



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"



## ELITE LAWYERS OF THE SOUTH

### LOUISIANA ALEXANDRIA

## RICHARD J. ARSENAULT

The Wall Street Journal has described Arsenault as having "national notoriety," BusinessWeek described him as "a Dean of the Louisiana Tort Bar," and The New York Times described him as one of the "big players" in the legal community. Arsenault has been an invited lecturer at various law schools including Baylor, Duke, Emory, University of Texas, Tulane, George Washington and LSU where he served on the Trial Advocacy faculty. He has been involved in over 25 Multidistrict Litigation proceedings, often serving in leadership capacities. He served as Lead Counsel in the Actos MDL where a jury rendered a \$9 billion verdict. He subsequently served on the negotiating team that secured a \$2.4 billion settlement, which is the largest single mass tort settlement for a drug that is still on the market. He was also appointed to the Pinnacle MDL Executive Committee and was a trial team member where three Bellwether trials resulted in \$502 million, \$1 billion and \$247 million verdicts. Arsenault is listed in the Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers as well as The Best Lawyers in America and has an AV Martindale-Hubbell rating. He has been recognized as one of America's 50 Most Influential Trial Lawyers by Trial Lawyer magazine, nominated for the Trial Lawyer of the Year Award by the Public Justice Foundation, and recognized by the National Law Journal as one of America's Elite Trial Lawyers. Arsenault will become one of the first practitioners in the nation to become Board Certified in Complex Litigation. The Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice appointed Arsenault to serve on the Rules of Professional Conduct Class Action, Bench Book, and State MDL Exploratory Committees.



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**TENNESSEE** TULLAHOMA

## JOHN R. LABAR

**L**aBAR LAW PLLC was founded in 2020 with the operational principle of being more responsive to clients than the traditional law firm structure where you go through several layers of “gatekeepers” before you even get the chance to explain your legal needs. By being forward-thinking and technology driven, LaBAR LAW can more effectively and quickly communicate and respond to clients. The goal of LaBAR LAW is to create a long-term business relationship with its clients. LaBAR LAW concentrates its practice on advising business and corporate clients on all manner of transactional, corporate, lending and finance (representing both lender and borrowers on matters up to nine figures), entity formation (from corporations, LLCs, partnerships, to joint ventures), employment law, tax, intellectual property, and real estate law matters (including purchases, sales, leases, title issues and closings) throughout Tennessee and the country. LaBAR LAW serves as outside general counsel for businesses for ongoing legal matters (in addition to supplementing in-house counsel) from corporate governance, mergers and acquisitions, business succession planning, contract review, negotiation, entity formation, supervision of litigation matters, and dispute resolution. In addition to obtaining an initial Doctor of Jurisprudence with a concentration in business transactions from the University of Tennessee, Attorney John R LaBar, has obtained an additional specialized post-doctoral law degree of a Master of Laws (LL.M) in Real Property and Development from the University of Miami. The provision of legal services by LaBAR LAW is not limited to one geographic area as its use of technology allows it to assist clients on both the State and national level. With over 21 years of experience representing businesses of all sizes, from startups to employers with over 500+ employees, LaBAR LAW looks forward to being able to assist you and your business.



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**TENNESSEE** CHATTANOOGA

## MICHAEL E. RICHARDSON

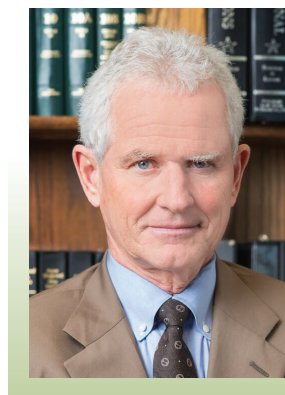
**M**ichael E. Richardson is a successful and highly experienced trial lawyer located in Chattanooga that has been obtaining judgments and favorable settlements for his clients for his entire 41-year career. He specializes in cases involving legal and accounting malpractice and has also had achieved great results for his clients in cases involving serious personal injuries and medical malpractice.

He has been recognized as one of the leading trial lawyers in Tennessee, having won a number of landmark decisions and cases that changed the law in Tennessee. He has been listed for ten consecutive years in Best Lawyers in America for his legal malpractice cases and has been an AV rated trial lawyer by Martindale Hubbell for 25 consecutive years (both by Judges and his peers).

He has been married to Cindy Harrah Richardson for 31 years, who manages their law practice and has been a paralegal for many years.

Richardson has developed a reputation for winning professional negligence suits and handling complex litigation that other lawyers cannot handle. Most of his business comes from referrals from other law firm where they ask to associate him or refer him cases that are difficult. He is one of the few attorneys in the Country to have tried and won verdicts in cases involving medical malpractice, legal malpractice, accounting malpractice and lender liability actions.

He has won numerous million dollar verdicts and settlements for his clients, including a verdict in a legal malpractice case of 15.6 million and another one of 12 million. He is devoted to his practice and his family and is a zealous advocate to his clients and their rights.



## THE RICHARDSON LAW FIRM

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**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, business lawyer and family lawyer who gets the best possible results for his clients and teaches trial advocacy worldwide for the military.

From 2017 to 2020, Mitchell J. Howie was selected as an esteemed lawyer of America, as a Lawyer of Distinction, and one of the Best Attorneys in America. Between 2015-2020, Huntsville Attorney Mitchell Howie was selected as a member of the Nation's Top One Percent of attorneys by the National Association of Distinguished Counsel. 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 2014-2020 Attorney Mitchell 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.



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**SOUTH CAROLINA** CHARLESTON

## JIM BUXTON

James T. H. Buxton, Sr. is the founding partner of Buxton & Collie, LLC, a transactional 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. Jim has served on the South Carolina Bar's Judicial Qualification Commission, and currently serves as Secretary for the South Carolina Bar's Corporate, Banking and Securities Committee. Along with his law partners, he is a co-author of the 2018 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.

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**NORTH CAROLINA** CHAPEL HILL

## LAURA NOBLE

With over two decades of diverse legal experience including civil litigation, negotiation, counseling and consulting, Laura Noble's passion is offering clients personal and powerful representation on employment law issues. She developed this conviction from her legal background in New York City and from her personal experiences as a woman and mother in the workplace.



Laura serves as Managing Partner of The Noble Law, a women-owned firm and recognized national leader in employment law. Founded in 2009, the firm provides legal assistance along the east coast, from offices in Chapel Hill and Charlotte, North Carolina, New York, and South Carolina. The firm's goal is providing exceptional employment law representation to individuals by focusing on core values: collaboration, leadership, diversity, empathy, integrity, and innovation. The Noble Law measures success by delivering positive impacts for clients and serving as a catalyst for changes in employment law and society at large.



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**MISSISSIPPI** OXFORD

## RONALD W. LEWIS

I have litigated civil rights cases for victims of law enforcement brutality, as well as other types of civil rights cases, for over 43 years. I also have represented many clients charged with crimes in both federal and state courts in Mississippi. For the past several years I have had a solo practice, Lewis Law Firm, with my office in Oxford, Mississippi, home of the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) and home of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi. My motto on my website, [www.ronlewislaw.com](http://www.ronlewislaw.com) is "Experience Matters and So Do You!"



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**LOUISIANA** NEW ORLEANS

**CONLEE S. WHITELEY**

Conlee S. Whiteley, is the managing member of Kanner & Whiteley. Her practice, for over 25 years, is primarily on behalf of plaintiffs in the areas of pharmaceutical, consumer fraud, antitrust and insurance litigation. She currently serves as co-lead counsel in *In re Valsartan NDMA Prod. Liab. Lit.*, serves on the PSC in *In re Zantac Ranitidine Prod. Liab. Lit.*, and has represented the State of Louisiana as co-lead counsel in various pharmaceutical cases including its case against GSK for the fraudulent marketing of Avandia. Ms. Whiteley is the immediate past president of the board of directors of Milne Developmental Services, a non-profit founded in 1843 devoted to the care and increasing independence for intellectually disabled persons in a community environment. Ms. Whiteley graduated from Louisiana State University and LSU's Paul M. Hebert Law Center.



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**NORTH CAROLINA** CHARLOTTE

**PAUL PEDIGO**

Paul Pedigo provides comprehensive IP strategies and solutions to help move his clients closer to their goals. Whether researching and writing a successful patent application, or providing counsel on how best to position IP for maximum profitability, Paul eliminates obstacles and mitigates risk to clear a path for each client's success.

A Chattanooga native, Paul attended Vanderbilt University, earning undergraduate degrees in English and Chemical Engineering. He obtained his J.D. from Loyola University of Chicago, and then studied in the LLM Intellectual Property Law program at John Marshall.

As managing partner of Pedigo Law Firm, Paul builds upon his distinguished background in IP Law. His resume includes stints at top-tier firms in Chicago and Charlotte, including Leydig, Voit & Mayer; partner at Bell, Seltzer, Park & Gibson, and Alston & Bird.

Paul has managed IP portfolios in over 70 countries and written significant patents. One relates to a blockbuster drug used in the treatment of liver disease. His expertise extends to pharmaceuticals, medical devices, chemicals, optics, life sciences, biotech, packaging, complex machinery, and engineering.



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**MISSOURI** SAINT LOUIS

**MICHAEL DOWNEY**

Michael Downey is a legal ethics lawyer and founder of Downey Law Group LLC, a law firm devoted to legal ethics, lawyer discipline defense, and the law of lawyering. Michael serves as outside general counsel to more than 50 law firms, advising on legal ethics and risk management issues. Michael also defends lawyers in Missouri and Illinois lawyer discipline matters, and has argued 15 lawyer discipline cases before the Missouri Supreme Court.

For more than two decades, Michael has taught legal ethics and law firm practice as an adjunct professor at Washington University School of Law. He is a member of the Missouri Bar Board of Governors, a past chair of the ABA Law Practice Division, and a past member of the ABA Standing Committee on Professional Regulation. Michael has published 190 articles and presented 600 times on legal ethics, including that his firm now hosts free ethics CLE programs twice per month.



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