

# NORTH DAKOTA

## Local litigation firms

### Highly recommended

Maring Williams

Nilles Law Firm

Pearce & Durick

Serkland Law Firm

Vogel Law Firm

Zuger Kirmis & Smith

### Recommended

Crowley Fleck

Dorsey & Whitney

Jeffries Olson & Flom

McGee Hankla Backes & Dobrovlny

McNair Larson & Carlson

Morley Law Firm

Pearson Christensen & Clapp

## Local litigation stars

### Larry Boschee

Pearce & Durick  
Appellate, Commercial Litigation, Products Liability

### Bruce Carlson

McNair Larson & Carlson  
Commercial Litigation

### Collin Dobrovlny

McGee Hankla Backes & Dobrovlny  
Insurance, Personal Injury, Products Liability

### Daniel Dunn

Maring Williams  
Commercial Litigation, Personal Injury, Products Liability

### Patrick Durick

Pearce & Durick  
Appellate, Employment Litigation, Products Liability

### Timothy Durick

Pearce & Durick  
Appellate, Employment Litigation, Products Liability

### Mark Hanson

Nilles Law Firm  
Commercial Litigation, Insurance

### Lyle Kirmis

Zuger Kirmis & Smith  
Commercial Litigation, Construction Litigation

### David Maring

Maring Williams  
Commercial Litigation, Personal Injury, Professional Liability

### Richard McGee

McGee Hankla Backes & Dobrovlny  
Personal Injury, Medical Malpractice, Tribal Court

### Ronald McLean

Serkland Law Firm  
Complex Commercial Litigation, Insurance, Professional Malpractice

### Patrick Morley

Morley Law Firm  
Commercial Litigation, Insurance, Medical Malpractice

### Thomas Olson

Jeffries Olson & Flom  
Appellate, Insurance

### Stephen Plambeck

Nilles Law Firm  
Civil Litigation

### Garth Sjue

Crowley Fleck  
Commercial litigation, Natural Resources

### Paul Summers

Crowley Fleck  
Natural Resources, Real Estate Litigation

### Stephen Storslee

Storslee Law Firm  
Insurance, Products Liability

### Rebecca Thiem

Zuger Kirmis & Smith  
Commercial Litigation, Employment Litigation

### Jason Vendsel

McGee Hankla Backes & Dobrovlny  
Construction Litigation, Insurance, Personal Injury

### Daniel Vogel

Vogel Law Firm  
Appellate, Environmental Litigation, Insurance, Products Liability

### Patrick Weir Jr

Vogel Law Firm  
Civil Litigation, Products Liability

### Patrick Weir Sr

Vogel Law Firm  
Financial Services Litigation, Insurance, Medical Malpractice

### Michael Williams

Maring Williams  
Personal Injury

### Todd Zimmerman

Dorsey & Whitney  
Securities

## Future stars

Tracy Kolb  
Zuger Kirmis & Smith

Robert Manly  
Vogel Law Firm

Joseph Wetch Jr  
Serkland Law Firm



# North Dakota

**N**orth Dakota is a business-friendly state as a consequence of the relaxed tax structure in place there. Owing to the state's small population, a majority of the firms in North Dakota are boutique firms, many of which focus on personal injury and insurance cases.

## Highly recommended

### Maring Williams

Maring Williams focuses on personal injury, employment, and insurance claims. The firm's personal injury practice is subdivided into highly specialized areas, including wrongful death, motor vehicle accidents, brain injury, and building hazards. The firm has offices in Fargo, and Bismarck. Major clients include Roers Development, State Bank & Trust, Workforce Safety & Insurance, and NCMIC (the United States' largest provider of medical malpractice insurance for chiropractors).

A long-standing client describes David Maring as an "excellent trial lawyer who knows how to work a case." He excels in plaintiff litigation; his most recent case involved the representation of a construction worker who suffered a brain injury when he was struck in the head by a metal object. The case was favorably and confidentially settled out of court. He also represented a plaintiff in an oil-field related injury where the client received a significant leg injury after being hit by a steel pipe.

Michael Williams possesses over 20 years of experience focusing on disability cases. He represented a plaintiff who was riding his bike when he was struck by a motor vehicle, resulting in the client's suffering a broken jaw requiring surgical reconstruction. The case was settled out of court for \$300,000.

Daniel Dunn has a strong defense practice and handles a large amount of insurance work. A peer describes Dunn as "a very calm lawyer who comes to trial prepared to the max." He recently represented a family in a liability and coverage issue stemming from the injury of a mother and the death of her two children in a fire in northeastern North Dakota. The case was favorably settled for an undisclosed amount. Dunn is a prominent member of the "I Buckle Up" campaign for the Traffic Safety Task Force. The campaign advocates the use of safety belts to prevent serious injuries in automobile accidents.

### Nilles Law Firm

Peers refer to Nilles Law Firm as an "exceptional firm" with a "strong litigation team." The firm has locations in Fargo and Williston and its 12 attorneys handle cases across the United States. The firm is known for commercial litigation, with an emphasis on trade secrets, environmental law, contract disputes and construction litigation.

Stephen Plambeck is the president of Nilles and has practiced at the firm since 1975. His practice concentrates on products liability, construction litigation, railroad law and class actions. In addition, he has a healthy appellate practice. Plambeck has conducted numerous presentations on various matters relating to civil litigation including depositions, cross examination and new legal technologies. Mark Hanson has been identified as a "top litigator" by his peers and is noted for his insurance, railroad defense and shareholder dispute work.

### Pearce & Durick

Pearce & Durick is often cited as a highly reputable firm by peers and competitors. Since its inception in 1919, the firm has prided itself on an accomplished practice which includes business torts, insurance defense, and employment litigation. Prominent clients include Anheuser-Busch, Black & Decker, The Cincinnati Insurance Companies, Emerson Electric Co., Kawasaki Motors Corp., and The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.

Patrick Durick has over 25 years of trial experience. His client roster includes General Motors, and Dawes Rigging & Crane Rental. He is admitted to the state bars of North Dakota and Nebraska in addition to the United States Court of Appeals, Tax Court and Supreme Court.

Timothy Durick has worked alongside his brother Patrick for years and has extensive trial experience of his own. "He deserves to be a part of any major list of litigators," says a peer. He has tried cases throughout North Dakota and the Midwest involving issues of defamation, employment discrimination, insurance coverage, medical malpractice and negligence.

Larry Boschee is a well-regarded litigator practicing products liability, insurance defense, and business litigation defense. At the time of writing, Boschee is defending an oil and gas company in regards to a personal injury lawsuit stemming from an oil well fire. The case also involves a parallel action in federal court on the interpretation of indemnity agreements.

### Serkland Law Firm

Although the firm is the first to admit that it is not the largest in the region, Serkland Law Firm enjoys a versatile and successful practice, representing clients in personal injury, employment, and insurance litigation.

Regarded as both a plaintiff and a defense firm, partners at Serkland develop close relationships with their clients, which help in crafting cost-effective strategies. The firm is based in Fargo and serves clients across North Dakota and Minnesota.

Ronald McLean has been called a "very capable and good attorney." His practice focuses on commercial and personal injury litigation and he is licensed to practice in all state and federal courts in North Dakota and Minnesota. Clients include Johnson & Johnson and Lloyds of London. McLean holds the honor of being a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

### Vogel Law Firm

Serving clients in North Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana, Vogel Law Firm is praised for its comprehensive litigation skills. The firm has offices in Fargo and Bismarck, with an out-of-state office in Moorhead, Minnesota. With 45 attorneys, it is the largest law firm in North Dakota. The firm handles cases relating to construction, environment law, insurance, products liability, and white-collar crime.

Based out of the Moorhead branch, Patrick Weir Sr. has been called "really one of the best litigators around" by a colleague. Although equipped to tackle products liability and mass torts cases, Weir is best known for his handling of personal injury and wrongful death claims. Daniel Vogel has a concentration in insurance, malpractice, and products liability work. He has been noticed for his strong work in appellate litigation and alternative dispute resolution. Vogel has served on the Board of Directors for the American Law Firm Association and as a past president of the North Dakota Defense Lawyers Association.

### Zuger Kirmis & Smith

Comprising 12 partners and two associates, Zuger Kirmis & Smith successfully serves North Dakota and has attorneys licensed to practice in Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, and South Dakota. The firm has amassed a wide range of clients including Aflac, Bridgestone-Firestone, Dan's Supermarket, Microsoft, Qwest, and Williston Basin Interstate Pipeline Company. Well-regarded in coverage litigation, the firm retains over 15 major insurance companies as clients. The firm has also noticed a growth in labor and railroad litigation.

Rebecca Thiem is highly regarded for her work in commercial and employment litigation. A peer has singled out Thiem for her "wonderful litigation talents." She recently became a fellow in the International Society of Barristers. In addition to her prestigious appointment, Thiem is a board member of the North Dakota Supreme Court Disciplinary Board and the National Conference of Bar Examiners.

Senior partner Lyle Kirmis focuses his practice on commercial, construction,

personal injury and professional malpractice litigation. A competitor notes that “his personal injury practice is strong.”

### Recommended

#### Crowley Fleck

Crowley Fleck was born in January 2009 when Crowley Haughey Hanson Toole & Dietrich merged with Fleck Mather & Strutz. With over 100 lawyers across all offices, Crowley Fleck now has a major presence in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Prior to the merger, Fleck Mather & Strutz operated out of Bismarck, North Dakota with a strong ten attorney team that was well known for its insurance defense work and oil and gas litigation. These practices have been greatly strengthened by the combination of the two firms and will now be complemented by a thriving financial services and securities litigation department.

**Paul Summers** has been an integral part of Fleck Mather & Strutz since he was made partner in 1978. He specializes in real estate, natural resources, and mining law. **Garth Sjue** is based in the firm’s Williston office and deals with commercial and natural resource matters. Peers also compliment his appellate practice.

#### Dorsey & Whitney

Possessing a national reach, with offices in Alaska, California, Delaware, the District of Columbia, and New York in addition to other domestic and overseas locations, Dorsey & Whitney has a strong presence in the United States and abroad. The firm’s Fargo office concentrates on issues of antitrust and bankruptcy, business litigation, construction, employment, insurance, and medical products. Litigators in the Fargo office primarily serve clients in the Red River Valley region, an area which encompasses northeast North Dakota and northwest Minnesota. Major clients include Ag Country Farm Credit Services, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota, Dakota Medical Foundation, Nodak Mutual Insurance Company, and Varistar.

Formerly of Faegre & Benson, **Todd Zimmerman** handles a range of commercial litigation, with a focus on contract litigation, shareholder disputes, and securities litigation. In a recent matter, Zimmerman defended a financial services company in an environmental claim filed after the client commenced foreclosure proceedings on what

would later be discovered a contaminated site. Zimmerman is well known for successful representations of agricultural and manufacturing companies.

#### Jeffries Olson & Flom

Jeffries Olson & Flom is a notable boutique situated in Fargo. This three person firm specializes in representing insurance companies and self-insured clients in contract and tort claims. The firm’s versatility allows it to represent plaintiffs and defendants in matters of employment litigation, liquor

liability, and products liability.

**Thomas Olson** has been a member of the firm since 1986, handling litigation matters exclusively. He has been certified as a civil trial specialist by the Minnesota State Bar Association and belongs to numerous legal organizations including the Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association, the North Dakota Defense Lawyers Association, and the Defense Research Institute.

#### McGee Hankla Backes & Dobrovolny

McGee Hankla Backes & Dobrovolny is a full-service firm with a booming litigation practice. Established in 1901, the firm is noted for its exceptional work in construction, commercial, insurance defense, and products liability litigation. Based in Minot, the firm has amassed a roster of insurance clients including the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund and Central Mutual. The firm utilizes up-to-date internet research technology to best serve its clients.

**Richard McGee** has successfully followed in his grandfather, firm founder George McGee’s, footsteps as a strong litigator representing plaintiffs and defendants in matters of medical malpractice, personal injury, and tort law. He formerly served as president of the American Board of Trial Advocates. **Colin Dobrovolny** works primarily with defendants on insurance personal injury and products liability matters. He is a member of the Ward County Bar Association and the State Bar Association of North Dakota. **Jason Vendsel** is recognized for his insurance defense, construction, and personal injury practices.

#### McNair Larson & Carlson

Comprised of three partners and one associate, McNair Larson & Carlson is viewed as a top-notch litigation firm by its peers. Focusing on business-related cases, the firm has often been retained to work on agriculture matters. **Bruce Carlson** is a notable lawyer in Fargo due to his distinguished commercial litigation and civil defense practice. “He’s definitely an attorney you can turn to if you’re in trouble,” says a competitor.

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#### Morley Law Firm

Morley Law Firm stands out in the North Dakota market because of its proficiency in insurance defense cases. Morley is also adept at managing complex commercial, medical malpractice, and products liability claims. With more than 60 years of experience, the firm has also been noted for its partners’ superior skills in appellate practice. Major insurance clients include Allstate, Auto-Owners Insurance, Canal Insurance, and Dakota Fire. Name partner **Patrick Morley** specializes in commercial and construction litigation in addition to business torts and insurance cases.

#### Pearson Christensen & Clapp

Founded in 1968, Pearson Christensen & Clapp has grown from a one-person tax practice to one of the largest litigation firms in the state. Currently, the firm has the capacity to deal with criminal, family, insurance, personal injury, and products liability litigation. The firm is based in Grand Forks, the third-largest city in the state and a city with an actively growing economic base. The firm was founded by **Gary Pearson** who, prior to starting his own private practice, worked as a trial attorney for the tax division of the United States Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. for three years. Possessing nearly 50 years of trial experience, Pearson is a frequent lecturer, having spoken at the University of North Dakota School of Law and the University of North Dakota School of Accounting.