



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

Martindale-Hubbell®, the company that has long set the standard for lawyer ratings, has supplied ALM with a list of Top Rated Lawyers who have achieved an AV® Preeminent® Peer Review Rating, the highest rating in legal ability and ethical standards. To create this section, Martindale-Hubbell® tapped its comprehensive database of Martindale-Hubbell® Peer Review Ratings™ to identify lawyers who have been rated by their peers to be AV® Preeminent™.

Martindale Hubbell Peer Review Ratings are driven by the confidential opinions of lawyers and members of the judiciary who receive invitations from Martindale-Hubbell®, via an online survey or by mail, to provide reviews of lawyers of whom they have professional knowledge.

A complete directory of all AV® Preeminent™ lawyers can be found online at Lawyers.com® and Martindale.com, in the Martindale-Hubbell® Law Directory in print and CD-ROM formats, and online through the LexisNexis® services and at lexis.com. Attorneys shown do not constitute the full list of “Top Rated Lawyers”



SOUTH

ALABAMA HUNTSVILLE

MITCHELL J. HOWIE

The Law Office of Mitchell J. Howie has been serving clients since 2004 with effective and skilled legal representation. Mr. Howie is a skilled criminal defense lawyer, personal injury lawyer and family lawyer who gets the best possible results for his clients. Mr. Howie still serves in the Air Force Reserves and teaches trial advocacy worldwide for the military. In 2017 and 2018, Mitchell J. Howie was selected as an esteemed lawyer of America, as a Lawyer of Distinction, as one of the Best Attorneys in America, as one of America's Top 100 Attorneys, and was recognized as an AV preeminent attorney by Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review Ratings. The AV Rating is the highest possible rating given by LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review for a lawyer and is established wholly on a peer-review basis. The AV Preeminent designation signifies that Mr. Howie has been rated by Judges and fellow attorneys as having the highest possible rating for legal abilities and ethical standards. Between 2015-2018, Huntsville Attorney Mitchell J. Howie was also selected as a member of the Nation's Top One Percent of attorneys by the National Association of Distinguished Counsel and has maintained a “superb rating” on AVVO. One of the best family lawyers in Huntsville, he was recognized as Top 10 under 40 of Alabama Family Lawyers by the National Academy of Family Law Attorneys. Between 2014-2018, Attorney Mitchell J. Howie was recognized as one of the Top 100 lawyers by the National Trial Lawyers (NTL) and was recognized as one of the Top 40 Lawyers Under 40 by NTL and as one of the TOP TEN Criminal Defense attorneys in Alabama under 40 by the National Academy of Criminal Defense Attorneys for being one of Huntsville's best criminal defense attorneys.



**LAW OFFICE OF
MITCHELL J. HOWIE**

107 North Side Square, Huntsville, Alabama 35801
Phone: 256.533.8074 | Fax: 256.533.3488
info@mitchellhowie.com | www.mitchellhowie.com



**SETTLEMENT
PLANNING
SERVICES LLC**

Tacker LeCarpentier

With 27 years of litigation, appellate and settlement planning experience, Tacker LeCarpentier is one of the South's most sought-after attorneys for helping litigation counsel and their clients fully resolve their largest cases. Based in Raleigh, N.C., LeCarpentier assists in cases involving catastrophic personal injuries, medical malpractice, workers compensation, wrongful convictions and employment law claims. He primarily employs qualified (tax-free) and non-qualified (tax-deferred) structured settlements, Special Needs Trusts, Settlement Preservation Trusts and Medicare Set-Aside Accounts to ensure the injured claimant maximizes and, most importantly, secures his/her financial future to meet critical life care, medical and family needs.

LeCarpentier founded Settlement Planning Services, LLC, in July 2017 after 12 years as Director of Settlement Planning and Structured Settlements at another successful agency. "I wanted to leverage my 12 years' experience structuring Section 104(a) physical injury cases into the many cases involving taxable damages, especially wrongful convictions and employment law matters," says LeCarpentier.

A graduate of the Episcopal High School of Virginia (1980) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1985), LeCarpentier earned his Juris Doctorate degree from the Wake Forest University (1991), where he received AmJur Awards for Trial Practice and Family Law. He spent the next two years as a Law Clerk for the Hon. James G. Exum Jr., Chief Justice of the Supreme



If I can help ease their burdens and concerns about the future, I am truly grateful for the opportunity to help make a difference.

Court of North Carolina. In 1993, he joined Cranfill Sumner & Hartzog, where he primarily litigated medical malpractice and other catastrophic loss cases.

LeCarpentier is an active member of the National Structured Settlement Trade Association (NSSTA) and serves on the NSSTA Legislative and Regulatory Committee which he recently chaired for two years. He also received his Certified Structured Settlement Consultant certification at Notre Dame University in 2008. He is licensed by the North Carolina State Bar and state insurance departments across the country. He has handled cases throughout the United States and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Although personable and friendly, LeCarpentier chooses his words carefully and demonstrates a high level of competence in his area of expertise. "Many of my claimant clients need a great deal of compassion, understanding and patience. And that is my passion. If I can help ease their burdens and concerns about the future, I am truly grateful for the opportunity to help make a difference," he says.

Over 25 Years of Litigation and Settlement Planning Experience

TACKER LeCARPENTIER, JD, CSSC - PRESIDENT
TACKER@SETTLEMENTPLANNINGLLC.COM

P | 919.247.9070 F | 888.639.9816
WWW.SETTLEMENTPLANNINGLLC.COM

OKLAHOMA OKLAHOMA CITY

DONNA J. JACKSON

Donna J. Jackson is a nationally recognized attorney, authority, speaker and educator in estate planning. Ms. Jackson is a CPA and holds a Master Degree (LL.M.) in Elder Law. Ms. Jackson has over 28 years of legal experience. She limits her practice to estate planning with an emphasis on Medicaid, VA Benefits and special needs planning, including trusts, special needs trusts, wills, durable power of attorneys and living wills. In addition, Ms. Jackson's practice includes taxes, corporate, trust, individual, gift and estate, probates and business organizations, including corporations, limited partnerships and limited liability companies.



Ms. Jackson obtained a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master's degree in Accounting from Oklahoma State University. She received her Juris Doctor degree from Oklahoma City University School of Law in 1988, and LL.M. in Elder Law from Stetson College of Law in Florida. She currently serves on the board of National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys. She has served on numerous committees of the American Bar Association, Oklahoma Bar Association, the Oklahoma Society of CPAs and National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys.

Ms. Jackson has been a keynote speaker for the Oklahoma Bar Association, Stafford, and National Business Institute (NBI). She was honored as one of the 2011-2015 Five Star Wealth Managers in Estate Planning in the *Oklahoma Magazine*. In 2013, she received the Earl Sneed Award from the Oklahoma Bar Association for her contribution to continuing legal education.

DONNA J. JACKSON
ATTORNEY AT LAW

10404 Vineyard Blvd, Ste E
 Oklahoma City, Ok 73120
 Ph: 405.840.1874 | Fax: 405.840.1880

TENNESSEE NASHVILLE

BRIAN MANOOKIAN

Brian Manookian represents plaintiffs in complex, catastrophic injury, and class action cases. One hundred percent of his practice is devoted to litigation. He has handled and prevailed in major actions in areas of law as varied as health care liability, constitutional claims, consumer protection, and business disputes. In one recent twelve-month span, Brian recovered over \$20,000,000 for clients injured by the negligence or wrongful conduct of others.



In practice, Brian's clients range from Fortune 500 companies and high-profile politicians to small businesses and families. He takes pride in being available to them at all hours of the day and night, going so far as to ensure that each one has his personal cell and home phone numbers. As for defendants, Brian's relentless style of litigation is unique even among trial lawyers. And it's so effective, he is frequently hired by the very same entities he previously sued. Of the many indicators of an attorney's skill and success, Brian believes having former adversaries retain him to represent them in future matters is quite possibly the highest practical endorsement an attorney can receive.

CUMMINGS MANOOKIAN PLC

45 Music Square West, Nashville, TN 37203
 Tel: 615.266.3333 | Fax: 615.266.0250
 www.cmtriallawyers.com

MISSISSIPPI STARKVILLE

LYDIA QUARLES

Lydia Quarles is a principal in the firm of Mozingo|Quarles PLLC with offices in Jackson and Starkville, Mississippi. She and firm principal James R. Mozingo have established a boutique practice built around their motto: *Creative solutions. Sound advice.* With a spectrum of legal expertise and a breadth of personal talents, Lydia has been able to offer her clients one-of-a-kind professional services. The firm is able to provide the skills, experience and resources of much larger firms, without sacrificing the personalized focus and attention that comes with its size. Areas of practice include business and commercial litigation, business transactions and contracts, business formation and operation, public entity representation, labor and employment, real estate transactions, and a select domestic and family practice. The firm is also adept at representing professionals in professional board inquiries, and Lydia is an experienced mediator. M|Q and its lawyers practice before all federal, state and local courts and many administrative bodies.

Lydia is a Martindale-Hubbell AV rated lawyer who is also recognized by Martindale as a Preeminent Woman Lawyer in America.


MOZINGO | QUARLES PLLC

1016 Louisville Street, Suite E, Starkville, MS 39579
 Tel: 662.268.5096 | Fax: 662.323.5256
 lydia@mqlawoffices.com | www.mozingolaw.com

LOUISIANA NEW ORLEANS

SUZETTE BAGNERIS

Picking Fights with Goliath for the People
That's what New Orleans attorney Suzette Bagneris does best

Twenty-four years ago, with the ink barely dry on her law school diploma, Suzette Bagneris entered the legal profession and the national spotlight representing a neighborhood built atop a toxic waste dump in New Orleans, Louisiana. Since then, Bagneris continues to tenaciously fight for the underdog taking on many controversial, high profile class actions against major corporations and government entities. Although these big cases fighting big shots have brought her notoriety, she has balanced her time fighting for the people in individual cases involving automobile accidents, 18-wheeler accidents, motorcycle accidents, injuries occurring on premises, nursing home neglect of the elderly, wrongful death and medical malpractice. "Every case, every client, is important to me," she says. "I love being the voice of the voiceless. I love fighting for the underdog." The outcome of her zealous advocacy is membership in the Multi-Million Dollar Advocates Forum, a national organization of attorneys who consistently achieve multi-million dollar results for their clients.


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2714 Canal Street, Suite 403, New Orleans, Louisiana 70119
 Telephone: 504.810.3995
 sbagneris@bagnerislawfirm.com | www.bagnerislawfirm.com

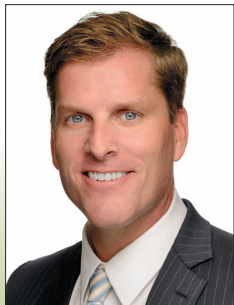
SOUTH CAROLINA MOUNT PLEASANT

JIM BUXTON

James T.H. Buxton, Sr. is the founding partner of Buxton & Collie, LLC, a corporate law firm in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. A native of Charleston, Jim graduated from Princeton University and the University of South Carolina School of Law. He practiced in Atlanta with Alston & Bird, LLP and with Hunton & Williams, LLP in Richmond before returning to his hometown. He is a council member for the South Carolina Bar's Corporate, Banking and Securities Committee and is a co-author of the new SC Bar publication, South Carolina Business Law Handbook.

Jim's practice focuses on private securities offerings, business purchase and sale agreements, and deal work involving high net worth individuals and family office clients who engage in private equity transactions. Buxton & Collie also serves as outside corporate counsel for middle market companies and small businesses, including closely-held family businesses in a variety of market segments.

Jim is active in the Charleston community, volunteering his time on several boards and foundations. He lives in Mount Pleasant with his wife, Courtney, and their two sons.


BUXTON & COLLIE, LLC

940 Johnnie Dodds Boulevard, Suite 205, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464
 Phone: 843.606.2397 | Fax: 843.284.8917
 jbxuton@buxtonandcollie.com | www.buxtonandcollie.com

MISSISSIPPI BRANDON

FRED M. HARRELL, JR.

Fred M. Harrell, Jr. graduated from The University of Mississippi ("Ole Miss") School of Business in 1972 and The University of Mississippi School of Law in 1974. He was admitted in 1974 to the U.S. District Court, Northern and Southern Districts of Mississippi and U.S. Court of Appeals. His legal career began in Jackson, MS with the law firm of Barnett, Montgomery, McClintock and Cunningham, practicing in areas of civil, personal injury, worker's compensation, domestic and criminal law, representing seriously injured individuals, wrongful death beneficiaries and corporate defense clients alike.

Now a member of the law firm of Harrell and Rester in Brandon, MS for over 42 years with an active practice representing personal injury, wrongful death, corporate defense clients and an educational governmental entity/school district board with over 3000 employees. His practice also includes estates, real estate, landlord-tenant cases, contracts and limited domestic matters.

Current and past association memberships: MS Association for Justice (MTLA) (Board of Governors-former member); MS Criminal Defense Lawyers Association (former V.P.); Rankin County Bar Association; Hinds County Bar Association; American Trial Lawyers Association; MS Council for School Board Attorneys.

HARRELL & RESTER

1700 West Government Street, Building B, Suite 102, Brandon, MS 39042
 Ph: 601.825.7236 | Fax: 601.825.7237
 www.harrellrester.com


NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

JAMES W. LEA

Jim Lea has been practicing law for 38 years. He has tried virtually every type of case, from criminal to civil, but in the last 20 plus years he has concentrated primarily in domestic law. In 1996, he was named by Martindale-Hubbell, the country's leading legal rating service, as one of the preeminent lawyers in America, an AV rating that only approximately 10% of lawyers achieve. He has held that designation for 22 years. For the 12th straight year, he has been named in "Best Lawyers in America," "North Carolina Super Lawyers," and recently in the American Registry as one of North Carolina's Best Lawyers. Six years ago, U.S. News and World Report began electing "The Best Law Firms in America" and Mr. Lea's firm has held that designation since its inception. He also recently received the Client Distinction Award from Martindale Hubbell, voted on by clients only.


THE LEA/SCHULTZ LAW FIRM, P.C

1612 Military Cutoff Rd STE 300
 Wilmington, North Carolina 28403
 Phone: 910.239.5990 | Fax: 910.239.5992
 www.theleaschultzlawfirm.com | jwl@theleaschultzlawfirm.com

NORTH CAROLINA CARTERET COUNTY

JOHN E. TANTUM

John E. Tantum is a sole practitioner, now located in Cedar Point, Carteret County, North Carolina, "The Crystal Coast".

John graduated from Wake Forest University in 1970 as a math major and continued his education at Wake Forest Law School in Winston Salem, North Carolina where he was an editor of the Law Review and graduated with a Juris Doctor Degree Cum Laude, in 1973. Upon graduation from law school, John was commissioned in the United States Army as a First Lieutenant and after graduation from Army Armor Officer's School in Fort Knox, Kentucky, served for 6 years in the Army Reserve, being honorably discharged as a Captain in 1979.

For 25 years John practiced law in Wake County (Raleigh), North Carolina with the firm Tantum and Hamrick. John principally represented Plaintiffs in personal injury and medical malpractice claims. He was fortunate to have a \$1.8 million dollar verdict rendered for his client in a 1983 case which was one of the highest verdicts in North Carolina at that time. In 1995 John negotiated a \$1.3 million dollar settlement for a minor child that had suffered from a delayed birth. John also represented clients at the North Carolina Industrial Commission and negotiated a settlement of more than \$900,000.00 for a worker who had been paralyzed when a box fell from a shelf onto his head.

In 2005 John moved to the North Carolina beach community of Cedar Point for what he thought would be a semi-retirement. There has been no retirement and John continues to practice law every day with a staff of four assistants. He now handles many residential and commercial Real Estate Transactions and does Estate Planning work for his clients. He continues his trial work on a limited basis.

John is licensed to practice in all North Carolina Trial Courts, the North Carolina Court of Appeals, the North Carolina Supreme Court, the Federal District Court, Middle and Eastern Districts of North Carolina, the Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District, the Federal Court of Appeals (Fourth Circuit) and the United States Supreme Court.

JOHN E. TANTUM, P.A.

604-C Cedar Point Boulevard, Cedar Point, North Carolina 28584
 Phone No. 252.393.2235 | Fax No. 252.393.2271
 Email: jtantum@tantumlaw.com | www.tantumlaw.com



NORTH CAROLINA CARY

F. STEPHEN GLASS

F. Stephen Glass is the managing member of Glass Law Group, PLLC, a boutique law firm in Cary, North Carolina, providing personalized legal services to business clients and individuals. His practice includes business and corporate law, business entity planning, startups, strategies, development, transactional matters and employment law. His corporate practice often evolves into exit planning and complex estate planning.

His firm was selected as the area's best law firm for 2017 and for the Chamber of Commerce's Community Service Award for 2018.

Upon graduation from Wake Forest University School of Law (1966), he clerked for the North Carolina Supreme Court. He served on active duty in the Navy JAGC (1967-71) and was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral, retiring in November 1966. He is a member of the American College of National Security Leaders. He served as a Special Congressional Assistant (4th Dist., NC).

Mr. Glass is admitted to and has practiced in all North Carolina state and federal courts, U.S. Tax Court, Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court.

He has served as President of his Rotary Club, is a Distinguished Eagle Scout and served on the B.S.A. National Committee.



201 West Chatham St., Suite 110,
Cary, North Carolina 27511
P: 919.948.7633; f: 919.827.4878
sglass@glasslawNC.com

ARKANSAS LITTLE ROCK

GREGORY M. HOPKINS

Gregory M. Hopkins practices primarily in the areas of business, commercial, and financial law, including banking law, mergers and acquisitions, commercial litigation, and general business advice. Hopkins founded Hopkins Headlee Caststeel PLLC in 1984 and the firm has been named by a national publication as Best Law Firm in Arkansas (small firm tier) for business and transactions.

Hopkins completed his undergraduate degree at Arkansas State University in less than two years and received the Robert E. Lee Wilson Award, A-State's highest award and was the Outstanding Real Estate & Insurance Major. Hopkins received his law degree from the University of Arkansas, where he was Chief Justice of the Student Court and president of the Phi Alpha Delta Legal fraternity.

Hopkins was named in Soirée Magazine's lists of the Best Lawyers in Little Rock for the past four years, and has received other awards, including Arkansas' Best Business Lawyer - Arkansas Times, Best Lawyers — Arkansas Business, Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers — Martindale-Hubbell, Top Attorneys in the Mid-South — Memphis Magazine, and Super Lawyers of the Mid-South — Thompson-Rueters.


HOPKINS HEADLEE CASTSTEEL PLLC

1000 West Second Street, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
Tel: 501.375.1517 | Fax: 501.375.0231
ghopkins@hopkinslawfirm.com | www.hopkinslawfirm.com

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