

# SOUTH CAROLINA

## Local litigation firms

### Highly recommended

Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough

Nexsen Pruet

Wyche Burgess Freeman & Parham

### Recommended

Buist Moore Smythe McGee

McNair Law Firm

Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart

Parker Poe Adams Bernstein

Pratt-Thomas Walker

Smith Moore Leatherwood

Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte

Turner Padgett Graham & Laney

Young Clement & Rivers

## Local litigation stars

### Michael Beal

McNair Law Firm

Bankruptcy Litigation, Commercial Litigation

### Robert Brunson

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough

Antitrust, Products Liability, Securities

### Robert Byrd

Parker Poe Adams Bernstein

Bankruptcy Litigation, Commercial Litigation

### Donald Cockrill

Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart

Environmental Litigation, Employment Litigation

### David Dukes

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough

Business Litigation, Securities

### Allen Gibson Jr.

Buist Moore Smythe McGee

Business Litigation, Civil Litigation, Products Liability

### Michael Giese

Smith Moore Leatherwood

Commercial Litigation

### Keith Hutto

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough

Business Litigation, Class Actions

### Marvin Infinger

Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd

Appellate, Complex Commercial Litigation

### Edward Laney IV

Turner Padgett Graham & Laney

Insurance

### Wallace Lightsey

Wyche Burgess Freeman & Parham

Antitrust, Appellate, Intellectual property, Products Liability

### Wade Logan III

Hagood & Kerr

Alternative Dispute Resolution, Personal Injury

### Joseph Major

Smith Moore Leatherwood

Commercial Litigation, Insurance

### David McCormack

Buist Moore Smythe McGee

Business Litigation, Employment Litigation

### Susan McWilliams

Nexsen Pruet

Employment Law, Products Liability

### Stephen Morrison

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough

Business Litigation, Products Liability, Securities Litigation

### Carl Muller

Wyche Burgess Freeman & Parham

Class Actions, Personal Injury, Products Liability

### Dewey Oxner

Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd

Medical Malpractice, Products Liability

### James Parham

Wyche Burgess Freeman & Parham

Commercial Litigation

### Henry Parr

Wyche Burgess Freeman & Parham

Antitrust, Appellate, Commercial Litigation, Products Liability

### Gordon Schreck

Buist Moore Smythe McGee

Environmental Litigation

### Joel Smith

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough

Products Liability

### John Smith Jr.

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough

Financial Services Litigation

### Henry Smythe

Buist Moore Smythe McGee

Business Litigation, Insurance, Products Liability

### Thornwell Sowell

Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte

Appellate, Commercial Litigation, Health Law, Professional Liability

### Duval Spruill

Turner Padgett Graham & Laney

Business Litigation

### Thomas Stephenson

Nexsen Pruet

Employment Litigation, Insurance, Professional Liability

### Robert Stepp

Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte

Appellate, Commercial Litigation, Professional Liability

### John Tiller

Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd

Products Liability

### Thomas Tisdale

Nexsen Pruet

Appellate, Insurance

**Elizabeth Van Doren Gray**

Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte  
Commercial Litigation, Professional Liability

**Trenholm Walker**

Pratt-Thomas Walker  
Commercial Litigation, Insurance, Products Liability,  
Securities

**John Wilkerson**

Turner Padgett Graham & Laney  
Complex Commercial Litigation, Employment  
Litigation, Insurance, Securities

**Rutledge Young**

Young Clement & Rivers  
Health Law, Professional Liability

**Future stars**

Molly Cherry  
Nexsen Pruet

David Cox  
Buist Moore Smythe McGee

Richard Dukes  
Turner Padgett Graham & Laney

Nicholas Gladd  
Turner Padgett Graham & Laney

Amy Hill  
Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte

Matthew Johnson  
Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart

Ellis Lesemann  
Parker Poe Adams Bernstein

Chip McQueeney  
Pratt-Thomas Walker

Jason Nutzman  
Smith Moore Leatherwood

Kurt Rozelsky  
Smith Moore Leatherwood

Troy Tessier  
Wyche Burgess Freeman & Parham

D. Andrew Williams  
Turner Paget Graham & Laney

Jeffrey Wiseman  
Young Clement & Rivers



# South Carolina

**The financial crisis has had a noticeable impact in South Carolina, where unemployment rates have soared to as high as 11.5%. The economic downturn has prompted a growing demand for bankruptcy and financial service litigators. Columbia continues to be the center for litigation in the state, although Charleston and Greenville are home to considerable practices.**

## Highly recommended firms

### Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd

With over 135 litigators, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd has a strong presence in South Carolina with offices in Columbia, Florence, and Greenville. The firm counts a former city mayor and former presidents of the South Carolina Bar Association within its ranks. The firm focuses on representing clients in commercial, mass torts, antitrust, insurance, products liability and real estate litigation.

The firm recently defended a national bank in a federal action involving the Fair Credit Reporting Act. The plaintiffs alleged the bank had violated the FCRA by failing to remove delinquent-loan information from their credit reports. Plaintiffs obtained a loan from the bank to buy a mobile home and six months after receipt of the home, attempted to reject the property and expunge the purchase from their records. The firm counterclaimed for collection of the amount due on the loan and filed for summary judgment. The court ordered mediation, where the case was favorably settled.

**Martin Infinger** devotes his practice to business, construction and maritime litigation. Peers compliment his appellate and mediation skills. With 40 years of trial experience, **Dewey Oxner** is known for handling malpractice defense, products liability, and insurance cases. **John Tiller** focuses his practice on matters of personal injury and products and premises liability.

### Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough enjoys a national presence, with locations in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Massachusetts and Washington D.C. as well as local offices in Columbia, Greenville, and Myrtle in South Carolina. The firm's South Carolina offices have been at the forefront of complex commercial litigation, representing major corporations, pharmaceutical companies and other businesses. The firm has litigated breach of contract, real estate, toxic torts, and warranty matters. The firm's client roster includes AT&T, General Motors and Wal-Mart.

Based in Charleston, **Robert Brunson** is recognized for his strong antitrust, automotive and recreational products liability, and securities litigation practice. He possesses over 20 years of experience and serves as vice chair of the firm's

transportation industry team. Managing partner **David Dukes** receives praise for his notable products liability work, catering to companies in the pharmaceutical, computer, and consumer products industries. He is also a past president of the Defense Research Institute. **Stephen Morrison** is a former chair of the firm and has tried over 240 cases to verdict. He has a successful business liability, products liability, and securities litigation practice. **Keith Hutto's** practice emphasizes business torts, class actions, contract law, and franchise and distribution litigation. He currently chairs the firm's franchise and product distribution litigation group. **Joel Smith** is known for his products liability defense work, with an emphasis on automotive and pharmaceutical cases. Formerly of Young Clement Rivers, **John Smith Jr.** is a leader in business litigation. He currently serves as the Director of Carolina First Bank and the Lead Independent Director of The South Financial Group. Peers have complimented **Wade Logan III's** professional negligence defense practice.

### Nexsen Pruet

With offices in both North and South Carolina, Nexsen Pruet provides a full range of trial and appellate services. Headquartered in Columbia, the firm maintains strong commercial, insurance, employment and real estate litigation practices. The firm's recent opening of an office in Raleigh has further strengthened its presence in the Carolinas. The firm represents clients in the agricultural, energy, biochemistry, pharmaceutical, manufacturing and transportation industries.

**Susan McWilliams** possesses over 25 years of trial experience, working as defense counsel for individuals and companies in business torts, employment, products and professional liability cases. She currently serves as chair of the South Carolina Ethics Committee. **Thomas Stephenson** is well-known for his work in employment-related litigation and has authored numerous books on the subject of labor and employment law. **Thomas Tisdale** maintains a commendable insurance and business disputes practice. Tisdale's clients include The Belle W. Baruch, The Beatty Companies Foundation, Kimberly Clark Corporation, and the South Carolina Aquarium. **Molly Cherry** practices employment and insurance litigation.

### Wyche Burgess Freeman & Parham

Headquartered in Greenville with a satellite office in Columbia, Wyche Burgess Freeman & Parham has served South Carolina for over a century. The firm is known for abandoning a billable hours fee structure, and instead offers clients a flat fee for services rendered. This fee arrangement allows the team to focus more on effective legal solutions. The firm primarily handles on employment, intellectual property, products liability, and insurance litigation.

**Wallace Lightsey** has a notable First Amendment, intellectual property and media litigation practice and has participated in more than 50 jury trials. Representative clients include New York Times Company, The Associated Press, The Spartanburg Herald, WYFF TV, and WHNS TV. **Carl Muller** also works on First Amendment matters and receives accolades for his health care practice. **James Parham** and **Henry Parr** are both recognized for their work in healthcare and commercial litigation. Former Assistant U.S. Attorney **Tory Tessier** is considered a generalist and has most recently tackled copyright infringement, insurance, products liability, and personal injury cases.

## Recommended firms

### Buist Moore Smythe McGee

Buist Moore Smythe McGee is renowned for representing corporations, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies and other business associations in construction, employment, insurance, maritime and products liability litigation. In particular, the firm's products liability practice has increased its visibility with successful representation of American and foreign manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers in federal and state trial and appellate courts.

Buist Moore attorneys **Henry B. Smythe** and **David B. McCormack**, along with David S. Cox and Matthew E. Tillman, represented Bridgestone Firestone North American Tire in an appellate matter regarding whether or not the company needs to disclose its proprietary and confidential skim stock formula. In an extremely rare procedural ruling, the Supreme Court of South Carolina granted a petition for *writ of certiorari* in its original jurisdiction and the firm earned an appeal. Smythe has 30 years of experience providing products liability defense, mass tort defense, and class action counsel to corporations. McCormack excels in wrongful termination and employment litigation.

**Gordon Schreck** practices admiralty and maritime law and regularly handles cases regarding collision, cargo damage, boating casualties, charter party and marine environmental issues. Products Liability Group chair David Cox has 15 years of experience litigating civil cases and serves as counsel for numerous product manufacturers. Cox has represented a leading

Charleston newspaper and several radio stations in a successful media practice.

#### McNair Law Firm

With attorneys spread across eight offices in South Carolina, McNair Law Firm enjoys a notable presence in the state. The firm also has a ninth location in North Carolina, which serves businesses that depend on interstate commerce between the Carolinas. Adept at handling a large spectrum of matters including bankruptcy, construction litigation, health care, and intellectual property work, McNair is best known for its commercial litigation practice and its commitment to fostering business growth by protecting company interests. Featured clients include

and South Carolina and has represented a wide variety of clients throughout the South.

**Robert Byrd** concentrates on commercial, insurance, and real estate litigation. Possessing over 20 years of trial experience, he is admitted in state and federal courts in South Carolina, as well as the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court. Focusing on business, construction, real property and employment disputes, **Ellis Leseman** has experience working on all aspects of litigation including jury trials and appeals.

#### Pratt-Thomas Walker

Mid-sized Charleston firm Pratt-Thomas Walker is staffed to handle a wide variety of

accused of conspiring to violate the Clean Air Act and defraud United States government. **Elizabeth Van Doren Gray** was lead counsel in the matter.

Known colloquially as Biff, named partner **Thornwell Sowell** is renowned for his general commercial practice. He is an esteemed member of the American Bar Association and the South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys' Association. Peers have lauded **Robert Stepp's** general commercial and professional liability work. **Amy Hill** is acknowledged as a rising star in the commercial and malpractice fields.

#### Turner Padgett Graham & Laney

Strategically located in five cities across South Carolina, Turner Padgett Graham & Laney has 91 attorneys skilled in defense litigation and capable of trying all sorts of matters, from small cases to large class actions. The firm has noticed an increase in referrals because of its affordable representation, with costs based on a flat service fee instead of billable hours. Its practice areas include construction, contract disputes, criminal investigations, malpractice and unfair trade litigation.

Firm CEO **Edward Laney** stands out among his peers for his prolific insurance litigation work. Possessing 20 years of litigation experience, Laney is admitted to practice before the South Carolina Court of Appeals, the South Carolina Supreme Court, and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

**David Spruill** excels in construction and commercial litigation. **John Wilkerson** has an extensive complex litigation practice, which includes products liability, insurance, and professional malpractice litigation. **Nicholas Gladd** maintains a noteworthy products liability practice. A competitor has acknowledged **Richard Dukes** for his strong professional liability and business litigation work. **Andrew Williams** has been called a "sharp litigator" by a contemporary; his practice focuses on construction and insurance-related litigation.

#### Young Clement & Rivers

Existing for over a century, Young Clement & Rivers provides counsel on complex civil and commercial cases for individuals and businesses. Insiders have paid special attention to the firm's medical malpractice, products liability and insurance work. In March 2009, Jeffrey Wiseman and Stephen Brown obtained a defense verdict for a builder who was blamed for shoddy carpentry when the plaintiff fell from a deck with a faulty railing on a house built by the defendant. After three days of testimony, the jury returned a verdict for the defendant. Wiseman and Brown attorneys are members of the firm's Commercial Litigation and Appellate Group. **Rutledge Young** focuses on professional liability and health litigation and is known for his success in "bet-the-company" cases.

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Flagstar Companies, Georgetown Steel, and Landmark Land Company of Carolina.

**Michael Beal** is lauded for his work representing distressed companies and financial institutions in Chapter 11 bankruptcy matters. He has counseled a steel mill, an international woven-fabric manufacturer and a large paper mill.

#### Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart

Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart receives referrals from many regional firms due to its strong employment litigation practice. Both Fortune 500 and small private companies nationwide have turned to the firm for representation. The firm also maintains a vibrant environmental practice, with a focus on toxic torts and contamination cases, and a business disputes practice, emphasizing traditional tort and contract disputes.

A member of the firm since 1979, **Donald Cockrill** represents corporations in environmental cases involving alleged personal injury and property damages, as well as products liability and medical malpractice cases. He is known for his expertise in poisonous substances including PCBs, asbestos, and pesticides. **Matthew Johnson** stands out among his contemporaries for his work in products liability, employment and class action defense litigation.

#### Parker Poe Adams Bernstein

Parker Poe Adams Bernstein is respected among its peers for its impressive construction, healthcare, intellectual property, and white-collar criminal defense work. The firm has locations in both North

litigation matters including contract, construction, insurance, intellectual property, products liability and securities cases. The firm has represented plaintiffs and defendants in state, federal and administrative courts. Peers remark that **Trenholm Walker** is a strong products liability litigator who manages cases on the trial and appellate level.

#### Smith Moore Leatherwood

Approximately 45 lawyers comprise Smith Moore Leatherwood's South Carolina office. Although the firm has its primary practice in North Carolina, the firm's South Carolina offices excels in multiple types of litigation. **Michael Giese** is renowned for his skill in commercial and technology litigation and possesses over 30 years of experience. Prior to joining the firm, he worked as a law clerk in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. **Joseph Major** has practiced for 40 years and represents insurance carriers in comprehensive liability matters. He has also worked on several large class action suits. **Kurt Rozelsky** has spent more than 15 years defending clients in transportation and products liability claims.

#### Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte

Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte represents a broad range of clients—from individuals to international corporations—in matters of employment, medical malpractice, and products liability litigation. Peers have taken note of the firm's insurance and personal injury defense practice. In April 2009, the firm successfully obtained a dismissal for a former manager at a W.R. Grace mine in Libby, Montana. The manager, along with six other employees of W.R. Grace, was