

Local litigation firms

Highly recommended

Adams & Reese

Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver

Jones Walker Waechter Poitevent Carrère & Denègre

Liskow & Lewis

Phelps Dunbar

Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann

Recommended

Frilot

Gordon Arata McCollam Duplantis & Eagan

Fishman Haygood Phelps Walmsley Willis & Swanson

Herman Herman Katz & Cotlar

Kean Miller Hawthorne D'Armond McCowan & Jarman

Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klien & Hilbert

Taylor Porter Brooks & Phillips

Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz

Louisiana

Louisiana came under scrutiny the past year for the matter of *Kennedy v Louisiana*. The child-rape case marks the Supreme Court ruling making it unlawful to use the death penalty for crimes against individuals that do not result in death, and nullified a Louisiana law allowing for capital punishment in the rape of a child younger than 12. The matter proved controversial since military code recently made the rape of a child a capital offense.

Highly recommended firms

Adams & Reese received significant media coverage recently for its lawsuit in relation to a former partner suing the firm over racketeering charges. The former client was already in hot water for allegedly stealing \$30 million from the firm. While many called the claim “sensational,” the matter is ongoing. Adams & Reese describes a culture “built on people who work hard, and do the best job they can for clients.” The firm has offices in significant markets throughout the Gulf Coast and is often regarded as one of the best litigation firms in the South. Major areas of practice in the Louisiana offices include antitrust, construction, environmental, torts and energy law. One recent case involves defense of Horizon Offshore Contractors in contractual and liability issues that settled in favor of the client. The firm actively participates in The Louisiana Appleseed program, and counted more than 5,000 hours of pro bono service in 2007.

Clients often turn to **Mark Beebe** for litigation work in securities and antitrust matters. In addition to representing Goldman Sachs, Credit Suisse, First Boston and the Algiers Charter School Association, Beebe takes an active role in the community through the United Way. **Charles Cerise** has extensive trial experience in maritime, toxic tort, casualty and insurance litigation. He was recently involved in the Horizon Offshore Contractors case. **Michelle Craig** focuses her work on employment, commercial and product liability litigation. Clients turn to her for defense work in breach of contract, warranty, fraud and trade secret issues. **Kyle Potts**'s litigation emphasis lies on civil, insurance, products liability and maritime law.

The boutique firm, **Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver**, consistently delivers results for clients within their commercial litigation department.

“They have the ability to try cases, and

many litigators don't have that,” says one client. “I would recommend them to anyone.” Practice areas for litigation include contracts, insurance, franchise, oil and gas, trade secret and intellectual property. The firm continues to score victories for commercial and homeowner insurers in Hurricane Katrina related matters. The firm represents employees of Big Lot Stores in a collective action suit regarding overtime pay and the Fair Labor Standards Act. “The substantive work they do is excellent,” says a client. The firm also spends a significant amount of time dedicated to pro-bono matters and often contributes to the community, most recently in a \$20,000 donation to a New Orleans charter school specializing in math and science education. Notable clients include Clear Channel Broadcasting, MassMutual Financial Group and Viacom.

Judy Barrasso continues her stellar performance working for clients like Allstate and Liberty Mutual in insurance coverage issues. Practice areas for her work include securities fraud, banking practices, attorney malpractice, commercial contracts and class actions. **Richard Sarver** recently led a trial group defending against the claims of four welders in a six-week trial. A complete defense verdict was reached in March. **Steve Usdin** focuses his efforts on commercial litigation with an emphasis on insurance, securities, intellectual property, contracts, business torts, class actions and products liability. His recent cases involve working for clients Allstate, Liberty Mutual and Chubb & Son. **Celeste Coco-Ewing** is often involved in complex litigation matters and recently assisted in welding fume litigation. **Minor Pipes** practices a diverse range of litigation including construction, corporate, bad faith insurance defense and class action.

Jones, Walker, Waechter, Poitevent, Carrère & Denègre spreads its knowledge throughout the state with a full service law

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- Adams & Reese

Local litigation stars

Donald Abaunza
Liskow & Lewis

Arthur Abercrombie
Taylor Porter Brooks & Phillips

John Anjier
Liskow & Lewis

Gordon Arata
McCollam Duplantis & Eagan

Judy Barrasso
Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver

Brett Barriere
Phelps Dunbar

Mark Beebe
Adams & Reese

Charles Cerise
Adams & Reese

Roy Cheatwood
Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz

Miles Clements
Frilot

Donna Currault
Gordon Arata McCollam Duplantis & Eagan

Ewell Eagan
Gordon Arata McCollam Duplantis & Eagan

George Frilot III
Frilot

James Garner
Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klein & Hilbert

Pauline Hardin
Jones Walker Waechter Poitevent Carrère & Denègre

Russ Herman
Herman Herman Katz & Cotlar

Michael Hunt
Phelps Dunbar

William Jarman
Kean Miller Hawthorne D'Armond McCowan & Jarman

Shelby McKenzie
Taylor Porter Brooks & Phillips

Lawrence Simon
Liskow & Lewis

Richard Sarver
Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver

James Swanson
Fishman Haygood Phelps Walmsley Willis & Swanson

Steve Usdin
Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver

Patrick Vance
Jones Walker Waechter Poitevent Carrère & Denègre

Phillip Wittmann
Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann

group. The firm prides itself on working with the “mentality of an efficient business,” without the need to “sacrifice personalized client service in order to achieve results.” The firm continues to meet client needs with the addition of new lawyers to offices in Houston, New Orleans and Baton Rouge. The firm recently successfully defended New Orleans Public Belt Railroad in a personal injury case. The plaintiff sought roughly \$2.4 million in damages when she sustained injuries as a passenger with an intoxicated driver. The jury returned a verdict completely in favor of the client.

Pauline Hardin has several years of experience working in litigation, and is praised for her work on criminal and commercial cases. However, she is most often praised by peers for her work on white-collar crime issues, and frequently writes about topics in environmental law. Chair of the business and commercial litigation group, **R Patrick Vance** often handles creditors’ rights, securities, class action defense, Employment Retirement Income Security Act and legal malpractice matters. He works extensively with businesses on Chapter 11 issues. In the Baton Rouge office, associate **Amelia Rinehart** focuses her work on intellectual property protection cases. She also works prosecuting patents involving nanotechnology, trademark infringement, copyright enforcement and trade secret protection.

Liskow & Lewis serves clients in the Gulf Coast with offices in Houston, New Orleans and Lafayette. Areas of commercial, environmental, energy and maritime law all received praise. The firm consistently garners recommendation for its work in complex

business and commercial litigation including antitrust, professional liability, tax, securities and disaster recovery. The firm takes on a commitment to their community with several organizations including Louisiana Civil Service League and New Orleans Pro Bono Project.

Donald Abaunza has an array of litigation experience including maritime law, toxic torts, natural resources and construction law. Peers appreciate the lectures he gives on business litigation matters. **Lawrence Simon’s** litigation work focuses on oil and energy law. In one recent case, he defended the Hunt Oil Company in a land dispute against the Louisiana Crawfish Producers Association. **John Anjier’s** litigation work includes securities and professional liability cases that amount from shareholder, director liability and breach of contract matters. Associate **Jason Johanson** has significant experience in energy and business litigation. **Katherine Roth** focuses her time on business litigation, and has worked on antitrust, professional liability and director liability matters.

Phelps Dunbar is consistently recognized for its work both in and out of the courtroom. An attorney there recently received the Louisiana State Bar Association’s 2008 Pro Bono Publico Award, and peers note the firm’s commercial and bankruptcy litigation efforts. The firm continues to expand its legal practice with several additions to Baton Rouge, New Orleans and other regional offices. Litigation strengths include commercial, insurance, toxic torts, energy and environmental law.

Brent Barriere represents clients in commercial, bankruptcy and antitrust litigation issues. Representative case

involvement includes fraud, class actions and franchisee and trademark disputes. **Michael Hunt’s** areas of practice include antitrust, commercial and construction litigation. Other matters include trade secrets, product liability and environmental law. Associate **Nora Bilbro** focuses her efforts on tort litigation including, personal injury, products liability, professional liability and class actions. Representative cases involve a class action suit against the client, a chemical company, with plaintiffs seeking significant punitive and compensatory damages. **Anderson Dotson III** focuses his associate work primarily on mass torts and product liability litigation. He frequently represents corporations in matters around the state.

Often regarded for their top real estate litigation strength, **Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann** receives praise for product liability, toxic torts and media law. The firm has offices in major centers of Louisiana commerce, Baton Rouge and New Orleans, and recently added new associates to those offices. The firm is known for litigation work representing major tobacco companies, including RJ Reynolds in a nationwide class action suit. Other clients include Merck., VISA International Service Association, ExxonMobil and ABC Television.

Phillip Wittmann recently received the Curtis Boisfontaine Trial Advocacy Award from the Louisiana Bar Association for his contributions to the legal profession. He has extensive trial experience in commercial, toxic torts and antitrust issues. ConocoPhillips and Dole Foods are both past clients. **Agnieszka McPeak** focuses her work on commercial litigation as an associate at the firm.

Future stars

Nora Bilbro
Phelps Dunbar

Celeste Coco-Ewing
Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver

William Caughman III
Kean Miller Hawthorne D'Armond McCowan & Jarman

Michelle Craig
Adams & Reese

Anderson Dotson III
Phelps Dunbar

Demarcus Gordon
Gordon Arata McCollam Duplantis & Eagan

Ashley Green
Gordon Arata McCollam Duplantis & Eagan

Lexi Holinga
Taylor Porter Brooks & Phillips

Jason Johanson
Liskow & Lewis

Seth Levine
Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz

Ryan Luminais
Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klien & Hilbert

Lance McCardle
Fishman Haygood Phelps Walmsley Willis & Swanson

Agnieszka McPeak
Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann

Michael Pinkerton
Frilot

Minor Pipes
Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver

Kyle Potts
Adams & Reese

Amelia Rinehart
Jones Walker Waechter Poitevent Carrère & Denègre

Katherine Roth
Liskow & Lewis

Paul Thibodeaux
Frilot

Recommended firms

Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz has nationwide offices with two in Louisiana – New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Attorneys of the firm include former members of the US Senate, governors of various states and even ambassadors to foreign countries. The firm received significant recognition for helping the disaster recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina, and has extensive experience in antitrust, insurance, toxic torts, Constitutional law, construction and environmental matters. Past clients include Delta Airlines, Monsanto and Philip Morris.

Roy Cheatwood is dedicated to construction, securities, antitrust, trade secrets, oil and gas and legal malpractice litigation. He frequently publishes articles on environmental law, and is known for his

Eagan makes a strong name for maritime, oil, gas and energy related legal matters. The firm has offices in Baton Rouge, Lafayette and New Orleans, and represents both plaintiff and defense issues. Consumer class actions, construction, employment, insurance and securities fraud are a few types of litigation the firm handles. The lawyers pride themselves on a diverse workplace from the upper echelons of management to the associate level. Past energy issues involve gas balancing agreements, pipeline construction and boundary and title disputes.

Donna Currault focuses on complex litigation with an emphasis on employment. **Ewell Eagan** predominantly defends cases in consumer class actions and business litigation matters like breach of contract issues for clients. He is often praised for his keen strategy sense while at trial, and has served as

“The New Orleans City Council hired the firm to handle claims post-Katrina for tax matters involving the Superdome.”

- *Frilot*

arbitration skills. Associate **Seth Levine** has extensive experience dealing with business litigation matters, and is part of the Gulf Coast Reconstruction effort at the firm.

Located in New Orleans, **Frilot** is a full service firm that “offers full service representation in all areas of litigation and labor and employment matters on a local, regional and national basis before all courts and administrative agencies.” The firm prides itself on the ability to try cases and has represented clients from start-ups to Fortune 100 companies. The commercial litigation group encompasses patents, lender liability, class actions, contract and construction disputes. The New Orleans City Council hired the firm to handle claims post-Katrina for tax matters involving the Superdome. No easy task, but the firm received great reviews for their handling of the mass disputes.

Founding partner **George Frilot III** practices within a strong energy and environmental group. He is often called upon to handle class actions, commercial litigation and products liability matters. Also a founding partner, **Miles Clements** heads the energy and environmental practice at the firm. With more than 25 years of practice, he often handles cases for national and international oil and gas producers. **Michael Pinkerton** has extensive litigation experience in commercial, bankruptcy, contract disputes, construction and real estate matters. Associate **Paul Thibodeaux** has experience helping to defend clients in mass torts, insurance coverage disputes, products liability and construction disputes.

Gordon Arata McCollam Duplantis &

lead counsel in multidistrict litigation, antitrust, Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act, contract claims, securities fraud, shareholder disputes, gas balancing cases, corporate disputes, technology and patent matters. Associate **Demarcus Gordon** focuses his work on toxic torts, class actions, product liability and energy. He often tries cases throughout the South. **Ashley Green's** litigation practice emphasizes commercial and bankruptcy issues.

Fishman Haygood Phelps Walmsley Willis & Swanson made major changes to the well known firm, originally known as Corroero Fishman Haygood Phelps Walmsley & Casteix. The additional names help to supplement the already powerful litigation practice at the firm, with Anthony Corroero recently leaving. The boutique is a leader in business litigation and has offices in New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Practice areas of litigation include Hurricane Katrina, class actions, contracts, tax and insurance.

James Swanson heads the litigation division at the firm. Notable clients include the leading newspaper in New Orleans, The Times-Picayune, and The State of Louisiana. Lance McCardle handles several types of litigation including Katrina-related matters, class actions and product liability. Recent case involvement includes work with a team that “obtained a \$22 million arbitration award against Securities America on behalf of several Exxon retirees.”

Herman Herman Katz & Cotlar remains a prominent litigation firm in New Orleans. The firm serves several areas including tobacco, railroad, class actions, complex

business, hurricane insurance and maritime matters. The firm recently made history when litigator, **Russ Herman**, achieved a \$4.85 billion Vioxx litigation settlement, one of the largest civil settlements in history. Herman practices in almost all areas of the firm including bankruptcy, civil rights, construction, maritime, medical negligence and pharmaceutical matters.

Peers regularly noted law firm **Kean Miller Hawthorne D'Armond McCowan & Jarman** for their work in environmental, real estate, class action, insurance, toxic torts and white-collar criminal defense work. The firm continues to expand its intellectual property group with the addition of new lawyers to the Louisiana offices. Lawyers represent clients in the entertainment, energy, pipeline and chemical industries, among others. The firm maintains a blog that frequently updates and examines the state of litigation and law practices within Louisiana and beyond.

William Jarman is a founding member of the firm focusing on oil and gas, environmental, commercial, toxic tort and petroleum litigation. Peers often recognize his

business litigation prowess. Representative clients include Louisiana Oil & Gas Association, American Petroleum Institute and the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association. **William Caughman III** represents clients in several business-related litigation matters including complex commercial real estate, copyright, trade secret and unfair competition issues.

Commercial law firm **Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klien & Hilbert** handles complex litigation in every area of practice. The firm boasts "aggressive trial lawyers, who are not afraid to fight to protect our clients' rights." The firm recently added new lawyers to the practice and often receives peer praise for work in complex commercial cases.

James Garner has extensive experience trying cases throughout the South and Southwest. Practice focus includes complex commercial, toxic tort, professional liability and insurance coverage litigation, and he regularly lectures regarding insurance issues following Hurricane Katrina. **Ryan Luminais's** focus involves commercial, medical products, professional and products liability litigation.

He reports that 90 percent of his practice is devoted to litigation.

Full-service law firm **Taylor Porter Brooks & Phillips** covers the "complete spectrum of civil law, including state and federal trial and appellate practice." The firm prides itself on its litigation strength whether that means "litigating multi-billion dollar cases for major corporations or handling matters for individuals and small businesses." Areas of expertise include class action, commercial, maritime, energy, intellectual property, insurance and toxic tort litigation.

Peers often recognize the work of managing partner **Arthur Abercrombie**. He focuses his work on large cases involving class actions, toxic torts and catastrophic products liability matters. One of his most prominent clients is Gaylord Chemical Company. **Shelby McKenzie** focuses his practice on insurance, and has written several articles on coverage in a post-Katrina atmosphere. Associate **Lexi Holinga** emphasizes toxic tort, class action defense and products liability litigation in her practice.

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Mr Garner, a member of the firm is a trial lawyer specializing in commercial and complex litigation. He has been lead counsel in cases in New Mexico, Kansas, Arizona, Indiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. He is admitted to practice before the federal courts in Arkansas and Mississippi and all courts in Texas and Louisiana. He serves as regional counsel for several companies.

Mr Garner has served and is serving as lead trial counsel for several corporations seeking in excess of \$1.5 billion in damages related to Hurricane Katrina. These include Xavier University of Louisiana, Dillard University, Children's Hospital of New Orleans, Universal Health Services, Pioneer Resources as well as Safeguard Storage Corporation. Mr Garner was lead advocate in two of the seminal Katrina insurance cases argued to the Louisiana Supreme Court and US Fifth Circuit.

While attending Tulane Law School, Mr Garner served as a member of the Board of Editors for 1987-1988 and managing editor of the *Tulane Law Review* for 1988-1989. He is also a member of the Order of the Coif. As an undergraduate at Tulane, he was a member of the Tau Beta Pi, Phi Eta Sigma, Omega Chi Epsilon, and Omicron Delta Kappa honorary societies.

Professional and civic activities include: American (member); Louisiana (member) and Federal (Director, Membership Chair, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, president elect and vice-president, president and National Council Delegate, member) Bar Associations; Defense Research Institute (member); Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (member); Louisiana Bankers Association (member); Holy Cross High School (Board Member); Our Lady of Holy Cross College (Development Board); Tulane University (Admissions Council and Externship Committee); *Tulane Law Review* Board of Advisory Editors; St Catherine of Siena Cub Scout Pack 230 Den Leader.

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Mr Swanson is the firm's managing partner and head of the litigation section. He represents plaintiffs and defendants in a broad range of business litigation matters, with emphasis on securities, media, state tax, contract and other general litigation. He regularly represents *The Times-Picayune LLC*, SMG, The State of Louisiana and others. He has obtained a number of multi-million dollar judgments in commercial matters. His efforts are recorded in many reported decisions, including a number of landmark media and securities cases.

Mr Swanson is ranked as one of the top litigators in New Orleans in *Chambers USA*, *Benchmark Litigation*, *The Best Lawyers in America*, *New Orleans Magazine*, *Super Lawyers* and others. *Chambers* has commented that he is "talented, astute and an expert performer before the jury", and on his ability to "negotiate a minefield of potential options in concluding a case". In the most recent edition of *Chambers* (2008), he is placed in Band One, the youngest lawyer in that small group, with the comment "he is a solid trial lawyer known for getting great results for his clients".

He is an adjunct professor at Loyola Law School teaching trial advocacy and at Tulane University teaching media law. For several years, he regularly taught trial advocacy with Federal Judge Carl Barbier. He is the vice-chairman of the Choice Foundation, which operates Lafayette Academy, a K-8 charter school serving New Orleans' inner city community.

Jim graduated from Tulane University in 1984 (economics). He received his law degree, magna cum laude, from Tulane Law School, where he was a member of the Order of the Coif and the *Tulane Law Review*. He was the winner of the Tulane Moot Court Appellate Competitions in 1986 and 1987.

Recent litigation successes include a \$22 million award including \$3.5 million in punitive damages in a nationally publicized NASD arbitration against Securities America, one of the largest NASD awards ever, the dismissal of the securities class action against US Unwired, the successful defense of Amedisys in class action securities litigation, including obtaining reversal of class certification, a \$26 million jury verdict against Tennessee Gas in a corporate income tax case, including \$6 million in bad faith penalties, landmark First Amendment and access decisions in favor of the *Times-Picayune*, the Associated Press, CNN and the *Baton Rouge Advocate* and the defense of SMG against the Saints' bid to break their Superdome Lease.