



Jelena McWilliams

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Jelena McWilliams is Managing Partner of the Washington, D.C. office and Head of the Financial Institutions Group (FIG) Practice. She is a former Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

Ms. McWilliams focuses her practice on advising public and private companies, financial institutions, fintechs, and early-stage and venture companies on regulatory and corporate matters, as well as on mergers and acquisitions, IPO and other capital markets transactions.

While at the FDIC, Ms. McWilliams managed over 6,000 employees supervising approximately 5,000 banks, including through the COVID-19 pandemic. She participated in interagency negotiations, policy developments and joint agency rulemakings both as agency principal and as a voting member of the Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC). Ms. McWilliams chaired the Resolution Group at the Financial Stability Board (FSB); chaired and

served on the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC); and served on the Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee (FBIIIC). She testified before U.S. Congress on numerous occasions and engaged extensively with U.S. and international regulators, including the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision and the International Association of Deposit Insurers. She established the agency's first office of innovation to implement technological advancements through supervisory channels and collaborative partnerships between banks and fintechs. Ms. McWilliams also spearheaded the agency's effort to develop prudential banking policy on digital assets, including through a "crypto sprint" with the Office of the Currency Comptroller (OCC) and the Federal Reserve Board (FRB), and in collaboration with the President's Working Group multiagency effort on stablecoins. She envisioned and created Mission Driven Bank Fund, a novel private/public partnership investment fund to support investments in low- and moderate-income communities served by the Minority Depository Institutions and Community Development Financial Institutions.

Prior to her tenure as FDIC Chairman, Ms. McWilliams served as Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary for Fifth Third Bank (FITB) where she managed over 100 lawyers and legal staff, oversaw legal and regulatory matters, and served on the Enterprise Committee and several internal committees, including Management Compliance, Enterprise Risk, Risk and Compliance, Operational Risk, Enterprise Marketing and Regulatory Change. In this capacity, Ms. McWilliams had extensive interactions with numerous federal and state regulatory agencies, including the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, the FDIC, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Before that, Ms. McWilliams served as Chief Counsel and Deputy Staff Director for the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs where she engaged in oversight of FRB, FDIC, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), CFPB, National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), SEC, Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), Federal Housing Administration (FHA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), FSOC and Office of Financial Research (OFR). She interacted with law enforcement and regulatory agencies, including U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN).

Previously, Ms. McWilliams served as Assistant Chief Counsel for the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship where she engaged in oversight of Small Business Administration (SBA) and its lending programs, and served as a principal advisor handling matters related to financial services.

During the 2007–2010 financial crisis, Ms. McWilliams served as a consumer protection attorney at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors where she worked on several rulemakings, including to amend consumer protection regulations under the Truth in Lending Act (TILA), Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act (FACTA), Gramm-Leach Bliley Act (GLBA) and Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure (CARD) Act, as well as bank and third party practices related to section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Act, which prohibits banks from engaging in unfair or deceptive acts or practices (UDAP).

Ms. McWilliams is a frequent speaker on trends and topics in the financial services sector, including bank regulatory policy, governance trends, digital assets, fintechs and early-stage company regulatory policy. She is a

past member of the Economic Council of Washington, D.C., and serves on the Board of Trustees of the Southwestern Graduate School of Banking Foundation at Southern Methodist University.

Ms. McWilliams was singled out by *Chambers USA* as an “Eminent Practitioner” in the Financial Services Regulation (Nationwide) category.

Ms. McWilliams was born in Belgrade, Serbia. She received her B.A. with highest honors from the University of California, Berkeley in 1999 and her J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law in 2002.

EDUCATION

- J.D., 2002, University of California, Berkeley, School of Law
Highest Honors for JD thesis.
- B.A., 1999, University of California, Berkeley
Alumni Scholar, Dean's Honor List, High Distinction

ADMITTED IN

- District of Columbia
- California

ORGANIZATIONS

Economic Council of Washington, D.C.

Southwestern Graduate School of Banking Foundation at Southern Methodist University

- Board of Trustees

RANKINGS

Chambers USA

- Financial Services Regulation: Banking (Compliance) – Nationwide (2024)

Lawdragon

- 500 Leading Global Bankruptcy & Restructuring Lawyers (2024)
- 500 Leading Lawyers in America (2025, 2024, 2023)

The Legal 500 US

- Financial Services Regulation (2024, 2023)

