

# STARS of the Bar Lawyers and Attorneys of Note

A survey of local attorneys reveals the names and faces that you should know.

*Portraits by Beau Gustafson*



Kevin Williams  
Bredley Adams Bout Cummings, LLP

Frances Nolan  
Nolan Byers, PC

Giles Perkins  
Adams and Perkins, LLP

Barry F. Gedala  
Shots & Smith

Ken Riley  
Parris, Riley and Pitt

Jennifer G. Rose  
The Rose Law Firm, LLC

Don Siegel  
Letman Siegel & Payne, PC

Deborah Aley Smith  
Christian & Small

**Richard S. Jaffe**  
Cohen & Jaffe, LLP

As a partner, Jaffe continues to practice in the areas of personal injury, medical malpractice, employment law, insurance law, products liability, lead paint poisoning, and municipal liability. Jaffe has represented thousands of

victims of car accidents, medical malpractice, and other types of negligence cases.

**Jonathan Macklem**  
Christian & Small

Macklem is an experienced corporate attorney who represents and advises clients on

a broad range of legal matters, representing businesses and professionals in litigation in Alabama and across the Southeast. He regularly defends clients in complex contractual and business tort proceedings involving director/officer liability issues, shareholder disagreements, and franchise disputes.

**TOPFLIGHT ATTORNEYS** 

W. Barry Alvis and Lara M. Alvis have combined over 45 years of experience in practicing law and tried over 100 jury trials. The firm specializes in Criminal Defense and Juvenile Family Law, and Appellate and Post-Trial litigation. The firm has an AV rating from Martindale-Hubbell and was ranked in the First Tier of the Best Law Firms in the State of Alabama in U.S. News and World Report. Both Barry and Lara are in the Top 100 Trial Lawyers and have co-authored a handbook entitled, "The Legality of Firearms"

W. Barry Alvis has tried crimi-

nal jury trials for over 30 years with an emphasis on capital murder, firearms, child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, and expungements. He was appointed as a Special Circuit Judge and has been an adjunct professor at Birmingham School of Law.



Lara M. Alvis was an Assistant District Attorney in Shelby County and served as a judicial clerk on the Court of Criminal Appeals. She currently serves as President of the Shelby County Bar Association and is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Alabama School of Law.

**Alvis and Alvis, LLC**

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cases, including derivative and class action. His trial experience includes securities fraud, construction, environmental, products liability, personal injury, F.E.L.A., insurance defense, and commercial litigation.

#### Edward P. Meyerson

Baker Donelson

Meyerson, shareholder in the Birmingham office, concentrates his practice in the areas of construction law, litigation, and mediation and arbitration. He has served on the board of directors of the American College of Construction Lawyers and as an adjunct professor in construction law at Cumberland School of Law at Samford University.

#### John Morrow

Burn & Forman, LLP

Morrow practices in the firm's litigation and health care sections, with an emphasis on product liability and personal injury, commercial, and administrative law litigation. He handles personal injury and wrongful death cases for products manufacturers, and has experience defending heavy truck (tractor-trailer) crashworthiness, design defect, failure to warn, fleet warranty, and other claims.

#### Kevin Newsome

Bradley Arant Boult Cummings, LLP

One of four firm lawyers to have clerked at the U.S. Supreme Court, Newsome is chair of the firm's appellate group. Before joining the firm, Newsome served as Alabama's Solicitor General, in which capacity he directed the State's litigation in the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Courts of Appeals, and the Alabama Supreme Court.

#### Frances Nolan

Nolan Byers, PC

Nolan has practiced in the area of matrimonial and family law exclusively since 2005, founding Nolan Byers, PC, in March 2013. A certified collaborative lawyer and family law mediator, Frances cofounded and served as inaugural president of Alabama's first collaborative practice group, Birmingham Collaborative Alliance.

#### Giles Perkins

Adams and Reese LLP

Perkins, a fourth generation lawyer, serves as

a partner in the Adams and Reese Birmingham office. Perkins works at the intersection of government and business. He understands the language of both and shepherds clients through litigation, regulation, public finance, legislation, and administrative concerns.

#### Harlan I. Prater IV

Lightfoot, Franklin & White LLP

Prater's law practice has been devoted to all types of high-stakes civil trial work. Focusing on product liability and pharmaceutical and medical device litigation, Prater also has extensive experience in business litigation, including consumer fraud, antitrust, patent cases, and environmental litigation.

#### Barry Ragsdale

Sirota & Farnutt

A litigator in our Birmingham office, Ragsdale recently returned to Sirota, where he began his legal career, after spending the last 15 years representing defendants and plaintiffs in anti-trust, securities, insurance, and business fraud cases. He also handles matters involving products liability, shareholder, and other complex litigation and class actions.

#### Ken Riley

Farris, Riley and Pitt

Riley has dedicated his law practice to helping injured victims obtain fair and just settlements and verdicts. Riley tailors his practice to not only focus on people involved in automobile accidents, but also those injured in boating accidents and child-related accidents, as well as victims of nursing home abuse.

#### John Robbins

John C. Robbins, Attorney at Law

Robbins has successfully defended clients across Alabama and Georgia. A past president of the Greater Birmingham Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, he is a recognized expert in criminal defense, handling numerous high-profile cases.

#### Bruce F. Rogers

Bainbridge, Mims, Rogers & Smith, LLP

Rogers has extensive experience in such varied areas as shareholder and business litigation, complex estate and trust matters,

business torts, and insurance. He is regularly engaged to mediate and arbitrate disputes. His years of service to the Birmingham Bar Association include time spent as president, member of the executive committee, and chairman of the grievance committee.

#### Jennifer G. Rose

The Rose Law Firm, LLC

Rose is a certified family law specialist, practicing family law such as divorce, custody, adoption, and asset division exclusively. In addition to this and other recognitions, she was voted a top family law attorney by her peers in 2013 and 2014. Rose is a member of the Alabama State Bar Family Law Chapter and the National Association of Council for Children. She is involved in multiple charities that focus on the needs of children such as Autism Speaks, The LoveLady Center, and Cure SMA.

#### Don Siegel

Leitman Siegel & Payne, PC

Siegel is a partner in the firm with a range of specialties is extremely broad—covering litigation and arbitration in the areas of securities, anti-trusts, shareholder/partner disputes, trust and probate litigation, will contests, derivative suites, class actions, products liability, and election law.

#### Kenneth O. Simon

Christian & Small

Simon has more than 30 years experience as a judge and litigator. Simon has extensive experience in representing public agencies and their boards in contractual, litigation, employment, insurance, bond issuance, transactional, personnel law, and other matters. He also represents private parties in their dealings with governmental commissions and agencies.

#### Deborah Alley Smith

Christian & Small

Smith's practice is post-judgment and appellate litigation. She devotes her time to research and writing and to preparing her Christian & Small partners for trial to ensure that significant issues are preserved in the event of an appeal. She is frequently enlisted to handle post judgment motions and appeals in cases tried by lawyers from other firms.

### Tommy Spina

Criminal Defense Attorney

Spina is a criminal defense lawyer in private practice. His practice is limited to criminal defense on a federal, state, and municipal court level at all stages of criminal proceedings including pre-indictment, trial, appeal, and post-conviction. Spina works cases throughout the United States.

### Michael Vercher

Christian & Small

At Christian & Small, Vercher has handled a wide variety of cases ranging from general insurance defense matters to complex toxic tort and workplace exposure litigation. The law firm of Christian & Small represents a diverse clientele throughout Alabama, the Southeast, and across the nation.

### J. Mark White

White Arnold & Dowd

White has more than 35 years of experience as a trial litigator in a number of matters that cover a spectrum of civil and criminal practice, including white collar crime, environ-

mental, mass tort, personal injury, antitrust, and securities litigation. He has been lead counsel in a number of high-profile trials, representing both plaintiffs and defendants.

### James S. Williams

Sinote & Permutt, PC

Williams handles civil litigation, with a particular focus on life and disability insurance litigation, representation of banks and mortgage companies, construction litigation, shareholder and derivative lawsuits, and all forms of commercial litigation on behalf of individuals and businesses.

### Josh Wright

Hollis, Wright, Clay, & Vail, PC

In 2002, attorneys Andrew Hollis and Wright joined together to form Hollis, Wright, Clay, & Vail, PC, a leading personal injury firm. Wright is a regular guest on talk shows and local television. He hosts a weekly television show on Sunday nights on NBC13 called *The Attorneys*.

## Lifetime Achievers

William J. "Bill" Baxley

Baxley, Dillard, McKnight, James & McElroy

Baxley was elected attorney general of Alabama at age 28. Remarkably, he was already a seasoned prosecutor, having tried dozens of jury trials as district attorney in Houston and Henry counties. He served as Alabama's attorney general from 1971 to 1979 and its lieutenant governor from 1983 to 1987.

As attorney general, Baxley served as lead trial counsel in every major action on the State's behalf, civil and criminal. He appointed the state's first African-American assistant attorney general, who later became a federal judge. His successful prosecution of Ku Klux Klansman Robert Chambliss for the 1963 bombing of Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church is featured in the Spike Lee documentary, *4 Little Girls*. His legal accomplishments are also documented in *Lay Down with Dogs, Until Justice Rolls Down*, and

## TOPFLIGHT ATTORNEYS



Morris, Haynes, Wheelles, Knowles & Nelson specialize in representing individuals who have been injured or wronged in some way. For the past twenty four years, our firm has successfully handled cases for individuals against some of the most powerful corporations in the world. We take pride in ensuring that our clients have the best chance for a successful recovery by devoting the time and expense needed in each case.

Morris, Haynes, Wheelles, Knowles & Nelson has historically handled trucking accidents, car wrecks, wrongful death cases, product defect cases, medical malpractice cases and insurance fraud cases. While we continue to handle these cases, we have recently successfully represented victims of Legionnaires Disease and victims of wrongful gun discharge. Please visit our Legionnaire's website at [www.legionnaireattorney.com](http://www.legionnaireattorney.com) and our firm website at [www.mhhlaw.net](http://www.mhhlaw.net) for more information.



### Morris, Haynes, Wheelles, Knowles & Nelson Attorneys at Law

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William J. "Bill" Baxley  
Baxley, Dilard, McKnight, James &  
McElroy



Chervis Isom  
Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell and  
Berkowitz



Frank M. Bainbridge



The Honorable  
Helen Shares Lee



J. Mason Davis  
Brote & Permutt, PC



Ann Huckstep  
Adams and Reese, LLP



Thomas Christian  
Christian & Small



J. Scott Vowell  
Vowell & Goldsmith, LLC

numerous other publications.

### Chervis Isom

Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell  
and Berkowitz

Isom published a memoir in December 2013, titled *The Newspaper Boy: Coming of Age in Birmingham, Alabama, during the Civil Rights Era*, which tells of his journey out of the Jim Crow racism of his youth through a series of stories meant to explain to his grandchildren the times in which he grew up. Over a period of 10 years, those stories grew into a book that documents the evolution of his life as it intersected with those historical and social events that occurred during his youth.

One of his short stories was published in *The Louisville Review*, Volume 75, Spring 2014, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Others have been published in *The Birmingham Arts Journal*.

Isom grew up in Birmingham and attended its public schools. A graduate of Birmingham-Southern College and Cumberland School of Law of Samford University, he has practiced law for 47 years in his native city with the firm of Berkowitz, Lefkowitz,

which merged in 2003 into Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell and Berkowitz.

### Frank M. Bainbridge

Bainbridge has been an attorney for more than 50 years. He graduated from the University of Alabama School of Law in 1956, where he served as an editor of the *Alabama Law Review*. Bainbridge served as president of the Birmingham Bar Association in 1977 and president of the Young Lawyers Section of the Birmingham Bar Association in 1963.

He is an acknowledged leader in the Birmingham law community, having served as lead counsel in seminal business dispute cases decided by the Alabama Supreme Court recognizing the rights of minority shareholders. He represented the appellant in the appeal of the case, which reversed the longstanding law in Alabama that the Circuit Court had no authority to provide by a divorce decree for a college education for the adult children of parties involved in divorce.

In 1970, Bainbridge was appointed chairman of a joint special committee of the Alabama State Bar and Birmingham Bar Association Committee to investigate the conduct

of two sitting Circuit Court Judges and four disbarred attorneys in connection with copies of what purported to be Alabama Court divorce decrees being sent to nonresidents when no divorce case had ever been filed. The investigation resulted in the indictment, arrest, conviction, and imprisonment of all six by the Federal Court in Birmingham, Alabama. Some 6,000 non-filed divorce files and decrees were uncovered in the investigation.

### The Honorable

Helen Shares Lee  
Circuit Judge, 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court of  
Alabama

The Honorable Lee was appointed Circuit Judge of the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court of Alabama by Gov. Don Siegelman and assumed the bench in January 2003. Judge Lee became the first African-American woman to serve in the Civil Division of the Circuit Court of Jefferson County.

Prior to the practice of law, Judge Lee served as Magistrate for the city of Birmingham, Alabama (1986-1987). Judge Lee practiced law in the Birmingham community for

more than 16 years with the firm of Shores and Lee until her judicial appointment in January 2003.

She is a graduate of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. She received her M.A. in Clinical Psychology from Pepperdine University in Los Angeles and her Juris Doctorate from Cumberland School of Law at Samford University.

Judge Lee has truly lived up to the legacy of her father, the late Arthur Shores, attorney and civic leader. He too was a pioneer because of his active involvement in many civil rights cases, including the integration of the University of Alabama as well as *Brown vs. Board of Education*. Judge Lee has dedicated her life to community service.

**J. Mason Davis**  
Sirota & Parnutt, PC

Davis has a long, distinguished career representing clients in business, antitrust, securities, and product liability litigation, as well as life, health, and surety company defense. He also has extensive experience before Insurance Regulatory Departments and Com-

missions and has participated in numerous trials in both state and federal courts. His appellate practice includes matters before the Supreme Court of Alabama and the Fifth and 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Courts of Appeals.

He was inducted into The Legion of Honor, Kiwanis Club of Birmingham in 2014 and received a Lifetime Achievement in Civil Rights from the NAACP in 2013. He has been honored by the Alabama Poverty Project, 2013, and Journey for Justice of the Birmingham Bar Foundation. He has served as chairman of the United Way of Central Alabama and the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce. He has also been inducted into the Alabama Lawyers Association Hall of Fame.

**Ann Huckstep**  
Adams and Reese, LLP

For more than 30 years, Adams and Reese's Huckstep has guided companies in cutting-edge issues in health care, real estate, and corporate law. Serving as Of Counsel in the firm's Birmingham office, Huckstep joined Adams and Reese in 2003 when she helped

guide the merger between Lange Simpson and Adams and Reese. Huckstep has also formerly served as the chair of the firm's executive committee and as the partner in charge of the Birmingham office.

Huckstep has reached many "first female" milestones, including first female partner at Lange, Simpson, Robinson & Somerville and first female member and later chair of the executive committee of Lange Simpson, a top 10 Alabama Law Firm. She has been listed in *Best Lawyers®* in Health Care Law, *Mergers & Acquisitions Law* since 2005, and also in *Alabama Super Lawyers®*. She has been awarded such honors as *Birmingham Business Journal's* Businesswoman of the Year Award for 2007, and also, in 2007, the Birmingham Bar Association's "Nina Miglionico: Paving the Way" Leadership Award, given annually to a lawyer who has achieved professional excellence, assisted women lawyers through mentoring, inspired women lawyers through role modeling, and provided opportunities for the advancement of women lawyers.

In the community, Huckstep is an active member of the Alabama Hospital As-

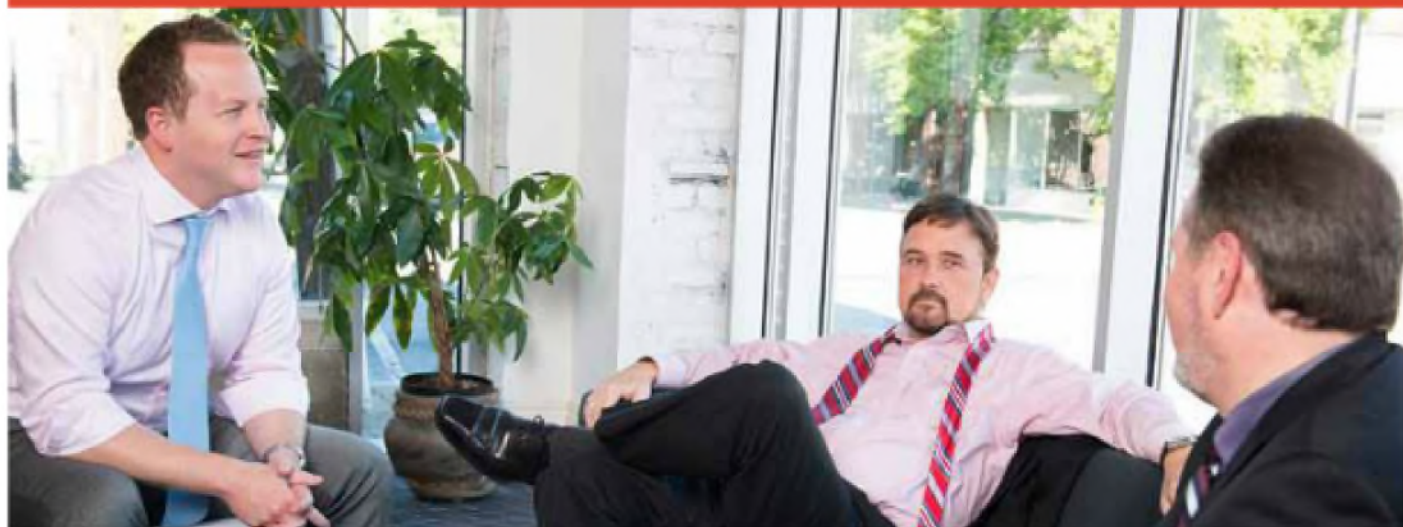
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sociation, Alabama State Bar Association, American Bar Association (Health and Business Sections), American Health Lawyers Association, and Birmingham Bar Association. She serves on the executive committee of the board of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. She is a founder and now board chair of the Alabama nonprofit Living in Limbo, Inc. Huckstep formerly served as chair of the board of trustees of the YMCA of Birmingham. She earned her J.D. from Vanderbilt University Law School in 1978, and she received her B.B.A. from University of Mississippi in 1975.

### Thomas Christian Christian & Small

Having tried well over 100 cases to verdict and arguing numerous significant appeals before the Alabama Supreme Court and the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals, Christian now leads other Christian & Small attorneys in the mastery of their trial skills. Christian's trial experience has run the gamut, from personal injury/wrongful death cases to complex commercial disputes. He has tried cases in almost every Alabama county and all three federal district courts in Alabama. He has successfully handled a number of mass tort matters and other significant litigation.

Christian is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates. Less than 15 Alabama attorneys are members of all three of these invitation-only trial lawyer groups. He is a former president of the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association and the Birmingham Bar Association. He has been listed in the *Best Lawyers in America*® for 23 consecutive years and is consistently voted by his peers as one of the Top 50 Alabama Attorneys in *Alabama Super Lawyers*®.

### J. Scott Vowell Vowell & Goldsmith, LLC

Since retiring from the bench in January of 2013, Vowell's practice has consisted of alternative dispute resolution—mediation, arbitration, and private judging. Vowell served as a Jefferson County Circuit Judge for 18 years, the last 10 as Jefferson County's Presiding Circuit Judge. Prior to taking the bench in 1994, Vowell was a civil litigator for more than 30 years.

Judge Vowell is a director of the Birmingham Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyer Program and is a fellow of the Alabama Law Foundation. Judge Vowell has received many professional honors and awards during his legal career, including an Award of Merit from the Alabama State Bar (2005), the Alabama Chief Justice's Professionalism Award (2012), and the Alabama State Bar's Al Vreeland Pro Bono Award (2012).

With a long history of civic involvement, he currently serves on the board of directors for Opera Birmingham, the Alabama Ballet, and the Greater Alabama Council of the Boy Scouts of America and is a trustee of the Birmingham Metro YMCA. He is an active member of the Rotary Club of Birmingham and is a parishioner of the Cathedral Church of the Advent.

Judge Vowell attended the public schools of Anniston and Jacksonville in his native Calhoun County before earning a B.S. from Auburn University and a J.D. from the University of Virginia.

ADAMS AND REESE LLP

OUTINFRONT



*Congratulations!*

*M. Ann Huckstep*

*B-Metro's Top Flight Lawyers 2015*

**Lifetime Achiever**



*Giles Perkins*

*B-Metro's Top Flight Lawyers 2015*

**Star of the Bar**



Adams and Reese is a multidisciplinary, regional law firm with nearly 300 attorneys and advisors strategically located in 16 offices across 15 markets. Providing legal services on a regional, national and international level, Adams and Reese represents clients in all industry segments.

*American Lawyer* once again named Adams and Reese to its list of the nation's top 200 law firms - "The Am Law 200." The *National Law Journal* also lists the firm on the "NLJ 350" of the nation's largest law firms.

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