



## Charles A. Janssen

Shareholder

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Charley Janssen's legal practice covers the entire spectrum of estate planning: wills, trusts, family business and succession planning from the basic to very complex business structures, charitable gift planning, creating and advising private and public foundations as well as estate and trust administration. Charley's goal is to make estate planning concepts and documents understandable to his clients to allow them to make sound decisions and fully understand the implications of those decisions.

He is always willing to speak on estate planning, charitable gifting and business planning issues to interested groups and businesses. He has authored numerous articles on estate planning, business and succession planning and charitable giving topics. He is a contributing editor to a number of Institute for Continuing Legal Education (ICLE) books and publications including *Revocable Living Trusts in Michigan*.

Charley's peers have repeatedly recognized his leadership and scholarship in the Trusts and Estates Practice area. Top estate planning attorneys from around the country nominated and elected him to the prestigious American College of Trust and Estate Attorneys in 1995 where he has been a member in good standing for more than 20 years. Fellow attorneys have also ranked him as a top Estate Planning and Elder Law attorney in *Best Lawyers® in America* since 1993 and he was recognized as a Michigan *Super Lawyer* since the survey's inception in 2005.

In addition to his practice, Charley has held numerous leadership roles at Foster Swift, including chairing the Business and Tax Department, and the attorney recruitment and marketing committees. He has served several stints on the firm's Executive Committee and was President of the Law Firm from 2003-2005. He also chaired the Ingham County Bar Probate and Estate Planning Section and the Greater Lansing Estate Planning Council.

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### PRACTICE AREAS

Estate Planning  
Trust & Estate Litigation  
Business Succession Planning  
Trusts & Estates  
Agri-Business  
Family Owned Businesses  
Federal Taxation  
Tax Law

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### EDUCATION

University of Michigan Law School,  
J.D., 1979  
Michigan State University, B.A.,  
1976, with honors

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### BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Michigan  
U.S. District Court for the Western  
District of Michigan  
U.S. District Court for the Eastern  
District of Michigan

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### HONORS & RECOGNITIONS

AV® Preeminent™  
Martindale-Hubbell  
*Best Lawyers®* 2015, 2024 Elder  
Law "Lawyer of the Year" in Lansing  
*Best Lawyers®* 2016, 2018, 2021,  
2024 Trusts and Estates "Lawyer of  
the Year" in Lansing  
*Best Lawyers® in America* - (Elder  
Law, Trusts & Estates), 1995-2025



He graduated from Michigan State University Honors College, Phi Beta Kappa in 1976 and the University of Michigan Law School in 1979. Charley is a loyal Michigan State Spartan and supports many causes and philanthropic initiatives at the university. Currently, he is an active member of the Board of Trustees for Michigan State University College of Law where he has served on numerous committees.

### **Community Service**

Charley is also a devoted booster for the Greater Lansing Community and is happy to volunteer time for numerous causes and initiatives. For more than a decade he has served as a commissioner of the Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority, which operates the Lansing Center, Lansing's Baseball Stadium, Lansing City Market and Common Ground Music Festival. He previously served as chairperson or board member of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee, Lansing Public Schools Foundation, Lansing Riverfront Development Board and Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority. Charley also co-chaired the City of Lansing's Project Play, which helped raise \$2 million for new playground equipment for city parks and school playgrounds.

He also served as a past board chair and member of the board of directors of the Capital Region Community Foundation and continues to support the Community Foundation's programs and initiatives. He is active in promotion and fundraising for Volunteers of America and serves on the VOA "Homeless No More" fundraising committee.

Charley has received numerous volunteer leadership awards, including the Ingham County Bar Association's Camille Abood Distinguished Volunteer Award in 2006 and the Chief Okemos Council Boy Scout of America Distinguished Service Award in 2009.

### **REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS**

- Develop and implement a diverse range of estate plans that accomplish clients' goals.
- Represent and advise fiduciaries in administering estates and trusts from small or midsize to those of several hundred million dollars
- Represent numerous multi-million-dollar lottery winners.

2019 Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Service to the College, MSU College of Law Alumni Association

Community Foundation Philanthropy Award, 2018 Governor's Service Awards

Michigan *Super Lawyers*, Estate & Probate, 2005-2019, 2022-2024

American College of Trust and Estate Law Counsel, Fellow

Camille Abood Distinguished Volunteer Award, Ingham County Bar Association

Distinguished Citizen Award, Chief Okemos Council Boy Scouts of America



- Establish and advise family and private foundations.
- Provide legal counsel to public charities.
- Design sophisticated generational family gifting plans that minimize tax liability and promote family harmony
- Develop and implement legal and tax aspects of business succession plans for family owned manufacturing, real estate, and agricultural businesses

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Common Estate Planning Pitfalls**, *Foster Swift Estate Planning Insights*, Fall 2010

**Planning for Incapacity**, *ICLE Michigan Revocable Grantor Trusts (Chapter 4)*, Third Edition, 2010

**Tax Aspects of Trust Administration**, *ICLE Revocable Living Trusts in Michigan (Chapter 3)*, Third Edition, 2010

## **MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS**

### **Legal Affiliations:**

- State Bar of Michigan
- American Bar Association
- Ingham County Bar Association, Estate Planning Section, Past Chair
- Michigan State Bar Foundation, Fellow

### **Industry & Professional Associations:**

- Michigan State University College of Law, Board of Trustees
- Greater Lansing Estate Planning Council, Past President

### **Community Involvement:**

- Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, Former Chairperson and Officer
- Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce PAC, Former Chairperson
- Lansing Public Schools Foundation, Former Chairperson
- Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority
  - Former Chairperson
  - Commissioner
  - Long Range Planning Commission, Chair
- Hospice of Lansing, Former Board Member
- City of Lansing-Project Play, Co-chairperson
- Capital Region Community Foundation, Former Chairperson
- Lansing Christian School Foundation, President, Past Treasurer, Board of Directors



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- Sparrow Foundation, Major Gifts Committee
  - Sparrow Foundation, Dapper Dads Fundraisers, 2010-Present
  - Volunteers of America, Homeless No More Committee