



VICTORIA MÉNDEZ

PARTNER

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Victoria Méndez is a Partner in the Miami office of Shutts & Bowen LLP, where she is a member of the Land Use & Zoning Practice Group. Victoria is Board Certified by The Florida Bar in City, County & Local Government.

Victoria is an experienced municipal lawyer with a wide range of capabilities in all phases of municipal operations, including general municipal law; land use and zoning; environmental law; election law; eminent domain; civil rights law; public finance; building and code enforcement; procurement law; utilities law; real estate; platting; and the litigation thereof. Victoria uses her vast experience advising local agencies on policy matters, statutes, rules and regulations, so that she can better advocate for and serve her clients' strategic business interests.

Before joining Shutts, Victoria served more than 20 years in the Office of the City Attorney for the City of Miami. In her nearly 11-year tenure as the City Attorney for the City of Miami, she supervised an office of more than 60 personnel, including lawyers, staff, interns, and fellows, in addition to outside counsel. She also was responsible for an \$11 million annual budget. Her role also involved representing the City in state, federal, administrative and appellate courts.

Victoria was also an Assistant State Attorney for the Miami-Dade Office of the State Attorney, Eleventh Judicial Circuit, where she represented the State of Florida for almost 4 years. She was responsible for large caseloads during her tenure that consisted of misdemeanors to life felonies, wherein she handled discovery, countless depositions, Arthur Hearings, suppression hearings and more. Her experience includes litigating more than 30 jury trials at the Circuit and County Court levels and more than 50 bench trials, in addition to litigating criminal appellate cases.

Notable Experience

- City of Miami v. State of Florida, et al., Case No. 19-29540 CA 01 (\$400 Million bond validation case for the Miami Forever Bonds).
- *Miami-Dade County, et al. v. Florida Power & Light Company, et al.*, Case No. 3D14-1467 (argued transmission line siting act appeal before the Third District Court of Appeals; affirmed; and the

Florida Supreme Court denied review).

- *In Re: Florida Power and Light Company Turkey Point Units 6 and 7 Power Plant Siting Application*, DOAH Case No. 09-003575EPP (site certification hearing before the Division of Administrative Hearings for the certification of transmission lines within Miami-Dade County).
- *Flava Works, Inc. v. City of Miami*, 800 F. Supp. 2d 1182 (S.D. Fla. 2011); *Flava Works, Inc. v. City of Miami*, 595 F. Supp. 2d 1341 (S.D. Fla. 2009); *Flava Works, Inc. v. City of Miami*, 559 F. Supp. 2d 1318 (S.D. Fla. 2008) (adult entertainment in a residential home case).
- City of Miami tree protection, billboard and mural ordinances: Assisted in the drafting and revisions to the tree protection, billboard, and mural ordinances; assisted in the implementation of the Tree Trust Fund and the Mural Program in the City of Miami.
- Miami 21 Zoning Ordinance: Part of the team that researched, reviewed, drafted the new zoning code, attended public hearings, assisted with implementation, and drafted amendments of the new City of Miami zoning code adopted May 2010; legally reviewed almost all of the land use and zoning City of Miami projects since 2005.
- Negotiated and drafted the 2010 Florida Power & Light Franchise Agreement, earning the City over \$27 million a year in franchise fees.
- Led the real estate team that negotiated the Freedom Park Soccer Stadium agreements over several years.
- Co-drafted the amended major use special permit for the Marlins Stadium.
- Negotiated and drafted many of the Ultra Music Festival Agreements over the years.
- Managed the 2016 Charter Review process, along with several Charter changes over the past 20 years.
- Negotiated with the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) regarding the City's use of deadly force within the Police Department. Our legal team entered into a first of its kind settlement agreement with the DOJ, which included a low-cost monitoring protocol and early termination.
- Led the litigation team that 1) successfully terminated the Pottinger v. City of Miami federal consent decree regarding homeless treatment within the city and 2) successfully settled the 26-year-old case: FOP, Vega et al., v. City of Miami, Case No. 98-7760 CA 01 over the 1994 police exam.
- Part of the litigation team that successfully handled the election challenge and recall petition cases in 2017 and 2018.
- Led the real estate teams that negotiated several of the largest waterfront leases within the City of Miami, including but not limited to, Jungle Island, Flagstone, Hyatt, Bayshore, Bayside, etc. and acquired via eminent domain several properties for marquis City park projects.
- Part of the transactional teams that negotiated the Brightline, Tri-Rail, and Tunnel and Underline projects.
- Negotiated donation/partnership agreements and the legacy projects for the Super Bowl, Major League Baseball All Star Games, Formula E, College Football National Championships, etc.

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- Part of the finance teams that closed many City of Miami million-dollar bond deals and handled a \$400 million bond validation case.

Practice Areas

Government Contracts

Government Law

Land Use & Zoning

Litigation

Real Estate

Accolades

- Florida Municipal Attorneys Association, Paul S. Buchman Attorney of the Year, 2024
- *Florida Trend's Florida Legal Elite*, Government, 2008-2023
- Florida League of Cities, Hometown Hero Award, 2021
- Dade County Bar Association, President's Distinguished Leadership Award, 2017
- Leadership Florida, Class XXXV, 2016
- Miami City Commission, Certificate of Merit for Women's History Month, 2016
- University of Miami School of Law, Distinguished Alumni Award, 2014
- *Daily Business Review*, Top 20 South Florida Women for Legal Achievement, 2014
- *Miami Today*, The Achiever, 2014
- *Miami Today*, Book of Leaders, 2014
- Thomas University School of Law, Supervisor of the Year, 2012
- *South Florida Legal Guide's Lawyers' Lawyer*, Top Government Attorney, 2010-2012
- Miami City Commission, Certificate of Merit, 2011
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Miami-Dade's 40 Under 40 Attorneys, 2010
- City of Miami Fire Rescue, Interdepartmental Employee of the Month Award, August 2009
- Miami City Commission, Salute, 2009

Education

- University of Miami School of Law, J.D., December 1999
 - Iron Arrow Honor Society

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- Omicron Delta Kappa National Honor Society
- Alpha Epsilon Lambda Graduate Honorary
- Society of Bar and Gavel Honorary
- *Who's Who: American Law Students*
- Student Bar Association, 1L, 2L, 3L Senator; Speaker Pro Tem; Senator of the Year Award
- Vice President Service Award
- Presidential Award for Exemplary Service
- Moot Court Competitions, Semi-Finalist
- University College of London Summer Program
- University of Miami School of Business, MPA, May 1999
- University of Miami, B.A., *cum laude with General Honors*, English and Political Science Double Major, December 1995
 - Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society
 - Golden Key Honor Society
 - Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society
 - President's Honor Roll
 - Honor's Program
 - National Dean's List
 - J.F. Pearson Merit Scholarship

Bar Admissions

Florida

Languages

Spanish

Professional and Civic

- University of Miami School of Law, Alumni Board of Trustees, Trustee, 2020-Present
- Miami Dade County Law Library, Trustee, 2005- Present
- Florida Bar Association City, County, and Local Government Executive Council, Member, 2015-Present; Chair Elect, 2024
- Miami-Dade County League of Cities, Member; City Attorney's Council, Executive Committee Member, 2014-2024

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- Florida Municipal Attorneys Association, Executive Committee, Member, 2020-2024
- Our Lady of Lourdes Academy High School, Strategic Planning Committee, Governance Sub-Committee Co-Chair, 2024
- Florida Municipal Attorneys Association, Annual Seminar Steering Committee, Member, 2018-2020
- Florida Bar Association Leadership Academy Inaugural Committee, Member, 2013-2016
- Dade County Bar Association, Government Affairs Committee, Chair and Co-Chair, June 2013 – 2019
- Our Lady of Lourdes Academy High School, Alumnae Board, Alumnae President, 2016-2018; Immediate Past President, 2018-2021
- Our Lady of Lourdes Academy High School, Board of Trustees, Trustee, 2020-2023
- American Bar Association, House of Delegates, Cuban American Bar Association Seat, 2013-2014
- Florida Bar Association, Hawkins Commission on Lawyer Discipline, Committee Member, 2012
- American Bar Foundation, Fellow, 2011-Present
- League of Prosecutors, Board of Directors, Director, 2011-2014
- Florida Bar Association, Board of Governors, Cuban American Bar Association Seat, 2011-2012
- Florida Bar Foundation, Fellow, 2010-Present
- Cuban American Bar Foundation, Board of Directors, Director, 2010-2014; President, 2012
- Cuban American Bar Association Pro Bono Project, Board of Directors, Director, 2010-2012
- Our Lady of Lourdes Academy High School, Law Section, Chair, 2009-2016
- Spellman-Hoeveler American Inn of Courts, Member, 2009-Present
- Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association, Member, 2009-Present
- Florida Association for Women Lawyers, Member, 2009-Present
- American Bar Association, Member, 2000-Present
- Dade County Bar Association, Member, 2000-Present
- Cuban American Bar Association, Board of Directors, Director, 2004-2012; President, 2011
- Florida Bar Association Grievance Committee, Member, 2005-2008; Chair, 2008

Presentations

- Featured Alumni, University of Miami School of Law, Admitted Students Reception, March 2024
- Roundtable Panelist, University of Miami Student Bar Association, Dinner with Esquires Event, February 2024

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- Speaker, Florida Bar Association, City, County, and Local Government Section, *Q and A for Board Certification*, January 2024
- Panel Moderator, Florida Municipal Attorneys Association, Annual Seminar, July 2023
- Featured Alumni Panelist, University of Miami School of Law, Hispanic Law Students Association, March 2023
- Panel Moderator, Florida Municipal Attorneys Association, Annual Seminar, July 2022
- Public Records Speaker, Miami-Dade County League of Cities, Ethics Training, 2021
- Speaker, Florida Bar Association, City, County, and Local Government Section, *Public Meetings during the Pandemic*, April 2020
- Public Records Speaker, Miami-Dade County League of Cities, Ethics Training, May 2018
- Featured Alumni, University of Miami School of Law, Recruitment Luncheon, February 2018
- Public Records Speaker, Miami-Dade County League of Cities, Ethics Training, December 2017
- Public Records Speaker, Miami-Dade County League of Cities, Ethics Training, May 2017
- Luncheon Speaker, Florida Bar Association Leadership Academy, Guardians of the Legal Profession, April 2017
- Career Day Speaker, Miami Dade Commission on Ethics, Governance Day at Auburndale Elementary, April 2017
- Senior Focus Group Speaker, Our Lady of Lourdes Academy High School, March 2017
- Moderator, Dade County Bar Association, Government Relations Committee Transportation Seminar, November 2015
- Panelist, Federal Aviation Administration, Unmanned Aircraft Symposium, April 2016
- Speaker, Miami-Dade County League of Cities, Ethics Training, May 2015
- Leadership Luncheon Panelist, Florida Association for Women Lawyers, May 2014
- Featured Alumni, University of Miami School of Law, Recruitment Luncheon, January 2014
- Panelist, Dade County Bar Association, Government Relations Committee CLE Sunshine Law, Public Records, and Ethics in the Magic City, November 2013
- Speaker, University of Miami School of Law, Miami Scholars Monthly Luncheon, December 2012
- Public Sector Employment Panel, Florida Association for Women Lawyers, April 2012
- Panelist, Florida International University 2012 Diversity Summit, February 2012
- Roundtable Panelist, University of Miami School of Law, Ins and Outs of Public Sector Work, February 2012
- Speaker, American Bar Association's Commission on Hispanic Rights and Responsibilities Forum, May 2011

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- Panelist, Broward County Bar Association, Florida Muslim Bar Association, and Cuban American Bar Association, Diversity Symposium, May 2011
- Panelist, Dade County Bar Association, Florida Association for Women Lawyers, and Cuban American Bar Association Diversity Symposium, March 2011
- Panelist, National Association for Women Lawyers, Annual Seminar on Non-Traditional Careers, February 2011
- Speaker, American Bar Association, State and Local Government Law Section Land Use Seminar on Adult Entertainment, April 2010
- Speaker, International Municipal Lawyers Association, Code Enforcement and Adult Entertainment, October 2009

Publications

- Mendez, Victoria, Rafael Suarez-Rivas, et al. "Bid Protests Under the Administrative Procedure Act: The Standard of Review, the Protest Hearing, and Further Review," *Florida Bar Journal*, Vol. 92, No. 9 (November-December 2018)
- Matthew Haber and Victoria Méndez, "[Speaking Truth to Power Company Regulators: The Consequences of Modern Regulatory Incentives and Administrative Expediency](#)," 25 *Duke Environmental Law & Policy Forum* 185-199 (Fall 2014)
- Sonja K. Dickens, Jeff P. H. Cazeau, Craig Leen, Victoria Mendez, Hans Ottinot, Richard Weiss, Richard Kuper, Nina Boniske, Bennett Brummer, Cynthia Everett, Jose "Pepe" Herrera, Howard Lenard, Jean Olin, Darcee Siegel, Jose Smith, Rafael Suarez Rivas, Henry Hunnefeld, John Greco, "[Miami-Dade County League of Cities Elected Officials' Handbook, Second Edition](#)"