GRAYROBINSON



Rachael M. Crews

Litigation Deputy Section Chair

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Focus

- Eminent Domain and Condemnation Law
- Appellate
- Litigation
- Environmental and Sustainability Law
- Election Law

Distinguished eminent domain lawyer advising property owners across Florida at the trial and appellate levels. Known for effective and persuasive written advocacy.

Rachael Crews represents property owners, business owners, and select condemning authorities in complex eminent domain cases and land use litigation across Florida. A versatile and highly-skilled trial attorney, she has served as lead counsel in numerous eminent domain and inverse condemnation proceedings, valuation trials, and Bert Harris actions. Clients include owners of large and small residential properties, commercial properties, vacant properties, agricultural properties, gas stations, mining sites, shopping centers, developed communities, and subdivisions, among others.

With diverse trial experience in both federal and state court, Rachael has tried and defended numerous non-jury trials and evidentiary matters to resolution. As part of her role defending landowners against natural gas line acquisitions in federal court, she was chosen by eminent domain colleagues around the state to take the lead in writing key briefs, which helped prompt federal court rulings allowing Florida property owners to recover their fees and costs in federal court. She has also served as second chair in two high-stakes, multi-million-dollar eminent domain jury trials.

Rachael helps clients navigate a variety of complex civil litigation matters and has developed a particular expertise in appeals involving eminent domain, land use, marital and family, high-profile individuals, and whistleblower law. Known for her love of the written word, she has distinguished herself among clients and colleagues as a go-to practitioner, handling numerous appeals on behalf of both appellees and appellants. Two of Rachael's cases resulted in written opinions establishing or clarifying new law in her clients' favor. She frequently teams with GrayRobinson colleagues in the corporate, real estate, and land use practice areas to provide robust litigation support services to clients.

Below is a sampling of some of the land use and eminent domain matters Rachael has handled:

- Road projects and acquisitions
- Bridge projects and acquisitions
- Whole-System Utility valuation trials

- Pond sites and acquisitions
- Rail sites and acquisitions
- Mineral and mine valuations and acquisitions
- Power line, water line, gas line, and other utility easements and acquisitions
- Flooding cases
- Airport and avigation easements
- Vested Rights litigation
- Writs of Certiorari and Prohibition
- Comprehensive Plan and Chapter 163 litigation
- Land Use Decision Challenges
- Property Tax Challenges

Notable Work

- Key team member representing the property owner in the highest valued eminent domain case in the history of the state of Florida, FDOT v. U.S. Cities, valued at more than $198 million

Recognition

- *Best Lawyers in America*, 2023-2027
  - Commercial Litigation
  - Eminent Domain and Condemnation Law
    - Lawyer of the Year, 2027
- Florida *Super Lawyers*, "Rising Star," 2009-2011, 2013-2018
- *Orlando Business Journal*, Women Who Mean Business, Honoree, 2020
- U.S. Service Academy Interview Panelist for the United States Naval Academy, 2019

Insights

- "Contested Order of Taking (OT) Roundtable: Practice Pointers for a Contested OT from Both Owner and Condemning Authority Perspectives," Presenter, 29th Annual Florida Eminent Domain Conference, November 14, 2025
- "Design-Build Projects," Presenter, Florida Eminent Domain Conference, November 14, 2024
- "Getting Past "No" With Local Governments," Presenter, Florida Eminent Domain Conference, October 24, 2022
- "Preparing for the September 18 Value Adjustment Boards Deadline," Panelist, 2020
- Senator Rick Scott's U.S. Service Academy Interviews, Panelist, 2019
- "Why Orlando? A Panel Discussion About Why to Work, Live, and Stay in Orlando," Panelist, OCBA Young Lawyers Section Luncheon, 2019
- "The Direction of Law Firm Management," Panelist, Law Firm Management, 2018

Media

- "April 1, 2026, News and Notes," *The Florida Bar News*, March 31, 2026
- "Personnel File --- People on the Move, March 2, 2026," *News Service of Florida*, March 2, 2026
- "Palm Coast Mayor Norris Files Dismissal Notice of His Lawsuit Against the City, Scrapping Rehearing or Appeal," *FlaglerLive.com*, August 14, 2025

- "In Stinging Defeat for Mayor Norris, Judge Rules on All Counts in Favor of City's Gambaro Appointment," *FlaglerLive.com*, July 3, 2025
- "Answering Lawsuit, Palm Coast Accuses Mayor Norris of Frivolously Weaponizing Court Against Gambaro's Legitimacy," *FlaglerLive.com*, May 30, 2025
- "Judge France Will Rule on Whether to Nullify Palm Coast's Debt Referendum Before Close of Election Day," FlaglerLive, November 1, 2024
- "Appeals Process in Utility Case Gives Vero Cash Windfall," *Vero News,* April 20, 2023
- "Fla. Town Says City Breached Water Services Contract," *Law360,* April 4, 2023
- "Crossroads Center Near Disney Reaches Historic $198 Million Eminent Domain Settlement With State," Orlando Sentinel, January 21, 2021
- "New Trial Ordered After Fla. Doc's $1.35M Whistleblower Win," Law360, October 30, 2020
- "Deja Vu: Recount Veterans Back At It In Florida," Law360, November 15, 2018

Affiliations

- American Bar Association
- Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers
- The Federalist Society
- The Florida Bar
  - Young Lawyers Section, Member
  - Eminent Domain Standing Committee, Member
- Judicial Nominating Commission, 9th Judicial Circuit
- Orange County Bar Association, Appellate Law Section
- George C. Young American Inn of Court
- PACE Center For Girls, Inc., Orange County Board, Former Chair
- Wofford College Young Leaders

Credentials

- J.D., Vanderbilt Law School, 2004
- B.A., Wofford College, 2001

Admissions

- Florida
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Southern, Middle, and Northern Districts of Florida
- U.S. Supreme Court