

Christopher P. Bussert

Senior Counsel

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Services

Anti-Counterfeiting & Gray Markets
Brand Licensing & Related
Transactions
Clearance & Portfolio Management
Copyright Litigation & Counseling
Franchising
Intellectual Property
Trademark Litigation
Trademark, Copyright &
Advertising

Chris Bussert has more than 40 years of experience in helping clients protect and defend their most important assets and brands. Chris represents clients in trademark, franchise, copyright, and unfair competition litigation, including proceedings before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board, and in licensing and trademark clearance and prosecution matters.

Chris was recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Franchise Law, Intellectual Property Litigation, and Trademark Law in 2027 and the 20 years immediately preceding and was also named a 2015 and 2022 "Atlanta Lawyer of the Year" in the area of Franchise Law by *The Best Lawyers in America*®. He was listed as one of 20 practitioners in "The Trademark Experts' Experts" by *World Trademark Review*. He has also been listed in *World Trademark Review*'s guide to the top 1,000 trademark practitioners in the world every year since its inception and is currently recognized as a "Luminary". Chris has also been listed repeatedly in the "International Who's Who of Trademark Lawyers", the "International Who's Who of Franchise Lawyers", and the "International Who's Who of Business Lawyers" by *Law Business Research Ltd*. He was named a 2008 Georgia "Super Lawyer" in the areas of Intellectual Property, Intellectual Property Litigation and Franchise/Dealership Law by *Super Lawyers* magazine. Chris has been recognized as one of *Georgia Trend*'s 2012 "Legal Elite" for Intellectual Property Law. In 2010, and again in 2025 and the ten years immediately preceding, he was recognized as a "Legal Eagle" by *Franchise Times* and was also named to its "2023 Hall of Fame Class." In 2025, Chris received the Lewis Rudnick Award, the ABA Forum on Franchising's highest honor. He was named by Legal Media Group to the 2010, 2012 and 2014 *Guide to the World's Leading Trademark Lawyers*. Chris was listed in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 editions of *Chambers USA* for Franchising and was also ranked nationally for Franchising in the 2017 and 2018 editions. He was a recipient of the 2016 and 2020 Client Choice Award USA & Canada in the Intellectual Property - Trademarks category for Georgia from Lexology and the International Law Office

(ILO). Chris received the 2010 University of Toledo College of Law Distinguished Alumnus Award. He is AV® rated by Martindale-Hubbell.*

Experience

Represented the Morgan & Morgan law firm in resolution of a trademark infringement and unfair competition lawsuit against a competitor law firm. *Morgan Global, PLLC v. Croskey Law, PLLC*, No. 3:2025-CV-00491 (M.D. Fla., filed May 1, 2025).

Represented Pound Law, Inc. in overcoming a refusal by the United States Patent and Trademark Office to register the mnemonic telephone number #LAW on the Principal Register. *Pound Law LLC v. Vidal et al.*, No. 6:2023-CV00061-RMN (M.D. Fla., Order entered Sep. 1, 2023).

Represented SMOOTHIE KING® franchiser against Wale Oyenuga, a former SMOOTHIE KING® franchisee that was accused of trademark infringement, unfair competition, and violation of the post-term non-compete provision of his franchise agreement. Obtained a permanent injunction against the former franchisee. *Smoothie King Franchises, Inc. v. Oyenuga et al.*, No. 1:2020-CV-02615 (N.D. Ga., Order entered Oct. 27, 2020).

Represented a regional culinary business in defending claims made by competitor for trademark infringement and unfair competition. *Valley Hospitality Services, LLC v. Jamie Keating Culinary, Inc.*, Civil Action No. SU-18-CV-845-68 (Muscogee County, Georgia, Order entered May 18, 2018).

Represented Gladys Knight in a dispute involving a former licensee's right to use her name in connection with a national restaurant chain. Secured a permanent injunction preventing the use of her name by the former licensee. *Gladys Knight-McDowell v. Rival Group, LLC, Cascade Foods, LLC, Granite Foods, LLC, and Shanga Hankerson*, (N.D. Ga., Order entered August 29, 2016) and *State of Georgia, ex rel. Tracy Graham Lawson, District Attorney for Clayton Judicial Circuit v. Shanga Hankerson, et al.*, (Clayton County, Georgia, July 22, 2016).

Successfully defended a national personal products manufacturer in a licensing dispute. *M.D. Science Lab, LLC, v. Jenkins, et al.*, AAA No. 79 122 00067 11 JENF (2014).

Achieved a win on behalf of MR. ELECTRIC® franchisor against Alber Electric, a business operated by a former MR. ELECTRIC® franchisee that was accused of trademark infringement and unfair competition. After a bench trial, a permanent injunction was obtained as well as an award of the former franchisee's profits. Subsequently, summary judgment was obtained against the former franchisee's principal for his part of the infringement and later an award of attorney's fees. *Mr. Electric Corp. v. Reiad Khalil, et al.*, No. 2:06-cv-02414-CM-GLR (D. Kan. 2009). *Mr. Electric Corp. v. Khalil*, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15723 (D. Kan. Feb. 6, 2013) and *Mr. Electric v. Khalil*, Bus. Franchise Guide (CCH) 15176 (D. Kan. Oct. 16, 2013).

Represented GLASS DOCTOR® franchisor and successfully defended claim made by a former franchisee that the parties' dispute must be arbitrated. *Synergistic International, Inc. v. Monaghan*, 2013 WL 5587269 (C.D. Ill. Oct. 10, 2013).

Represented TWO MEN AND A TRUCK® franchisor and obtained a preliminary and permanent injunction against an infringer and an award of attorney's fees. *Two Men and a Truck/International, Inc. v. Robert Lee Thomas, et al.*, 908 F. Supp. 2d 1029 (D. Neb. 2012).

Represented TWO MEN AND A TRUCK® franchisor in enforcing right of first refusal to purchase trademark. Eliminated geographic concurrent restriction on company's service mark registrations and created national trademark right. *Two Men and A Truck Int'l, Inc. v. David Underwood, et. al.*, No. 11-00598 (E.D. Va. filed June 1, 2011).

Achieved a win on behalf of MR. APPLIANCE® franchisor against former MR. APPLIANCE® franchisees. The former franchisees were accused of violating their franchise agreement's post-term non-compete provision and debranding obligations of their franchise agreement. After a bench trial, a permanent injunction was obtained enforcing the non-compete provision to its full extent, an assignment of the former franchisees' MR. APPLIANCE® telephone numbers and an award of attorney's fees. *Mr. Appliance Corp. v. Woodrow Holloway et al.*, No. 6-004 (W.D. Tex. filed Jan. 7, 2010).

Represented the National Football League and the New Orleans Saints in a trademark dispute involving rights in and to the designation "Who Dat" and subsequently in rolling out a co-branding license program involving a wide variety of products. *Who Dat?, Inc. v. NFL Properties LLC, et al.*, Case No. 2:10-CV-02296-CJB-KWR (E.D. La. 2010).

Defended Network Communications Inc., a national publishing company, in a trademark infringement action. Obtained summary judgment that the plaintiff's mark was generic. *New Homefinders Inc. v. Network Communications Inc.*, No. 06-0442 (N.D. TX filed Feb. 26, 2008).

Represented GLASS DOCTOR® franchisor and obtained a preliminary injunction against third-party infringer. *Synergistic International Inc. v. Windshield Doctor, Inc.*, 2003 WL 21468568 (C.D. Cal. April 28, 2003).

Represented Harley-Davidson in obtaining a multi-county preliminary injunction and seizure order in connection with anticipated counterfeiting activities during its 100th Anniversary Open Road Tour. *Harley-Davidson Motor Co. Group, et al. v. John Does, et al.*, No. 02-2003 (N.D. Ga. filed July 18, 2002).

Represented the National Football League in 1994 and 2000 in connection with obtaining multi-county preliminary injunction and seizure orders in connection with anticipated counterfeiting activities at Super Bowl XXXIV and XXVIII. *National Football League Properties, Inc., St. Louis Rams Partnership and Tennessee Football, L.P. v. Does 1 through 100*, (Fulton Co. Sup. Ct. 1994, 2000).

Represented the National Football League and Atlanta Falcons in a trademark dispute involving rights in and to the "Dirty Bird" mark. *Alan Weiss v. National Football League Properties, Inc. and Logo Athletic, Inc. and The Five Smiths, Inc. d/b/a The Atlanta Falcons*, Case No. 1:99-CV-0928-RLV (N.D. Ga.).

Obtained a preliminary injunction on behalf of COLORS ON PARADE® franchisor against a former franchisee enforcing the franchise agreement's post-termination noncompete and debranding provisions. *Total Car*

Franchising Corp. v. L & S Paint Works, Inc., 981 F. Supp. 1079 (M.D. Tenn. 1997).

Represented LONGHORN STEAKS® franchisor against a third party operating under a confusingly similar mark. Obtained a permanent injunction and an award of the infringer's profits on behalf of the franchisor.

Contemporary Restaurant Concepts, Ltd. v. Las Tapas-Jacksonville, Inc., 19 U.S.P.Q.2d 1411 (M.D. Fla. 1991).

Represented Abatement Technologies Inc., manufacturer of negative air machines used for asbestos removal, in an action brought by a competitor based on misappropriation of trade secrets, fraud, misrepresentation and breach of fiduciary duty. Obtained summary judgment on all claims asserted by the competitor. *Aerospace America, Inc. v. Abatement Technologies, Inc.*, 738 F. Supp. 1061 (E.D. Mich. 1990).

Successfully defended FANTASTIC SAMS® national haircutting franchisor against former franchisees' fraud and breach of contract claims in arbitration. *Fantastic Sam's Int'l, Inc. v. Forrest and Lottie Spain*, AAA No. 30 14 0153 88 (1988).

Represented Roosevelt Thomas & Associates, a national diversity consulting firm, with negotiating license agreements with a number of global *Fortune* 500 companies to use the consulting firm's copyrighted materials.

Represented the Callaway Gardens Resort in connection with negotiating license agreements involving the organization's nationally recognized CALLAWAY and CALLAWAY GARDENS brands.

Education

University of Toledo J.D. (1983) *magna cum laude*, *Order of the Coif*

Kalamazoo College B.A. (1978) Biology

Admissions

Georgia (1986)

Court Admissions

Supreme Court of Georgia (1995)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit (2005)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (1992)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (2005)

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia (1986)

Professional & Community Activities

ABA Forum on Franchising, Former Governing Committee, Member, Co-Chair 2016 Annual Meeting – Miami Beach, Florida (2016)

The Franchise Law Journal, Former Editor-in-Chief

The Intellectual Property Strategist, Editor

The Trademark Reporter, Former Editor

The International Trademark Association (INTA), ADR Outreach Subcommittee Chair (2009-2011), ADR Law Firm Outreach Subcommittee Chair (2007-2009), Annual Meeting, Past Chair (2004), Information Resources Committee, Past Chair, Vice-Chair and Subcommittee Chair (1997-2003)

Kalamazoo College, Board of Trustees, Former Member, and Alumni Association Executive Board, Past President

University of Toledo College of Law, Dean's Advisory Council, Former Member

United States Tennis Association - Georgia, Adult Competition Committee, Former Chair; Investment and Finance Committee, Former Member

United States Tennis Association - Georgia Men's Callen Cup Team, Captain (Since 2017)

USA Gordon Trophy International Team (Since 2016), Men's 70s Captain (Since 2025)

United States Tennis Association – Southern Donoff Intersectionals Men's Captain (Since 2025)

United States Tennis Association – Southern William ("Slew") Hester Adult Male Player of the Year (2022)

National Men's Tennis Association, Board Member (Since 2025)

Georgia State College of Law, Past Adjunct Professor

University of Georgia, The University of Toledo College of Law, Lecturer

Insights

News Releases

Kilpatrick Attorneys Once Again Earn Outstanding Recognitions in 2027 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America®

August 20, 2026

Perspectives

6 Key Takeaways | Ethics: Investigations Gone Wild

February 10, 2026

News Releases

With Record-Breaking Numbers, Kilpatrick Once Again Achieves Most U.S. Attorneys Ranked in 2026 World Trademark Review 1000

February 3, 2026

Events

2026 Advanced Trademark Law Seminar

January 29, 2026

Perspectives

5 Key Takeaways | Ethical Considerations in IP Investigations: Balancing Effectiveness and Integrity

December 5, 2025