



Thomas E. Terrell Jr.

Partner

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Raleigh, NC

Tom Terrell has helped clients successfully navigate land use, zoning and environmental matters in more than 350 counties and municipalities throughout North Carolina, as well as in Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia, representing a variety of difficult-to-permit industries, including mines and quarries, landfills, solar farms, industrial parks and cell towers.

Featured in *Waste Advantage Magazine* for his work on over 40 solid waste facilities, Tom has also handled or consulted on renewable energy projects totaling over 4,000 megawatts of energy in four states. He has represented several mining companies on a broad range of land use and regulatory matters in the development of rock quarries, sand and sand rock mining, and a lithium mine. He played a key role in the rezoning of the approximately 2,000-acre megasite in Randolph County, NC, where Toyota will construct its lithium battery plant.

Numerous city and county governments have retained Tom as litigation counsel. He serves as general counsel to the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation and speaks regularly to industry, trade, governmental, university;and attorney groups on evolving land use and environmental regulations affecting the development of land.

In 2012 and 2013, Tom chaired the North Carolina Bar Association drafting committee that rewrote the statute governing boards of adjustment, and he subsequently chaired the Bar Association committee that prepared a comprehensive rewrite of North Carolina's zoning and land use statutes.

Zoning and General Land Use

Tom serves as Co-Chair the firm's Zoning & Land Use Group. Commercial, industrial and residential developers in municipalities and counties in every region of North Carolina rely on Tom to represent them in all phases of the permitting and entitlement processes, including in the pre-zoning stages and before all local boards. He has also counseled clients on matters related to local ordinance interpretation, vested rights, preemption, special use permits, and statutory and constitutional limitations on governmental exactions.

Litigation

Tom routinely represents private parties and local governments in state and federal courts at the trial and appellate levels on matters related to land use/zoning denials, real estate contract disputes and torts related to land and real estate.

Development Agreements

Tom has negotiated several complex development agreements on behalf of both local governments and private developers, seeking to carefully define the long-term relationship between the developer and the government(s) involved so that matters related to utility and road construction, entitlements, dedications and land use allowances and restrictions are carefully articulated and practically interpreted.

Solid Waste

Private companies and local governments have hired Tom to represent them in matters related to solid waste franchises and local approval and state permitting for over 40 solid waste facilities, including facilities for MSW, C&D, LCID, medical waste, coal ash, recycling, scrap metal, composting and transfer stations.

Telecommunications

Tom has represented three cellular carriers and five tower construction companies in securing local approval of cellular tower sites across the state as well as in Virginia and South Carolina.

Services

- Zoning & Land Use
- Environmental
- Infrastructure & Development
- Real Estate
- Litigation
- Real Estate Litigation
- Energy & Natural Resources
- Energy & Natural Resources Litigation
- Renewable Energy & Project Development
- Appellate Practice

Before Fox Rothschild

Tom was a partner and Leader of the Real Estate Practice Group covering six offices at Smith Moore Leatherwood LLP, which combined with Fox Rothschild in 2018.

Bar Admissions

- North Carolina

Court Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of North Carolina
- U.S. District Court, Middle District of North Carolina

Education

- University of North Carolina School of Law (J.D., 1985)
- University of Chicago (M.A., 1980)
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (B.A., 1979)

Memberships

- North Carolina Bar
 - Chairman, Zoning, Planning and Land Use Section Council (past)
 - Administrative Law Section Council (past)

Board of Directors

- Board of Directors, High Point City Project (past)
- Chairman, Board of Trustees, North Carolina State Health Plan (past)
- Chairman, Board of Trustees, Winston-Salem State University (past)
- Board of Directors, UNC-CH General Alumni Association (past)
- Guilford College Board of Visitors (past)
- Board of Directors, High Point Chamber of Commerce (past)
- Center for Creative Leadership, Board of Center Associates (past)
- Chairman, High Point Core City Board (past)
- Trustee, N.C. Shakespeare Festival (past)

Honors & Awards

- Selected to the "Power List" for Real Estate by *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly* (2025)
- Recognized in *Business North Carolina's* Legal Elite for Real Estate (2013, 2024-2026)
- Named a "Leader in the Law" by *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly* (2023)
- Recognized by *Chambers USA* for Real Estate: Zoning/Land Use in North Carolina (2014-2025)
- Recipient, North Carolina Bar Association Zoning, Planning & Land Use Section Award of Excellence (2019)
- North Carolina *Super Lawyers*, Listed Environmental/Land Use Law (2006, 2010), Environmental (2011-2013), Land Use and Zoning (2017-2022)
- Selected to the "Best Lawyers in America" list for Litigation-Land Use & Zoning (2011-2024, 2026) and Real Estate Law (2018-2024, 2026) in Greensboro, NC by *Best Lawyers*
- Martindale-Hubbell's top "AV" Peer Review Rating

Beyond Fox Rothschild

In his spare time, Tom raises donkeys, chickens, and guineas on his family's farm, and enjoys summer evenings fishing on one of his farm ponds.