Sheryl Hunter

Shareholder

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Practice Areas

- Business Transactions
- Trenam Tech
- Technology Company Transactions
- Entrepreneurship
- Private Equity and Venture Capital
- Corporate Mergers and Acquisitions
- Employment
- Franchise Law
- Intellectual Property

Education

J.D., Georgetown University Law Center, 1995
B.A., *magna cum laude*, Georgetown Washington University, 1991

Admissions

Florida

Overview

Sheryl Hunter is a shareholder in the firm's Business Transactions Group. For over 25 years, she has represented hundreds of growth-focused entrepreneurs and their business enterprises, from start-up to exit. As a corporate and securities attorney, Sheryl provides a wide range of advice to emerging growth and middle market companies. Sheryl also represents venture capital firms and angel investors who invest in early-stage companies.

Sheryl's practice focuses on meeting client's needs in each stage of a company's life: start-up, growth and sale. Services include business formation and entity selection, intellectual property protection, contract drafting and negotiations, shareholder and operating agreements, compensation and equity arrangements, capital raising transactions, including private placements of debt and equity and venture capital, growth through mergers and acquisitions, and ultimately sale transactions.

Deeply committed to Florida's entrepreneurial ecosystem, Sheryl has served for several years on the board of Synapse, is a frequent speaker at innovation events, and mentors students and interns. She is also the chair of the advisory board for Transitions Candles, a social enterprise of Girls Empowered Mentally for Success (GEMS), and in 2022 established the Think Business Scholarship, for future business owners and lawyers, offered through the nonprofit Think Big for Kids.

Sheryl was named on the list of Legal Elite 2022 representing the top 1.4% of Florida lawyers, selected by peers and published by Florida Trend Magazine. She was also identified on The StartUp Weekly's 2021 Women in Business to Watch list, was selected by her peers for the 2020 Top Lawyer edition of TAMPA Magazines and was honored as the 2016 Businesswoman of the Year for Legal Services by the Tampa Bay Business Journal. Sheryl is a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center and George Washington University and lives in Tampa with her husband and two children.

Representative Matters

General Corporate Representation

- Represented bartering technology company with divestiture from an international parent company.
- Represented Sarasota-based educational technology company in a $500k series seed financing round.
- Represented Sarasota-based company in a $1.2m buyout of minority owners from whom the clients had made a technology acquisition.
- Represented a restaurant franchisee in negotiations of commercial leases in multiple cities.
- Represented a purchaser of St. Petersburg, Florida-based restaurant for over $1m.
- Represented a restaurant owner in the structuring of strategic agreements and financing.
- Represented client in a dispute with and separation from co-owner of a fitness

studio.
- Represented angel investor fund in $1.5m investment into an early-stage cannabis-related marketing company.
- Processed over 50 trademark applications with the United States Patent and Trademark Office for 40+ companies.
- Represented a blockchain educational and coworking company in a $1M convertible note private offering.

General Counsel Representation

- General Counsel to multiple franchisees providing fire and water cleanup, and restoration services.
- General Counsel for a Tampa-based investment company with both a crowd-funding platform and a $18M venture fund dedicated to investing in Florida-based early stage companies; assisted with over 35 investments in over 25 companies as well as three funding rounds for the company since 2014.
- General Counsel for a Fort Myers-based direct marketing and database solutions provider specializing in the energy, broadband and telecommunications industries.
- General Counsel for Tampa-based mobile platform provider which turns sports and entertainment venues nationwide into smart spaces to improve and innovate the guest experience.
- General counsel to consumer products manufacturer distributing millions of dollars of sold products internationally each year.
- General counsel to three executive and board coaching and training companies.
- General Counsel to Tampa-based automotive equipment management firm with operations throughout the Southeast.
- General counsel to salon suites company.
- General counsel to a commercial real estate company, including handling of all leases.

Intellectual Property

- Drafting and negotiating various technology and intellectual property agreements, including confidentiality, noncompete, tech development, software as a service, licensing, invention assignment, work made for hire, and joint venture agreements.
- Advising businesses on the availability and proper use of trademarks, and assisting clients in obtaining federal and Florida trademark registrations.
- Drafting and compliance with terms of use, privacy policies, and other click-wrap policies and agreements for websites and mobile apps.

Securities Early Stage Capital Raises

- Educating founders on options for funding early-stage companies with private security offerings.
- Advising clients about and preparing SAFEs (simple agreements for future equity), convertible note and priced round (equity) security offerings, and guiding clients through investor relations and paperwork.
- Advising clients on federal and state securities laws compliance, including filing notices of exempt offerings in connection with private placements and complying with state Blue Sky laws.

Recent Representative Securities Transactions:

- Capital raise (SAFE) offering for startup video technology company, Spring 2022
- Capital raise (convertible note) for startup construction management technology company, Spring 2022
- Capital raise (priced equity round) for blockchain company, Blockspaces, Fall 2021
- Seed capital raise (convertible notes) for wellness vacation company, Vacayou, Spring 2021
- Series A capital raise (priced equity round) for healthcare technology platform company, Spring 2021

Private Equity/Venture Capital

- Represented most active VC firm in the State of Florida since 2014, on over 40 investments.

- Formed and structured VC Fund focused on seed stage start-ups.

Mergers & Acquisitions

- Preparing clients for sale of their business through a multi-stage program to maximize value developed by Sheryl Hunter called the M&Aximizer Program
- Drafting and negotiating investment banker and M&A advisor agreements
- Performing due diligence
- Drafting and negotiating Letters of Intent, Asset Purchase Agreements, Stock Purchase Agreements, Seller notes and ancillary documents associated with transaction
- Performing closing and post-closing transaction related work

Recent Representative Purchase & Sale Transactions:

- Sale by sole owner of restaurant to operating employees, May 2022.
- Sale of InSync Healthcare Solutions, one of Tampa Bay's largest software firms and a leading provider of EHR and practice management software plus revenue cycle management services forbehavioral, medicaland rehabilitative professionals, to a portfolio company of private equity firm Warburg Pincus LLC, December 2021.
- Purchase of engineering company by long term executive employee, April 2021.
- Sale of 180byTwo, a leading Account-Based Marketing Technology, and Audience Solutions Company based in Clearwater, Florida, to a private equity backed, out of state buyer, November 2020.
- Purchase of dog daycare and boarding business, October 2020.
- Sale by founding shareholder to successors of surveying business, August 2020.
- Sale of engineering business, June 2020.
- Sale of a Tampa Bay area commercial roofing company to a private equity backed, out of state buyer for an undisclosed amount, April 2020.
- Negotiated the six-figure settlement of a disputed M&A Advisors fee associated with the sale of a business.
- Represented a Clearwater-based direct-to-garment apparel printing and fulfillment company in $30M sale to a publicly-traded company.
- Represented a national signage company in sale to national competitor.
- Represented bartering technology company with divestiture from an international parent company.
- Represented Sarasota-based company in a buyout of minority owners from whom the clients had made a technology acquisition.
- Represented a purchaser of St. Petersburg, Florida-based restaurant.

Honors and Distinctions

- Selected for list of Legal Elite 2022 (top 1.3% attorneys in FL), Florida Trend Magazine Business Law
- The StartUp Weekly's, Women in Business to Watch, 2021.
- TAMPA Magazine, Top Lawyer in Business Law, 2020.
- Listed as one of the Top 3 Business Lawyers in Tampa, FL by ThreeBest Rated in 2020.
- Tampa Bay Business Journal, Top 10 People to Watch, 2018.
- Tampa Bay Business Journal, Business Woman of the Year for Legal Services, 2016.

Professional Involvement

- The Florida Bar
  - Business Law Section
- Association for Corporate Growth (ACG) Tampa Bay

Community Involvement

- Synapse 501(c)(3) dedicated to the fostering of the Florida entrepreneurial ecosystem;
  - Board Member and Chair of Governance Committee, 2018-2019
- Girls Empowered Mentally for Success (GEMS); Mentor and Chair of Advisory Board for Transitions Candles, GEMS' social venture, 2017-present
- Women Ambassador Forum (WAF) event sponsor, January 2019
- Best Buddies Champion Fundraiser/Sponsor, 2018 Gala

- Investor Participant, Uberpitch Tampa, October 2015
- Member, Advisory Board and Research Foundation Committee of the National Stuttering Association, 2013-2018
- Chair of the Board of Directors, National Stuttering Association, 2012 to 2014.
- Co-Chair, Family Programs, National Stuttering Association, 2010-2012. Founded and hosted NSA Family Radio, an online support group for parents of children who stutter, and kids who stutter.
- VIBE, BVG Incorporated January 2007-2008. Founded corporate social responsibility initiative (VIBE) and chaired its volunteer board of BVG employees. VIBE provided support and services to Faith Caf and Habitat for Humanity.
- Tampa Crossroads, Inc. Board of Directors, 1998-2004. Board President 2001-2002. Provided leadership and active board participation to nonprofit serving criminal offenders who have re-entered society. Spearheaded social entrepreneurship initiative to promote greater capacity to self-fund and eventually provide employment opportunities to graduating clients.
- National Association of Women Business Owners, Tampa Bay Board member, 2003-2004. Community Liaison Committee member, 2001-2002; Chair 2003-2004.
- Hillsborough Association for Women Lawyers (HAWL) Board member, 1996-2001. Chapter Representative to and served on the board of the Florida Association of Women Lawyers, 1999-2001. Chairwoman of Community Outreach Committee, 1996-1997. Editor of Newsletter, 1997-1999. Volunteer, Domestic Violence Injunction Project.
- Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence/Women in Prison Project/Pro Bono Service Summer 1993; 1995-1999.
- Advocate for battered women. Coauthored report on domestic violence and the criminal justice system and developed materials for an expert witness training seminar. Successfully argued before Governor Chiles and Cabinet for the early release of incarcerated abuse victims.
- Tampa Connection 1998 graduate of Tampa community one-year leadership program for professionals.
- Helping the Elderly with Their Legal Problems (H.E.L.P.); Pinellas Branch 1996-1998; Co-coordinator of volunteer program to make attorneys available to indigent elderly on monthly basis at Senior Center.
- Women's Peacepower Foundation Advisory Committee Chairwoman, September 1995-2001. Analyzed and evaluated grassroots organizations and individual activists dedicated to bringing peace to the lives of women, families, and communities.

Thought Leadership

- "Empowering Brand Ambassadors to Grow the Company", Guest, Growth Think Tank Podcast #785, September 2021
- *Inc. 5000* America's Fastest Growing Companies, 2019 - 2021
- Presenter, Angel Investing: The Bachelor(ette) Style, Synapse Innovation Summit Webcast, March 2021
- Featured in the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee Tech Video discussing why Tampa Bay is the perfect place to Stay Work Play! February 2021
- Presenter, Options for Structuring Your New Company, webcast during Synapse Converge: GEW Edition November 2020
- Co-Presenter, Mitigating COVID-19: Waivers and Other Risk Management Tools webcast, hosted by ALI CLE, October 2020
- Panelist, Latest on Legal & Financial COVID Resources for Small Businesses, Synapse, June 2020
- Co-Author, Oops, They Did It Again! Another Big Change to the Paycheck Protection Program Loan Forgiveness blog, June 2020
- Co-Presenter, Pressing Restart A Discussion of Various COVID-19 Related Issues from PPP Loan to Contracts Clauses, presented virtually by ITServe Alliance, May 2020
- Co-Presenter, Restaurant Restart! A Roundtable Discussion webinar, May 2020
- Guest, Plan Your Start podcast, Hosted by Allen Clary, May 2020
- Presenter, Legal Issues, the Coronavirus & What You Need to Know to Protect Yourself & Your Business webinar, CEO Council Round Table, April 2020
- Speaker, Quickly Pivoting to a Remote Business Model webinar, Synapse, March 2020

- Presenter, Legal Issues, the Coronavirus & What You Need to Know to Protect Yourself & Your Business, Key Women's Leadership Forum, March 2020
- Moderator, Excuse the Investment, Synapse Innovation Summit, February 2020
- Moderator: Tech Shakeup: How Technology is Shifting the Landscape of Professional Services, Synapse Innovation Summit, February 2020
- Guest, Great Day Live along with Lauren Prager to discuss the 2020 Synapse Summit, January 2020
- Guest, Low Down with Lance & Nolan podcast, Episode 32, December 2019
- Speaker, Succession and Exit Planning, Jim Moran Institute Small Business Executive Program, November 2019
- Guest, Jeff Stanislow Radio Show discussing business and marketing, October 2019
- Panelist, Law Coaching Podcast with Anthony Geraci speaking about her journey as an entrepreneur, October 2019
- Moderator, Growth in St. Petersburg A Night with Mayor Baker and J.P. DuBuque , Association for Capital Growth (ACG), October 2019
- Adjunct CEO Hour Radio Show with Dean Akers speaking about her journey in becoming the Entrepreneurs' Advocate, September 2019
- Speaker, Succession and Exit Planning, Jim Moran Institute Small Business Executive Program, June 2019
- Interview, Expert regarding real estate lease enforcement when landlord fails to maintain the property, Bay News 9 with Roy De Jesus, May 2019
- Interview, How veterans can become entrepreneurs, Boots 2 Business, May 2019
- Interview, Fundamentals of entrepreneurship, The LAAB (Ladies Are About Business) by Gaby Delisme, May 2019
- Interview, Florida Funders Investor Testimonial, April 2019
- Speaker, How to think like an entrepreneur, Tampa Bay Wave/WITI (Women In Technology International) Forum, March 2019
- Client Conversation Video with John Fay from Abacode on the topic of how important it is for law firms to adopt cybersecurity, March 2019
- Interview, What it took for Sheryl to start her business and why she chose to start it, St. Pete Catalyst Start-Up Report, February 2019
- Speaker/moderator, Scale Strategically: Balancing Speed with Stability to Stay on Track, Synapse Innovation Summit, January 2019
- Speaker/moderator, Developing High-Value Relationships to Lead Your Business: Pitfalls and Pluses, Synapse Innovation Summit, January 2019
- Speaker, Women Ambassadors Forum, January 2019
- Interview, Project BOLD Life, November 2018
- Panel presenter/moderator, Cybersecurity Crisis Management Associated with Data Breaches, Association for Capital Growth (ACG), August 2018
- Speaker, The Climb: 15 Tips from 5 Business Growth Experts, Synapse Innovation Summit, March 2018
- Panel presenter/moderator, The Cryptocurrency, ICO, and Blockchain Technology Boom, Association for Capital Growth (ACG), February 2018
- Bay News 9 appearance discussing franchising, December 2017
- Panelist, The Gender Gap: Compensation, Startup Funding, and Women on Boards., Women Making Waves in Tech Luncheon, March 2017
- Panelist, Taking Care of Your Team, Florida GovCon Summit, March 2017
- Panelist, Women Mean Business, Indo-US Chamber of Commerce of Tampa Bay, August 2016
- Speaker, Nonprofit Consultation Connection Luncheon, June 2016
- Guest, employment law , Bay News 9, April 2016
- Guest, That Business Show with Jamie Meloni, April 2016
- Guest, Crowd funding, Bay News 9, March 2016
- Speaker, Breakfast Series on crowd funding, ACG Tampa Bay, March 2016
- Judge, KPI PITCHfest 2016, Sponsored by the John P. Lowth Entrepreneurship Center at the University of Tampa, with Anthony Sullivan and Dave Chitester, January 2016
- Guest, overtime legislation and changes in 2016 , Bay News 9, January 11, 2016
- Guest, That Business Show with Jamie Meloni, January 2016
- Speaker and Partnership Mentor, Business Growth & Accelerator for Entrepreneurs, Key Person of Influence USA, November 2015
- Speaker, The Partner Trap Advising Clients on Escaping the Cons of Business Co-Ownership, Commercial Financial Association, Tampa Chapter, October 2015
- Speaker, Data Breach and Cyber Security Managing Risk for CPAs, Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Pasco County Chapter, October 2015
- Guest and Presenter, Jamie Meloni's That Business Show, June 2015

- Speaker, It's the Law: Business Law for Senior Move Managers, National Association of Senior Move Managers Annual Conference & Expos, February 2015
- Speaker, The Partner Trap: Avoiding and Escaping the Cons of Business Co-Ownership, The Indo-Chamber of Commerce, January 2015
- Speaker, The Partner Trap: Avoiding and Escaping the Cons of Business Co-Ownership and The Entrepreneur's Guide to Attorneys, Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization (CEO) National Conference co-hosted by The University of Tampa, October 2014
- Presenter, Law & Entrepreneurship Building a Business on a Healthy Foundation, Southeast Entrepreneurship Conference, February 2014
- Presenter, The Business of Serving Seniors, 2011 Florida Conference on Aging
- Speaker, Three part series titled Intellectual Property: Trademarks, Copyrights and Copycats, Oh My, National Association of Senior Move Managers newsletter, 2011
- Inspired by her experience caring for two family members with Alzheimer's Disease and her legal and volunteer work on behalf of the elderly, Sheryl educates individuals and business owners on how to meet the needs of seniors and family caregivers through her company Lifelines Academy & Network
- Sheryl has co-developed three professional certifications and over 30 webinars. Subjects include: LifeDocuments Organizing and Health information Organizing; Ethics and the Confused Client Ethics and the Confused Client Guidance for Professionals when a Client's Capacity Comes into Question; and Domestic Violence and the Elder Population
- Sheryl has taught classes to multiple professional associations, including the National Association of Senior Move Managers, the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers, the National Association of Daily Money Managers, and the National Association of Professional Organizers
- Sheryl has been interviewed on The Caregiver Hour, Senior Voice America and Women Power Up radio shows