

## Leslie A. Winneberger

Partner | Richmond

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Leslie joined Harman Claytor in January 2018, after working at another Richmond firm for fifteen years. She concentrates her practice in civil defense litigation, primarily defending local governmental officials and employees from claims asserting constitutional violations or other violations of federal law. Leslie also has experience representing public employees as they navigate the state grievance process and representing churches in disputes arising from within and outside the church. She serves as general counsel for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. Additionally, Leslie's experience includes cases involving breach of contract, employment disputes, trust/estate disputes, collections, defamation, malicious prosecution, intentional torts, and negligence.



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### Professional Activities & Honors

- Virginia Association of Defense Attorneys
- Defense Research Institute
- Richmond Bar Association
- Virginia Bar Association
- Virginia Business Legal Elite (2019 – 2024)
  - Civil Litigation
- Best Lawyers in America (2024 – 2026)
  - Litigation – Municipal

### Representative Experience

- In a case of first impression in the Virginia Supreme Court, obtained a ruling in favor of a church client on the constitutionally protected right to a time bar under the applicable statute of limitations.
- Obtained dismissal with prejudice based on qualified immunity on behalf of sheriff's deputy for claims of substantive and procedural due process, unreasonable seizure, and violation of equal protection. Affirmed on appeal by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of five sheriff's deputies for claims of excessive force made against them. Affirmed on appeal by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of two sheriff's deputies for federal and state claims of unlawful arrest and malicious prosecution made against them. Affirmed on appeal by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Obtained employment reinstatement for public employee following a state grievance hearing.
- Obtained a defense verdict after a federal jury trial in favor of two sheriff's deputies for claims of false arrest and excessive force made against them.
- Obtained a defense verdict after a state jury trial in favor of sheriff for claims of gross negligence, willful and wanton negligence, negligence, malicious prosecution, false imprisonment, and negligent retention made against him.
- Obtained dismissal with prejudice on motion to strike in favor of church based on the ministerial exception of the

church autonomy doctrine.

- Obtained summary judgment in favor of church supervisor for retaliation claim in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

*The cases referenced above do not represent the lawyer's entire record. Each case must be evaluated on its own facts. The outcome of a particular case cannot be based on past results.*

## **Education**

- University of Virginia, B.A. (1996)
- College of William & Mary School of Law, J.D. (1999)

## **Bar & Court Admissions**

- Virginia State Bar
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
- United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia
- United States Supreme Court