




May L. Harris, Esq., MA

CEO | *Managing Attorney*

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May L. Harris (she/her) founded For Purpose Law Group (FPLG) in 2012, and currently serves as the firm's CEO and Managing Attorney.

Ms. Harris chairs the firm's transactional practice group, working with an outstanding team of FPLG attorneys and professionals in service to clients of all sizes, including museums, schools, churches, medical organizations and other charitable tax-exempt entities.

Serving in the roles of nonprofit founder, board member, corporate counsel and executive director over the course of her career, Ms. Harris has been instrumental in the development of each of the organizations she has led, and she understands the challenges facing nonprofit executives every day.

Over more than two decades of legal practice, Ms. Harris has developed widespread recognition of her expertise & knowledge specific to the challenges facing tax exempt organizations and social enterprises. She excels at advising growth-focused purpose-driven organizations, ensuring they receive practical, real-world advice they can apply immediately with staff, board members, stakeholders and donors to establish, protect and fulfill their mission, vision and values.

"I founded FPLG on the simple premise that there is more to life than just living. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once observed, 'The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.' These words frame my work, and they define my actions."

— MAY

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Nonprofit & Tax Exempt Organizations





Social Enterprise & Business Law →

Estate Planning & Charitable Giving →

ADMISSIONS

- California Bar
- Washington, DC Bar
- California Supreme Court
- US District Court for the Southern District of California

EDUCATION

- Juris Doctor, University of San Diego School of Law
- Managing Editor, Journal of Contemporary Legal Issues
- Master of Arts, Nonprofit Leadership & Management, University of San Diego, School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES)
- Bachelor of Science, Geology / Mathematics, University of Utah

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- American Bar Association, Taxation Section; Member of the Tax-Exempt Organizations Standing Committee
- American Bar Association, Business Law Section, Nonprofit Organizations Committee
- American Bar Association, Business Law Section, Corporate Governance & Social Responsibility Committees
- California Lawyers Association, Taxation Section, Nonprofit Organizations Committee
- Washington, DC Bar Association, Taxation Section
- Board Member, Advisors in Philanthropy, San Diego Chapter
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- San Diego County Bar Association
- Wealth Counsel

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS



- ARCA Academy, Encouraging Public Participation, Without Losing Effectiveness and Efficiency, April 2023
- Cause Conference, Exploring the Tradeoffs: C-Corp, 501 (c)(3), LLC, B-CORP, What Does it all Mean?, September 2022
- California Charitable Fundraising Platform Regulations, Lorman Education Live Webinar, March 2022
- Nonprofit Governance Symposium, University of San Diego (2016 - 2021)
- Cause Marketing: Building a (Legal) Framework for Success, Cause Conference, San Diego Chapter of the American Marketing Association, November 2020
- Regulatory Compliance for Nonprofit Organizations in California, Half Moon Bay Education, October 2020
- Social Good Partnerships, Forming and Operating a Sports Based Nonprofit Organization, USA Rugby National Development Summit, January 2016

TEACHING ENGAGEMENTS

- Nonprofit Legal Issues and Risk Management, University of San Diego, School of Leadership & Education Sciences, (2018 - Present)

PUBLICATIONS

- Problems with Prozac: A Defective Product Responsible for Criminal Behavior?, 10 J. CONTEMP. LEG. ISSUES 359 (1999)
- The Modern Lanham Act and the Death of Common Sense, 12 J. CONTEMP. LEG. ISSUES 32 (2001)
- “Scandalous” or “Disparaging” Should Make a Difference, 12 J. CONTEMP. LEG. ISSUES 44 (2001)
- TRIPS: Historical Overview and Basic Principles, 12 J. CONTEMP. LEG. ISSUES 454 (2001)