

Real Estate Practices Section

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

PROF. STEPHEN A. SPITZ

Stephen A. Spitz joined the Charleston School of Law Faculty in fall 2004 as full professor. A leading expert in South Carolina property law, Spitz was an associate professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law prior to joining the Charleston School of Law faculty. While at USC, Spitz was awarded the Gedney M. Howe Outstanding Teaching Award.

Spitz teaches courses in remedies, real estate transactions and environmental law, including a seminar on the federal Superfund law. He is former chair of the Governor's State Water Law Revision Committee. Prior to becoming a professor, he practiced law in Omaha, Nebraska.

Among his publications are a case book, "Real Estate Transactions: Cases and Materials," and a practice pamphlet, "Searching Land Titles in South Carolina." He also has written chapters in books on South Carolina water and environmental laws.

WILLIAM O. HIGGINS

William O. Higgins is a shareholder in the Columbia law firm of Ellis, Lawhorne & Sims, P.A., where he practices in the areas of commercial real estate law, tax law, business acquisitions, professional responsibility, legal ethics, and lawyer misconduct. He received his B.S. degree from Presbyterian College, his J.D. degree from the University of South Carolina, and his LL.M. degree in taxation from New York University School of Law. Active in the South Carolina Bar, he is a former chairperson of the Professional Responsibility Committee and of the Ethics 2000 subcommittee. He was a member of the Task Force on Multi-Disciplinary Practice and currently serves on the Real Estate Practices Section Council, the Professional Responsibility Committee, and the Ethics Advisory Opinion Committee.

CHARLES D. LEGRAND

A native of Greenville, Charlie graduated from Winthrop University In 1982, and from Mercer University School of Law in 1987. He was with Bozeman, Grayson, Smith & Price from 1987 to 1994, and LeGrand Law Firm since 1994. Charlie was co-author of "Cotenancies," Vol. 6, South Carolina Jurisprudence (1991), and editor and co-author of "Mortgages," Vol. 27, South Carolina Jurisprudence (1996).

Charlie has served on the South Carolina Bar Real Estate Practices Council since 2005, currently serving as Chairman of the Section for 2012-13. His primary practice areas are mortgage foreclosures and real estate (commercial and residential).

R. WILLIAM METZGER

University of South Carolina School of Law, Columbia, SC; J.D.

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC; M.B, A - **Honors**: Summa Cum Laude

Washington & Lee University, Lexington, VA; B.A. - **Honors**: Cum Laude - **Major**: Economics

Mr. Metzger received a B.A. degree in Economics from Washington and Lee University in 1985, and his M.B.A. and J.D. degrees from the University of South Carolina in 1989. He practices primarily in the commercial finance and creditors' rights areas and is a Certified Specialist in Bankruptcy and Debtor-Creditor Law by the South Carolina Supreme Court. He has served in the past as President of the South Carolina Bankruptcy Law Association, Member of the Local Rule Advisory Committee of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of South Carolina, Member of the SC Supreme Court Specialization Board for Bankruptcy and Debtor-Creditor Law and Chairman of the Creditors Rights and Bankruptcy Section of Meritas, an independent affiliation of law firms world-wide. With Meritas, he also served a 3-year term as a member of the Board of Directors and an additional 3 years as Vice-Chairman and member of the Executive Committee. He is active at Shandon United Methodist Church, where he teaches youth and adult Sunday school and has served on the Board of Trustees, Finance Committee, and Administrative Board (Chairman). He is also active in numerous other civic organizations including the Committee of 100, the Central South Carolina Alliance, and the S.C. Economic Development Association.

His practice focuses on two primary areas - bankruptcy/creditors' rights and commercial transactions/corporate. In each of these practice areas, Mr. Metzger has been involved in many different industries. Within the bankruptcy/creditors' rights area, he has represented secured creditors in (a) residential and commercial real estate development (b) inventory financing matters with specific experience in automotive and trucking financing, (c) manufacturing facilities, (d) government guaranteed loan programs with specific experience in HUD and SBA guaranteed programs, (e) airline cases with specific experience in aircraft parts and gate leases, and (f) retail cases involving multiple locations such as grocery, gasoline and convenience and general merchandise. Because of his transactional and commercial finance background, he has extensive experience in representing purchasers of assets in bankruptcy cases and all types of commercial loan workouts, including note sales and acquisitions.

On the commercial finance side of his practice, Mr. Metzger has worked extensively with commercial banks and lenders on loans to numerous manufacturing facilities and commercial real estate developments. He has served as general counsel to several national and regional lending institutions as well as approved USDA and SBA lenders. In the context of economic development lending, he has experience in economic incentives, job development credits and other tax incentives for business with operations in South Carolina. He also has experience in representing developers in all facets of commercial real estate development, with specific experience in the development of shopping centers, movie theaters, hotels, and leasehold mortgage financing. Finally, his corporate experience includes all aspects of corporate formation and planning and multi-state issues associated with professional practices.

MICHAEL J. VIRZI

Michael Virzi has a solo practice in Columbia, focusing on lawyer discipline, malpractice, and ethics. He teaches courses in Legal Writing and Law Practice and Professionalism at the University of South Carolina School of Law. Michael is a former Assistant Disciplinary Counsel for the Supreme Court of South Carolina and previously practiced in business and general litigation. Michael is a former Chair of the South Carolina Bar's Ethics Advisory Committee, where he has served since 2003. He also serves on the Professional Responsibility Committee and has authored many Ethics Advisory Opinions and several published articles involving lawyer ethics and malpractice. Michael is a frequent CLE speaker and law school guest lecturer on the topics of lawyer ethics, malpractice, and the discipline process.

HON. CHARLES B. SIMMONS

Judge Simmons was in private practice with the Wilkins Law Firm in Greenville before becoming the Master in Equity for Greenville County. He is also a Special Circuit Court Judge for the 13th Circuit and

presides over the 13th Circuit Adult Drug Court. One of his few claims to fame is having lectured in several of Professor Spitz's law school classes over the years.