

# 20 LEGAL 16 ELITE

## Ryan T. Smith

RTS Law Group, Charlotte

### Criminal

**Vita:** 35; born in Wheeling, WV.; bachelor's from Marshall University and law degree from West Virginia University.

**Why he chose to specialize in this field:** I focus the large majority of my practice on impaired driving (DWI) defense. Good people can make mistakes. I'm a big advocate in giving these individuals the opportunity to learn from their mistakes, and not letting lapses in judgment ruin their futures. Also, law enforcement officers are human too, and sometimes they just plain get it wrong. Either way, clients retain me to fight like hell.

**Passions:** Increasing the camaraderie among members of the legal profession in Charlotte. I'm the social chair of the local defense bar and the commissioner of the lawyer basketball league. Also, living a healthy and fit lifestyle.

**Where he'd live if he had to practice somewhere else:** Barcelona, Spain. I'd be able to relive my glory days from 2005 by jumping over to Pamplona for another "Running of the Bulls." I'm one-for-one so far. I've always been one to press my luck.

**Favorite place:** My office late at night, with Miles Davis playing on repeat and creativity at full throttle.

**Hero:** My mother, Linda Smith. She not only helps and motivates me on a daily basis, but she has dedicated her life to our family, putting others' wants and needs ahead of her own.

**Don't ask him to:** Work less or sleep more. Or, eat chocolate: As a seventh grader, I won a ridiculous bet to not eat chocolate for one week. I'm still winning.



*I'm one of the few attorneys who enjoys running a business just as much as practicing law. I've always been accused of working too many hours: After my evening workout, I usually head back to the office. The show Shark Tank is constantly in the back of my mind – if I never practiced law again, I'd advise other lawyers how to build their practice.*