

James Bradley Smith

Arnold & Smith

Charlotte

Brad Smith started his legal career as an assistant district attorney in Mecklenburg County. After two years, he switched over to the defense side of the courtroom, and practiced criminal defense law, DWI/DUI, and traffic law. Then he started a law firm.

"In the fall of 2007, Matt Arnold and I decided to open our own practice, Arnold & Smith," he says. "Early in our legal careers, this was a risk for both of us and a tremendous leap of faith for our young families."

Hard work paid off, and today, the firm thrives. "We have actually prospered with our business growing exponentially year after year," he says. "Recently we have added two associate attorneys and have seven support staff."

Smith graduated from N.C. State University with a bachelor's in political science and earned his law degree from Mercer University School of Law in Georgia.

Childhood role-playing led Smith to his career practicing law. "My fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Brackett, came up with a creative class project to teach us 'The Great Gilly Hopkins' by Katherine Patterson," he says. "We had a full jury trial where as I recall, Gilly Hopkins was prosecuted for being a bad child."

The entire class was assigned a role for the trial, and Smith served as Gilly's defense attorney. "We had a two-day trial, and after deliberation by a jury composed of parents from our class, Gilly was found not guilty of being bad," Smith says. "If Gilly Hopkins had lost, who knows what I would be doing professionally."

After Smith grew up and started practicing in a real courtroom, he was surprised at the role of politics in the law. "I think too often our judges' decisions are based on what they believe to be politically responsible rather than what may be legally appropriate," he says.

Nevertheless, he maintains that he never takes anything said during a trial personally.

"Business is business," he says.



How I balance work and my personal life: "My wife, Whitney, and I have been happily married for seven years. We have an amazing one year-old daughter and two Labrador Retrievers. I look forward to the evenings and weekends I get to spend with my family."

How I use social media: "Social media has absolutely transformed the legal profession. My law firm has its own Facebook page and we have three active blogs attached to the firm's website. I think in order to stay relevant in today's marketplace, you must have a strong web presence and that means using social media."

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