

Super Lawyers®

A GREAT WAY TO FIND GREAT ATTORNEYS

If you need a lawyer, *Super Lawyers*, a Thomson Reuters Service, is a handy resource. We've designed *Super Lawyers* to provide you with information that will help you begin your search for legal counsel or check on a lawyer who's been recommended to you.

In creating *Super Lawyers* (and *Rising Stars*, our listing of top attorneys who are 40 years old and younger or who have been in practice 10 years or less), we perform the type of due diligence that a highly motivated and informed consumer would undertake if he or she had an abundance of time, energy and resources—the very things that are in short supply in most people's lives. *Super Lawyers* does the footwork for you, and presents you with a list of outstanding lawyers in more than 60 areas of practice.

First, we ask lawyers across the state to name the top attorneys they've personally observed in action. We also perform our own research to find outstanding attorneys who may have been overlooked by their peers. Once we have our candidate pool assembled, we assess the background, credentials and experience of each lawyer. Specifically, we look at 12 indicators of peer recognition and professional achievement—things like experience, verdicts and settlements, transactions, clients, honors and awards.

The lawyers are then evaluated by a blue ribbon panel of peers within their primary area of practice. Before final selections are made, we divide the lawyers by firm size and choose the top lawyers from each group until we have a list that represents 5 percent of the lawyers in the state (*Rising Stars* lists are limited to 2.5 percent). This ensures that you have options from all types of law firms—large, medium and small.

Finally, we check the discipline record of each lawyer prior to

publication. For a more detailed description of the selection process, visit superlawyers.com.

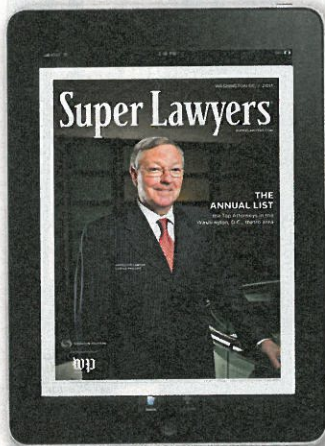
So how do you use *Super Lawyers*? We list the lawyers by practice area. Find the practice area that pertains to your particular legal needs. Lawyers listed in red have purchased profiles that are located on the indicated page. The profiles provide you with useful information about a lawyer's background, experience and credentials.

You can also search *Super Lawyers* online by practice area and location at superlawyers.com. This section can be a great resource for you, but remember: *Super Lawyers* is a tool to help you search for a lawyer, but it is not a substitute for doing your own homework. Do not rely exclusively on this, or any other list in selecting counsel.

If your lawyer is not listed, don't take this as a sign of mediocrity. Only a small percentage of the lawyers in the state are selected for inclusion on our lists. That being the case, many excellent attorneys are not named. *Super Lawyers* is simply one indicator of peer recognition and professional achievement.

A final word: You may wonder whether lawyers pay to be included. The simple and unequivocal answer is no. Lawyers do not and cannot pay to be included, and advertising has no bearing on selection to the list (in fact, ads are not sold until after final selections are made).

We hope you find *Super Lawyers* helpful. If you have any suggestions on how we might make this section or our website more useful, or if you want to recommend a lawyer for inclusion, contact Cindy Larson, director of research and editorial, at cindy.larson@thomsonreuters.com.



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Note: The list was finalized as of March 25, 2011. Any updates to the list (for example, status changes or disqualifying events) will be reflected on superlawyers.com.

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Kathleen O'Brien has practiced family law for more than 27 years, and is consistently named to *Super Lawyers*® in Washington, D.C. and Virginia. She has extensive experience in resolving complex cases involving divorce, child custody, child and spousal support and property distribution. Active in local and state bar associations, Kathleen is a past-president of the Virginia State Bar, and is currently a co-chair of the Collaborative Professionals of Northern Virginia.



Frances Fite has practiced family law for more than 30 years, and is consistently named to *Super Lawyers* in Washington, D.C. and Virginia. She has been a mediator since 1991 and is certified by the Supreme Court of Virginia. Frances has been a pioneer in Virginia's Collaborative Law movement, and she is convinced that a majority of cases can and should be resolved in a positive family-focused process, such as the Collaborative Process.

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