Chapman and Stakely Secure Defense Verdict for Cardiothoracic Surgeon

On October 14, 2026, Peyton Chapman and Charlie Stakely achieved a defense verdict in favor of a cardiothoracic surgeon in a medical malpractice case that was tried before the Honorable Cody Robinson in Etowah County, Alabama. The case involved an alleged delay in diagnosing and treating heparin induced thrombocytopenia during the plaintiff's hospitalization following emergency coronary artery bypass grafting surgery. Plaintiffs claimed that the alleged delay caused thrombotic injury resulting in kidney damage and the amputation of numerous fingers and toes. The defense responded with supportive expert testimony establishing that the surgeon's handling of the patient's care was timely and appropriate, and that the alleged injuries were caused by the patient's severely compromised overall condition rather than by any breach of the standard of care. After a week and a half of trial, the jury returned a defense verdict in favor the surgeon.

J. Evans Bailey and Katie D. Archer Secure Favorable Result for Client with the

Alabama Supreme Court

The Alabama Supreme Court affirmed in part and reversed in part a trial court's judgment involving a commercial lease agreement. Mr. Bailey and Mrs. Archer represented the landlord. The case involved claims for unpaid rent, defense and indemnification, and property damage arising from alleged mold exposure in the leased premises. The Alabama Supreme Court affirmed the trial court's decision to strike the tenants' untimely response to the landlord's motion for partial summary judgment and upheld the partial summary judgment in favor of the landlord on its counterclaims of unpaid rent and defense and indemnity. However, the Court reversed the trial court's dismissal of the entire case because individual claims and the determination of damages remained pending. The case was remanded for further proceedings.

Rushton Stakely Lawyers Recognized Among 2027 Best Lawyers in America

Rushton Stakely is pleased to announce that eighteen of our attorneys have earned recognition in the 2027 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America©,* which is a testament to the quality of legal talent across our firm. This achievement continues a long-standing tradition at the Rushton Stakely – for more than fifteen consecutive years, over half of our attorneys have earned a place in this respected publication. This year's honorees span eighteen practice areas, reflecting the range of

experience within our firm. We appreciate the hard work of these attorneys and their continued commitment to serving our clients every day.

Congratulations to the following attorneys who have earned this recognition:

- **Evans Bailey –** Commercial Litigation, Insurance Law, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants
- **Jeffrey W. Blitz –** Real Estate Law
- **Peyton Chapman III –** Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions – Defendants and Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants
- **James R. Dickens, Jr. –** Commercial Transactions/UCC Law and Real Estate Law
- **Scott Dickens –** Litigation – Construction
- **Royal C. Dumas –** Commercial Litigation, Insurance Law, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants
- **William Eskridge –** Real Estate Law
- **Brett Garrett –** Insurance Law, Litigation – Insurance, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants
- **WilliamS. Haynes –** Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants and Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants
- **Paul M. James, Jr. –** Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants
- **Thomas Keene –** Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants and Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants
- **Andrew Laird –** Workers' Compensation Law – Employers
- **Daniel Lindsey, Jr. –** Tax Law and Trusts & Estates
- **Philip G. Piggott –** Commercial Litigation and Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants
- **Grant Sexton, Jr. –** Insurance Law, Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants
- **Patrick Shegon –** Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants
- **Christopher Simmons –** Employee Benefits (ERISA) Law, Litigation and Controversy – Tax, Public Finance Law, and Tax Law

- **Ben Wilson –** Litigation – Health Care, Litigation – Labor and Employment, and Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants

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Paul James Secures Dismissal of Negligent Hiring Claims Against Senior Care Facility

Paul James recently obtained a dismissal of claims of negligent hiring, training, and supervision against a Senior Care facility in Central Alabama. Mr. James successfully argued that the Plaintiff's Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted and, more importantly, that an Amended Complaint did not relate back to the original filing. On procedural grounds, the Trial Court accepted Mr. James' argument, noting that the identity of the Senior Care Company was either known or reasonably discoverable prior to the filing of the original Complaint. When a subsequent Amended Complaint specifically identifying the Company was filed, Mr. James filed a Motion to Dismiss, which the Trial Court ultimately granted.

Rushton Stakely Welcomes

Charles Smith as Associate in Montgomery Office

Rushton Stakely is pleased to announce that Charles C. Smith has joined the firm as an Associate in its Montgomery office.

Charles brings more than six years of experience in trusts and estates, closely held businesses, tax, and transactional law. His practice covers federal and state taxation, estate and trust administration and litigation, mergers and acquisitions, public finance, and economic development. Before joining Rushton Stakely, he practiced with a Montgomery area firm, advising clients on estate and trust matters, tax planning, and related business issues.

Charles earned his J.D. from Cumberland School of Law in 2019 and his LL.M. in Taxation from the New York University Graduate Tax Program in 2020. He holds concurrent undergraduate degrees in Finance and Economics from Auburn University (2016). He is admitted to practice in Alabama and serves as a board member of the Montgomery Estate Planning Council.

Bill Eskridge, President of Rushton Stakely, commented on the new addition: “We are thrilled to welcome Charlie to Rushton Stakely. His extensive experience in tax and estate planning will be a tremendous asset to our clients and will help carry forward the tradition of excellence our firm has built for more than 135 years.”

Bailey Published in MediaLawLetter

Evans Bailey recently published an article in the MediaLawLetter examining the 11th Circuit's recent decision to strike down a multi-million dollar defamation verdict that had been entered in favor of former Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore. The article provides an analysis of the court's reasoning and the broader implications of the ruling. The article can be found here: https://medialaw.org/eleventh-circuit-tosses-roy-moores-8-2-million-damage-award/

Paul James and Katie Marie McEntyre Obtain Summary Judgment for a Paint Contractor in North Alabama

Mr. James and Ms. McEntyre recently defended a national paint contractor involving allegations of overspray at a storage facility in North Alabama. After extensive arguments, the Circuit Court granted summary judgment in favor of Defendant, holding that no negligent or wanton conduct occurred, and that the allegations of paint overspray were not proven by the Plaintiff. The Court also dismissed claims of trespass in their entirety.

Paul James Attains Summary Judgment for Termite Company

Mr. James recently obtained summary judgment on behalf of a termite company in a case involving allegations of deficient treatment and/or inspections. Specifically, the Plaintiffs alleged that the termite company prepared a fraudulent Wood Infestation Inspection Report ("WIIR") and claimed that the Plaintiffs relied upon that document when purchasing a home in Central Alabama. Mr. James successfully argued that the treatment work had been performed for a prior customer and that disclosures contained within the WIIR placed the Plaintiffs on notice of the potential for hidden termite damage. The order granting summary judgment ended two years of litigation in favor of Mr. James' client.

Katie Archer Selected for Alabama State Bar Leadership Forum Class 20

Katie Archer has been selected for the Alabama State Bar Leadership Forum Class 20, a highly competitive program recognizing attorneys for their commitment to leadership, service, and the advancement of the legal profession. Only 20 – 30 lawyers are chosen statewide each year for this initiative, which is widely recognized as one of the Bar's most impactful programs for developing leadership skills among

Alabama lawyers.

Participants in Leadership Forum Class 20 will engage in a series of educational sessions focused on ethics, professionalism, community leadership, and the responsibilities of lawyers as servant leaders. The program also provides opportunities for mentorship, collaboration, and service across the state.

Katie's selection reflects her dedication to professional excellence and her commitment to serving both her clients and the broader legal community.

Alabama Supreme Court Affirms Summary Judgment

Katie Archer, alongside Dennis Bailey and J. Evans Bailey, successfully obtained a decision from the Alabama Supreme Court upholding a summary judgement in favor of a local bank in a breach of contract matter. The case centered on the proper distribution of mortgage payments. The Alabama Supreme Court affirmed the trial court's ruling without opinion.