

Thomas G. Varnum

Partner



CONTACT INFO

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OFFICE

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Thomas represents and counsels businesses on a wide range of intellectual property and business matters. An avid supporter of North Carolina's film industry, Thomas also practices in film and entertainment law, working with producers and filmmakers throughout the entire production process.



PRACTICE AREAS

Business and Corporate
Entertainment
› Film & Television
› Music
Intellectual Property
Litigation
› Federal Litigation
› IP Litigation
› North Carolina Business Court
Privacy

INDUSTRIES

Advertising
Film & Television
Media, Publishing, & Communications
Music
Technology

EDUCATION

University of California at Davis
School of Law
J.D., 2008; Order of the Coif; *Law Review* Articles Editor, 2007-08
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
B.A., 2004, with honors

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

North Carolina
US Supreme Court
US District Court - North Carolina
Western District
Middle District
Eastern District

MY PRACTICE

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Thomas helps his clients navigate a variety of intellectual property issues, including trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets, idea protection, data privacy, and digital marketing. Thomas works with businesses and other content creators to identify, enforce and exploit their intellectual property rights. He also litigates intellectual property infringement and trade secrets misappropriation lawsuits in both state and federal courts, and handles trademark proceedings before the USPTO's Trademark Trial and Appeal Board.

FILM & TELEVISION

Thomas represents individuals and companies active in all types of entertainment projects, from film and television, to online videos and other media. Thomas regularly works with independent producers and other filmmakers, counseling his clients throughout the pre-production, production, post-production and distribution processes. Thomas has represented and negotiated with production companies, talent and entertainment lawyers from all over the country, helping talented people bring creative ideas all the way from inception to the screen.

Thomas serves as an Adjunct Professor of Entertainment Law at Elon University School of Law. He also has a personal interest in film and television, and is active in North Carolina's film industry. Most notably, he serves on the board of trustees for Cucalorus Film Festival, one of the Southeast's largest independent film festivals.

In addition, Thomas also works on the literature side of entertainment, counseling authors on a variety of legal issues that arise throughout the publishing process, including contract negotiations and copyright and fair use issues.

CIVIL LITIGATION

Thomas represents companies and individuals in complex business litigation in both federal and state court. He has represented businesses and individuals in lawsuits involving a variety of issues, including contract disputes, intellectual property infringement claims, trade secrets misappropriation claims, non-competition and non-solicitation agreements, construction disputes, shareholders' rights, insurance subrogation claims, constitutional rights and lender liability claims. Thomas also litigates in front of the USPTO's Trademark Trial and Appeal Board.

GENERAL CORPORATE

Thomas has become a trusted advisor for many of his clients, transitioning from an intellectual property attorney or entertainment attorney to general counsel for the businesses he works with. Thomas is in daily communication with many of his clients, advising on a variety of legal issues, from labor and employment matters to real estate issues. His clients may be based in North Carolina, but many do business all over the world. His regular clients include a medical practice, an online social networking company, technology and software companies, a manufacturing company and a securities broker-dealer.

HONORS

Selected by his peers for inclusion in *Business North Carolina's* "[Legal Elite](#)" in Intellectual Property (2015-2018) and "Young Guns" (2015)

Recognized in [North Carolina Super Lawyers](#) (Thomson Reuters) as a "Rising Star" in Intellectual Property (2014-2018)

Rated AV Preeminent by Martindale-Hubbell

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Adjunct Professor (Entertainment Law), [Elon University School of Law](#) (2015-present)

Board of Directors, [Brigade Boys & Girls Club](#) (2012-present)

Board of Trustees, [Cucalorus Film Foundation](#) (2013-present); Treasurer (2015); Board Chair, (2016-present)

Member, [North Carolina Bar Association, Intellectual Property Section](#) (2008-present)

Member, [North Carolina Bar Association, Sports & Entertainment Law Section](#) (2008-present)

PUBLICATIONS & MEDIA

Panelist, "Distribution Platforms and How to Get There?" Longleaf Film Festival, Raleigh, NC, May 12, 2018

Co-presenter (with Charles Marshall), "Digital Marketing Blues," Raleigh Social Media Marketing Meetup, Raleigh, NC, January 18, 2017

Co-presenter (with Charles Marshall), "Digital Marketing Blues," Internet Summit, Raleigh, NC, November 16, 2016

Brooks Pierce Sponsors 2017 DIY Musician Conference, July 26, 2017

Brooks Pierce Sponsors 22nd Annual Cucalorus Film Festival, November 2, 2016

Brooks Pierce Attorneys to Speak About Digital Marketing Law at 2016 Internet Summit, October 24, 2016

Thomas Varnum to Speak at Longleaf Film Festival, April 29, 2016

Brooks Pierce Attorney Receives Award from Brigade Boys & Girls Club, February 17, 2016

Varnum Elected as Board Chair of Cucalorus Film Foundation, January 22, 2016

Brooks Pierce Partners to Speak on Digital Marketing at 2014 Internet Summit, November 10, 2014

Brooks Pierce Sponsors 20th Annual Cucalorus Film Festival, November 6, 2014

Six New Partners Named at Brooks Pierce, October 1, 2014

New North Carolina Law Provides Tool to Battle Patent Trolls, August 21, 2014

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SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Thomas Varnum to Speak at Longleaf Film Festival, May 8, 2018

Brooks Pierce Partners to Host Roundtable Discussions at the UNCW Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, September 14, 2015

Twenty Brooks Pierce Attorneys to Speak at the 2015 Festival of Legal Learning, February 10, 2015