The following section features attorneys who have demonstrated leadership qualities and have achieved the AV Preeminent rating by Martindale-Hubbell®.

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At Corless Barfield Trial Group, our firm brings extensive experience and a unique approach to each case we handle. Recognized as one of the leading insurance litigation lawyers in Florida, founding attorney Ted A. Corless formerly represented some of the most powerful insurance companies in the state and currently uses that inside experience to assist property owners and personal injury victims in recovering compensation for their losses.

Corless routinely shares his experience and knowledge by authoring articles, giving television interviews and presenting lectures throughout the United States on a range of legal topics, including insurance coverage, complex expert testimony and insurance bad faith. He is licensed to practice law in Florida and Missouri and has received an AV peer review rating® through the Martindale-Hubbell system. Further, Corless is a member of the American Society of Trial Consultants.

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Construction Law

R. Loy Waldrop

Loy Waldrop has represented contractors, design professionals, developers, owners, sureties, and material suppliers in a wide range of construction industry matters for over 30 years. He has more than 25 years experience in defending major lawsuits against designers with single suit claims as high as $250 million. He has represented contractors in the prosecution and defense of claims ranging from payment issues to complex differing site conditions and scheduling claims. He has personally tried dozens of jury and bench trials and arbitration hearings to verdict. He has obtained summary or voluntary dismissals of numerous suits against designers. He also regularly assists his contractor and designer clients in contract reviews and negotiations. His present practice is devoted almost exclusively to the construction industry. In the first 10 years of his career, he obtained extensive trial experience in personal injury and product liability cases. He has been named to “Best Lawyers,” “Mid-South Super Lawyers” and Best Lawyers “Lawyer of the Year” for Knoxville in the construction practice area.

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David N. Garst

For more than 30 years, Mr. Garst has represented contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, architects, engineers, surveyors, building owners, and developers on a variety of construction projects, both locally and regionally. He has substantial experience in the defense of design professionals, and has represented architects and engineers in hundreds of claims, lawsuits, arbitration matters, and disciplinary proceedings. He also has represented numerous general contractors and specialty contractors on construction defect claims, payment disputes, liens, and disciplinary and licensing matters. His experience involves claims and litigation over many project types, including commercial, industrial, retail, and residential buildings, sports arenas and stadiums, subdivisions and industrial parks, water and wastewater plants and facilities, natural gas transmission lines and other subsurface utilities, dams, school and university facilities, airport hangars and runways, and electric transmission facilities. He has been named to “Best Lawyers in America,” “Best Lawyers in Nashville,” and “Mid South Super Lawyers” in the construction practice area.

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p: 615.259.1389  f: 615.259.1389  dgarst@lewisthomason.com
JASON K. GUNther

Jason K. Gunther is a principal in the firm and has been an attorney for 15 years. He is AV rated by Martindale-Hubbell and his primary areas of practice are construction defect and truck/automobile collision litigation. Mr. Gunther has tried numerous cases and handled many complex multi-party construction and truck/automobile collision cases and mediations. Mr. Gunther also possesses significant litigation and trial experience in premises liability, wrongful death, insurance coverage disputes, collection matters and surety law.

Moreover, Mr. Gunther is often involved in representing clients in pre-suit matters and claims in order to develop an early analysis of the issues and disputes, and to develop and implement early resolution strategies and agreements. Prior to forming McIntosh Schwartz, P.L., he was a partner with Yoss, LLP and Adorno & Yoss, LLP for 7 years.

Mr. Gunther began his career as an Assistant Public Defender where he tried numerous cases and held supervisory positions in felony divisions.

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GARTh M. WAINMAN

Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley & Walsh represents national and regional builders, developers, and contractors throughout Virginia in litigation in state and federal courts. Our team of skilled attorneys provides a solution-oriented and fee-efficient approach to resolving all types of construction disputes and has effectively led our clients through complex cases resulting in successful arbitration awards and jury verdicts. We have successfully defended our clients from claims of breaches of construction warranties, structural design defects, delay damages, bond defaults, and myriad complex business torts. Our lawyers have earned their strong reputation with Virginia’s judges and clients with diligence and creative yet pragmatic legal analysis while serving as lead counsel in a number of complex construction and surety claims. Garth Wainman leads the firm’s construction law practice group and is recognized by U.S. News and World Report as one of The Best Lawyers in America®. He is AV rated and named a 2016 Top Rated Lawyer in Construction Law by American Lawyer Media and Martindale-Hubbell. (162)

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TIE NICHOLSON

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THOMAS M. FITZPATRICK

Thomas M. Fitzpatrick is a graduate of the University of Montana (1973) and the University of Chicago Law School (1976). He is a former partner in the firm of Karr, Tuttle, Campbell (1978-1989) and Stafford Frey Cooper (1989-1999), managing partner (1991-1994). From 1999 through 2004, he served as Assistant Chief of the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, Civil Division, heading the Litigation and Employment unit. He was named a “Super Lawyer” by the publication Washington Law and Politics in 2004. In 2005, the elected Snohomish County Executive, selected him as Executive Director of Snohomish County with oversight responsibility for planning and development, economic development, environmental policy, the airport, risk management, and several other county offices. In 2006, he returned to private practice, joining former Washington Supreme Court Justice Phil Talmadge with whom he previously practiced, at the Talmadge/Fitzpatrick firm. His practice has an emphasis in professional responsibility, attorney fees, and litigation. Mr. Fitzpatrick’s emphasis is on professional responsibility, attorney fees, and governmental related litigation including land use.

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MELANIE GURLEY KEENEY
Melanie Gurley Keeney practices in Immigration, Employment and Education law representing
corporations, institutions of higher education, and individuals in immigration matters, including
obtaining temporary and permanent visas, employer sanctions issues, I-9 compliance, E-Verify,
consular processing and naturalization. She was
named St. Louis Best Lawyers “Education Law Lawyer of the Year” for 2017 and “Immigration
Lawyer of the Year” for 2015 and 2012. Since
1997, she has been listed in St. Louis Magazine’s
“St. Louis’ Best Lawyers” and in “The Best Lawyers
in America” in Education Law, Employment Law
- Management and Immigration Law. She has
been named to “Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers,” as a “Top 50” Woman Lawyer in Missouri and Kansas. In 2016, Missouri Lawyers Weekly awarded Melanie the Women's
Justice Litigation Practitioner Award. In 2014, Washington University School of Law honored Melanie with the International Women's Day Award for Employment Law.
Melanie represents public and private employers in the full gamut of employment issues,
including state and federal litigation. She is a featured speaker and provides preventive
employment law services, including supervisor training and compliance audits. Melanie
is a founding Shareholder of the Firm and serves as Chairwoman. She graduated from
Baylor University, phi beta kappa, and from Washington University School of Law.

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FRANCIS R. LAWS
Frank Laws leads the firm’s Litigation Department, a team of lawyers spanning
a wide range of litigation experience and expertise. Focusing on finding business
solutions to business problems, Mr. Laws has successfully litigated commercial
cases throughout the country. Aside from
the usual contract disputes and business
torts, the subject matters have included
construction claims, cattle rustling, copyright infringement, the
uniform commercial code, agricultural issues, government
authority, and land use issues. Mr. Laws’ labor practice
includes the full range of issues generated in the process of
employment: litigating, administering, negotiating, and/or
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November 2016   61