

# John P. Cole

## Jacksonville Office Managing Shareholder

Jacksonville  
jcole@gunster.com  
(904) 354-1980



### Practice & Industry Areas

- Private Wealth Services
- Fiduciary Risk Management
- Banking & Financial Services
- Probate, Trust & Guardianship Litigation
- Dispute Resolution

### Education

- Emory University School of Law, J.D., 1991
- University of Tulsa, B.S., cum laude, 1985
- Florida State University, A.A., 1983

### Bar & Court Admissions

- Florida Bar, 1991
- United States District Court
  - Northern District of Florida
  - Middle District of Florida

## Overview

John P. Cole is Gunster's Jacksonville Office Managing Shareholder. John practices exclusively in the areas of fiduciary risk management for professional fiduciaries, and complex probate, trust and guardianship litigation. He is a Florida Supreme Court certified circuit court mediator who brings his years of litigation and dispute resolution experience to bear on behalf of parties and their litigation counsel in probate, trust and guardianship litigation.

John's approach to fiduciary risk management is grounded in years of experience litigating complex, high-stakes commercial and fiduciary disputes. Effective risk management demands litigation experience, substantive expertise and critical knowledge of and insight into the internal processes and sensitivities of professional fiduciaries. John brings his "pro-active" risk management approach to his representation of professional and family member fiduciaries. He is a regular speaker to professional fiduciary and financial services industry

groups on fiduciary risk management. John's professional fiduciary clients also receive on-site fiduciary risk management training.

Effective representation of distraught family members in probate, trust and guardianship cases requires an appreciation of the powerful emotions often driving these disputes. Litigation among family members is unpleasant. Experienced litigation counsel recognize the importance of balancing a client's strong desire to litigate on "principle" with the inevitability of a collision between the client's principles and a fundamental rule of all good legal representation — "the cure cannot be worse than the disease."

As a mediator, John's litigation experience and strong personality all support his commitment to finding creative, cost-effective solutions to seemingly intractable disputes among family members over family wealth. John's abilities as a mediator are often employed in his representation of professional fiduciaries who find themselves caught in the middle of a family feud over inherited wealth.

## Honors

- "Client Champion 2020," Silver Distinction, Martindale-Hubbell®, 2020
- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Trusts & Estates Litigation "Lawyer of the Year" in Jacksonville, 2018 & 2021
- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Trusts & Estates Litigation, 2017-23
- *The Best Lawyers in America*® Business Edition: The Litigation Issue, 2021
- AV Preeminent Rated as independently determined by Martindale-Hubbell®
- "Friend of the Industry" award from the Trust Asset Management & Private Banking Division of the Florida Bankers Association, 2010
- Florida *Super Lawyers*, 2015-22
- *Florida Trend*, "Legal Elite," 2006, 2019

## Professional Associations & Memberships

- Florida Bar
  - Real Property Probate and Trust Law Section
  - Probate and Trust Litigation Committee
  - Probate Law and Procedure Committee
  - Trust Law Committee
- Jacksonville Bar Association
  - Estate Planning, Probate and Tax law section, co-chair, 2012-13
- Estate Planning Council of Northeast Florida
  - Board of directors, 2016-present
- Chester Bedell Chapter of the American Inns of Court, alumnus (barrister)

- Florida Supreme Court Certified Circuit Court Mediator
- Florida Supreme Court Qualified Arbitrator