

NC TRIANGLE EDITION | VOL. 9 NO. 6

ATTORNEY AT LAW

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MAGAZINE®

A photograph of Mike McIntyre, a middle-aged man with grey hair, smiling. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark trousers with a brown belt. He stands in front of a yellow sign that reads "BEACH EROSION IN PROGRESS". The background shows a beach with dunes, tall grass, and a wooden structure, with the ocean visible in the distance under a clear blue sky.

Mike McIntyre

ATTORNEY OF THE MONTH

A Sea of Possibilities

Judge Orlando F.
Hudson Jr.

THE GATEKEEPER AND THE OWL

Heather
Williams Forshey
OBSERVATIONS ON THE
GABBY PETITO MURDER



Mike A Sea of Possibilities McIntyre

WRITTEN BY BOB FRIEDMAN
PHOTOS BY HEADSHOTS & CORPORATE
AND RTP PHOTO AND VIDEO



■ MCINTYRE GIVES A WASHINGTON UPDATE TO THE CAROLINA BEACH TOWN COUNCIL IN OCTOBER.

It's 376 miles from the U.S. Capitol to the Carolina Beach Town Council. But for former North Carolina congressman Mike McIntyre, it seems a lot closer. "I'm working with a lot of the same staff in rural development that I worked with when I was serving in Congress," said McIntyre, senior advisor for government relations and economic development at Ward and Smith.

McIntyre represented NC's Seventh Congressional District from 1997 to 2015 and was chairman of the U.S. House Agriculture Subcommittee on Rural Development. It had oversight of USDA Rural Development, which included economic development opportunities for small businesses and private companies and community facilities and electric and telephone cooperatives.

HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY

Mike McIntyre grew up in Lumberton, NC. He was a Morehead Scholar at UNC, where he won the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award for best exemplifying "unselfish interest in the welfare of others."

He earned his Juris Doctor at UNC School of Law. He could've gone anywhere to practice law, but McIntyre noted that he harbored "a desire to help those at home, where my roots run deep along the banks of the Lumber River and where my ancestors go back 200 years."

McIntyre is part of Ward and Smith's government relations and economic development teams, including attorneys Jeff Bandini, Whitney Campbell Christensen, Lee Hodge, Jamie Norment, and Hayley Wells. They work with both private and governmental clients on agribusiness, coastal development, the defense industry in North Carolina, local tourism, energy and infrastructure, and sports and entertainment law matters.

The economic development group assists companies with utility negotiation, applications for economic incentives at the state and county levels, and the formation of NC entities.

Ward and Smith's government relations group counsels clients through regulatory monitoring, procurement advocacy, and legal advice related to compliance with the array of laws regarding government relations in the state and Washington, DC.

"Our firm's work in economic development brings hope and opportunity to the communities and the clients that we serve. Likewise, our work in government relations opens the door to these opportunities on the local and state, and federal levels and occasionally, even on the international level."

Meet the Team



Jeff Bandini works as an attorney and consultant with agencies and private companies to structure economic development, infrastructure, and utility agreements. He also negotiates railroad right-of-way agreements for connections with Class I and short-line railroads serving new and expanded industries, and works with NCDOT on new road and railroad investments to support economic growth.



Whitney Campbell Christensen represents clients on various state legislative and appropriations matters before the NC General Assembly. Her work highlights include securing appropriations for landmark economic development projects for local government clients and seeking business expansion incentives for some of the world's largest tech companies.



Lee Hodge provides outside general counsel services and mergers and acquisitions advisory services to middle-market companies. He has represented numerous buyers and sellers on sophisticated mergers and acquisitions transactions and helped secure local economic development incentives as part of the deals.



■ MIKE MCINTYRE

Recent projects have included assisting an Israeli company in locating its U.S. headquarters in NC, coordinating economic incentives from the government at the city, county, and state level for two textile-related manufacturing operations, and negotiating contracts related to transportation improvement incentives for a home appliance manufacturer.

"A lot of folks don't realize that defense is the number two industry in NC. We have a strong practice with citizens and community groups that support our military and the military communities," added McIntyre.

ENVIRONMENTAL TREASURE

"The NC coast is an economic engine and an environmental treasure. It attracts business for tourism, and all kinds of economic opportunity," said McIntyre. "People are attracted to NC's beautiful setting, including our beaches and our inland waterways."

The 20-county coastal region generates 10 percent of the state's economy, employing over 8 percent of the state's workers through seafood, minerals, energy, marine biotechnology, transport, trade, and tourism.

The firm is working with government agencies on shoreline protection, dredging, and renourishment. "Frequently, the people in these areas want both to encourage smart development and to preserve the natural setting that makes these developments attractive, both from a tax revenue and a quality-of-life perspective," said McIntyre.

RURAL CHALLENGES

Seventy-eight of NC's 100 counties are classified as rural. Almost 40 percent of the population lives in rural areas, which is twice the national average. Therefore, a key to growing the state's economy is developing in the rural areas.

"We want the rural communities to be able to cast the line, but many of them are disadvantaged because of their tax base. They may not be able to afford new fire stations, rescue units, or equipment that they need," McIntyre said.

"Fire and rescue protection, law enforcement and other public services can help lower the insurance rates and increase business opportunities because safer communities can lead to the mid-level, and senior-level management moving to those communities.

“Water and sewer improvements are also badly needed in many communities,” he added. “Unfortunately, a lot of our rural areas do not have the tax base to support the changes that they need to implement.”

Help could be coming from the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill passed by Congress in November. Fifty-five billion dollars are allocated to drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure funding. It will increase access to clean drinking water for homes, businesses, schools, and childcare centers nationwide.

Ward and Smith’s economic development group expects to help negotiate water and sewer access and upgrades with the city and regional water authorities.

NC is slated to receive roughly \$1 billion for broadband under the federal infrastructure bill, another shortfall facing some rural communities. During the pandemic, the acute need for internet service was demonstrated when over 1 million North Carolinians did not receive broadband service.

“Broadband is to education and business what roads were to industry in the last century,” said McIntyre.

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INVESTING IN RELATIONSHIPS

“The crux of what we want to do is to seek and promote the interests and concerns of our clients and do it in such a way that makes for good government relations and positive experiences,” said McIntyre.

“Our clients can meet and talk with their elected representatives, as well as with the government agencies that they may have to work with. Investing in relationships and partnerships can start new ways of hope that lead to economic development and opportunity for communities.

“We want to help communities build a stronger North Carolina. Our team can contribute to the vision and help shape robust relationships and partnerships that can lead to a sea of possibilities. That’s how we work together to create ripples of opportunity.”

Meet the Team



Jamie Norment’s economic development experience includes a wide range of legal and consulting services. Recently, he advised a pharmaceutical company on incentives for expansion of an existing plant; helped a home appliance manufacturer expand its existing factory through state incentives; and counseled the parties to an aerospace project that brought 50 new jobs to an eastern NC industrial park.



Hayley Wells leads the firm’s sports, parks, outdoor recreation, and tourism practice, where she works with a variety of industries statewide, including breweries, wineries, distilleries, outdoor sporting goods companies, summer camps, and festivals. She works with many entrepreneurs reactivating under-capitalized areas across the state to help return them to economic vitality.