



Bianca Smith

Cleveland

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Overview

Bianca concentrates her practice on white collar defense, government investigations and diverse commercial litigation. She holds a particular interest in sports and entertainment law, vigorously representing clients across the sports industry, from individual athletes to colleges and universities.

Bianca is a trusted advisor in the dynamic landscape of sports law, assisting clients in navigating complex matters such as Title IX compliance, enforcement and investigations. She also specializes in name, image and likeness (NIL) regulation and enforcement, and sponsorship negotiations. She is a frequent speaker and author on these critical issues.

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.
- Represented a consumer products company in an internal investigation regarding allegations of racial bias and a hostile work environment involving a human resources manager.

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

- [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
- [Cashing In On Preemption: Kalshi Lawsuits Preview the Future of Gambling Regulations](#)
November 5, 2025 | Client Alerts & Insights
- [NCAA President Calls for Stiffer State Laws on Sports Betting Following NBA Betting Scandal and Revised Legislation Permitting Sports Betting for D-II and D-III Athletes](#)
October 27, 2025 | Client Alerts & Insights
- [The "Streamline Act" Seeks to Raise Reporting Thresholds and Modernize the Bank Secrecy Act](#)
October 23, 2025 | Client Alerts & Insights

Speaking & Events

UPCOMING EVENTS

- [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
- [NIL for Parents and Coaches | Bianca Smith](#)
September 12, 2026 | Speaking Engagement

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

PAST EVENTS

- [What Happens to an NIL Deal When an Athlete Enters the Transfer Portal? | Bianca Smith](#)
May 19, 2026 | Firm Events
- [Foul on the Play! The Evolution of Title IX in High School and College Athletics | Bianca Smith](#)
October 13, 2025 - October 18, 2025 | Speaking Engagement
- [Virtual Coffee Talk | Bianca Smith](#)
September 9, 2025 | Speaking Engagement
- [A Look Into the Future of Title IX's Sex and Gender Discrimination Regulations Post-Election 2024](#)
November 12, 2024 | Firm Events