

Melinda Merk

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At McCandlish Lillard, Melinda Merk works at the intersection of finance and law, bringing a unique and diverse perspective from her work in private law practices, Big Four accounting firms and private banking and trust services. She focuses on providing holistic multi-generational income and wealth transfer tax planning advice and estate and trust services to high-net-worth individuals, families, and business owners.

Growing up: I am originally from Pittsburgh and was fortunate to live close to my paternal grandparents growing up. My grandmother was very active in the community and advocated for persons with disabilities, as my uncle had cerebral palsy and other intellectual disabilities. My father was an avid Steelers fan and season ticket holder, which is a tradition that my brother and I carry on today.

Personal accomplishment: I am proud of being on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee for the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia since 2018, which is committed to building a community that works for everyone.

Professional accomplishment: Completing Georgetown's Tax LL.M. program was one of the most challenging and rewarding moments of my career.

First job: My first job was delivering newspapers when I was in 5th grade. I learned the value of hard work and discipline, particularly waking up at 5am to deliver the Sunday paper. I also got to know my neighbors, including world wrestling champion and local hero Bruno Sammartino, who was a gentle giant and incredibly kind.

Humbling experience: I will never forget visiting a client in hospice to complete her estate planning. She was dying from cancer yet greeted me with the warmest and kindest smile and thanked me for my help. It was a moment of true grace.

Biggest challenge: Earlier in my tax law career, I was often one of the youngest and only females in the room, which was sometimes intimidating and did not always allow me the opportunity to speak up. I am glad to see more diversity in law and business today, and always try to make it a point to give young associates the opportunity to contribute their thoughts and questions to the conversation when I am leading a meeting.

I might have been: A broadcast/TV journalist like Diane Sawyer. It would be fascinating to travel the world and interview newsworthy and famous people.

Favorite getaway: My family and I have visited the Outer Banks and Hilton Head for many years. They are both peaceful places with priceless memories.

A month off: I would plan a trip to walk the Camino de Santiago, which I have heard can be life changing.

You didn't know: I am a huge Whitney Houston fan and know every word to the Body Guard soundtrack. I also loved rap music growing up and still listen to it, including old school classics like the Beastie Boys, Run-DMC, LL Cool J, and Doug E. Fresh.

