

State rankings

The following firms and individuals were consistently recommended as the best in litigation in their respective states.

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Leading litigation firms

Highly recommended

Bradley Arant Rose & White

Cunningham Bounds

Lightfoot Franklin & White

Starnes & Atchison

Recommended

Balch & Bingham

Cabaniss Johnston Gardner Dumas & O'Neal

Hare Wynn Newell & Newton

Helmsing Leach Herlong Newman & Rouse

Lanier Ford Shaver & Payne

McDowell Knight Roedder & Sledge

Rushton Stakely Johnston & Garrett

Maynard Cooper & Gale

Christian & Small

Alabama

While the state continues to see several mass torts, securities litigation is also growing. Additionally, The Alabama Supreme Court found itself in the local news for staying the execution of a man by a 5-4 vote. After an unusual set of filings, in which the state lost a rape kit needed in the prosecution, lawyers called for reforms to the justice system in the hopes that DNA evidence can exonerate someone before execution.

Highly recommended firms

Bradley Arant Rose & White remains one of the top, go-to litigation firms in Alabama. With three offices in the state and litigators to meet a client's every need, Bradley Arant is capable of tackling difficult cases. Industries served include automotive, banking and finance, biotechnology, construction, energy, insurance, manufacturing, media and communications, mining, pharmaceuticals, real estate, technology, transportation and many more. While its main headquarters is in Birmingham, the firm incorporates offices in Mississippi, North Carolina and Washington DC.

Commitment to the community is also noted by lawyers' dedication to the Birmingham Pledge Project. The Pledge, created by a Bradley Arant attorney, is part of an effort to put aside racial prejudices within the community, and embrace differences in each individual. Notable signees include President George W Bush, Former President Bill Clinton, New York Senator Hilary Clinton, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Reverend Jesse Jackson. Pro bono efforts include services to several indigent individuals and non-profit organizations.

Alabama Governor Bob Riley recently hired the firm to argue a case before the Supreme Court regarding election-law issues. Lawyers obtained a 7-2 victory for the Governor in May for an appointment made to the Mobile County Commission based on the Voting Rights Act. Other representative clients include Coca-Cola, CVS, General Motors, Microsoft and Time Warner. The firm boasts more than 100 litigators spread over its many Southern offices.

James Gewin is noted as one of the leading litigators at Bradley Arant. He specializes in general civil litigation in antitrust, construction and pharmaceutical issues among others. Also of note is **Michael McKibben** who regularly represents Alabama healthcare providers. His practice includes defense of physicians, nurses and hospital systems. Aside from health care litigation, McKibben represented Intel in an antitrust matter and Uniroyal Goodrich Tire in a wrongful death case. Litigator **Hobart McWhorter's** practice covers an extensive array of clients in complex commercial matters. **Julia Cooper** is also a leading litigator at Bradley Arant. She covers

complex business and commercial practices including matters of antitrust and white collar criminal defense. Recently making waves is associate **Hallman Eady**. He serves on both plaintiff and defense sides of cases, and concentrates his practice on civil litigation matters.

Cunningham Bounds continues to excel in all matters related to the plaintiff's side of class-action litigation matters. Not long ago, Cunningham Bounds attained one of the ten largest jury verdicts in the nation for its client in a matter involving an exploding water heater. The jury awarded the plaintiff's family \$50 million in the verdict for the death of a man when the unit exploded. The firm serves clients in industries such as complex litigation matters, maritime accidents, oil and gas litigation, product liability and sports recreation as well. The firm's office is located in Mobile, and conducts business all around the state.

Cunningham is deeply rooted in various local organizations and is, "proud to be involved in the community." Activities include participating with the Alabama Civil Justice Foundation, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Friends of Mobile Public Library, Mobile Mental Health Association and Thomas Hospital among several others. Their attorneys were also active in the community following Hurricane Katrina.

Both **Gregory Breedlove** and **Robert Cunningham** are highly regarded among their peers. Cunningham recently acquired a \$108 million verdict in a toxic tort litigation matter for Dirt. Both ShawCor, a Canadian-based company specializing in products and services for the oil and gas industry, and Halliburton, a Houston-based company, were ordered to split the costs. Clients consistently turn to Breedlove for personal injury litigation matters. He also regularly involves himself in class actions and complex litigations. Attorney **David Cain Jr.**, while only admitted to the Alabama bar in 2003, attained multi-million dollar verdicts as either lead or co-lead counsel on cases.

Lightfoot Franklin & White specializes in civil litigation cases. While their main office is in Alabama, they regularly represent clients in California, Texas, Washington DC and Florida to name a few locations. The firm serves several clients in the automotive, financial services, insurance and



Local litigation stars

Leon Ashford
Hare Wynn Newell & Newton

Michael Atchison
Starnes & Atchison

Lee Bains Jr
Maynard Cooper & Gale

Allen Baker
Balch & Bingham

Walter Bates
Starnes & Atchison

Gregory Breedlove
Cunningham Bounds

Robert Brock
Rushton Stakely Johnston & Garrett

JR Brooks
Lanier Ford Shaver & Payne

Julia Cooper
Bradley Arant Rose & White

Michael Edwards
Balch & Bingham

Thomas Christian
Christian & Small

Robert Cunningham
Cunningham Bounds

Michael Florie
Starnes & Atchison

Samuel Franklin
Lightfoot Franklin & White

James Gewin
Bradley Arant Rose & White

Frederick Helmsing
Helmsing Leach Herlong Newman & Rouse

Robert Huffaker
Rushton Stakely Johnston & Garrett

John Johnson
Lightfoot Franklin & White

Thomas Keene
Rushton Stakely Johnston & Garrett

Michael Knight
McDowell Knight Roedder & Sledge

John Leach
Helmsing Leach Herlong Newman & Rouse

Jerry McDowell
McDowell Knight Roedder & Sledge

Crawford McGivaren
Cabaniss Johnston Gardner Dumas & O'Neal

Michael McKibben
Bradley Arant Rose & White

manufacturing industries. A few notable companies include Volkswagen AG, AT&T, Accenture, AIG, Prudential Insurance Company of America and L'Oreal. The firm also prides itself on the breadth of technology services available at hand. The firm is "committed to using technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our trial practice." Video and audio conferencing, a secure client extranet and technology for trial are all offered to clients. Anything from Powerpoint presentations to three dimensional computer charts can be created to best suit a client's needs. The firm actually created an in-house litigation technology services department in order to offer clients a more effective, cost conscious way to present cases. The firm recently won a verdict for their client, Louisville Ladder in the US District Court of the Middle District of Florida. Louisville Ladder would have paid close to \$2 million in medical costs alone to the plaintiff, but proved, with the help of Lightfoot Franklin & White attorneys, that they were not at fault.

Samuel Franklin acts as a leader in both the business litigation and securities and shareholder disputes groups at the firm. Also a prominent member of the firm, **John Johnson** focuses much of his practice on environmental and toxic torts litigation, and is a lead member of the division within the firm. Past clients there include the ExxonMobil, Kimberly-Clark and Monsanto. **Jere White Jr** handles all types of business litigation matters and is lead contact for both the product liability and

litigators with their ability to handle a trial." Another client notes, "They were willing to try the difficult cases." The firm recently won more acclaim for its medical/ healthcare litigation practice by obtaining a defense verdict in favor of a physician in a wrongful death case as well as a separate verdict in favor of two obstetricians and their professional practice. The firm also realizes the importance of diversity and strives to attract and retain "attorneys and staff of varying backgrounds." One client says, "I use them throughout the country to talk me through tough cases."

Walter Bates is noted by one client for excellent skills when dealing with litigation matters. Bates regularly focuses his practice on several aspects of litigation and not only represents individual physicians but hospitals as well. **Michael Atchison's** practice is devoted to a wide range of matters in civil litigation including class actions, business disputes, products liability and employment discrimination. Clients consistently turn to Atchison for his "bet the company" experience. Clients note **Michael Florie** as an "extremely professional, very well prepared and disciplined" litigator. Florie defended several physicians in professional medical liability cases. **Randal Sellers** is noted by clients for his abilities in the courtroom and often lectures about litigation matters in healthcare. **Rik Tozzi** is a leading litigator involved in the antitrust, consumer finance and class action divisions of the firm. Focusing on commercial litigation, **Arnold**

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corporate plaintiff's practices at the firm. He represented several high-profile clients such as General Electric, Hyundai and Comcast. **Natasha Wilson**, an associate at the firm, also focuses much of her practice on environmental toxic torts and business litigation. She also actively contributes her time to the DuPont Minority Counsel Network.

Clients confirmed that **Starnes & Atchison** practices with a "high level of skill" and includes "great client service." The firm describes litigation as "100 percent of the firm's practice" that includes two offices Mobile and Birmingham. The group focuses on civil litigation matters including class actions, product liability and consumer litigation, intellectual property and securities litigation among others. Pro bono matters are also important to the firm, as attorneys regularly appear on behalf of indigent clients in matters of civil rights litigation, domestic disputes and immigration and naturalization issues. One client says they hired the firm due to its "general reputation as experienced

Umbach is quickly getting more and more recognition for his case work.

Recommended firms

Balch & Bingham stretch their skills throughout the south in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi. Their Birmingham office, established in 1922, houses more than 100 attorneys. The firm also has an office in Montgomery. The litigation practice at Balch & Bingham encompasses civil rights, health law, insurance and securities among others. The firm encompasses an extensive client base in its energy litigation practice with clients such as Duke Power, Entergy, General Electric and Texaco. The firm is also heavily involved in its community. It participates in the Birmingham City Schools' Partners in Education. This program allows the firm to establish what the school needs for the year in terms of financial assistance, incentives and special projects. By doing so, the firm then matches "the needs with resources available through the firm." The firm

Hobart McWhorter
Bradley Arant Rose & White

Donna Pate
Lanier Ford Shaver & Payne

James Pratt
Hare Wynn Newell & Newton

Stanley Rodgers
Lanier Ford Shaver & Payne

Alan Rogers
Balch & Bingham

William Roedder
McDowell Knight Roedder & Sledge

Randal Sellers
Starnes & Atchison

Clarence Small Jr
Christian & Small

Rik Tozzi
Starnes & Atchison

Thomas Wells Jr
Maynard Cooper & Gale

Jere White
Lightfoot Franklin & White

recently expanded its immigration law practice as well by partnering with a firm in Florida, Pena & Associates.

Allen Baker Jr specializes in product liability and casualty litigation cases for the firm. He also practices in construction matters, defending contractors and premises owners. **Michael Edwards** is known by peers as an attorney to turn to for “bet the company” cases. He is best known for his abilities in business and financial services litigation. Also noted is **Alan Rogers**, chairman of the firm’s executive committee. Rogers specializes in business, energy and insurance litigation. **Bruce Barze Jr** is noted by peers as a top lawyer at the firm. Barze’s primary areas of practice include defending personal injury clients and wrongful death litigation.

As one of the oldest law firms in Alabama, **Cabaniss Johnston Gardner Dumas & O’Neal** practices a broad spectrum of civil litigation. The firm describes itself as not “rigidly departmentalized,” but will “assemble matter-specific teams for a customized approach” to meet the needs of clients. Offices are located in both Birmingham and Mobile. Litigation matters for the firm include biotechnology, construction, Employment Retirement Income Security Act, medical malpractice and toxic torts. The firm provides work to a bevy of powerful clients. Alcoa, BP America, Liberty Mutual Insurance and Providence Hospital are all listed clients for the firm.

Crawford McGivaren remains a leading lawyer in the Birmingham office of the firm, and is continuously noted among his peers as a top lawyer in the state of Alabama. **Jennifer Anderson** is an associate at the firm and also has commercial litigation experience. Her experience includes product liability, ERISA and personal injury cases.

Fairly new firm **Christian & Small**, represents a diverse group of clients around the state. Established in 2000, the firm’s litigation areas include antitrust, complex, product liability and securities. Four attorneys recently joined the firm and now contribute their efforts to the growing litigation practice. With its office in Birmingham, the firm regularly involves itself in community matters such as the National Conference for Community and Justice and Birmingham Bar Association’s Volunteer Lawyers Program.

Thomas Christian is often regarded as a top litigator by his peers. His practice areas include medical malpractice defense, complex litigation and product liability. **Clarence Small Jr** also helped establish the firm and practices in business and commercial litigation matters. **Clark Cooper** has a broad range of legal experience and practices in the areas of construction, insurance, product liability and medial malpractice defense litigation matters.

Hare Wynn Newell & Newton bases its litigation philosophy on, “a dedication to protecting and preserving the dignity and

rights of all individuals.” Their litigation services encompass several aspects of civil litigation for matters in aviation, medical malpractice, product liability, railroad litigation and toxic torts, among others. The firm prides itself on following the “therapeutic role of torts.” This states, “Experience has proven the power of a single lawsuit to eliminate the dangers caused by unsafe products and practices when legislative regulations and industry standards fail to protect the public.” The firm recently received a settlement for \$1.5 million on behalf of their client from an injury during an automobile accident.

Litigator **Leon Ashford**, an attorney in the Birmingham office, recently won a major case as well. In a separate automobile accident injury case, the client, a railroad engineer with Norfolk Southern, was awarded a \$1.3 million settlement. Ashford regularly practices in areas of construction accidents, negligence, complex litigation and wrongful death. **James Pratt** also excels in personal injury, products liability and complex civil litigation matters. He claimed a settlement of \$1.85 million for a client who received severe injuries after the faulty repair of this car at a Ford dealership. Future star attorney **Matthew Minner** worked in conjunction with Pratt on the case against the Ford dealership.

Based in Mobile, law firm **Helmsing Leach Herlong Newman & Rouse** offers a wide array of litigation experience in its practice. The firm describes itself as a “full service firm of medium size,” that combines “characteristics of a smaller firm’s vigor and personality with the quality and efficiency attributed to larger groups.” The firm’s lawyers specialize in corporate, tax, estate, trust, bankruptcy and real estate issues. The litigation department at the firm is not afraid to go to trial, so long as it is in the best interest of the client. The firm also provides litigation assistance in matters of class actions, ERISA and white-collar cases.

Frederick Helmsing specializes in white-collar, business, product liability and tax controversy litigation matters. He leads the practice area in tax controversy work that is regularly involved in working with the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Justice. Also of note is **John Leach**, whose practice includes a specialty in eminent domain and condemnation. His litigation practice areas include personal injury and property damage, product liability and professional liability defense. Associate **Annie Dike** joined the firm in the summer of 2007. She is regularly involved with civil defense litigation matters for the firm.

With its office in Huntsville, **Lanier Ford Shaver & Payne** defines itself as a full-service law firm. Litigation specialties include matters in construction, healthcare, real estate and technology. The firm also specializes in intellectual property, and is noted among its peers as a top patent and trademark practice.

Future stars

Jennifer Anderson
Cabaniss Johnston Gardner Dumas & O'Neal

Bruce Barze Jr
Balch & Bingham

David Cain Jr
Cunningham Bounds

Clark Cooper
Christian & Small

Annie Dike
Helmsing Leach Herlong Newman & Rouse

Hallman Eady
Bradley Arant Rose & White

Richard Gaal
McDowell Knight Roedder & Sledge

Angela Holt
Lanier Ford Shaver & Payne

Matthew Minner
Hare Wynn Newell & Newton

Terri Sewell
Maynard Cooper & Gale

Grant Sexton Jr
Rushton Stakely Johnston & Garrett

Arnold Umbach
Starnes & Atchison

Natasha Wilson
Lightfoot Franklin & White

Civil rights litigation is the specialty of attorney **JR Brooks**. He frequently represents school systems in Northern Alabama and corporate clients in matters of wrongful termination claims, contract disputes and misappropriation of trade secrets. **Donna Pate's** trial experience involves civil, commercial and insurance litigation. She represented insurance carriers in residential and commercial premises-liability cases as well as automobile liability-insurance cases. When looking for a medical professional liability litigation specialist, **Stanley Rodgers** is there. He is consistently praised by his peers for his personal-injury litigation abilities. Also of note is registered patent attorney **Angela Holt**. Cases she handles regularly involve copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, employee disputes and domain name disputes.

The office of **McDowell Knight Roedder & Sledge** is in Mobile. The firm engages in several aspects of trial law including bankruptcy, business, class actions, communications, construction, consumer transactions, drug and device liability, employment, environmental, fraud, insurance, oil and gas, pharmaceutical liability, product liability, professional malpractice and securities. Clients like Amtrak, GlaxoSmithKline, Medtronic and Yamaha are all representative clients of the firm. Lawyers actively involve themselves in the legal community. One of the litigators serves as a member of the Board of Directors at the Defense Research Institute, a national organization of defense trial lawyers and corporate counsel that describes itself as the "largest international membership organization of attorneys defending the interests of business and individuals in civil litigation."

William Roedder, another leading litigator of the firm, serves as Chairman of the Board for the Lawyers for Civil Justice, which describes itself as a "national coalition supporting excellence, fairness and improvements within the civil justice system." Roedder's primary areas of practice include business litigation, class action, insurance, and personal injury defense litigation. Michael Knight's practice regularly involves defending corporate clients in class action matters or complex business litigation matters. Also, of note is attorney Jerry McDowell who practices in matters of insurance, products liability, class action and corporate litigation. Attorney **Richard Gaal** is a star at the firm practicing in business and commercial litigation while also involved in several associations including the American Bar Association and the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association.

Rushton Stakely Johnston & Garrett is a Montgomery law firm with experience in antitrust, employment, insurance, professional malpractice for physicians, business and shareholder disputes, products liability, media legislation, health care and

environmental cases. The firm recently won a wrongful death claim in defense of a trucking company. The plaintiff, a deceased individual, initiated a case that accused the defendant, the trucking company, of being "wanton and negligent in operating a commercial vehicle." However, the defense proved the deceased driver had a blood alcohol level of .126, and won the case. The firm also successfully defended a cardiac electrophysiologist in a medical malpractice case.

Leading attorney **Robert Brock** focuses his practice on civil litigation, and regularly tries cases for the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries as well as within toxic tort litigation. He recently represented one of his leading clients, Merck, regarding the Vioxx litigation. **Robert Huffaker's** areas of practice include commercial litigation, insurance defense and alternative dispute resolution. He serves as counsel to The Automobile Dealers Association of Alabama and the Alabama Road Builders Association. **Thomas Keene** predominantly practices in the defense of medical and professional liability cases and also lectures on topics related to medical liability, risk management and healthcare law developments. Associate **Grant Sexton Jr** joined the firm as an associate in 2006, and practices in areas of professional liability, products liability and commercial litigation.

Maynard Cooper & Gale is a full service law firm that includes offices in Birmingham, Huntsville and Montgomery. Litigation areas include class actions, construction, intellectual property, product liability and white collar among several others. Representative clients of the firm include Honda North America, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Wyeth-Ayerst Pharmaceuticals, Miller Brewing and El Paso Energy Corporation. The firm recently expanded its intellectual property and technology group by adding an additional three patent attorneys to the Birmingham office. In addition to contributing their time to the community through the American Bar Association Katrina Task Force and the United Way of Central Alabama, the firm continuously promotes diversity through its three offices.

Lee Bains Jr focuses mainly on complex civil litigation matters and handles a large amount of class action and mass tort cases. His work includes extensive work in the AIG/American General "Juvenile Smoker" litigation where he obtained numerous motions for summary judgment for the client. Also of note is **Thomas Wells Jr** who focuses his practice on complex mass tort, environmental and product liability cases. Many of his cases involve energy and environmental law issues. Attorney **James Bussian** handles matters of complex, consumer and commercial, as well as construction litigation, and has tried jury trials throughout the state of Alabama.



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Crawford S McGivaren Jr has been listed among The Best Lawyers in America in Business and Personal Injury Litigation since 1989. He has been named by *Super Lawyers* magazine as one of the top 50 lawyers in the state of Alabama. He is listed in the Who's Who legal section under USA Commercial Litigation. He is also named in the inaugural edition of *Benchmark* as a leading lawyer. He is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. He serves as Alabama Division Counsel for Norfolk Southern Corporation. He is on the Executive Committee of the National Association of Railroad Trial Counsel.

His practice has encompassed contract, antitrust, unfair trade, partnership, shareholder oppression, dissenter's rights, director and officer liability litigation, insurance coverage and all manner of personal injury/toxic tort litigation. Ultimately prevailing after two en banc opinions, he was the principal defense counsel in the securities case which first recognized the "fraud-on-the-market" theory of Rule 10b-5 liability. He was trial and appellate counsel in groundbreaking cases resulting in federal preemption decisions favorable to the rail industry. He is responsible for medical malpractice defense and other litigation at two major Birmingham hospitals. He has defended class and individual claims asserting product liability, consumer finance violations and insurance fraud. He has handled employment, non-compete, and tortious interference claims and the successful defense of a long-running Human Rights Act case in West Virginia.

He is a member of the Defense Research Institute, the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association and The Torts and Insurance Practice and Health Law Sections of the ABA. He is active in bar, community, and charitable affairs.