HUSCH BLACKWELL

Melissa K. Smith-Groff

PARTNER

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OVERVIEW

Melissa guides business-critical real estate transactions and property decisions for Fortune 500 companies and other major corporations.

With nearly 30 years of experience, Melissa handles all aspects of real estate needs and oversees global and nationwide real estate portfolios for major corporate clients. Her work includes the sale and acquisition of commercial property, leasing negotiations, real estate financing, and other real property-related transactions—often valued in the hundreds of millions to billions. Melissa has led corporate headquarters relocations, helps companies establish major new facilities, and assists as businesses acquire and lease property throughout the United States and around the world. She routinely serves as clients' lead real estate counsel and also regularly assists with the real estate components of mergers, acquisitions, and other corporate transactions. Her experience spans a wide variety of industries and includes commercial properties ranging from office, retail, and hospitality space to industrial and healthcare facilities.

For Melissa, real estate is a deeply relationship-centered practice. She is known for establishing strong, collaborative relationships that help drive more efficient and successful deals. Melissa has worked with many of the same clients for years, building longstanding relationships as she fully integrates into client teams. Her familiarity with the organization allows her to provide truly practical, business-focused advice that minimizes risk and maximizes efficiency.

Industry

Real Estate, Development, & Construction

Services

Corporate Real Estate
Hospitality
Retail Real Estate
Telecommunications

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Melissa leverages her experience to help clients understand the risks and market at play. As co-chair of the firm's Corporate Real Estate practice group, she is committed to helping clients use their real estate portfolios to advance their business goals.

Case Study

Jacobs Engineering Group

Our team assisted the client, one of world's largest engineering companies, in relocating its corporate HQ to the Lone Star State.

Experience

- Served as legal counsel to a Fortune 500 engineering company with $12 billion in revenue and 50,000 employees worldwide, with respect to its real estate portfolio and including the negotiation of the headquarters relocation.
- Represented a medical device company with the acquisition and development of a new $180 million manufacturing facility that will be one of the most innovative facilities in the U.S., bringing back a large number of jobs to the U.S. from China.
- Counseled a pharmaceutical company on all of their real estate issues from 1999 to the present.
- Guided a $100 billion company in the sale of one of its businesses for $7 billion, coordinating the global transfer of real estate in numerous countries spanning from the United States and Canada to Germany, Japan, and Ireland, among others.
- Represented a Fortune 100 company subsidiary on all of its real estate matters since 2004, including negotiations for a new leased headquarters in New Jersey.
- Advised a publicly traded restaurant and retail client with respect to all of its 400+ locations.
- Served in a lead role for a Fortune 500 company as it purchased a new business that required an evaluation of risk of acquisition of numerous properties around the world.
- Negotiated and provided real estate counsel for the sale of a 94-acre industrial facility.

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Experience

- Served as nationwide real estate counsel to a healthcare technology company.
- Represented client in a 21-year lease transaction valued at over $500 million—the largest in that state in terms of a construction build out for tenant space in 2021 and the largest public incentive project in the state's history.
- Represented a national chain in the restructuring of more than 300 leases, resulting in significant cost savings.
- Managed the disposition of $150 million in surplus properties for a Fortune 50 company.
- Negotiated the lease of five buildings in a headquarters campus and handled the purchase of an additional building.
- Negotiated an office consolidation of more than 100,000 square feet in Philadelphia, PA.
- Addressed 400,000 square feet of office space (which included excess space acquired in business acquisitions) by reorganizing the real estate portfolio in three markets, including the sale of property, downsizing leased space and relocating to more efficient space.

Recognition

- *The Best Lawyers in America®*
  - Real Estate Law, 2021-2027
- *Chambers USA*
  - Real Estate, 2010-2012, 2022-2026
  - Real Estate, Up-and-Coming, 2010
- *Real Estate Forum*
  - Woman of Influence, 2017

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Education

- J.D., University of Missouri School of Law
  - *Missouri Law Review*, note and comment editor
- B.A., Washington University in St. Louis
  - *magna cum laude*

Admissions

- Missouri

Clerkships

- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, 1997-1999
- The Hon. James R. Reinhard, Missouri Court of Appeals, 1996-1997

Community Leadership

- Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), Board of Directors, 2009-2011, 2016-2018
- Washington University Alumni and Parents Admission Program

The Best Lawyers in America®

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