

## W. Jerry Byrd

Jerry's comprehensive experience in law, accounting, and business provides him with the unique ability to counsel his clients with a multifaceted approach. He has served on the firm's Executive Committee and he is an officer, director, and a shareholder.

Jerry graduated *magna cum laude* from Western Michigan University with a B.B.A. in accounting, finance, and marketing. He is an attorney and a CPA. He worked for Deloitte, Haskins & Sells for such clients as General Motors Corporation and General Motors Overseas Distribution Corporation, and various automotive suppliers. He then obtained his J.D. from Detroit College of Law (now Michigan State University). For the past twenty-eight years, Jerry has divided his practice between complex business transactions and sophisticated trust and estate matters.

### BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

Jerry has nearly three decades of experience handling numerous business transactions involving corporations, partnerships, limited liability companies and joint ventures. While some of the transactions involved publicly-traded entities, most involved privately-held businesses, often family owned, with annual gross sales between five million to five hundred million dollars. He has negotiated and coordinated numerous mergers and acquisitions, spin-offs, business combinations, financings and private placements, and has handled many shareholder and equity matters, intra-company disputes, and planning matters. He has also negotiated and drafted numerous business contracts of all types.

His clients have included manufacturing and stamping plants, paint companies, parts suppliers, assembly businesses, banks, insurance companies, engineering firms, construction businesses, energy and wind power companies and smaller businesses such as hotels, restaurants, franchises, maintenance companies, gas stations, mobile home parks, retail and wholesale companies, real estate businesses, mortgage and appraisal businesses, sales rep companies, leasing companies and others.

Jerry has also, with his firm partners, coordinated with in-house counsel, and at other times acted as in-house counsel in order to facilitate legal activities such as contracts, human resource matters, real estate matters, litigation and litigation costs, business policies, etc.

For some of his business clients, Jerry has also coordinated litigation and litigation strategy in federal courts, circuit courts, district courts and bankruptcy courts, and he established a network of relationships with law firms handling specialty lawsuits in thirty-five states.



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## **EXAMPLE BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS:**

- Handled large asset sale of a family-owned business to a publicly-held company
- Handled stock purchase of manufacturing company by significant family-owned business
- Drafted contracts for internet use in fifty states

## **TRUST AND ESTATE MATTERS**

Jerry also holds a Certificate of Completion in Probate and Estate Planning from the Institute of Continuing Legal Education and the Probate and Estate Planning Section of the State Bar of Michigan, and he has planned, drafted documents for, and administered numerous estates, many of which have included multiple trusts. The sizes of the estates have ranged from moderate to substantial, and some have involved global holdings in different states and countries.

Jerry has also successfully litigated and settled many contested trusts and estate matters, some of which involved numerous family businesses in different states.

He has also been involved in significant succession planning matters, especially as they relate to family businesses, and he has often counseled and advised on such delicate issues as designing and sometimes balancing estate plans, so that the expectations of the parents are met, when some adult children and grandchildren participate in the family businesses, and some do not.

## **EXAMPLE ESTATE MATTERS:**

- As part of a single estate plan, advised and drafted numerous trusts to meet family objectives, including maintaining significant family businesses
- Administered trust, both pre and post-death, with family businesses in several states and countries
- Successfully litigated difficult contested trust matter between family members in different states

Jerry has been named a "Leading Michigan Lawyer" (2018-2023) by Leading Lawyers, a division of Law Bulletin Media, in Closely & Privately Held Business Law, Corporate Finance Law, Mergers & Acquisitions, and Trusts/Wills/Estates.

## **EDUCATION**

- Western Michigan University , B.A., magna cum laude
- Detroit College of Law, J.D.

## **BAR ADMISSIONS**

- Michigan

## **COURT ADMISSIONS**

- All Michigan courts

## **PRACTICE AREAS**

- Business Law
- Estate Planning

- Real Estate Development
- Transportation and Logistics Law