

2024 Appellate Training: New and Emerging Legal Issues

About the Speakers

Sara DePasquale is the Albert and Gladys Hall Coates Term Professor for Teaching Excellence (2023-2025) at the UNC School of Government. She is an NC Board Certified Child Welfare Law Specialist who teaches, advises, and writes for judicial officials, social services and parent attorneys, and other professionals. Her publication, *Abuse, Neglect, Dependency, and Termination of Parental Rights Proceedings in North Carolina* is an extensive practice manual relied upon by professionals in the court system who are involved in these proceedings. Prior to joining the School of Government, Sara practiced law at Pine Tree Legal Assistance in Maine, specializing in issues related to children, housing, and public benefits. She earned her J.D., magna cum laude, from the University at Buffalo School of Law with a dual degree of a Master of Social Work from the University at Buffalo School of Social Work. She graduated with outstanding academic performance from Binghamton University.

Joseph Kyzer is the Deputy Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts. He joined the Judicial Branch in 2021 as a Legislative Liaison and Assistant Legal Counsel with AOC. He previously worked for the Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives, the North Carolina Senate Judiciary Committee, and government affairs organizations in Raleigh and Washington, D.C. He earned his J.D. from Campbell Law School and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of North Carolina.

Jamie Markham joined the School of Government faculty in 2007. His area of interest is criminal law and procedure, with a focus on the law of sentencing, corrections, and the conditions of confinement. He was named Albert and Gladys Coates Distinguished Term Associate Professor for 2015–2017. Markham earned a bachelor's degree with honors from Harvard College and a law degree with high honors, Order of the Coif, from Duke University, where he was editor-in-chief of the *Duke Law Journal*. He is a member of the North Carolina Bar. Prior to law school, Markham served five years in the United States Air Force as an intelligence officer and foreign area officer. He was also a travel writer for Let's Go Inc., contributing to the Russia and Ukraine chapters of *Let's Go: Eastern Europe*.

Kristi Nickodem, Robert W. Bradshaw Jr. Distinguished Term Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, joined the School of Government's faculty in 2021. She teaches, consults, and writes about human services law, including the organization and governance of local social services and consolidated human services agencies, the responsibilities of social services and consolidated human services boards and directors, and the confidentiality of social services information. Nickodem's work also explores how local governments use and respond to technology, including legal issues associated with social media, artificial intelligence, filming on public property, and the First Amendment. Nickodem is a member of the UNC Generative AI Committee and the University's Faculty Information Technology Advisory Committee. Previously, she practiced law at K&L Gates LLP, where she counseled clients, conducted internal investigations, and defended clients in litigation. Prior to entering private practice, Nickodem worked for an international nonprofit organization in Greensboro, North Carolina. Nickodem is a member of the North Carolina State Bar. She earned a

bachelor's degree, summa cum laude, from UNC-Greensboro and a J.D. with high honors, Order of the Coif, from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Leslie Packer is a founding partner of Ellis & Winters. She focuses her practice on civil litigation with an emphasis on products liability, including drugs and medical devices, medical malpractice, and high-end commercial litigation. For over three decades, Leslie has helped clients navigate disputes including as part of national trial teams in various high-profile and high-stakes healthcare litigation matters. She is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the International Academy of Trial Lawyers.

Brittany Pinkham, a native New Hampshireite, received her undergraduate degree in psychology and criminal justice from the University of Connecticut and her law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Before serving as both the Executive Director and Commission Counsel for the Judicial Standards Commission, Brittany was an assistant district attorney with the Durham County District Attorney's Office and an assistant attorney general in both the Transportation Condemnation and Special Prosecutions sections of the North Carolina Department of Justice. In her free time, Brittany enjoys hiking with her dog, practicing and teaching yoga, and cheering on New England sports teams.

Dixie Wells is a senior partner and member of the Management Committee at Ellis & Winters. She earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering and worked as an engineer before beginning her legal practice. She represents clients in lawsuits that involve engineering issues and also represents higher education clients. She regularly handles cases throughout the country in both state and federal courts. She is a former President of the Chief Justice Joseph Branch Inn of Court.