

# PROFILE

## Ramonda C. Marling Litigation Attorney

**What is the best professional advice you have ever received?** A longtime mentor encouraged me as a young attorney to “think and speak”: to think holistically about a case, and to not be afraid to express my opinions. He was not looking for an associate who was simply taking down an assignment. He wanted someone who was proactive and strategic, and if I had a different view than him, he wanted me to tell him. There were times we ultimately disagreed, but it was that dialogue that I found most helpful in my professional growth. It was critical for me to learn how to think about and handle a case on my own.

**What drew you to energy and natural resources litigation?** I fell into my current practice area by happenstance, following advice from that same mentor to not shy away from new areas of law. I remained in the energy and natural resource litigation arena and cultivated a practice not only because it is important work, but also because it's challenging and interesting. Whether I'm working with an engineer, a geologist, or another expert, I learn something new every day.

**What quality do you most like to see in the associates that you work with?** I want an associate to give me critical feedback on litigation strategy, that is, someone who is contributing substantively to achieving our clients' goals and not just turning in the work. Obviously, I want all of the fundamentals—solid research, strong writing, and timeliness—but I also want to see someone who actually adds strategic value to the case.

**What attracted you to Babst Calland?** Initially, it was the fact that the Firm's practice areas aligned with my own practice. But more importantly than that, it was the people I already knew. I practiced with several of the Firm's attorneys previously, so I knew the quality of the people and the caliber of work they do. I have worked in large firms and small firms across West Virginia during the course of my career and have been impressed with every aspect of Babst Calland since joining the Firm last January. I particularly value the Firm's collaborative culture, supportive infrastructure and proactive management.

**What is it about the Firm's culture that you most appreciate?** The Firm very much promotes a team environment. Everyone is working toward a common goal—to give our clients the best work product and representation possible. Some firms have an underlying competition among attorneys below the surface that can be detrimental to the ultimate goal of providing the best service to the client, but that is not something I have experienced here.

**In an alternate life where you are not an attorney, what would be your profession?** I was an English and Philosophy major and could see myself as a college professor or an author in an alternate life. Writing clearly and critically is so important and I have seen a decreased focus on that in high school and college. I fear that this trend will only get worse with artificial intelligence, and I would welcome an opportunity to instill an appreciation of good writing in the next generation.

**Who inspires you?** My parents are my greatest inspiration. For various reasons, they were unable to graduate from high school, but always valued education. They ultimately secured their diplomas through a local GED program and my father obtained his contractor's license. He and my mother ran their own business from our dining room table. They worked hard to give me opportunities they did not have and made it very clear that I would pursue higher education (college was mandatory, not optional for me) and could become whatever I wanted in life.

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