



Sandra L. Havrilak

Principal

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Sandra Havrilak is an experienced trial attorney who has handled a wide variety of civil litigation matters in her thirty-eight years of practicing law, but she now focuses her practice primarily on family law.

With a passion for helping individuals navigate sensitive and often challenging matters, Sandra is committed to providing comprehensive legal support in all aspects of family law. Her expertise encompasses a wide spectrum of family law issues, allowing her to assist clients with diverse needs, including equitable distribution, spousal support, child support, child custody, grandparent visitation, premarital agreements, post-divorce modifications, juvenile law, family abuse cases, abuse and neglect cases involving children, criminal law, guardianship and conservatorship, and appellant practice.

Sandra vigorously represents her clients and works with them to obtain the best possible result. Sandra invites her clients to be actively involved in all aspects of their case and to ask questions. She recognizes that, in the guardianship and family law arena in particular, this may be the most difficult time of her clients' lives, and she expertly guides them through it. Her diligent approach and extensive understanding of the law enables her to utilize all resources available to effectuate the best resolution for her clients. Sandra uses mediation, arbitration, and litigation when necessary.

Sandra holds an AV Preeminent® rating by Martindale-Hubbell®, the highest possible rating awarded by both peers and members of the judiciary, for her legal ability and ethical standards.

Practice Areas

- Family Law
- Appellate and Trial Consulting Practice
- Civil Litigation

Education

- King's College (B.A., *magna cum laude*, 1982)
- George Mason University School of Law (J.D., 1986)

Bar Admissions

- Virginia State Bar, 1986
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, 1986
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, 1986
- U.S. Bankruptcy Court, 1986
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, 1987

Published Articles

- “The Role of the Guardian ad litem: A Lawyer’s Perspective”; Virginia Lawyer, Vol. 43, No. 1, July 1994.
- “The Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Families: What Is It?”; Lex Claudia, Vol. XV, Spring 1997.
- “Making It Rain: Leslie Tuxhorn”; for ABA Women Rainmakers in Law Practice Today, August 14, 2019,
- “Making It Rain: Bonnie A. Sewell”; for ABA Women Rainmakers in Law Practice Today, May 15, 2020,
- “Making It Rain: Susan Pesner”; for ABA Women Rainmakers in Law Practice Today, November 13, 2020,

Professional Honors & Activities

Professional Honors

Consistently recognized as one of the area’s top divorce lawyers in Washingtonian magazine, in both the Virginia and Washington, D.C. metropolitan area editions of Super Lawyers magazine, in Northern Virginia magazine, Arlington Magazine, and in other print and online publications

- 2024 Top Lawyer, Family Law, Washingtonian Magazine
- 2026 U.S. News - Best Lawyers in America®, Family Law
- 2023 Top Lawyer, Family Law, Northern Virginia Magazine
- 2024 Virginia Business Magazine’s 25th annual Legal Elite
- 2023 Virginia Lawyers Hall of Fame 2023 Best Lawyers “Women in the Law”
- Super Lawyers, Super Lawyer - Family Law (2006-2026)
- Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent Attorney rated attorney for more than 30 years
- 2022 AV Preeminent Attorney – Judicial Edition
- Top 50 Women Lawyers, Virginia Super Lawyer since 2019 Influential Woman of Law 2019, Virginia Lawyers Media
- Recipient of the Northern Virginia Women Attorneys Association Woman of the Year Award (2016)

- Leader in the Law 2015, Virginia Lawyers Media

Professional Organizations

Throughout her career Sandra has served the legal profession and the community through her support of and participation in community service organizations and endeavors. She was a Substitute Judge of the General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts for Virginia's Nineteenth Judicial District for 24 years, and she is a Commissioner in Chancery in the Fairfax County Circuit Court. She also sits, on occasion, as a Circuit Court Judge Pro Tempore by judicial appointment.

- Virginia State Bar Disciplinary Board (Chair 2019-2020) (4 Terms)
- Virginia State Bar Clients' Protection Fund (currently in second year of 1st term)
- VSB Standing Committee on Legal Ethics (3 terms) VSB Standing Committee on Lawyer Discipline (1 term) Fifth District Disciplinary Committee (2 terms)
- Virginia State Bar Professionalism Faculty
- VSB Council Member (3 terms)
- Member- Boyd-Graves Conference 1993 - 2019
- American Bar Association member since 1986 American Bar Association Delegate -2018-2020 American Bar Association LP member
- ABA LP Chair Outreach Committee ABA LP Chair Fellows
- ABA Women Rainmakers Vice Chair 2021-2022 ABA Diversity Committee Member
- Fellow of the American Bar Foundation since July 2013
- Virginia Bar Association Commission on Special Needs of Children
- Past-president of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association
- Fairfax Bar Association (FBA) Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Committee (Past Chair)
- FBA Circuit Court Committee
- FBA Judicial Screening Committee (Past Chair)
- FBA Lawyer Referral Committee (Past Chair)
- FBA LPM Committee Secretary 2019-2020
- Appointed to VBA Committee that developed the Standards that Govern the Appointment of Guardian *ad litem*
- Presentations and Lectures
- Faculty, GMU School of Law, Adjunct Professor, Family Law, 2000
- Professionalism Course, Virginia State Bar. Lecturer: Virginia Retirement System, Annual Family Law Seminar, Arlington County Bar Association, January 1997
- Children Seminar, American Bar Association, Washington, D.C. April 18, 1997; Administrative Law and Local Government Section on the Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Children, Annual Meeting, Virginia State Bar, June 1996
- Practice and Procedures in J&DR Court, Law and the Media Seminar, April 1996
- The Violent Juvenile Offender, Institute of Law and Psychiatry, May 1995; A review of Juvenile Law - Advocacy for changing times, September 1995
- The Clinician's Role in Transfer Hearings, 28th Semi-Annual Forensic Symposium, May 12, 1995
- Ethics in Juvenile Law, Virginia CLE Program, 1995
- Children's Rights, Symposium on Women & Children in Virginia, VWAA, December, 1994
- The Comprehensive Services Act, Fairfax Bar Association CLE, 1993

- The Role of the Guardian ad Litem; Fairfax Bar Association CLE, 1993
- Allegations of Child Sex Abuse, What Every Criminal Defense Attorney Should Know About Child Protective Services, Custody & Abuse Proceedings, Fairfax Association CLE, 1994

Representative Cases

- Merritt v. Gray, Record No. 2003-03-4 (VA 9/7/2004) (Va, 2004)
- Russell v. Russell, 545 S.E.2d 548, 35 Va. App. 360 (Va. App., 2001)
- Fauquier County Department of Social Services v. Robinson, 455 S.E.2d 734, 20 Va.App. 142 (Va. App., 1995)

News & Insights

- Blankingship & Keith Attorneys Recognized in 2026 Virginia Super Lawyers and Rising Stars
- Fairfax Circuit Court Awards \$245,000 in Attorneys' Fees After Custody Trial
- FAQ: Custody Litigation & Attorneys' Fees (Virginia)
- Thirty Blankingship & Keith Attorneys Recognized in the 2026 Editions of Best Lawyers in America® and Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch®
- Blankingship & Keith Attorneys Recognized Among Virginia Business Magazine's Legal Elite
- Twenty-Seven Blankingship & Keith Attorneys Shine in the 2025 Edition of Best Lawyers in America
- Four Blankingship & Keith Family Law attorneys Named Washingtonian Top Divorce Lawyers
- Twenty Blankingship & Keith, P.C. Attorneys Named Virginia Super Lawyers and Rising Stars for 2024
- Blankingship & Keith Attorneys Shine as "Legal Elite" in Virginia Business Magazine's 2023 Rankings
- Ten Blankingship & Keith Attorneys Recognized as "Top Lawyers" by Northern Virginia Magazine
- The Havrilak Law Firm, P.C. Joins Blankingship & Keith