

MICHAEL VIRZI

University of South Carolina Joseph F. Rice School of Law
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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 1997 – 2000
- CALI Award, Business Corporations
- *ABA Real Property, Probate and Trust Journal*, Articles Editor

University of South Carolina, B.A., Political Science, 1991

EXPERIENCE

University of South Carolina Joseph F. Rice School of Law

Instructor 2006 – present

Adjunct Professor of Legal Writing 2005 – 2006

Current Courses: Legal Research, Analysis, & Writing I & II; Problems in Professional Responsibility (3 credit); Advanced Legal Writing; Legal Research, Analysis, & Writing III; Legal Analysis Workshop (Academic Support bar preparation); Mastering the Bar Exam

Previous Courses: Professional Responsibility (2 credit); Fundamentals of Law Practice & Professionalism; Motions Practice; Problems in Professional Responsibility (3-credit online combined synchronous/asynchronous course)

Virzi Law Firm

Owner, Solo practitioner 2006–present

Ethics Consultation & Law Firm Risk Management

Attorney Discipline Defense

Standard-of-care Testimony in Legal Malpractice, Attorney Disqualification, and Ethics-related Matters

Appellate litigation before the South Carolina Supreme Court and Court of Appeals

Office of Disciplinary Counsel, Supreme Court of South Carolina

Assistant Disciplinary Counsel, Commissioned Investigator 2003 – 2006

Lawyer Misconduct Investigations and Prosecution
Discipline-related Civil Litigation

Midlands Technical College

Adjunct Instructor, Paralegal Degree Program 2003 – 2005

Business Law I; Business Law II

Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte, L.L.C.

Associate 2001 – 2003

Business Litigation, Creditors' Rights, Bankruptcy

Gallivan White & Boyd, P.A.

Associate 2000 – 2001

Business Litigation, Insurance Litigation, Bankruptcy

PUBLICATIONS

Books

STEPHEN A. SPITZ & MICHAEL J. VIRZI, REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS: CASES AND MATERIALS (2d ed. 2010).

JAMES FLETCHER THOMPSON, SOUTH CAROLINA ADOPTION LAW AND PRACTICE 25–68 (Michael Virzi ed., 2d ed. 2023).

Other Publications

New “Fish or Cut Bait” Rule Lets Lawyers Off the Hook for Disputed Trust Funds, S.C. LAWYER, Mar. 2024, at 35 (with Clara Hanger).

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.

Other Publications (con't)

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.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Marketing in a Digital World (panelist), S.C. Bar Convention, Technology Seminar, Jan. 18, 2025.

Using Generative AI: Ethical Rules and Responsibilities (panelist), S.C. Bar Convention, Consumer Law Seminar, Jan. 16, 2025.

Practicing Lawyer Ethics & Grievance Defense (guest lecturer), USC School of Law, Jan. 13, 2025.

Regulating Trust Funds: Can We Do a Better Job of Preventing Theft?, TN Board of Professional Responsibility Ethics Workshop, Nov. 1, 2024.

Ethics 2024: A Year in Review, Richland County Bar CLE, Oct. 25, 2024.

Hot Topics in Ethics, S.C. Department of Corrections Defense Counsel Seminar, Oct. 11, 2024.

Professionalism & Ethics for Aspiring Lawyers (guest lecturer), USC Honors College, Oct. 2, 2024.

Money is the Root of All Evil, S.C. Bar Lunch & Learn (panelist), July 12, 2024.

For the Love of Money: Lessons Learned from Girardi & Murdaugh, ABA National Conference on Professional Responsibility & National Client Protection Forum (panelist), May 31, 2024.

Transparency Reckoning: Re-Evaluating Confidentiality & Transparency in Lawyer Discipline, ABA National Conference on Professional Responsibility (panelist), May 31, 2024.

Prospective Clients & Disqualifying Information, S.C. Bar Ethics Hot Tips, Feb. 21, 2024.

Deposited Funds & the New 90-day Notice Rule, S.C. Bar Ethics Hot Tips, Feb. 21, 2024.

Confidentiality and Privilege, S.C. Bar Ethics Essentials CLE, Feb. 15, 2024.

Ethics 2023: A Year in Review, Hilton Head Island Bar CLE, Feb. 5, 2024.

Selected Presentations (con't)

Lawyers in the Media, S.C. Bar Convention, YLD Seminar, Jan. 19, 2024.

Fee Splitting, Fee Sharing, & Referral Fees, S.C. Bar Ethics Hot Tips, Feb. 22, 2023.

Emerging Trends in the Regulation of the Legal Profession, John Belton O'Neil Inn of Court CLE, Nov. 15, 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.

Professionalism & Ethics for Aspiring Lawyers (guest lecturer), USC Honors College, April 6, 2021.

Ethics & Malpractice in a Real Estate Practice (guest lecturer), Charleston School of Law, Aug. 23, 2012.

SELECTED MEDIA

Broadcast

Ali, Emil, host. *Ethics in 10: Rule 5.1*, ABA Center for Professional Responsibility (2025).

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

Closing Arguments with Vinnie Politan (various Court TV broadcasts).

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

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

Print

Thy Vo, *Oregon Watchdog Says Open Discipline Makes 'Stronger' Attorneys*, LAW360, May 31, 2024.

Nick Reynolds, *SC lawmaker accused of filing court documents with forged signature, offering hush money*, POST & COURIER, Apr. 11, 2024.

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.

Selected Print Media (con't)

- 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 (S.C.), Dec. 7, 2021.
- Joseph Cranney, *The Untouchables: Inside SC's Secretive Process for Disciplining Judges*, POST & COURIER, July 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.
- Debra Cassens Weiss, *Lawyer is Reprimanded for Google Ads Linked to Opposing Lawyers in Timeshare Litigation*, ABA JOURNAL, Oct. 2015.
- Stephanie Francis Ward, *Coupon, You're On: 3 Opinions Say Lawyers May Participate in Daily-Deal Websites*, ABA JOURNAL, May 2012, at 24.
- Paul Tharp, *Lawyers: Ruling Muddied Proper Handling of Flat Fees*, S.C. LAWYERS WEEKLY, Mar. 14, 2011, at 1.
- Diana Smith, *E-mail Marketing Presents Opportunities for Firms but Perils if Done Wrong*, S.C. LAWYERS WEEKLY, Oct. 4, 2010.
- Tim Smith, *High Court Puts Lawyers on Notice about Relationships*, GREENVILLE NEWS, Sept. 15, 2010.
- Stephanie Francis Ward, *Grade Anxiety*, ABA JOURNAL, Feb. 2010, at 52.
- 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.
- Gregory Froom, *Attorneys May Threaten Criminal Action While Trying to Collect on Bad Checks*, S.C. LAWYERS WEEKLY, Sept. 24, 2007, at 1.
- Kristy Eppley Rupon, *Lawyers Required to Oversee Refinancing*, THE STATE (S.C.), Nov. 6, 2006, at H23.
- Michael Dayton, *Disbursement of Closing Funds Requires Attorney Supervision*, S.C. LAWYERS WEEKLY, Oct. 30, 2006, at 1.

LAW SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES AND SERVICE

Academic Responsibility Committee 2011–2018, 2022–present
Admissions Committee 2020–2022
Technology Committee 2008–2011, 2018–2020
Ad Hoc By-laws Revision Committee 2025–present
Ad Hoc DEI Committee 2020–2021
Various Ad Hoc Hiring Committees 2010–2024
Faculty Advisor to ABA Real Property, Trusts and Estate Law Journal 2006–present
Faculty 1L Mentor 2020–present
Guest lectures on ethics and professionalism in various doctrinal courses 2007–present
University Board of Residency Appeals 2023–present
Honors College guest lectures in pre-law courses on lawyer ethics and professionalism 2021–present

SELECTED COMMUNITY SERVICE

S.C. Bar Professional Responsibility Committee 2011–present
Chair 2018–2020
S.C. Bar Ethics Advisory Committee 2003–present
Chair 2007 – 2010
S.C. Bar Member Benefits Task Force 2019–2023
S.C. Bar Technology Committee 2001–2003
South Carolina Association for Justice 2017–2022
Ethics Committee Chair 2017–2021
S.C. Bar House of Delegates, Fifth Circuit Delegate 2018–present
S.C. Bar Judicial Qualifications Committee 2021–2024

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

ABA Center for Professional Responsibility
Association of Professional Responsibility Lawyers
South Carolina Association of Ethics Counsel
Richland County Bar Association
Phi Delta Phi

BAR ADMISSIONS

South Carolina 2000–present

North Carolina 2001–present (inactive since 2004)

United States Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit 2001–present

United States District Courts:

 District of South Carolina 2000–present

 Eastern, Middle, & Western Districts of North Carolina 2001–present