



Sam Hayes grew up in Kernersville, North Carolina and attended East Forsyth High School. He is a 1994 graduate of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he majored in Economics and minored in Business Administration. He received his law degree from Wake Forest University School of Law in 1998.

Sam has practiced law for more than 20 years, beginning his legal career with international law firm of Arnold & Porter in Washington, DC. While at A&P, he represented a number of American companies in complex litigation. He also took on pro bono representation of indigent criminal defendants in DC Superior Court. Outside of the office, he served as a member of the Board of Governors of the North Carolina State Society of Washington, DC and membership chair of the Tar Heel Circle.

In 2015, Sam returned to his native North Carolina to serve in the McCrory Administration as General Counsel of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, now the Department of Environmental Quality (“DEQ”). At DEQ, he assisted in the implementation of the Coal Ash Management Act in order to address the decades-long problem of coal ash contamination. As part of that effort, Sam oversaw litigation against the State’s largest utility company and the issuance of the two largest civil fines for environmental damage in State history. He is most proud of his work to ensure the cleanup and removal of coal ash and the provision of municipal drinking water to communities impacted by coal ash impoundments.

Also at DEQ, Sam was appointed Special Counsel by Governor McCrory to represent the Administration in litigation involving the Environmental Protection Agency’s Waters of the United States Rule, or “WOTUS,” and its so-called “Clean Power Plan.” In the WOTUS litigation, Sam proudly stood with North Carolina’s farmers to fight what would have amounted to a taking of all agricultural lands east of Interstate 95. In the Clean Power Plan litigation, Sam fought against the Obama EPA’s attempt to take over North Carolina’s power grid and severely punish the State’s rate payers.

In 2017, Sam joined the North Carolina Department of State Treasurer (“DST”) as General Counsel. While at DST, he worked to address the problem of unfunded liabilities for pension and retiree healthcare. As part of that effort, he managed the successful defense of a billion-dollar class action suit seeking lifetime premium-free healthcare for state government retirees. In 2019, he fought for taxpayers against special interests by serving as counsel of record for the State Health Plan in federal litigation brought by plaintiffs seeking the provision of gender dysphoria benefits.

Outside of work, Sam remains active in support of both his alma maters. He recently completed a four-year term on the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Visitors and currently serves on the Economics Department Advisory Board. At Wake Law, he serves on the General Counsel Advisory Committee. Sam is also an active member of the Federalist Society.

Sam lives in Raleigh, North Carolina with his wife, Adriane, their daughter, Anna, and their son, Walker. They are members of Edenton Street United Methodist Church.

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