Evans Bailey Elected to Alabama Law Institute

Evans Bailey was elected as a member of the Alabama Law Institute ("ALI") in January 2024. The election is for a six year term that will expire in 2030. The purpose of the ALI is to clarify and simplify the laws of the State of Alabama, revise laws that are out-of-date, and fill in gaps in laws that may be confusing. ALI membership is made up of only 150 of the 15,000 members of the Alabama State Bar. More information about the ALI can be found here.

Taimoor Arshad Joins Rushton Stakely Law Firm

We are pleased to announce that Taimoor Arshad has joined our firm as an associate, focusing on civil litigation. Mr. Arshad is a Montgomery native. He earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Alabama School of Law in 2023, where he served as an Articles Editor for the *Alabama Law Review*, Vice President of the Bench and Bar Legal Honor Society, and a member of the Michael Figures Student Committee Board. He also holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology, *summa cum laude*, from the University of Alabama. Prior to joining the firm, Mr. Arshad completed a clerkship with the Honorable William B. Sellers at the Supreme Court of Alabama.

We are thrilled to welcome Mr. Arshad to our team.

Twenty-Three Rushton Stakely Lawyers Named Best Lawyers 2025

Rushton Stakely is honored to announce that twenty-three of our attorneys have been selected for inclusion in the 2025 edition of The Best Lawyers in America©. This prestigious recognition, which our attorneys have consistently earned for over fifteen years, highlights excellence across a diverse range of legal practice areas. This year, Rushton Stakely attorneys have been recognized in nineteen distinct areas of law.

The attorneys being recognized include:

- **Evans Bailey** – Commercial Litigation, Insurance Law, Product Liability Litigation (Defendants)
- **Jeffrey W. Blitz** – Real Estate Law
- **Peyton Chapman III** – Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions (Defendants), Medical Malpractice Law (Defendants)
- **Stephen P. Dees** – Healthcare Law, Medical Malpractice Law (Defendants)
- **James R. Dickens, Jr.** – Commercial Transactions/UCC Law, Real Estate Law
- **Scott Dickens** – Litigation – Construction
- **Royal C. Dumas** – Commercial Litigation, Insurance Law, Product Liability Litigation (Defendants)
- **William I. Eskridge** – Real Estate Law
- **Brett Garrett** – Insurance Law, Litigation – Insurance, and Product Liability Litigation (Defendants)
- **Alan T. Hargrove, Jr.** – Insurance Law, Litigation – Insurance

- **William S. Haynes** – Medical Malpractice Law (Defendants), Personal Injury Litigation (Defendants)
- **Amanda C. Hines** – Insurance Law, Medical Malpractice Law (Defendants)
- **Paul M. James, Jr.** – Personal Injury Litigation (Defendants)
- **Thomas H. Keene** – Medical Malpractice Law (Defendants), Personal Injury Litigation (Defendants)
- **Andrew Laird, Jr.** – Workers' Compensation Law – Employers
- **Daniel L. Lindsey, Jr.** – Tax Law, Trusts and Estates
- **Philip G. Piggott** – Commercial Litigation, Personal Injury Litigation (Defendants)
- **Grant Sexton, Jr.** – Insurance Law, Medical Malpractice Law (Defendants), Product Liability Litigation (Defendants)
- **Patrick M. Shegon** – Medical Malpractice Law (Defendants)
- **Christopher S. Simmons** – Employee Benefits (ERISA) Law, Litigation and Controversy – Tax, Public Finance Law, Tax Law
- **Frank J. Stakely** – Medical Malpractice Law (Defendants), Personal Injury Litigation (Defendants)
- **Helen Crump Wells –** Tax Law, Trusts and Estates
- **Benjamin C. Wilson** – Litigation – Healthcare, Litigation – Labor and Employment, Medical Malpractice Law (Defendants)

In addition, **Chase S. Eley** has been recognized in the *Ones to Watch* category for Workers Compensation Law – Employers.

We are proud to have our attorneys recognized for their commitment to legal excellence and their contributions across these areas of practice.

Alabama Supreme Court Affirms Summary Judgment in Lowndes County Wrongful Death Case

In a recent Opinion, the Alabama Supreme Court affirmed summary judgment in favor of Southern Sportsman Hunting Lodge, Inc., Jim Mason, and David Lyons, individually. These Defendants were represented by Paul James and Amanda Hines in the Circuit Court of Lowndes County, Alabama. The case involved a wrongful death claim brought by Veronica Edwards, individually, and as Personal Representative of the Estate of Corey Hatcher. The Plaintiffs argued that Southern Sportsman, Mason, and Lyons were responsible for the death of the decedent because horses they allowed to be corralled on their property escaped and were on a highway when the plaintiff struck the horse, killing both in the accident.

In the Opinion, the Alabama Supreme Court affirmed summary judgment for Mr. James' and Ms. Hines' clients on all counts, reaffirming all of the Defendants' positions regarding Ala. Code § 3-5-3, et seq. The court specifically noted arguments made by Mr. James before the trial court regarding the pleading deficiency inherent in the plaintiff's complaint, a major issue that supported their decision.

Tommy Keene Honored as Distinguished 50-Year Member

of MCBA



In recognition of his legal excellence and steadfast commitment, Tommy Keene was recently honored as a distinguished 50-year member of the Montgomery County Bar Association (MCBA). The ceremony took place during the annual meeting on February 1st at the RSA Activity Center, where Tommy and fellow 50-year members were formally introduced by Bobby Segall, who remarked, “Tommy is absolutely at the top of the list. He is astonishingly good, amazingly effective, and I don’t know anyone in our Bar who has more experience trying jury cases to verdict.”

This milestone celebration highlighted Tommy’s long-standing dedication to the MCBA and his significant impact on the legal community. The recognition of Tommy is not only a testament to his enduring commitment to excellence but also a reflection of the respect and admiration he has earned from his peers over the years. Tommy’s achievements serve as an inspiration to the legal community, demonstrating the rewards of perseverance and excellence in the field.

As a shareholder of Rushton Stakely, Tommy has been an integral part of the firm since 1974, serving as president for

25 years. With a wealth of experience, he has defended hundreds of cases involving catastrophic personal injury and death in the state and federal courts throughout Alabama as well as in Mississippi and Florida. He has tried well over 100 cases to jury verdict in venues throughout the state of Alabama. He is a member and former state committee member of the American College of Trial Lawyers, International Academy of Trial Lawyers, and he is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates and past president of its Alabama Chapter. He has been named repeatedly to *The Best Lawyers in America*® and *Super Lawyers*. He has also served on the board of directors of the Montgomery County Bar Association and is a member of the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association and the Alabama State Bar.

Rushton Stakely Launches Birmingham Office and Adds Six Attorneys

Rushton Stakely is pleased to announce the opening of its newest office in Birmingham, Alabama. This expansion reflects the firm's commitment to meeting the evolving needs of its clients and solidifies its position as a leading law firm in Alabama.

In addition, Rushton Stakely is excited to welcome several new lawyers to our team, including Phil Piggott, Jeannie Walston, Scott Dickens, Andy Laird, Chase Eley, and Katie Marie McEntyre. These lawyers bring a wealth of experience and expertise, enhancing the firm's capabilities to provide top caliber legal services across a broad spectrum of practice

areas, including litigation, healthcare, real estate, labor & employment, construction, energy & environmental, and business matters.

The new office represents a significant milestone for Rushton Stakely, as it marks a deliberate step to broaden the firm's geographic reach to better serve our clients. This expansion aligns with the firm's strategic vision to provide comprehensive legal solutions while maintaining the high standards and personalized service that have been its hallmark for over a century.

Bill Eskridge, President of Rushton Stakely, expressed enthusiasm about the expansion, stating that "while our firm has long served clients throughout Alabama and the Southeast, the opening of our Birmingham office along with the addition of exceptional legal talent underscores our commitment to growth and innovation. We are dedicated to meeting the growing needs of our clients and we are optimistic that this expansion will allow us to accomplish that mission."

Founded in 1890, Rushton Stakely has been a pillar of the legal community for well over a century. With a team of over 30 lawyers, the firm is widely respected for its commitment to excellence, integrity, and client-focused representation. The firm looks forward to a bright future, full of opportunities to serve the needs of its clients.

Bradley Obtains Defense Verdict

Ms. Bradley recently obtained a defense verdict in an action involving a fire at an apartment complex. The Plaintiff

alleged the fire was caused by electrical issues due to the management company for the apartment complex's negligence in maintaining the Plaintiff's unit. The defense established, through expert testimony, that the fire was not caused by electrical issues. The case was before Judge Julie S. Moody in the District Court of Covington County, Alabama.

Stakely Obtains Directed Verdict

Charlie Stakely successfully defended a hospital in Mobile, Alabama in a premises liability action. The plaintiff claimed that he fell and suffered injuries due to a defect on the premises. At trial, Stakely moved for a directed verdict at the close of plaintiff's case-in-chief, arguing that the plaintiff had not proven the existence of a defect. The trial judge agreed and found in favor of the hospital.

Best Lawyers® Names Bailey, Stakely, Wells, and Wilson Lawyers of the Year

Rushton Stakely is pleased to announce that shareholders, **Dennis R. Bailey, Frank J. Stakely, Helen Crump Wells**, and **Benjamin C. Wilson** have been selected as "Lawyers of the Year" in the 2024 Edition of *The Best Lawyers in*

America®, a guide that is highly respected in the legal community. Lawyers are selected based on extensive reviews by their peers, and only one lawyer in a specific practice field and location is selected annually for this publication.

Mr. Bailey is being recognized as a Lawyer of the Year for the sixth time, with this years' recognition honoring him for his work in Product Liability Litigation in Montgomery, Alabama. Mr. Bailey began practicing law with the firm in 1980 and has been a shareholder since 1983. Building upon a strong background of product liability and insurance defense, Mr. Bailey's practice has evolved into handling a variety of complex litigation. He has managed and argued complex litigation for corporate manufacturing, insurance, and financial services clients as pro hac vice counsel in federal or state cases in Arizona, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and California. He has also represented clients in construction arbitration proceedings and has served as an arbitrator. Additionally, Mr. Bailey has extensive experience in media law, particularly in matters involving First Amendment rights and open government.

Mr. Stakely has been recognized repeatedly, with this year's recognition marking his fifth year as a Lawyer of the Year. He is currently being honored for his work in Personal Injury Litigation– Defendants in Montgomery, Alabama. Mr. Stakely joined the firm in 1987 and attained shareholder status in 1991. He is a member of the litigation practice department, and he has over twenty years' experience defending a broad range of civil cases, with emphasis on professional liability, healthcare, products liability, and insurance defense. He has extensive experience defending physicians, hospitals, nurses, and other healthcare professionals in medical malpractice cases throughout the state. He also handles other complex litigation involving personal injury and first-party bad faith claims.

Mrs. Wells is being recognized as a Lawyer of the Year for the fourth time, with this year's recognition honoring her for her work in Trusts and Estates. Ms. Wells began practicing law with the firm in 1988 and has been a shareholder since 1992.

Mrs. Wells has a wide range of experience in corporate mergers and other transactions, securities issuance and disclosure, bank regulatory matters, corporate governance, and estate planning and trust and estate administration. Mrs. Wells' practice includes corporate, partnership, and personal financing and real estate transactions, taxation, entity formations, corporate transactions including purchases, mergers and reorganizations, and corporate buy-sell agreements, and other business succession planning. Her probate and estate planning practice has included innovative tax and personal planning for complex estates involving closely held businesses, generation-skipping tax problems, minimization of estate and gift taxes by various techniques, securing IRS private letter rulings, and numerous other issues.

Mr. Wilson is being recognized as a Lawyer of the Year in Litigation and Health Care. Mr. Wilson has been a shareholder since 2004. He focuses his practice on civil litigation and trial work, with an emphasis on health care and professional liability defense, drug and medical device litigation, product liability, and employment law. Mr. Wilson has significant trial and appellate experience, having defended a variety of individuals and entities including hospitals, physicians, and dentists in jury trials throughout the state. Mr. Wilson has also been actively involved in the defense of medical devices and pharmaceutical products, both in local and nationwide (multi-district or consolidated) litigation. In addition, he regularly represents a variety of clients in various types of employment litigation including claims of discrimination based on race, gender, or age, retaliatory discharge, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family & Medical Leave Act, and wage and hour matters.

For over 130 years, Rushton Stakely has provided the highest levels of legal service throughout the United States. Founded in 1890, the firm is now composed of over thirty experienced lawyers practicing in a broad spectrum of legal fields. From the courtroom to the boardroom, our lawyers will advocate for you.

Twenty-One Rushton Stakely Attorneys Named Best Lawyers 2024

Rushton Stakely is pleased to announce that twenty-one of our attorneys were chosen for the 2024 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America©.* For over fifteen years, more than half of the Rushton Stakely attorneys have been recognized in the annual publication, with at least one attorney being named Lawyer of the Year in his or her respective practice area(s) since 2011. This recognition spans across numerous practice areas, with our attorneys gaining recognition in eighteen areas of law in 2024. The selected lawyers include: **Dennis R. Bailey**, Bet-the-Company Litigation, Commercial Litigation, Communications Law, Litigation – Banking and Finance, Litigation – Intellectual Property, Litigation – Labor and Employment, Litigation – Real Estate, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants; **J. Evans Bailey**, Commercial Litigation, Insurance Law, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants; **Jeffrey W. Blitz**, Real Estate Law; **L. Peyton Chapman III**, Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions – Defendants, and Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants; **Stephen P. Dees**, Healthcare Law and Medical

Malpractice Law – Defendants; **James R. Dickens, Jr.**, Real Estate Law; **Royal C. Dumas,** Commercial Litigation, Insurance Law, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants; **William I. Eskridge**, Real Estate Law; **R. Brett Garrett**, Insurance Law and Litigation – Insurance; **Alan T. Hargrove**, **Jr**., Insurance Law, and Litigation – Insurance; **William S**. **Haynes**, Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants, and Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants; **Amanda C. Hines**, Insurance Law and Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants; **Paul M. James, Jr**., Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants; **Thomas H. Keene**, Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants, and Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants; **Daniel L. Lindsey**, **Jr**., Tax Law, and Trusts and Estates; **T. Grant Sexton, Jr.,** Insurance Law, and Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants; **Patrick M. Shegon**, Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants; **Christopher S. Simmons**, Employee Benefits (ERISA) Law, Litigation and Controversy – Tax, Public Finance Law, Tax Law, and Trusts and Estates; **Frank J. Stakely**, Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants, and Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants; **Helen Crump Wells**, Tax Law, and Trusts and Estates; **Ben C. Wilson**, Litigation – Health Care, Litigation – Labor and Employment, and Medical Malpractice Law – Defendants.