

Erika E. Cole, Esq.

THE CHURCH ATTORNEY®

Professional Summary

Accomplished attorney & CEO who has built significant business and contacts in the faith-based and nonprofit arena, developed over 25+ years by listening to client needs, developing a strategy to solve problems, clearly communicating the successful path forward, and serving with joy.

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Cole Law Offices, LLC | March 2022 - Present

Managing Partner/Chief Executive Officer

Founder and operator of a full-service law firm concentrating in the representation of denominations, churches, and other tax-exempt clients; Founder of the Faithful Foundations Membership, a program designed to provide accessible legal education to churches and their leadership teams; serves as General Counsel to national and international denominations; provides training to churches and organizations in risk management and critical governance areas; manages all aspects of the law firm practice and staffing.

Whiteford, Taylor & Preston | July 2017 -February 2022

Equity Partner

Served as outside General Counsel to churches, nonprofits and faith-based organizations in a broad range of corporate transactions with national and international presence; effective communicator advising church leaders and the Board of Directors on strategic legal and corporate direction; increased value to clients by resolving compliance, HR, and regulatory issues; compiled the right team of professionals for complex projects, leveraging my excellent relationships with other professionals.

Co-Chair Mentoring Program for associates in the Columbia/Rockville/DC offices;

Served on Firm's Ethics Committee

Created Mentor-Protégé Program for attorneys in the BIPOC community and to be of service in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion matters

The Law Offices of Erika E. Cole, LLC | June 2005 - July 2017

Principal

Founded and operated a full-service law firm concentrating in the representation of non-profit and tax-exempt clients; founder of The Church Compliance Conference, designed to inform and inspire pastors and leaders in areas of legal compliance; served as General Counsel to national and international denominations; provide training to churches and organizations in risk management and critical governance areas; manage all aspects of the law firm including other attorneys and staff; author of *The Church Attorney's Guide* series.

Ferguson, Schetelich, & Ballew, P.A. | September 2000 - May 2005

Associate

Provided comprehensive legal services to small- and medium-size businesses, including matters of business structure and management, tax planning, private stock offerings, and business acquisitions and sales; represent charitable, religious and tax-exempt organizations; co-authored Maryland Law of Religious Corporations.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

University of Baltimore School of Law, Baltimore MD | August 2001 - May 2005

Adjunct Professor

Taught Legal Analysis, Research, and Writing, a required first-year course designed to train students in persuasive legal writing and appellate oral advocacy.

Loyola College of Maryland, Baltimore MD | May 1998 - May 2001

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Law

Taught GB 612: Legal and Regulatory Issues in Business, core course in the MBA Program that included contracts, business torts, and labor & employment law; Taught BA 305: Legal Environment of Business; facilitated Mock Trial with student participation.

EDUCATION

University of Baltimore School of Law, Baltimore MD | May 1996

Juris Doctor

Admitted: Maryland Bar

James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA | May 1993

Bachelor of Science in Political Science with a minor in Communications

MEDIA RECOGNITION AND SERVICE

Keynote Speaker at the Ultimate Financial & Legal Summit, October 2025, Virtual
“Top 5 Hidden Legal Risks in Ministry & How to Prevent Them

Keynote Speaker at The Church Network Conference, July 2025, Omaha, Nebraska
Keynote: “Law & Leadership: The Keys to Protecting Your Ministry”

Keynote Speaker at the MORE Conference, March 2025, Ocala, Florida
“Top 5 Hidden Legal Risks Churches Face & How to Fix Them”

Co-Organizer of the Rest & Renew Cruise, January 2025, Bahamas

Founder and Producer of The Church Law Podcast, 2022 - Present

Baltimore Business Journal - Who’s Who in Law, 2021

The Daily Record “The Church Attorney Joins Whiteford Taylor’s Flock”, July 2017

Baltimore Business Journal- “How I Became The Church Attorney”, August, 2017

Editorial Advisory Board for Church Law & Tax, 2016 to present

Appointed to the Panel of Legal Experts for the Commission of Accountability for Religious Organizations (2011)

Author: The Church Attorney’s Guide series