

Florida-based Bryant Miller Olive celebrates 50 years of public finance law

By Shelly Sigo October 09, 2020, 2:44 p.m. EDT

For five decades, Florida-grown Bryant Miller Olive PA has practiced public finance law across the Sunshine State and the Southeast.

BMO's practice areas also include state and local government law, complex transactions, project finance, and litigation.



The offices of Bryant Miller Olive celebrated the firm's 50th anniversary at a retreat in January.
BMO

The firm turned 50 on Tuesday. It was founded by former Florida Gov. C. Farris Bryant, Wilton R. Miller and Robert Olive, both former assistant attorneys general for the state, and bond finance veteran Benjamin H. Dickens.

Their founding vision statement was, and remains, "We will be known by the quality of the service we provide."

That vision earned the company a reputation as one of Florida's preeminent law firms, said Grace Dunlap, BMO's managing shareholder the past nine years.

"Throughout the past 50 years, Bryant Miller Olive has continued to build upon that reputation by focusing on our core subject matter expertise, our diversity, and providing a team approach to legal services," Dunlap said. "We are proud of our legacy as a law firm of providing exemplary legal services, and we look forward to a strong future of continuing to serve our clients with a collaborative client centered focus."

The firm's attorneys have served as bond and disclosure counsel on numerous deals. BMO has also been disclosure counsel for two of Florida's largest bond issuers: Citizens Property Insurance Corp. and the State Board of Administration Finance Corp.

The SBA Finance Corp. closed on \$3.5 billion of taxable bonds on behalf of the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund Sept. 16, the largest taxable transaction this year and the largest fixed-rate deal ever completed in Florida, according to the SDC Platinum, said BofA Securities, the book-running manager on the Cat Fund deal.



JoLinda Herring, co-chair of BMO's public finance group, was appointed to NABL's board of directors in September.

BMO has been a household name in the Florida bond counsel community for many years, said Ben Watkins, a member of the SBA Finance Corp. board and director of Florida's Division of Bond Finance.

"We have enjoyed a great working relationship with the firm and have benefitted from their very able counsel," Watkins said. "They have a deep understanding of Florida law and how state government operates. Combined with their experience in public finance it makes working with them seamless to get deals done."

BMO has served as bond counsel to Port Tampa Bay since 1992.

Attorneys at the firm also have been active in the National Association of Bond Lawyers over the years, according to Dunlap.

In September, JoLinda Herring, co-chair of the firm's public finance group, was appointed to NABL's board of directors. A frequent speaker at NABL workshops, she also chaired the Bond Attorneys Workshop Steering Committee in 2019 and the Fundamentals of Municipal Bond Law seminar in 2011.

Herring, who has been a practicing attorney with BMO since 1996, has served as bond and disclosure counsel for issuers across Florida. She is also a frequent speaker at the Florida Government Finance Officers Association conferences.

Kenneth Artin, whose practice areas include public finance, corporate trust clients and public private partnerships, served as president of NABL for the September 2015-2016 term.

Keirston Wood is the current chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee, Kareem Spratling is vice chairman of NABL's General Law and Practice Committee, and Will Milford is on the Tax Law Committee.



"We are proud of our legacy as a law firm of providing exemplary legal services," said BMO Managing Shareholder Grace Dunlap.

Citing Securities Data statistics, BMO said over the past 20 years the firm has served as bond counsel on more Florida bond issues than any other firm, and the dollar volume of transactions for which BMO has served as disclosure counsel exceeds that of any other Florida firm.

In the bond counsel tables during the first half of 2020, BMO came in second with \$914.2 million in Florida, according to Refinitiv. With that amount, the firm ranked ninth across the 11 states that comprise the Southeast region.

In disclosure counsel tables in the first half, BMO came in second in Florida and in the Southeast with \$524.3 million.

In Florida, BMO has offices in Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, Tallahassee and Tampa. The firm also has offices in Atlanta and Washington, D.C.