



HELLMUTH
&
JOHNSON

COLE A. HICKMAN
ATTORNEY AT LAW

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OVERVIEW

Cole practices in the areas of estate planning and closely held business law. Cole prepares succession plans for business owners and serves as general counsel for small to mid size companies across a variety of industries. In that role, Cole regularly counsels his clients through sales and acquisitions of businesses and real estate.

His clients have ranged from individuals and start-ups to Fortune 500 companies.

Individuals, families, and business owners rely on Cole to help them plan what to do with their assets during their lifetimes and upon death. He prepares a variety of estate planning instruments, including wills, trusts, health care directives, and powers of attorney. In addition, Cole assists his clients in mitigating estate tax by drafting such documents as disclaimer trusts, credit shelter trusts, irrevocable life insurance trusts, grantor retained annuity trusts, and intentionally defective grantor trusts. Cole works closely with business owners and their advisors to develop tax efficient business succession strategies.

Cole also works with clients after the death of a family member or business owner. In this role, he assists his clients and their families in carrying out the decedent's final wishes. He counsels personal representatives, trustees, and beneficiaries through probate and the trust administration process.

In addition to estate and business succession planning, Cole serves as outside general counsel to many businesses. Cole regularly represents closely held businesses in both transactional and litigation matters.

As part of his transactional business practice, Cole regularly advises clients through all stages of a business sale, whether that client is selling the business or acquiring a business. In that capacity, Cole works in close collaboration with the client's advisors to develop and implement tax efficient strategies. Cole's transactional practice also includes preparing and advising on corporate organization and reorganization documents, and employment and executive compensation agreements. He works closely with owners of small to mid size businesses to incorporate the proper buy/sell agreements as part of their business succession plan.

PRACTICE AREA

Agriculture
Business & Corporate
Business Litigation
Farm Transition Planning
Mergers & Acquisitions
Real Estate
Trusts & Estates

ADMISSIONS

Minnesota State Courts
North Dakota State Courts

EDUCATION

William Mitchell College of Law, J.D., cum laude, 2011
Saint John's University, B.A., cum laude, 2008

Cole has a broad range of experience in litigating matters on behalf of his clients. This experience includes employment disputes, contract disputes, products liability matters, and real estate disputes. Cole has first chair trial experience and has argued cases before the Minnesota Court of Appeals for his business clients.

EXPERIENCE

- Represented countless individuals and business owners in planning designed to save millions of dollars in state and federal estate taxes.
- Represented several health care companies in asset and real estate acquisitions and sales.
- Represented a marketing company in the sale of its assets to a private equity company.
- Represented trash hauling and recycling companies through various stages of acquisitions and sales.
- Represented engineering and architectural firm through business succession planning and strategies and owner buyouts.
- Represented the CEO of a public company in an employment contract dispute that settled on favorable terms.
- Represented several business owners on disputes with their business partners.
- Represented corporate and family farm operations in both Minnesota and North Dakota.
- Represented software companies through various stages of acquisition and sales.

AFFILIATIONS

- Minnesota State Bar Association
- Hennepin County Bar Association
- American Bar Association

COMMUNITY

- Plymouth Lions Club, President/Former Vice President
- Plymouth Lions Club, Grants Committee Chair
- St. Joseph Parish Community, Finance Committee Member
- Wills for Heroes, Volunteer Attorney

HONORS & AWARDS

- *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America* – Business Organizations (including LLCs and Partnerships), Real Estate Law, Trusts and Estates, 2021-2024
- 2020 Up & Coming Attorney, *Minnesota Lawyer*