



Stark & Stark's Benjamin E. Widener poses for a portrait at the Stark & Stark office in Lawrenceville. — VALERIE FRIEDMAN BRONSON PHOTO

## Stark & Stark's Employment Law Chair Ben Widener Emblematic of Firm's Dedication to Excellence

### Stark & Stark, Attorneys at Law

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**No. of Employees:** 265

**Top Executives:** John A. Sakson, Esq., President and Treasurer; Lewis J. Pepperman, Esq., Vice President and Assistant Secretary; Gregory Deatz, Chief Operating Officer

**Product/Service:** Legal Services

**Year Founded:** 1933

**STARK & STARK**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

In 2013, Stark & Stark celebrated 80 years serving the New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York areas, both as a legal counselor and community partner. Today, boasting more than 105 attorneys and a support staff in excess of 200, the firm is consistently ranked as one of the largest in New Jersey and continues to build on the quality and diversity of its client service.

Nowhere is this more apparent, perhaps, than in attorney Benjamin E. Widener, a Shareholder and Chair of Stark & Stark's Employment Law practice. Widener, a 2004 graduate of The Ohio State University Mortiz College of Law, is responsible for managing all aspects of employment-related work handled by the firm.

Asked to describe the philosophy of his practice, Widener says, "As a lawyer, I'm driven to obtain the best possible results for my clients. Whether it's a litigation matter we're handling for a client or simply day-to-day employment counseling, my team and I work with our clients to identify goals and then execute appropriate strategies to achieve those goals."

This philosophy seems to be working for Widener. Through the effective use of both litigation and alternative dispute resolution (including a very proactive approach to pre-litigation dispute resolution), he has established an impressive track record for navigating his clients through challenging employment issues and disputes.

A natural litigator, Widener has significant experience representing clients in complex litigation arising from the interpretation and enforcement of employment agreements, restrictive covenants, non-competes and non-disclosure agreements, as well as claims involving the protection/misappropriation of trade secrets. He also regularly

litigates claims of wrongful termination, employment discrimination, harassment in the workplace, retaliation and other business torts.

"I think my background as a litigator complements my work as an employment counselor and compliance officer for my clients," Widener explains. "My clients benefit from my litigation experience because I view the employment issues faced daily by in-house counsel and HR professionals from a litigator's perspective. One thing I counsel my clients on is the belief that a good baseline is equal and fair treatment. If you are doing something for one employee, do it for all employees. I am a big believer in the golden rule, and I think that also is a very good starting point to any litigation-averse employment counseling."

In line with the top trends in employment law, Widener's group counsels clients on a diverse range of issues, including wage and hour, medical leave, social media and employee privacy, and equal employment issues, both nationwide and locally across a variety of industries. The firm's Employment Law group not only counsels some of the major players in the financial services industry, but they also act as de facto general counsel for many local small businesses.

Lest his impressive credentials and track record fail to convince, Widener has been fortunate to be recognized by the industry as a leader in his field. In 2014, he was named as a New Leader of the New Jersey Bar by the *New Jersey Law Journal*. Outside the courtroom, he is an avid runner and triathlete, having completed several marathons and triathlons.

"What is it they say — a sound body is a sound mind?" Widener jokes. For him, it's just another reason why he has quickly risen to the top as a leader among Employment Law attorneys and as a leader for Stark & Stark.