

WORK EXPERIENCE

Durham County Attorney's Office, Senior Assistant County Attorney

Durham, North Carolina | May 2024 - present

- Provide legal advice and representation to Durham County government departments on a broad range of matters, including contracts and civil litigation
- Represent Durham County in state and federal court

Durham Guardian ad Litem Program, Staff Attorney

Durham, North Carolina | January 2008 - August 2013, September 2022 - April 2024

- Represent abused and neglected children in NCGS Chapter 7B pretrials, trials, and negotiated settlements each week in highly contested, intense cases; manage heavy caseload with fluctuating docket, chaotic court environment, large volume of documents, and high trauma subject matter
- Draft all necessary documents, prepare and call child and adult witnesses to testify in trials, work cooperatively with other parties whose interests align
- Previously represented children in all aspects of cases on appeal to NC Court of Appeals
- Develop legal training materials and train volunteers and staff as needed; mentor and supervise law student interns

- **GAL Conflict Attorney** - handled individual cases when GAL Staff attorney is conflicted out

August 2013 - August 2022

- **GAL Contract Attorney** - handled one half of the caseload and appeals in GAL cases

January 2007 - December 2007; January 2006 - June 2006

- **GAL 3rd year Practice Law Intern**

Fall 2004 - Spring 2005

- **Summer Legal Intern, (awarded IOLTA stipend)**

Summer 2003

- **Court-Appointed Volunteer GAL**

Fall 2001 - Spring 2006

JusticeMatters Inc., Senior Staff Attorney, Family Law Section Lead

Durham, North Carolina | November 2014 - September 2022

- Counseled clients through all aspects of trial and negotiated settlements in family law cases, including custody, adoption, guardianship, and domestic violence to protect children from victimization, to reduce the need for foster care, and to combat human trafficking.
- Managed the development, implementation, and expansion of a Durham Family Law Pro Se Center, a weekly clinic offering free legal advice on family law issues to individuals who cannot afford to hire attorneys under NC GCC grant, serving 25+ individuals per month
- Advised immigration attorneys addressing unique challenges of the state court system for human trafficking survivors and immigrant families/children; assisted with Special Immigrant Juvenile Status cases
- Prepared and presented trainings to community partners and lawyers at statewide conferences and CLEs, especially related to trauma-informed services, human trafficking, and vulnerabilities unique to immigrants and juveniles
- Advocated for children through local and statewide committees (Children's Justice Act subcommittee of the Department of Public Safety/Juvenile Justice, the Intentional Death Prevention subcommittee of the Child Fatality Task Force, Durham's Community Child Protection Team (Chair) and Child Fatality Prevention Team (Chair)); served with judges, DSS/Public Health Director, and state/community leaders; presented annual recommendations to Board of County Commissioners
- Developed and implemented policies, trained and supervised staff attorneys, paralegal, and interns with ongoing oversight and guidance in Durham Family Law Section
- Advised and assisted Executive Director in the development and expansion of JusticeMatters' trauma-informed legal services from a staff of three to a staff of fourteen
- Reviewed, edited, and advised Executive Director on legal contracts and grant applications
- Studied humanitarian immigration law to screen individuals for immigration relief and presented community trainings with immigration attorneys
- Researched, studied, and worked with Senior Staff to incorporate racial equity, trauma awareness, and cultural humility in JusticeMatters policies and practices

Lewis & Anderson, PLLC, Associate Attorney

Chapel Hill, North Carolina | August 2013 - October 2014

- Represented clients in all aspects of family law through all phases of civil trials and negotiated settlements, including adoptions, guardianship proceedings, divorce, custody, alimony, post-separation support, equitable distribution, and termination of parental rights proceedings
- Represented clients in Superior Court matters tangential to family law issues
- Transitioned into new area of civil law from NCGS Chapter 7B cases to Chapter 50 cases

CASA of Laramie County, Volunteer Manager

Cheyenne, Wyoming | August 2006 - December 2006

- Assisted, supervised and supported court-appointed volunteers who represented abused and neglected children in district court
- Taught and organized training conferences for volunteers
- Advocated for improving Wyoming child welfare laws through service on task forces with community and statewide partners

Adkins Law Group, Associate Attorney

Durham, North Carolina | October 2005 - June 2006

- Handled a variety of civil cases in all aspects of trial in small claims court, District and Superior Court, including personal injury, workers' compensation, homeowners' association, landlord-tenant, competency proceedings, educational issues and family law
- Represented undisciplined and delinquent juveniles in Durham District Court through the Public Defender's appointment list

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & INTERESTS

Community Child Protection Team, Chair

Durham, North Carolina | January 2015 - December 2023

- Appointed by Durham Co. Board of Commissioners to work with Co. Commissioner, DSS, DPH, DPS, GAL, LE, Duke, Alliance, etc. in reviewing cases of children in Durham County who are involved with DSS in an effort to reduce systemic barriers to success for all children and families through local and statewide advocacy; write and present annual report to BOCC

Child Fatality Prevention Team, Chair

Durham, North Carolina | January 2015 - December 2023

- Appointed by Durham Co. Board of Commissioners to work with judges, DSS Dir., DPH Dir., DPS rep., GAL Dist. Administrator, Law Enforcement, Duke, Alliance, Medical Examiner, and others in reviewing cases of child fatality in Durham County due to reasons other than child abuse or neglect to make recommendations to the BOCC and the State of NC to reduce child deaths; write and present report to BOCC

NC Children's Justice Act Task Force

Raleigh, North Carolina (statewide) | 2018 - 2022

NC Child Fatality Task Force, Intentional Death Subcommittee

Raleigh, North Carolina (statewide) | 2019 - 2023

14th (now 16th) Judicial District/Durham Co. Bar Association

Durham, North Carolina

- Board member, Secretary, Vice President, and President | 2008-2012, 2011-12 (President)
- Scholarship Award Committee Member | 2008-2016, 2011 (Chair)
- Nominating Committee Member | 2020 - 2021

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee for the Durham County Board of Commissioners

- Appointed by the Durham County Sheriff (2014-2016 term)
- Reviewed and recommended policies in compliance with state law and local ordinances

Bull City Little League, Softball Team Manager

Durham, North Carolina | Spring 2022, Fall 2022 (records 9-0, 8-3, respectively)

Athletics

- Softball – Duke (1997-2000), Durham Parks and Rec (2006-2009)
- Running – Marine Corps Marathon Finisher (2000), numerous half-marathons completed (PR time 1:50)
- Horses – English (Dressage) and Western (trained with Professional Cowboys in WY)

SELECT PRESENTATIONS & COLLABORATIONS

- JusticeU Faculty member, “Essential Knowledge for Addressing the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in NC, 2021, web-based training, Part 2, Lesson 4
- Disability Rights North Carolina (CLE credits awarded), “Trauma Informed Legal Practice,” staff training with Charissa Gray on August 5, 2021
- Raleigh Oak Charter School, “Recognizing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking,” staff training with Charlene Reiss, November 18, 2020
- Duke Pediatrics, “Legal Options for Caregivers,” training Duke Pediatrics social work staff, September 3, 2020
- JusticeMatters Community Partners Training, “Trauma Informed Legal Practice” (CLE credits awarded) with Nicole Daniels, May 6, 2020
- Durham Guardian ad Litem Program, “Advocating for Immigrant Children,” training GAL staff and volunteers with Cheryl Chew, October 23, 2019
- JusticeMatters Community Partners Training, “Trauma Informed Legal Representation,” with Nicole Daniels and Charissa Gray on June 18, 2019
- Gaston County Bar Association (CLE credits awarded), “Human Trafficking: what every legal professional needs to know,” with Libby Coles, June 12, 2019
- JusticeMatters Community Partners Training (CLE credits awarded), “Trauma Informed Care,” training attorneys with Charissa Gray, November 29, 2018
- Wake Women's Giving Network luncheon speaker, “Human Trafficking Protective Factors,” November 8, 2018
- North Carolina Human Trafficking Symposium “Trauma Informed Legal Representation” (CLE credits awarded), with Nicole Daniels and Charissa Gray, April 18, 2018
- North Carolina Human Trafficking Symposium (CLE credits awarded), “Sharing Survivors' Stories Responsibly: Empowering vs. Exploiting,” training with Nancy Hagan and Ann Johnston, April 18, 2018
- North Carolina Human Trafficking Symposium (CLE credits awarded), “Collaborating with Lawyers to Better Serve Survivors,” training with Nicole Daniels, Caitlin Ryland, and Charissa Gray, April 18, 2018
- Durham County Bar Association, “Human Trafficking: what every legal professional needs to know,” training attorneys with Nicole Daniels on April 11, 2018
- NC AOC Trial Court Administrators Conference, “Human Trafficking and the Court,” training NC Trial Court Administrators with Libby Coles on Feb 29, 2018
- DSS Attorneys Conference (CLE credits awarded), “Human Trafficking: the Connection with the Child Welfare System,” training attorneys with Libby Coles and Charissa Gray on February 15, 2018
- North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission Symposium (CLE credits awarded), “Community and Survivor Outreach in the Digital Age,” November 14, 2017
- North Carolina Human Trafficking Symposium (CLE credits awarded), “Sharing Survivors' Stories Responsibly: Empowering vs. Exploiting,” training with Nancy Hagan, Liz Klien, and Niel Sollod, November 13, 2017

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

May 2001

Duke University, B.A. (Political Science)
Durham, North Carolina

May 2005

North Carolina Central University School of Law, J.D.
Durham, North Carolina

NCCU Law Journal Staff, Pro Bono Award
IOLTA stipend award winner (2004)

February 2017 - present

Nationally Certified Child Welfare Law Attorney
by the National Association of Counsel for Children

TRAININGS

Racial Equity Institute (May 2017)

Durham, North Carolina

Teach2Reach (November 2021)

REFERENCES

Wendy Sotolongo | wendy.sotolongo@gmail.com
Retired Indigent Defense Services Parent Defender

Shirley Harley-Smith | shirley1199@earthlink.net
Retired Durham Guardian ad Litem District Administrator

Cathy L. Moore | cathylynnmoore@gmail.com
Retired Durham DSS Attorney

Cheryl Chew | cheryl@justicemattersnc.org
JusticeMatters Immigration Law Section Lead