



Our History

"Being First" is our Legacy

The Story of our Firm and our Historic Building in Durham

The history of Olive & Olive, P.A. dates back to 1957, when B. B. Olive became the first patent attorney to establish a private practice in what is now referred to as the Research Triangle Park area of North Carolina. The original site was 200 square feet of rental space in the old NC Bank Building at the corner of Main and Mangum Streets in downtown Durham.

In the early 1960s, Mr. Olive moved his practice to another downtown Durham building at the corner of Parrish and Market Streets, then known as the Trust Building. The office eventually tripled in size to around 600 square feet.

1970s: The Durham Dairy office building becomes our new home.

In the 1970s Mr. Olive purchased the old Durham Dairy building and adjacent property at 500 Memorial Street. He and his wife, an architect, extensively redesigned the interior to provide approximately 2,000 square feet of office space. This renovation was completed in 1974. A second attorney and additional support staff were added to the firm.

In 1979, B.B. Olive was joined by his daughter Susan Freya Olive, who had just completed a two-year term as Special Counsel for the State of North Carolina. She became the first female in the private practice of intellectual property law in North Carolina. While Mr. Olive focused his practice on patents, Susan initially

focused on trademarks and litigation.

Over the years, Ms. Olive became widely recognized as an expert in her field. She also continued the family tradition of “being first.” She was the first female president of the Durham Bar. She was the first female Chair of the North Carolina Board of Law Examiners – and the first female head of any state board of law examiners in the South. She was the first female to lead statewide bar organizations, including the intellectual property bar.

1980s: We Keep growing.

By 1987, the solo practice of B. B. Olive, Patent Attorney, had grown into the specialized intellectual property law firm of Olive & Olive, P.A.

The thriving practice needed more staff and room, so the premises at 500 Memorial Street were completely reconstructed to create 5,600 square feet of space, into which the firm moved in October 1988. The original one-floor building was now two and one-half stories.

1990s: We add more lawyers and an elevator.

By 1994, Olive & Olive had grown to six attorneys and six support staff. More space was needed. Once again the interior of the historic building was extensively renovated. Now there were three full floors and an elevator.

What started out as a one-story dairy bar has evolved into a modern three-story building with approximately 8,000 square feet of carefully designed office space. Its transformation has been done so that it blends architecturally with the historic Duke Memorial United Methodist Church across the street.

Our Tradition continues

You will note that the words “first” and “growth” appear frequently in the above narrative. We have expanded our office space six times over our 60 years – always staying in the heart of Durham. Needless to say, we expect to remain a part of Durham’s thriving downtown area.

We are proud that our firm has become well-known and widely respected for our acumen in intellectual property law. Our successes have been documented in the U.S. and overseas. We treasure that recognition. We appreciate what it means for our clients.

But we also know none of it would have been possible without the trust and support of our clients and colleagues.