HUSCH BLACKWELL



Melissa M. Kirby

SENIOR COUNSEL

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OVERVIEW

A results-oriented litigator with over two decades of trial experience, Melissa represents clients in government contract, white collar, and commercial litigation matters.

Melissa began her legal career in criminal law more than 20 years ago, leading prosecution trial teams in South Carolina. She then moved to the greater Washington, DC area where she worked as a senior attorney at a non-profit organization training and providing technical assistance to prosecutors nationwide. Thereafter, Melissa served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Eastern District of Tennessee for five years. In 2014, she began managing a criminal defense law firm and representing clients in Georgia courts. Her criminal cases brought her to the courtroom often: she has extensive experience persuading juries, and high-stress, high-stakes cases are a matter of routine for her.

At Husch Blackwell, Melissa represents clients in a variety of litigation matters in state and federal courts. A former government attorney, she is especially well-versed in working with federal agencies. She enjoys helping contractors navigate federal grant and contract compliance issues, including domestic procurement requirements and bid protests.

In addition to her government contracts work, Melissa represents clients through civil and criminal government investigations, including potential or alleged False Claims Act violations. She also represents clients in general commercial litigation, most often in matters involving construction disputes. A member of Husch

Industry

Real Estate, Development, & Construction

Services

Bid Protests

Commercial Litigation

Data Centers

False Claims Act

Government Contracts

Litigation & Alternative Dispute Resolution

White Collar, Internal Investigations, & Compliance

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Blackwell's Chattanooga office—which sits on the Tennessee/Georgia state line—Melissa frequently appears for court proceedings on behalf of clients in both states. Additionally, she is licensed to handle matters for clients in the District of Columbia and South Carolina.

In addition to her extensive trial experience, Melissa is a gifted negotiator who loves getting to yes. She's known for her strength at developing and building relationships, bringing parties together, and navigating adversarial issues effectively. Melissa has the experience to know whether trial or settlement will lead to the best outcome for a client, and her litigation strategies always keep client results and client goals front and center.

Experience

- Handled criminal cases in juvenile, state, and superior courts and worked with children and families in dependency and custody cases.
- As Assistant U.S. Attorney, coordinated investigations with federal, state, local, and NGO agencies; presented cases for federal grand jury investigation and indictment; handled a variety of cases, including trafficking, counterfeiting, exploitation, national security violations, white collar fraud, firearms violations, and computer crimes. Among these was a high-profile national security case, covered extensively in the *Washington Post*, that involved protecting a federal nuclear facility in Tennessee.
- Trained prosecutors as a Senior Attorney at the National District Attorney's Association to build solid cases and successfully conduct jury trials.
- Served as a state prosecutor in South Carolina state courts, trying cases ranging from murder to fraud.
- Provided counsel to a nationwide construction company on litigation matters and worked with regional commercial developers on issues related to eminent domain.
- Made several appearances as guest contributor on Court TV.

Education

- J.D., Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law
- B.S., Georgia Southern University

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Admissions

- Tennessee
- Georgia
- South Carolina
- District of Columbia
- U.S. District Court, District of South Carolina
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Tennessee
- U.S. District Court, Middle District of Tennessee
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Georgia
- U.S. Court of Federal Claims



2026 Pro Bono Contributor

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