

J. Darrell Shealy

Partner

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The greatest transfer of wealth that we will see in many generations is occurring now, at the same time that many law firms have eliminated their trusts and estates practice, or view them simply as loss leaders. We have done the opposite -we have doubled-down on our services and commitment to high net worth business owners, entrepreneurs, executives and physicians who are worried about their future, and have burning financial, business and tax planning concerns. Our clients include 4th and 5th generation families – we care as much about the safe financial future of the grandkids as we did about the great-grandparents several decades ago.

Darrell Shealy is an experienced **trusts and estates** lawyer who represents owners and executives of highly successful businesses in North Carolina. A “generational counselor,” Darrell’s clients include multiple generations of entrepreneurial families who are concerned about wealth preservation and transfer and asset protection. Having high net worths, his clients have complex business, tax, financial, and management issues – and Darrell is always their first phone call. He is known as a master communicator who distills arcane principles into cost-effective, actionable advice clients understand. He works closely with other Johnston, Allison & Hord colleagues on clients’ most important issues, including succession planning, reducing the upheaval in transitions in company management and ownership, minimizing estate tax and preparing for its payment, and handling



Practices

Asset Protection Planning
Charitable Planning & Exempt Organizations
Estate Administration
Business Transactions
Business Succession Planning
Trusts & Estates
Taxation

Bar Admissions

North Carolina

Education

University of North Carolina School of Law (JD, , 1982)
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (MBA, , 1982)
• Business Administration
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (BS, , 1977)
• Business Administration

Associations

Professional

- American Bar Association
- North Carolina Bar Association
- Mecklenburg County Bar

Community

- Foundation for the Carolinas, Past Member

conflicts and lawsuits that arise within families, partnerships and among potential creditors. He also represents numerous high net worth physicians in all aspects of their tax and estate planning. Discretion, sensitivity, and honesty are the foundation of Darrell's relationships with his clients, as they are discussing and planning the most intimate decisions affecting their future. Whether a client is facing a later-in-life "gray divorce," a key business owner/partner's death, the sale of a business, the beneficiary of a large inheritance, or other major life event, Darrell has helped clients cope with the challenges and design the best path going forward. Darrell also served as Managing Partner of Johnston Allison Hord from April 2011 to April 2020.

- Sharon Presbyterian Church, Teacher
- Sharon Presbyterian Church, Endowment Committee and Capital Projects Committee Member
- UNC Educational Foundation, Steering Committee on Deferred Giving, Past Member

Community

[About Our Firm Recognition](#)

Representative Experience

- Represents numerous high net worth individuals and families with complex estate and gift tax planning strategies and transactions.
- Lead counsel in representation of owners of a regional department store chain in \$35 Million acquisition by a public company.
- Assisted lead counsel in representation of owners in \$280+ million sale of 60 unit regional convenience store chain and fuel distribution business to public company in sale/leaseback transaction with public REIT.
- Represented numerous individuals involved in tax shelter activities before the Internal Revenue Service.
- Secured private letter rulings from the IRS for numerous taxpayers.

Honors

- **Super Lawyers®** North Carolina – Estate Planning and Probate (2014-2025)
- **The Best Lawyers in America®** – Trusts and Estates Law (2014-2025)

- *Business North Carolina* “Legal Elite” – Tax and Estate Planning (2005, 2012, 2024, 2025)
- *Charlotte Business Leader* – Recognized as one of Charlotte’s Top Attorneys (2008)
- Martindale-Hubbell, AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated