

Michael C. Joyce

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DES MOINES OFFICE

While Des Moines native Michael Joyce followed in his father’s footsteps as an attorney, he took a few side trips along his career path.

Mike spent several years in Los Angeles after graduating from college. After working several different jobs initially, he found himself working in employee benefits consulting at a large accounting firm—and found his niche.

Mike then moved to New York and continued to work in employee benefits. “After working closely with employee benefits attorneys for several years, I thought, ‘I can do this. I should go back to law school,’” he says. So, he returned to Iowa to attend law school. After law school, he practiced for several years at a firm in Chicago, then returned home to Des Moines to continue working in his chosen practice area.

Mike specializes in [employee benefits](#), advising employers on the legal aspects of 401(k) plans, health and welfare plans, and ERISA and tax compliance. In addition, he counsels clients on executive compensation matters, such as nonqualified deferred compensation plans, employment and separation agreements, and incentive plans. “Employee benefits and executive compensation are unique practice areas not often found in Iowa law firms,” he says. “I’m fortunate that Nyemaster is large enough to support a specialty like this.”

Mike’s representation cuts across various industries and employer sizes, with projects often prompted by a specific incentive compensation issue or specific company need related to benefits. “I often come in when there’s an issue with a benefit plan, or an executive’s compensation, or there is a need to create a stock incentive program, for example,” Mike says. “I’m a specialist who can help out with these unique issues.”

Mike’s work often requires him to negotiate on behalf of his clients with government agencies, and to work closely with company management and other providers to arrive at the best benefits or compensation solution for a company or executive. “My practice is highly driven by statutes and regulations,” he says. “It’s sometimes tricky to deliver the desired result within the framework of the law.” Mike works hard, however, to deliver excellent results for his clients.

Outside of work, Mike dedicates time to his family’s activities. He is also involved in various capacities at his parish, Sacred Heart in West Des Moines, including serving on its Pastoral Council.

RECOGNITION

Legal Aid Bureau of Metropolitan Family Services (Chicago)
Scott C. Solberg Pro Bono Award, October 2010

Iowa Law Review
2003–2004

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PRACTICE AREAS

- Business, Finance & Real Estate
- Corporate Governance
- Health Care
- Insurance
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Tax, Estate Planning & Employee Benefits

EDUCATION

- University of Notre Dame (B.A.)
- University of Iowa (J.D., with distinction)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Iowa
- Illinois

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Associate, Vedder Price P.C., Chicago
- Benefits Consultant, PricewaterhouseCoopers, New York
- Senior Associate, Tax/Benefits, Ernst & Young, Los Angeles

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

American Bar Association

Iowa State Bar Association

Polk County Bar Association

SPEECHES & PUBLICATIONS

"Setting a Standard to Rely On: ERISA Benefit Claims Where the Summary Plan Description and Plan Document Conflict"

90 Iowa L. Rev. 765, January 2005

Various presentations in Central Iowa on benefit and compensation matters, including for the Iowa State University Foundation Professional Advisor annual conference and for the Society for Human Resource Management.