

North Carolina Bar Association ^[1]

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by Memory F. Mitchell, 2006

The [North Carolina Bar Association](#) ^[2] dates to 1899, although a short-lived organization of lawyers had been formed in 1885. The first group had only two meetings and was formally disbanded after the 1899 association formed. On 10 Feb. 1899 lawyers met in Raleigh to establish a statewide association for the purpose of fostering goodwill among attorneys and improving the legal system, including codification of the laws. As president, the group named [Platt D. Walker](#) ^[3] of Charlotte, and as secretary-treasurer, [J. Crawford Biggs](#) ^[4], professor of law at the [University of North Carolina](#) ^[5] and a prime mover in the effort to organize the state's lawyers. A [charter of incorporation](#) ^[6] was obtained from the [General Assembly](#) ^[7].

By 1915 the legislature had granted the Bar Association the authority to create a board of legal examiners composed of the chief justice and two associate justices of the [North Carolina Supreme Court](#) ^[8]. The board was responsible for testing and licensing applicants for the bar as well as for disbaring lawyers should the need arise, but by 1932 the Bar Association agreed that an incorporated bar should handle those functions. The following year the North Carolina State Bar came into being as a legal entity.

The modern voluntary bar is made up of two closely related organizations: the North Carolina Bar Association and the [North Carolina Bar Foundation](#) ^[9], Inc. The Bar Association is a trade organization concerned with substantive and procedural law and needed legislation. The Bar Foundation functions as a charitable and educational organization; it sponsors continuing education programs, encourages lawyers to provide legal assistance to the poor and disadvantaged, and works to improve the administration of justice in the state. By the early 2000s there were more than 12,500 members of the North Carolina Bar Association. In June 1991 [Rhoda Billings](#) ^[10], professor of law at [Wake Forest University](#) ^[11] and former state supreme court justice, became its first woman president.

Reference:

Fannie Memory Blackwelder, "Organization and Early Years of the North Carolina Bar Association," *NCHR* 34 (January 1957).

Additional Resources:

North Carolina Bar Association website: <http://www.ncbar.org/> ^[12] (accessed November 19, 2012).

North Carolina Bar Association. 1999. *North Carolina Bar Association, 1899-1999: a centennial celebration* ^[12]. Raleigh, N.C.: The Association.

"An Act to Incorporate the North Carolina Bar Association." *Private laws of the state of North Carolina passed by the General Assembly at its session of 1899*. Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton, and E.M. Uzzell 1899. p.923-925. <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/u/?p249901coll22.214144> ^[6] (accessed November 19, 2012).

Image Credits:

2012 Annual Meeting Wrap-up. YouTube video, 1:52. posted by NCBarAssociation, Jun 26, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7MLc3YrrFQ> ^[13] (accessed November 19, 2012).

Subjects:

[Gilded Age \(1876-1900\)](#) ^[14]

[Law and legal history](#) ^[15]

Authors:

[Mitchell, Memory F.](#) ^[16]

Origin - location:

[Raleigh](#) ^[17]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[18]

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[1] <https://www.ncpedia.org/north-carolina-bar-association> [2] <http://www.ncbar.org/> [3] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/walker-platt-dickinson> [4] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/biggs-james-crawford> [5] <https://www.ncpedia.org/university-north-carolina-chapel-hi> [6] <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/u/?p249901coll22,214144> [7] <https://www.ncpedia.org/general-assembly> [8] <https://www.ncpedia.org/supreme-court-north-carolina> [9] <http://www.ncbar.org/development.aspx> [10] <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=cwEzAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=0xMEAAAAIIBAJ&pg=6423%2C1127363> [11] <https://www.ncpedia.org/wake-forest-university> [12] <http://www.ncbar.org/about/history/centennial-history-book.aspx> [13] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7MLc3YrrFQ> [14] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/gilded-age-1876-1> [15] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/laws> [16] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/mitchell-memory-f> [17] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmont-0> [18] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->