

WILLIAM A. NELSON

wnelson@law.gwu.edu

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Securities law and public policy leader with over 15 years of experience in federal securities regulation, financial services policy, retirement security, and legislative affairs. Proven record of shaping regulatory and legislative outcomes through strategic Congressional advocacy, coalition leadership, and direct engagement with regulators and industry stakeholders. Deep expertise in analyzing complex SEC rulemakings and federal legislation, translating technical requirements into actionable policy strategy. Experienced in advancing market integrity, investor protection, and innovation, including emerging issues such as AI governance, digital assets, and fintech regulation.

EXPERIENCE

Investment Adviser Association, Washington, DC

December 2021 – Present

Director of Public Policy and Associate General Counsel

- Advise more than 550 IAA member firms - collectively managing over \$57 trillion in global assets - on federal securities regulation and legislative developments impacting both individual and institutional investors
- Serve as the IAA's sole federal lobbyist, representing the organization before Congress, regulatory agencies, and global policymakers; build strategic coalitions; and drive integrated legislative and regulatory advocacy strategies
- Lead year-round advocacy initiatives, including Adviser Advocacy Day, grassroots mobilization, PAC strategy, strengthening Capitol Hill relationships and advancing policy priorities
- Author and deliver influential technical comment letters, policy analyses, and congressional testimony on complex Securities law, fintech, and investment adviser regulatory matters
- Develop practical compliance resources and educational programming - including conference presentations, workshops, and webinars - to equip member firms to navigate evolving regulatory requirements with confidence

University of Denver, Sturm College of Law, Denver, CO

July 2020 – Present

Adjunct Professor, Securities Law and Regulation

- Design and deliver engaging online lectures on complex securities law, covering topics such as defining a security, materiality, offerings, anti-fraud provisions, and adviser and fund regulation

Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc., Washington, DC

January 2021 – December 2021

Assistant General Counsel

- Partnered with the General Counsel to establish and support councils, commissions, and working groups that informed updates to the CFP Board's Code of Ethics, Standards of Conduct, and related rules
- Supported enforcement and disciplinary matters by preparing case materials, drafting formal notices, and serving as liaison to the Disciplinary and Ethics Commission
- Conducted in-depth legal research and governance analysis; prepared briefing materials and presentations for Board of Directors meetings

Mercer Global Advisors Inc., Denver, CO

June 2017 – January 2021

Chief Compliance Officer

- Served as Chief Compliance Officer for one of the largest independent SEC-registered investment advisers, overseeing 70 branch offices, 1,200+ employees, and \$70B in AUM
- Directed a \$5M compliance budget, leading SEC examinations, internal audits, and all regulatory filings through IARD and EDGAR.
- Led compliance integration for 40+ acquisitions, supporting \$32 billion in asset growth over four years
- Served as a Corporate Officer and Senior Executive Team member, providing strategic guidance on regulatory, compliance, and governance matters
- Overhauled the firm's compliance program, including drafting a comprehensive Compliance Manual aligned with federal securities laws
- Designed and implemented a firmwide compliance testing program to monitor adherence to federal and state regulatory requirements
- Acted as a subject matter expert on securities laws, providing legal interpretations and guidance to senior leadership and staff
- Led compliance education and training initiatives across the organization to strengthen risk management and regulatory awareness

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Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc., Washington, DC

July 2013 – June 2017

Public Policy Counsel

- Served as the lead public policy advocate for an organization representing more than 100,000 CFP® professionals nationwide
- Researched and analyzed regulatory issues impacting broker-dealers, investment advisers, and financial planners to advance CFP Board's public policy and advocacy priorities
- Served as a subject matter expert on regulatory compliance, providing interpretation of federal securities laws, ERISA, and the Administrative Procedure Act
- Drafted regulatory comment letters to the SEC on Dodd-Frank implementation and to the Department of Labor on fiduciary standards and retirement security issues
- Developed policy briefs, advocacy materials, and testimony for Congressional hearings and stakeholder engagement

The George Washington University Law School, Washington, DC

August 2010 – August 2017

Adjunct Professor, Legal Research and Writing

- Prepared lectures for and led discussion of classes focused on legal analysis, writing legal documents including memoranda and briefs, and engaging in legal research

Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC

June 2009 – July 2013

Associate Counsel

- Drafted more than 450 high-quality decisions for Administrative Law Judges on veterans' benefits claims, requiring complex legal research, application of the Code of Federal Regulations and case law, and detailed analysis of medical and military service records
- Prepared legal opinion requests to the VA Office of General Counsel seeking guidance on unresolved legal questions in cases pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC

October 2008 – June 2009

Attorney, Natural Resources Section, Environmental and Natural Resources Division

- Assigned to over 100 cases filed against the United States by Indian tribes alleging the Federal Government failed to properly manage tribal trust funds and did not comply with other inherent and statutory fiduciary duties as trustees
- Core duties included assisting senior trial attorneys in writing legal briefs, compiling court documents, electronic filing, docket management, conducting document reviews, and all other preparations required for conducting complex litigation

EDUCATION

The George Washington University Law School, Washington, DC

May 2008

LL.M., International Law with a Business and Finance Specialization

The University of Tulsa College of Law, Tulsa, OK

May 2007

J.D., *With Honor*

Tulsa Journal of International and Comparative Law, Publishing Editor

The University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK

May 2004

B.S., in Business Administration; Major: Management Information Systems

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS / DESIGNATIONS

- Chair, District of Columbia Bar Association, Corporation, Finance and Securities Law Community
- Designation Holder, Certified Association AI Professional (AAiP)
- Designation Holder, Certificate in Blockchain and Digital Assets (CBDA)
- Certificate, AI Fundamentals for Non-Data Scientists, The Wharton School
- Certificate, Generative AI: Governance, Policy, and Emerging Regulation, University of Michigan

PUBLICATIONS AND SCHOLARLY WORKS

Available Upon Request