

Bianca Smith

Cleveland
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Overview

Bianca concentrates her practice on white collar defense, government investigations and complex commercial litigation. She holds a particular interest in sports and entertainment law, vigorously representing clients across the sports industry in matters involving Title IX compliance and investigations, NIL regulation and enforcement, and sponsorship negotiations.

Before joining Benesch, Bianca gained a deep understanding of state and local court systems through 15 years of experience within the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Courts. Her background includes roles as an Ohio Supreme Court certified mediator specializing in domestic violence and domestic relations issues, personal bailiff, probation officer, and managing specialized dockets involving victims of human trafficking and co-parents managing dual diagnosis concerns.

Drawing on this robust litigation experience, Bianca prides herself on guiding clients through their most vulnerable times, bringing a comprehensive and thoughtful approach to secure favorable results. She is also a staunch advocate for her pro bono clients, focusing on civil litigation, social justice, and youth and family matters.

Bianca serves on several boards, including the Norman S. Minor Bar Association (2026-2027), The Gathering Place Rising Leaders Council (2025-2027) and the Cleveland Leadership Center's Civic Leadership Institute Council (2025-2027). She also mentors law students through several pipeline programs, including The Law School Mentor.

Representative Matters

- Represented a professional basketball player accused of conspiracy and wire fraud for allegedly attempting to avoid paying child support and taxes for several years. The government claimed that the pro athlete "unlawfully, voluntarily, intentionally and knowingly" conspired to defraud the U.S. by falsely underreporting his income and sought prison time for the athlete. Benesch defended the athlete, securing a probationary period and avoiding prison time for the client.
- Represented a consumer products company in an internal investigation regarding allegations of racial bias and a hostile work environment involving a human resources manager. Benesch reviewed all internal communications, interviewed company personnel and provided a detailed investigative report with factual findings and proposed remedial actions.

Credentials

EDUCATION

- Cleveland State University College of Law, 2022, J.D., *cum laude*
  - Recipient, Outstanding Student in Appellate Practice Clinic (Spring 2021)
  - Research Assistant, Tulane Basketball Negotiation Competition
  - Subregional Director 4, Midwest Black Law Students Association
  - Chapter Vice President, Cleveland State University Black Law Students' Association
- Tiffin University, 2006, M.S., Forensic Psychology and Criminal Behavior, *magna cum laude*
- Eastern Michigan University, 2003, B.S., Criminology and Criminal Justice, *magna cum laude*

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

- Ohio
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio

Memberships

- Vice President of the Board, Living at the Intersections (L.A.T.I.)
- Board Member, Norman S. Minor Bar Association
- Board Member, The Gathering Place Rising Leaders Council
- Board Member, Cleveland Leadership Center Civic Leadership Institute Council
- Member, Association of Title IX Administrators
- Member, Sports Lawyers Association

- Mentor, The Law School Mentor Program
- Volunteer, 3Rs, (Rights, Responsibilities and Realities), Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association

News & Insights

- Associate Bianca Smith Quoted in The Athletic on NCAA Eligibility Litigation
  September 4, 2026 | Media Mentions
- 126 Benesch Attorneys Recognized in 2027 Best Lawyers® Rankings
  August 20, 2026 | Press Releases
- SCOTUS Rules That States May Limit Women's and Girls' Sports to Biological Females - Another Chapter in the Delicate Legislative Balance Between Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause
  July 6, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- Benesch Partners Kevin Frankel, Holly Gross and Managing Associate Bianca Smith Publish Law360 Article on Senate Ban on Prediction Market Trading
  May 20, 2026 | Media Mentions
- Prediction Markets and Public Power: Senate Restricts Trading, but Constitutional Questions Linger
  May 8, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- Benesch Partner Marisa Darden and Associate Bianca Smith Named Finalists in Corporate Counsel's 2026 Women, Influence & Power in Law Awards
  March 18, 2026 | Press Releases
- DOJ Solidifies Its Universal Policy for Corporate Cooperation Credits
  March 12, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- Columbus Business First Features Benesch Insight on Point-Shaving and Sports Gambling
  February 5, 2026 | Contributed Content & Presentations
- "Point-Shaving" Scandal Rocks NCAA Men's Basketball - Federal Indictment Exposes Widening Risk of Game Fixing in College and Professional Basketball
  January 16, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- Cleveland 19 News Interviews Associate Bianca Smith on Collegiate Betting Scandal
  January 15, 2026 | Media Mentions

Speaking & Events

PAST EVENTS

- Beyond Scholarships: Managing Name, Image, & Likeness, Collectives, and Sponsorships Through a Title IX Lens | Bianca Smith
  October 14, 2026 - October 16, 2026 | Speaking Engagement

- NIL for Parents and Coaches | Bianca Smith
  September 12, 2026 | Speaking Engagement
- Protecting Players: Contracts, Brands, Name, Image and Likeness | Bianca Smith
  July 8, 2026 - July 9, 2026 | Speaking Engagement
- Protecting Players: Contracts & Building a Global Brand - College Sports International Panel | Bianca Smith
  July 8, 2026 - July 9, 2026 | Speaking Engagement
- What Happens to an NIL Deal When an Athlete Enters the Transfer Portal? | Bianca Smith
  May 19, 2026 | Firm Events