

Rita McNeil Danish

PARTNER / COLUMBUS, CHICAGO

E: rmcneildanish@taftlaw.com

T: (614) 220-0229

F: (614) 221-2007

As a trusted advisor, Rita leads her clients down the unconventional path to successful outcomes. She is a savvy problem solver, legal strategist, and committed advocate. Her vast matrix of experiences in the public and private sectors have made her keenly adept in municipal law, crisis management, government affairs, economic development and personnel/human resources. Rita serves those in the corporate community who need assistance navigating public sector organizations that are owned and operated by government entities. She also addresses organizations in the public sector, which require legal counsel who understands the nuances of government law. She brings her passion to empower economic growth in local communities through diversity and inclusion work with small, women- and minority-owned businesses.

Rita has significant hands-on public and private experience from serving in a variety of roles, including:

- Judge and Magistrate, Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, Domestic and Juvenile Divisions
- City Attorney for the cities of Cincinnati and Dayton, Ohio, and Greensboro, N.C.
- Vice President of Government Affairs, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber
- Section Chief, Civil Rights Division, Ohio Attorney General's Office
- Chief Legal Counsel, Ohio Department of Commerce
- Assistant Deputy Legal Counsel for Governor George V. Voinovich

Active in the community, Rita contributes her legal knowledge to multiple causes and diversity and inclusion



Practices

Women, Minority and
Veteran-Owned Businesses
Local Government
Crisis Management
Government Relations
Public Finance and Economic
Development
Government Contracts

Education

The Ohio State University Moritz
College of Law
Howard University

Admissions

State - Supreme Court of Ohio
Federal - U.S. Supreme Court
Federal - 6th Circuit Court of
Appeals
Federal - Southern District of Ohio
State - Illinois
State - Supreme Court of Illinois

organizations. She is a member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. (NCBW), a group that advocates on behalf of black women and girls to promote leadership development and gender equity in the areas of health, education and economic empowerment. Rita is also a board member for the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), which provides supportive services for abused and neglected children. She previously served as vice president and board member of Ohio's Minority Development Finance Advisory Board, which assists in creating employment opportunities and wealth in the minority business community. She also served as the first president of the St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Pharmacy Board in Cincinnati, a group that provides a last resort safety net for those who have no other way to access their prescription medication. Rita aided the Supreme Court of Ohio and the Ohio Judicial System's Board of Commissioners on Character & Fitness. The board is responsible for ensuring that each applicant for admission to the practice of law possesses the requisite character, fitness and moral qualifications for admission.

Rita has been an inspiring influence in the legal studies classroom, teaching the following courses:

- Legal Writing, The Ohio State University College of Law
- Business Law, Central State University
- Administrative Law, Wright State University Masters of Public Administration
- Municipal Law, Annual Conference of the International Municipal Lawyers Association

Rita graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelors of Business Administration from Howard University. She received her Juris Doctorate from The Ohio State University College of Law. Rita is admitted to practice law before the United States Supreme Court, the Supreme Court of Ohio, the United States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio.

Speeches and Publications

Speaking

- Speaker, "There is a Crisis: What to Do," WELD 2019 National Leadership Conference, June 2019.
- Panelist, "Advanced D&I: Practical Solutions for In-house Counsel to Promote Diversity and Inclusion," ACC Chicago Summit, April 4, 2019.

Publications

- "Trailblazing Legislation: Senate Bill 2610," Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council Newsletter, Spring 2019.
- "The 'Occupy Movement' and Regulating Public Spaces," *Municipal Lawyer*, International Municipal Lawyers Association (2012).
- "Municipal Subdivision Liability under Section 1983 in Perino, J.C., Citizen Oversight of Law Enforcement,

Chicago," American Bar Association, 97-113 (2006).

Professional Affiliations

- Ohio State Bar Association
Chair, Women in the Profession Section
- American Bar Association
Member
- Columbus Bar Association
Member
- Women Lawyers of Franklin County
Member
- Black Women Lawyers Association of Greater Chicago, Inc.
Member

Community Involvement

- Ohio Chamber of Commerce
Member, Board of Directors
- Women's Small Business Accelerator
Member, Board of Directors
- Women for Economic & Leadership Development
Member, Board of Directors
- Matriots Political Action Committee
Vice Chair
- National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.
Member, Central Ohio Chapter
- National Underground Railroad Freedom Center
Member, Board of Directors
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children
Board Member
- Minority Development Financing Advisory Board (MDFAB)
Former member