

R. DAVID WARE



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Partner

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Practice Areas

[Batch Claims & Class Action](#) | [General Liability](#) | [Government Affairs](#) | [Governmental Liability](#) | [Labor & Employment](#)
| [Products Liability](#) | [Medical Malpractice](#) | [National Trial Counsel Team](#) | [Transportation](#)

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Mr. Ware earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Georgia School of Law, where he excelled in national Moot Court competition, a precursor to his work as a trial lawyer. He earned a B.A. in English from West Georgia College, where he attended on an academic and athletic scholarship. He was elected to the Blue Key National Honor society and Phi Eta Sigma (the small school counterpart of Phi Beta Kappa) was a student government leader and a nationally ranked NCAA Division II track and field athlete –he set the school record for the high jump- and was on the basketball team.

Mr. Ware is admitted to practice in all state and federal courts, and the United States Supreme Court. During his multi-faceted, 40-year career, Mr. Ware has represented clients ranging from Fortune 500 companies, cities and counties as well as high-profile professional athletes and other high net worth individuals in complex litigation matters and multimillion-dollar negotiations and transactions. Mr. Ware has extensive executive management experience and has played an active and prominent role in numerous professional organizations, civic groups and on legal advisory panels. He also is an ordained minister.

Prior to Hall Booth Smith, Mr. Ware chose to work in public service for 11 years, 7 as the Fulton County Attorney, Georgia's largest county. In that role, Mr. Ware led a team of 25 staff attorneys and managed numerous outside counsel who provided legal advice to the Fulton County Board of Commissioners and 40 departments and agencies on a range of complex matters including labor and employment actions, catastrophic personal injury suits, wrongful death claims, government contract disputes, taxation controversies, zoning law interpretations, environmental issues, construction litigation, constitutional challenges, First Amendment questions and Section 1983 cases. Mr. Ware's most noteworthy achievements included defeating a 2014 suit of first impression brought by a group of state legislators to prevent the County from raising property taxes; he successfully convinced a Federal District Court to end nine years of federal oversight of the County jail and represented the County in the protracted series of cases arising from the 2005 Atlanta courthouse shootings that killed four people. But Mr. Ware's greatest asset is his ability to try cases of all complexities. Mr. Ware's trial skills have earned him numerous accolades.

Mr. Ware's litigation work in private practice for corporate clients, insurers, municipalities and counties has covered matters ranging from alleged employment discrimination under Title VII and the ADA to general business disputes and complex personal injury litigation, as well as issues facing cities and counties. He is a former Magistrate Court judge who sat by designation in Superior and State Court. Mr. Ware is particularly adept at helping clients resolve complex disputes and provides clients with advice to avoid protracted litigation but is also a skilled trial attorney who has tried numerous cases to verdict.

He is also widely known for his pioneering work as a sports attorney, Mr. Ware has advised and represented professional athletes in negotiations that resulted in record-setting salaries and lucrative rights agreements for his clients. Notably, Mr. Ware became the first African American to represent a Heisman Trophy winner when then Oklahoma State running back and eventual NFL Hall of Fame player, Barry Sanders, hired him and he successfully challenged the National Football League's prohibition against drafting college juniors. He has named Agent of the Year and has been featured in and interviewed by numerous national and local print and broadcast media outlets, including Sports Illustrated, The Wall Street Journal, The Sporting News, Sports Illustrated, Jet Magazine, Black Enterprise Magazine and Ebony, among others. Additionally, Mr. Ware has provided legal advice and counsel to entertainers and those involved in intellectual property endeavors, including serving as the legal advisor on the award winning movie, Sunday Morning Rapture.

Mr. Ware also has executive management experience: he was appointed to serve as the County Manager for Fulton County where he successfully balanced a billion dollar budget and saved the county \$24 million.

EXPERIENCE

- Successfully defeated an unprecedented suit by state legislators against Fulton County to prevent the County from

collecting \$680 million in taxes, which would have shut down County operations;

- Presented the legal arguments that ended the nine-year federal oversight of Fulton County's jail which had lasted 10 years and cost over \$1billion;
- Successfully challenged the National Football League's player eligibility rules on antitrust grounds, leading to the inclusion of college juniors in the NFL draft;
- Defeated multiple wrongful death and personal injury claims against the County stemming from the 2005 Atlanta courthouse shootings where four people were killed;
- Established an 11th Circuit precedent regarding the ability of the County to fire an employee who criticized the Sheriff;
- Established Georgia precedent establishing immunity for police officers engaged in high-speed pursuits;
- Successfully represented a small municipality in one of the first environmental justice cases ever filed which lead to a \$24 million settlement;
- Successfully defended the County in a suit involving an inmate who was held almost two years past his release date;
- Devised legal strategies that led to summary judgment in many employment litigation matters and won numerous jury trials brought under Title VII and related employment discrimination laws;
- Successfully defended a Fortune 500 company in a multimillion-dollar racial discrimination suit;
- Won a rare federal bench trial in a Fair Housing case brought by a real estate developer related to a multimillion-dollar project;
- Successfully defended two sheriffs in federal employment cases;
- Served as counsel to a major insurer in numerous personal injury matters that ended in verdicts for the defendants;
- Negotiated the largest contract at the time for an NFL running back and was considered one of the top sports agents in the country

ADMITTED

- Admitted to the State Bar of Georgia, 11th Circuit Court of Appeals
- Admitted to U.S. Supreme Court

EDUCATION

- J.D., University of Georgia School of Law
- B.A., English, West Georgia College

MEMBERSHIPS

- Past President of the Gate City Bar Association
- Leadership Atlanta Class of 2012

PUBLICATIONS

- [“Modern Litigation: The Effect and Discoverability of Third-Party Litigation Funding \(Part 2 of 2\),”](#) Co-authored with John E. Hall, Jr., Todd Gilbert, and Kelsey Kicklighter, *DRI – For The Defense*, April 2021
- [“Modern Litigation: The Effect and Discoverability of Third-Party Litigation Funding \(Part 1 of 2\),”](#) Co-authored with John E. Hall, Jr., Todd Gilbert, and Kelsey Kicklighter, *DRI – For The Defense*, March 2021

RECOGNITIONS

- Martindale-Hubbell Distinguished Rated- Peer Rated for High Professional Achievement, 2020
- The Best Lawyers in America©, 2020-2021
- Named by Atlanta Tribune as one of the 100 Most Influential Black Atlantans
- Sports Agent of the Year by B.E.S.L.A
- Recognized by The Sporting News as one of the top 10 NFL Agents in America (2003)
- Who's Who Among Black Americans (1992)
- Featured in Sports Illustrated, The Sporting News, USA Today, Black Enterprise Magazine, The Wall Street Journal, The Atlanta Tribune, Ebony Magazine, Jet Magazine, The National Law Journal, The Fulton County Daily Report, The Sports Business Journal
- Appeared on HBO Sports, CBS Evening News Magazine program, CNN, ESPN
- Alumnus of the Year, University of Georgia B.A.L.S.A chapter
- The National Black Lawyers Top 100

Hall Booth Smith Attorneys Honored By The Best Lawyers In America© 2022

August 19, 2021

Hall Booth Smith, P.C. (HBS) is pleased to announce 25 lawyers from the firm were honored in the 2022 edition of The Best Lawyers in

Hall Booth Smith Creates Batch Claims & Class Action Task Force

September 23, 2020

ATLANTA – September 23, 2020 – Hall Booth Smith, P.C. has created a Batch Claims & Class Action Task Force to help clients put up

Hall Booth Smith Attorneys Honored By The Best Lawyers In America© 2021

August 20, 2020

Hall Booth Smith, P.C. (HBS) is pleased to announce 24 lawyers from the firm were honored in the 2021 edition of The Best Lawyers in

Hall Booth Smith Attorneys Honored By The Best Lawyers In America© 2020

August 15, 2019

Hall Booth Smith, P.C. (HBS) is pleased to announce 24 lawyers from the firm were honored in the 2020 edition of The Best Lawyers in

Hall Booth Smith Names Seven New Partners

August 1, 2017

Hall Booth Smith, P.C. is pleased to announce that it has named seven new partners, bringing the firm-wide total to 93. “We are so pleased to

HBS Welcomes R. David Ware as Of Counsel to the Atlanta Office

March 22, 2016

HBS is pleased to welcome R. David Ware as Of Counsel to the Atlanta office. During his multi-faceted, 36-year career, Mr. Ware has represented clients ranging from