Holly M. Bastian

PARTNER

Holly's practice is focused on the preservation of wealth and the transfer of that wealth from generation to generation.

Industries

Private Companies

Practices

Complex Litigation
Private Clients, Trusts & Estates
Tax

Education

Georgetown University Law Center, JD, cum laude, 1992

University of Virginia, McIntire School of Commerce, BS, with distinction, 1987

Offices	Phone	Email
Washington, DC	202.857.8993	holly.bastian@afslaw.com

For over 25 years, Holly has developed and implemented creative and customized solutions to achieve the tax and personal objectives of her high net worth clients, who include real estate developers, government contractors, business owners and executives, principals of private equity, venture capital and hedge fund firms, professional athletes, and multiple generations of high net worth families.

Nationally recognized both for her sophisticated estate planning practice and for her trusts and estates litigation/dispute resolution practice, Holly assists her clients with customized estate planning, business succession planning, insurance planning, asset protection planning, tax controversies involving the Internal Revenue Service and local tax authorities, litigation and dispute resolution involving estate and trust matters, charitable planned giving, and the establishment and representation of private foundations. She works closely with families and their advisors to design and implement comprehensive plans that reflect and adjust to each family's unique attributes.

Holly also has extensive experience in the areas of real estate and corporate transactions. She routinely advises clients on choice of entity issues, prepares partnership, limited liability company and corporate formation and operational documents, and advises clients on financing transactions, corporate and partnership restructuring and related matters.

In addition to counseling clients on the planning and transactional side, Holly expertly guides clients through the probate and estate administration process. She understands the difficult emotional issues involved in the loss of a loved one and routinely administers large estate, assists families with post-mortem planning, supervises the preparation of federal estate tax returns, and represents clients before the IRS in federal estate tax audits.

Recent Recognitions

- *Chambers High Net Worth* – Private Wealth Law, District of Columbia (2023-2025); Private Wealth Law, Virginia (2024-2025)
- Leading Global Tax Lawyers, *Lawdragon 500* (2025)
- By vote of her peers, Holly has been included in *The Best Lawyers in America* every year since

2007.

- Holly has been included in numerous *Washingtonian* magazine articles featuring selected trust and estate attorneys in the Washington, DC metropolitan area: “Finding Good Financial Help,” January 2009; “Washington’s Top Financial Advisors,” November 2010; “They Know Money,” November 2012; “Top Money Advisors,” November 2014; “Washington DC’s Best Financial Advisors,” November 2016; and “Washington DC’s Best Lawyers,” December 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2020.
- Holly has been recognized in *Northern Virginia Magazine* as one of the top attorneys in estate planning, probate, trust and estate administration and tax planning every year since 2011.
- Holly is included in “Top Women Lawyers in the Northeast ” in Arrive magazine.
- Holly holds the highest peer review rating (“AV Preeminent”) in both legal ability and ethical standards from *Martindale-Hubbell*.

Client Work

Holly’s extensive experience includes the following:

- Estate planning and family wealth management, including the preparation of wills and trusts, structuring of life insurance, and planning for retirement benefits;
- Implementation of sophisticated wealth transfer techniques, including dynasty trusts, sales to grantor trusts, transfers to grantor retained annuity trusts, and transfers to lifetime credit shelter trusts;
- Estate planning with real estate and carried interests in private equity funds;
- Trust decanting, including generation-skipping transfer tax planning and analysis;
- Estate and trust administration, including post mortem tax planning, valuing and probating estate assets, and preparation of estate tax returns;
- Advising individuals and charitable organizations in disputes involving estates and trusts, including will contests and matters involving fiduciary duties;
- Cross border estate planning for international clients;
- Business succession planning for owners of closely held businesses and their families, including structuring of family limited partnerships and limited liability companies;
- Historic preservation and conservation easements;
- Charitable planned giving, including the creation of charitable lead trusts and charitable remainder trusts;
- Private foundations, including formation, qualification for tax exempt status, and operation;
- Representation of fiduciaries in estate tax controversies with the Internal Revenue Service and state taxing authorities.

Previous Work

After graduating from law school, Holly was a judicial clerk for the Honorable Robert J. Yock of the US Court of Federal Claims. Following the clerkship, she joined Arent Fox as an associate and was later elected to the partnership.

Professional Activities

Holly is an active member of the Washington, DC Estate Planning Council and holds membership in several associations, including the American Bar Association’s Section of Real Property, Probate and Trust Law and the District of Columbia Bar Association’s Section of Estates, Trusts and Probate Law.

Life Beyond the Law

Holly is an instrument-rated private pilot and flies her own 1991 American General Tiger.

Bar Admissions

District of Columbia
Virginia
Maryland