



BASSFORD REMELE

Christopher R. Morris

ATTORNEY AND
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER



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PRACTICE GROUPS

Alternative Dispute Resolution
Commercial Litigation
Consumer Law Defense
Professional Liability/
Claim Prevention

INDUSTRY GROUPS

Credit and Collection
Financial Services

OVERVIEW

Christopher Morris defends financial institutions and firms against consumer and regulatory lawsuits and advises businesses on compliance with federal credit and collection laws. He also defends attorneys, engineers, and other professionals, and represents businesses and individuals in commercial and employment disputes.

Chris has litigated to trial complex business cases with at-risk amounts in excess of \$200 million and has successfully resolved claims involving hundreds of thousands of class members. He appears regularly in courts throughout the Federal Eighth Circuit, and in state courts in Minnesota, Nebraska, and North Dakota.

Chris is a member of the Minnesota State Bar Association Investment Committee and a past president of the Hennepin County Bar Association. He recently served as Bassford Remele's Chief Financial Officer and is now its Chief Administrative Officer.

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

University of Minnesota Law School, J.D., *cum laude*, 1992
Harvard University, B.A., *cum laude*, 1989

Bar Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit
- U.S. District Court, District of Colorado
- U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota
- U.S. District Court, District of Nebraska
- U.S. District Court, District of North Dakota
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Arkansas
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Arkansas
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- North Dakota

Certifications

Qualified Neutral under Rule 114 of the Minnesota General Rules of Practice

Judicial Clerkship

Minnesota Court of Appeals, The Honorable Gary L. Crippen, Law Clerk, 1992-1993

EXPERIENCE

Representative Cases

- Affirmed summary judgment against consumer claim that interest demand violated FDCPA on behalf of a collection agency client; *Weeks*, 814 N.W.2d 792 (N.D. 2012).
- Appellate reversal of damages on defamation claim on behalf of a large bank client.

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- Obtained dismissal of class claim regarding application of FDCPA to Summons and Complaint on behalf of a collection agency client.
- Obtained affirmance of district court ruling on behalf of a group of distributors; *Insulate SB, Inc.*, 797 F.3d 538 (8th Cir. 2015).
- Obtained reversal of district court decision and directing summary judgment in favor of bank client on nationally significant issue involving Ponzi scheme presumption; *Finn*, 860 N.W.2d 638 (Minn. 2015).

Additional Representative Cases

- Obtained dismissal of FDCPA class action claim arising from pre-default assignment on behalf of a billing service client.
- Obtained summary judgment on claim by independent contractor to recover damages under Minnesota Human Rights Act for alleged harassment of another independent contractor of defendant.
- Obtained reversal of district court's class certification of FDCPA and state law consumer claims on behalf of a collection agency client; *Powers*, 776 F.3d 567 (8th Cir. 2015).
- Successfully resolved consumer class action asserting FACTA claim on behalf of a hotel client.
- Part of litigation team who successfully defended credit union against antitrust and trademark claims.
- Successfully argued motion on behalf of a credit industry association to enjoin Minnesota Attorney General from enforcing a new state law that conflicted with FCRA.
- Obtained partial affirmance of district court order dismissal of state law claims involving use of credit scams to underwrite insurance, on behalf of an insurance company; *Davenport*, 378 F.3d 839 (8th Cir. 2004).

Publications

- *The Rise and Fall of the Ponzi Scheme Presumption*, co-author, Bench & Bar of Minnesota, January 2018
- *Court Funding, Constitutional Priorities and Common Sense*, author, Hennepin Lawyer, May 2010
- *A Continuing Commitment to Diversity in Our Law Firms and on the Bench*, author, Hennepin Lawyer, March 2010
- *Judicial Ride-Along Gives New Perspective on the Bench*, author, Hennepin Lawyer, January 2010
- *Legal Risks in the Check Industry & How to Attack Them*, co-author with M.A. Klutho, ACA International, Inc., April 3, 2003
- *The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act: Understanding the Impact of the New Federal Privacy Protections for Medical Records*, author, MDLA for the Defense, August 2002
- *Compliance and Contract Issues in "Pre-Collection" and Billing Services*, co-author with M.A. Klutho, American Collectors Association, July 2000
- *A Look At the Legal Implications of Agency/Attorney Relationships*, co-author, Collector Magazine, December 1997

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Seminars

- *The Unique Risks of Healthcare Collections and How to Address Them*, presenter, ACA International Hot Topics Webinar, December 5, 2019
- *Controls and Corrective Actions*, presenter, ACA International, Inc. Advanced Compliance Webinar, February 21, 2019
- *Conducting a Risk Assessment*, presenter, ACA International, Inc. Advanced Compliance Webinar, February 20, 2019
- *Regulation of Unfair, Deceptive and Abusive Practices in Financial Services*, co-presenter, Representing Community Banks in Minnesota webcast, Minnesota CLE, December 13, 2017
- *Understanding and Responding to the CFPB's Expectations*, presenter, ACA International, Inc. Spring Forum, March 15, 2017
- *CFPB Proposed FDCPA Rulemaking and Federal Case Law Update*, presenter, ACA's North Dakota Collectors Annual Meeting, September 13, 2016
- *How to Walk the CFPB Line: New Spins on Old Collection Techniques*, co-presenter, National Business Institute Webinar, June 14, 2016
- *Advanced FDCPA Issues*, presenter, ACA International, Inc., May 10, 2016
- *Shifting Sands: Court Interpretations of "Actual Damages,"* co-presenter, ACA International, Inc. Annual Convention, Boston Mass., July 19, 2015
- *The Annual FDCPA Update and Panel Discussion*, presenter, Hennepin County Bar Association, Minneapolis, Minnesota, February 18, 2015
- *Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) and Latest HIPAA Rules*, presenter, South Dakota Healthcare Financial Managers, December 17, 2013
- *The FCRA from the Perspective of the Creditor*, presenter, Annual Debtor and Creditor Conference Minnesota CLE, October 3, 2013
- *Defense Litigation Strategies for the Collection Industry*, presenter, ACA International, Inc. Annual Convention, San Diego, Cal., July 14, 2013

PROFESSIONAL & CIVIC

Professional Achievements

- Claims and Litigation Management Alliance, Selected Member

Bar Associations

- Federal Bar Association
- American Bar Association
 - Litigation Section
- Association of the Bar of the United States Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit
- Minnesota State Bar Association
 - Investment Committee; Chair, 2016-2021; member, 2013-present
 - Legislative Committee; Chair, 2014-2016, member 2011-2016
 - Council Member, 2011-2014
 - Assembly, 2011-2014, 2016-2018
 - Consumer Litigation Section, 2012-present

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- Hennepin County Bar Foundation, Past Board Member
- Hennepin County Bar Association
 - President, 2009-2010
 - Treasurer, 2007-2008
 - Secretary, 2006-2007
 - Judicial Plebiscite Committee, Chair, 2011-2013
 - Professional Conduct Committee, 2000-2005
 - Finance and Planning Committee, Chair, 2005-2006
 - Fourth District Ethics Committee, Investigator, 2005-2008

Professional Associations

- ACA International, Inc.
 - Members' Attorney Program
 - Certified Instructor
 - Scholar Designation, 2013
 - Collection Notice Review (CNR) Panel
 - MAP State Compliance Chair, North Dakota, 2011-present
- Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association
- The National Creditors Bar Association

Civic Involvement

- Harvard Club of Minnesota, Past President
- Harvard Alumni Association, Past Director
- Prodeo Academy, tutor
- Ralph K. Morris Foundation, Board Member and Past Chair
- Volunteer Lawyers Network
 - Board Member, 2008-2009

ACCOLADES

Honors & Awards

- *The Best Lawyers in America*®; Appellate Practice, 2015-present; Commercial Litigation, 2016-present
- Rated AV Preeminent® by Martindale-Hubbell®
- Minnesota Super Lawyers list, *Super Lawyers*, 2005-present
- Minnesota Top 40 Business Litigation Super Lawyers list, *Super Lawyers*, 2007
- Minnesota Rising Stars List, *Super Lawyers*, 1999-2002, 2004