magazine’s list of Georgia’s “Rising Stars 2013.” Attorneys receiving the recognition for the first time are Kevin Abernethy, Kelly Brown Viel, Joel McKie, and Heather Saum Ware of the Atlanta office and Paul Ivey of the Columbus office. Denise Spitalnick of the

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HBS **Recognized by** **James** **Magazine**

December 8, 2011

Hall Booth Smith, P.C. was recently ranked by James Magazine as the third top Large Law Firm Associated Lobbying Firms in their October/November 2011 Issue. In addition, five HBS attorneys were ranked in the top ten Rising Stars while one of their attorneys tied as one of the top ten Power Chicks. HBS was honored to have their attorneys recognized as

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Joel Mckie to **receive UGA** **achievement** **award**

September 15, 2011

Joel Mckie will be recognized by the University of Georgia's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences on September 15, 2011. He is one of two alumni who will be

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receiving an achievement award for his professional excellence.

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James Magazine 2010 Rankings are out and HBS is proud of the outstanding results

December 7, 2010

James Magazine sets out every year to rank Georgia's lobbying corps. Hall Booth Smith moved up this year being ranked the 7th lobbying firm in the large firm category. The firm was also well represented in the other categories. Congratulations to the following Rising Star winners: Brad Carver placed 4th Chad Wingate and Joel McKie tied

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Joel McKie

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Listed as an Agribusiness Mover and Shaker

August 7, 2010

In an article posted by Georgia Trend Magazine, attorney Joel McKie was listed as one of the Movers and Shakers in the Agribusiness Industry. The list generated by Georgia Trend featured various individuals who are helping to “boost farm productivity, increase crop exports, encourage organic farming or set public policy.” Joel was highlighted for his speaking engagements throughout the state

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Joel McKie Featured in Georgia Farm Bureau News

July 21, 2010

In the latest edition of the Georgia Farm Bureau News, attorney Joel McKie was featured in an article discussing the legal

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ramifications and liabilities concerning agritourism venues. In the article, McKie discusses why property owners are liable and some specific duties that they have towards the public and their safety. He also discussed the Recreation Property Act, which addresses

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