

Local litigation firms

Highly recommended

Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz

Bradley Arant Rose & White

Brunini Grantham Grower & Hewes

Butler Snow O'Mara Stevens & Cannada

Phelps Dunbar

Watkins & Eager

Recommended

Forman Perry Watkins Krutz & Tardy

Latham & Burwell

Mitchell McNutt & Sams

Watkins Ludlam Winter & Stennis

Wise Carter Child & Caraway

Mississippi

Mississippi litigation made headlines recently with the trial of Richard "Dickie" Scruggs, the prominent asbestos and tobacco plaintiff's lawyer who fell from grace after pleading guilty in conspiring to bribe a judge for attorney fees. While a judge gave Scruggs five years for his crime, the state continues to see trials relating to insurance policy claims in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Highly recommended firms

Law firm **Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz** includes more than 500 attorneys. Its Mississippi offices in Jackson and Oxford employ lawyers with significant legal backgrounds. The firm proudly "represents local, regional, national and international clients," by providing clients with "innovative, results-oriented solutions." Community involvement includes the Mississippi Economic Council and Mississippi Museum of Art. The firm is also well known for serving the municipal bond industry, however, serves the litigation market best with its successful defense work. Peers recently lauded the intellectual property group for work in patents, trademarks and copyrights as well as the labor and employment division. The firm continues efforts to rebuild the Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina.

Product liability and health law are main focuses of **Barry Ford**. Ford brings his knowledge as a former judge to his practice, with peers praising his work often. Sources comment on the work of former president of the firm **William Reed**. His litigation strengths include class action, product liability and toxic tort law. **Scott Welch** focuses his time on personal injury, insurance and product liability litigation, and is no stranger to the Mississippi Supreme Court and Mississippi Court of Appeals. Associate **Jason Bush** works on cases of commercial, construction, class action and product liability litigation. His litigation experience includes representing insurance carriers in lawsuits alleging bad faith in property damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. Associate **Clint Pentecost** represents clients in insurance coverage, lender liability claims and intellectual property disputes. Case involvement includes representing subprime mortgage lenders in alleged mortgage fraud and civil conspiracy.

The Mississippi offices of **Bradley Arant Rose & White** carry a strong litigation team.

Located in Jackson, the firm handles several clients who might be facing trials in Mississippi and throughout the Gulf Coast region. The firm also maintains a Mississippi Law Blog that opines on the decisions of the Mississippi Supreme Court and other regional legal news. The Jackson office also helped develop the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers' Project to aid the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Notable client, Pfizer uses the firm in relation to its litigation with the drug Rezulin.

Roy Campbell handles products liability, insurance, mass torts and professional liability litigation in Mississippi and Tennessee. He frequently handles cases involving asbestos and welding rod claims. His work also includes defending insurers in a bad faith and fraud actions. **Wayne Drinkwater Jr** is noted by peers for his work in several aspects of litigation, and is regularly the attorney who clients turn to for their biggest cases. Major representations include 3M, State Farm and Microsoft. In addition to his Fortune 500 company work, Drinkwater has counseled several local organizations including Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference, an interfaith coalition that formed in response to attacks on local churches in the 1960s and Children's Rights, an independent child advocacy organization. **Stephen Thomas** practices within areas of agricultural, commercial and products liability litigation, and is also sought to represent major cases within the state. Previous clients include Delta and Pine Land, ConAgra and the American Honda Motor Company. **Margaret Cupples** focuses her litigation experience on consumer-finance, products liability and asbestos mass-tort cases, and also often handles cases that lead to defending appeals.

With offices in Jackson, Biloxi and Columbus, **Brunini Grantham Grower & Hewes** predominantly handles business law matters. The firm boasts big name clients

"Her recent case work involves successful representation of Johnson & Johnson and McNeil Consumer & Specialty Pharmaceuticals in the case of Children's Motrin allegedly causing blindness and Stevens-Johnson syndrome, with the plaintiff asking for almost \$1 billion in damages."

-Christy Jones of Butler Snow O'Mara Stevens & Cannada

Local litigation stars

Reuben Anderson Phelps Dunbar
Fred Banks Jr Phelps Dunbar
Roy Campbell Bradley Arant Rose & White
John Corlew Watkins & Eager
Wayne Drinkwater Jr Bradley Arant Rose & White
Barry Ford Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz
Richard Forman Forman Pery Watkins Krutz & Tardy
John Henegan Butler Snow O'Mara Stevens & Cannada
David Kaufman Brunini Grantham Grower & Hewes
Christy Jones Butler Snow O'Mara Stevens & Cannada
Fred Krutz Forman Pery Watkins Krutz & Tardy
William Latham Latham & Burwell
Charles Ozier Wise Carter Child & Caraway
Keith Raulston Watkins Ludlam Winter & Stennis
William Reed Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz
Sandy Sams Jr Mitchell McNutt & Sams
Christopher Shapley Brunini Grantham Grower & Hewes
Paul Stephenson Watkins & Eager
Lee Thames Butler Snow O'Mara Stevens and Cannada
Stephen Thomas Bradley Arant Rose & White
Wendell Trapp Mitchell McNutt & Sams
Michael Wallace Wise Carter Child & Caraway
Scott Welch Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz
John Wheeler Mitchell McNutt & Sams
Michael Ulmer Watkins & Eager

including, “the nation’s largest privately held wireless company, Mississippi’s largest health insurer and one of the state’s largest banks.” Practice areas within litigation include class actions, toxic exposure claims, construction, employment, insurance and white-collar criminal defense. One recent victory includes the reversal of a verdict in favor of the client and defendant, a wood treating company. The firm also received a defense victory representing St Dominic Jackson Memorial Hospital in a medical malpractice lawsuit.

David Kaufman is often called upon to handle complex commercial and mass tort cases in state and federal trials. Representative cases include defense of The BOC Group, Lincoln Electric, Hobart and ESAB in significant welding-fume exposure lawsuits. Also of note is **Christopher Shapley**, who focuses his work on several areas of litigation including mass torts, environmental, insurance coverage and products liability litigation. Case work includes the reversal verdict in favor of a wood treating company where plaintiff’s claims were deemed untimely under the Mississippi Statute of Limitations. Associate **Matt Allen** has experience in matters of commercial, products liability, mass torts and employment litigation. Recent case work includes obtaining a defense win for Pemberton Manor Nursing Home and Magnolia Healthcare in a negligence case.

Butler Snow O’Mara Stevens & Cannada received accolades for its litigation team that calls upon “resources from across the firm to match legal experience” with whatever a client may need. Practice areas include employment, product liability, mass torts, insurance, securities and white-collar criminal litigation. Clients are located across the nation, and in Canada, China, Australia and Mexico. The firm continues to expand its offices with additions to the commercial and intellectual property litigation groups. A significant number of attorneys have expertise in litigation dealing with pharmaceuticals and the healthcare industry. Recent case work involves representation of Johnson & Johnson and McNeil Consumer & Specialty Pharmaceuticals in a case involving an allergic reaction to Children’s Motrin.

John Henegan’s focus on litigation includes antitrust, media law and intellectual property. Peers often praise his work in First Amendment law. One recent case involves defense of One America Productions and Twentieth Century Fox Film in a suit relating to the film Borat. **Christy Jones** receives significant praise for her product liability practice, and serves as chair of the pharmaceutical, medical device and healthcare group at the firm. Her recent case work involves successful representation of Johnson & Johnson and McNeil Consumer & Specialty Pharmaceuticals in the case of Children’s Motrin allegedly causing blindness and Stevens-Johnson syndrome, with the

plaintiff asking for almost \$1 billion in damages. Jones, however, argued that a true cause could not be determined based on the rarity of the disease. **Lee Thames** is known for his trial experience in product liability, medical device and class action litigation. He recently spoke at the American Conference Institute’s Drug and Medical Device On Trial meeting. **Barney Robinson III** has experience in banking and intellectual property litigation matters including trade secret, copyright and trademark use.

The Mississippi offices of **Phelps Dunbar** house lawyers within several areas of litigation. In Jackson, lawyers practice a wide range of law including gaming, commercial, tort and intellectual property. The Tupelo office serves as a hub for the firm’s growing healthcare practice with lawyers representing hospitals, physicians and managed care organizations. One lawyer in the Tupelo office recently received The Lifetime Achievement Award from The Mississippi Bar. Bell South and Delta Pine and Land are major clients of the firm. Offices also participate in community service efforts around the area including Habitat for Humanity and United Way.

Reuben Anderson practices within areas of commercial, tort and gaming litigation matters, and is highly rated by peers for his work. As a former member of the Mississippi Supreme Court, Anderson serves as an active member of his community. Also a former member of the Mississippi Supreme Court, **Fred Banks Jr** serves regulatory, governmental and commercial litigation groups. His appellate work wins high praise. Associate **Kenneth Grigsby** represents his clients predominantly in personal injury and product liability matters. His trial experience includes serving as lead defense counsel in a personal injury case involving a plaintiff seeking \$2 million, but the jury returned a verdict in favor of his client.

The well-established Jackson firm **Watkins & Eager** traces its roots back to 1895 when “William Hamilton Watkins became the twentieth lawyer at the Jackson bar.” The firm represents several clients in banking, securities, energy, insurance and real estate litigation matters, and is also noted by peers for a strong appellate practice. The firm garners praise for its mass torts work in relation to pharmaceutical products, asbestos and welding.

John Corlew represents clients in matters relating to class action, environmental and governmental litigation matters. His work also garnered him a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Past clients include National Solid Waste Management and Waste Management of Mississippi. **Paul Stephenson** receives accolades for his work in class action and energy law matters including bankruptcy issues, consumer finance and real estate contracts. With product liability in relation to automotive matters and personal injury law, clients refer to **Michael Ulmer**.

Future stars

Matt Allen
Brunini Grantham Grower & Hewes

Jason Bush
Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz

Margaret Cupples
Bradley Arant Rose & White

Clint Pentecost
Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz

Barney Robinson III
Butler Snow O'Mara Stevens & Cannada

Kenneth Grigsby
Phelps Dunbar

Lindy Brown
Watkins & Eager

Ashley Calhoun
Forman Perry Watkins Krutz & Tardy

Dustin DuBose
Latham & Burwell

Stephen Spencer
Mitchell McNutt & Sams

Bradford Ray
Watkins Ludlam Winter & Stennis

Gretchen Kimble
Wise Carter Child & Caraway

Associate **Lindy Brown** receives praise for her work in class actions and complex commercial litigation matters.

Recommended firms

Forman Perry Watkins Krutz & Tardy focuses its litigation practice on tort, environmental and commercial law. The firm provides "a wide spectrum of legal services in a number of other areas, including corporate law, commercial lending, bankruptcy, securities, commercial real estate, public utilities, antitrust and administrative law." Nationally, the lawyers have created a strong, recognizable practice for asbestos contamination cases, and are often sought by peers for their expertise. Past clients for the firm include AT&T Wireless, Fireman's Fund Insurance and Union Pacific Railroad.

Richard Forman and **Fred Krutz** receive praise for work on mass tort litigation in relation to lawsuits filed against big names like RJ Reynolds and Philip Morris. The lawyers consistently try toxic torts cases involving silica, used in glass and ceramic production, and serve as national counsel for three silica defendants. Attorney **Ashley Calhoun** contributes her work to the ongoing general litigation at the firm.

The full-service law firm **Latham & Burwell** located in Ridgeland offers its expertise in several litigation areas including, commercial, creditor's rights, insurance defense, personal injury and worker compensation matters. This boutique often handles cases for banks and small businesses facing Chapter 11 reorganizations, asset sales, debt collections and other various issues. Personal injury litigation work also helps to supplement the practice. Notable clients include Manheim Auctions, Mississippi Valley Title Insurance and Scott Regional Hospital.

Clients turn to senior partner **William Latham** not only for his strength inside the courtroom, but for his legal acumen in mediations and avoiding litigation as well. Case experience includes asbestos matters, consumer fraud and environmental torts. **Dustin DuBose**, an associate at the firm, focuses his time on several aspects of litigation including professional liability, medical malpractice and insurance defense.

With offices located across the state, **Mitchell McNutt & Sams** offers a diverse practice. The firm, more than 100 years old, includes prominent litigation areas of construction, product liability, pharmaceuticals and shareholder disputes. Intellectual property within areas of trade secrets and copyrights continues to grow at the firm as well. As the firm grows with mergers and new attorneys, litigators meet a broader base of clients' needs. The firm often uses various forms of technology to facilitate information gathering and presentations for clients.

Sandy Sams Jr provides clients with his well-versed opinion on construction, professional liability and business litigation

matters. Peers respect his trial reputation, and commitment to his local community. In addition to banking litigation, **Wendell Trapp** works in areas of insurance defense, product liability and civil rights law. Chair of the litigation department, **John Wheeler** regularly defends medical professionals in liability claims as well as pharmaceutical clients in product liability matters. **Stephen Spencer** receives a mention based upon work in insurance, worker compensation and employment discrimination defense cases.

Watkins Ludlam Winter & Stennis meets the needs of its clients within its six industry groups. Notable groups for litigation work include construction, finance and development and financial institutions. The health law, for medical malpractice and pharmaceutical liability, and intellectual property litigation fields continue on a steady path for growth. The firm recently welcomed the addition of new attorneys to the health care, tax and personal injury defense practices. Trial work includes acting as defense counsel to a manufacturer of pneumatic tools in more than 2,000 cases involving occupational hearing loss. Clients consist of Bell Utilities of Mississippi, Union Planters Bank, Mississippi Methodist Hospital & Rehabilitation Center and Gannett River States Publishing. A member of the firm's board of directors, **Keith Raulston** garners praise for his work in personal injury and insurance law matters. Associate **Bradford Ray** also receives commendation for his construction and intellectual property work.

General commercial, product liability and mass tort litigation bring in considerable work for the attorneys at **Wise Carter Child & Caraway** in Jackson, Biloxi and Hattiesburg. Peers and clients seem to rate the firm consistently as a "go-to" destination when they find themselves in need of counsel. In turn, the firm prides itself on providing "long-term working relationships" between clients and attorneys in order to allow "those attorneys to become thoroughly familiar with the businesses and legal requirements of such clients." Clients include Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Mississippi, Biloxi Regional Medical Center, Mississippi Hospital Association and Entergy Mississippi.

Charles Ozier has considerable experience working in areas of railroad, pharmaceutical and product liability litigation. In addition to his frequent seminars on trial practice, he is a member of the Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Constitutional claims and election disputes are the primary focus of **Michael Wallace**, who also receives praise for his appellate work. His work includes representation of a major insurer in the enforcement of a water exclusion clause of a homeowner's policy after Hurricane Katrina. **Gretchen Kimble** represents several clients in medical malpractice, insurance defense and tort litigation.

