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# Introduction



**By Christian Moises**  
Associate Editor

As New Orleans CityBusiness honors the region's 50 leading attorneys, Brian Bromberger, dean of the Loyola University School of Law, says nothing but positives have come from the flood of hurricane recovery-related litigation.

"This is definitely not a time where the community is resting," he said. "With the recovery litigation, our legal community is taking law to a new level, almost akin to the tobacco legislation."

Even though he believes the recovery caseload is just beginning, Bromberger doesn't foresee any difficulties.

"Whatever anyone might say about

Louisiana's legal system, there is no shortage of very capable lawyers."

New Orleans CityBusiness has recognized 50 of the area's leaders in law based on professional and community achievements. In the program's third year, a judging panel reviewed more than 130 nominations before naming the class of 2007.

The 2007 honorees feature a foursome of three-time honorees: Kim Boyle, John Houghtaling, Steven Lane and Wayne Lee.

An increase in nominations from 2006 is very encouraging and proves our legal community has not only remained strong since Katrina but

remains committed to the region and bringing it back better and stronger.

As we move on with the recovery and return to normalcy, this year's class has taken an active role in the process. Many have taken on additional duties, serving on recovery boards or lobbying for legislative changes to improve business and livelihoods while others foster new growth and change.

CityBusiness thanks each of them for their professional and civic efforts and the difference they are making.

Congratulations to the 50 honorees of CityBusiness' Leadership in Law 2007. •

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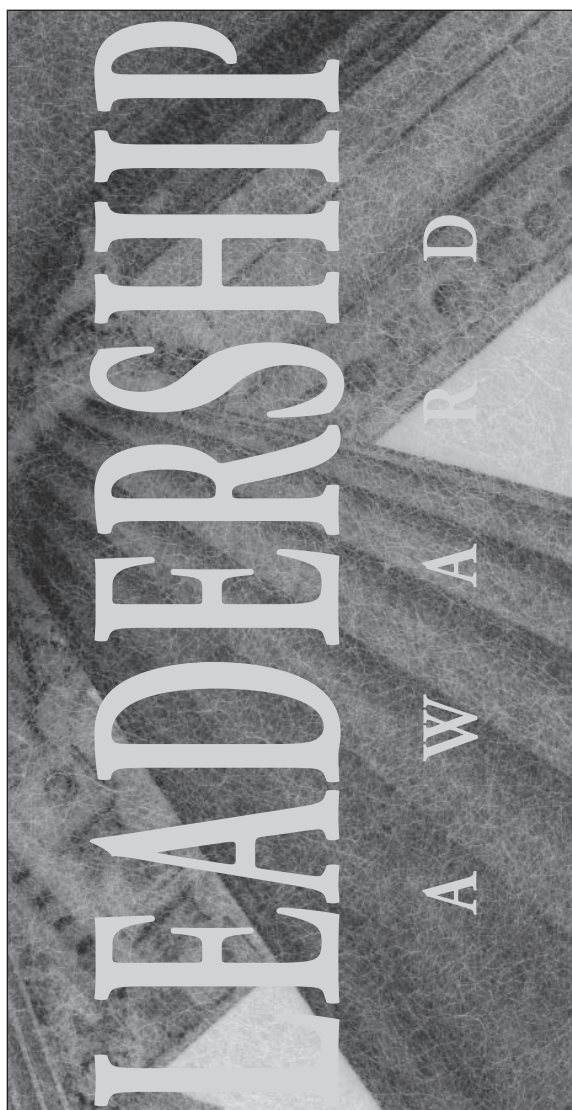


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# Robert S. Angelico

**Position:** shareholder, Liskow & Lewis

**Age:** 48

**Family:** wife, Kathy; children, Jean, 22,  
George, 18, Greg and Seth, both 14

**Education:** bachelor's degree in accounting,  
Louisiana State University; juris doctorate,  
Loyola University School of Law

In two decades as an attorney with Liskow & Lewis, Robert Angelico made the often bewildering universe of taxes come alive with a keen appreciation of how tax laws and policies affect businesses and lives.

"Tax law is a fairly complicated area. Not everyone likes to get involved with things like the many different codes and legislation," said Angelico, head of the federal, state and local tax practice group at Liskow & Lewis. "But how the various laws read and what they mean can have a powerful impact on any given company or business."

Angelico showcased the connection between those laws and a company's bottom line in 1997 when he successfully represented British Petroleum, now BP-Amoco.

"They were on the hook for a roughly \$30-million liability in connection with a commodity they used at their refinery. And my job was to prove that, in fact, they did not owe any tax at all."

In a case that went all the way to the Louisiana State Supreme Court, Angelico ultimately prevailed, which added to his growing reputation as one of the state's most distinguished tax law experts.

Angelico regularly advises clients on corporate restructurings and expansions and has taken on federal tax planning and dispute resolution for a number of nonprofits in his role as a certified public accountant.

Post-Katrina, Angelico agreed to serve as a member of the board of the nonprofit Daughter of Charity Services, noting "one of the things in the area that was the hardest hit from the storm was our health care system. Most of the hospitals were affected physically, with a lot of doctors and health care professionals deciding to leave."

In response, the Daughter of Charity Services is operating clinics for the underinsured.

Such effort is also important because Angelico, who in 2004 was given the Outstanding CPA in Business and Industry Award from the Louisiana Certified Public Accountants, is also a native New Orleanian.

"My family's roots in New Orleans are deep, which is another reason why I am trying in my own way to make this city work."•

— Garry Boulard



# Mark R. Beebe

**Position:** litigation practice group leader,  
Adams and Reese LLP

**Age:** 43

**Family:** wife, Anne; children, Mark Jr., 9,  
and Christopher, 8

**Education:** bachelor's degree in economics, Tulane  
University; general course degree, London School of  
Economics; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School



Mark Beebe started practicing law in 1989 at Adams and Reese and has been there ever since.

He practices business law. He advises businesses about legal matters and issues. He specializes in securities and business litigation, antitrust and banking.

One challenge of the job is working with businesses to arrive at the best decision for the company and its stakeholders, he said.

"This analysis involves intimately understanding the client's business and taking the time to build strong and trusting relationships with our clients," Beebe said.

Beebe's representations include the Algiers Charter School Association, the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and Middle School Advocates Charter School.

Not only is Beebe happy with his job, but he is also pleased with its location.

"I get to enjoy a wonderful career in my hometown."

Beebe, born in Japan and raised in New Orleans, left the city for a short time to study economics in London. He said even though he was in one of the world's great cities, he still missed everything about New Orleans.

"If you love New Orleans, you love it forever."

Beebe always knew he wanted to be a lawyer and considers himself lucky to be living his dream. "The practice of law is truly a privilege."

Beebe attributes God's blessing, hard work, drive and perseverance to get to where he is today. He has already achieved success for his clients, which continues to be his top priority, but he said he also hopes to accomplish everything possible for his firm.

"My wish is to look back and see that I have helped build the very best law firm, a firm dedicated to the betterment of its clients, personnel and community."

Beebe has devoted time to the United Way, Pontiff Playground in Old Metairie, and Adams and Reese HUGS programs as a coordinator and volunteer.

"You have an obligation to enrich the community which in turn enriches the profession," he said.

He has been recognized in publications including Louisiana's Super Lawyers for business litigation and "Best Lawyers in America" for antitrust.

Beebe is a member of the International Association of Defense Counsel and the American Bar Association. •

— Jennifer Nall



# Lucia Blacksher

**Position:** general counsel, Greater New Orleans  
Fair Housing Action Center

**Age:** 33

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degrees in sociology  
and women's studies, Tulane University;  
law degree, Loyola University School of Law

Lucia Blacksher is one of the rare few in any profession willing to accept a salary reduction to follow her conscience.

"I took a 70 percent pay cut when I moved to my current job," Blacksher said. "So far it's been worth it."

After earning undergraduate degrees in sociology and women's studies from Tulane University in 1996, Blacksher went on to earn a law degree from Loyola School of Law in 1999.

"I grew up in Mobile, Ala., and after attending school here, I knew New Orleans was the place I wanted to stay," Blacksher said. "It's the most unique city in the country in terms of the people, architecture and food."

Blacksher first worked as a trial attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice in the civil rights division.

"We enforced civil rights laws the Department of Justice was made responsible for by Congress," she said. "I found myself working in the disability area."

While at Tulane, Blacksher worked as a tester at the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, a practice affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court to identify discriminatory practices. She continued to work as an intern there while earning her law degree.

"I was impressed by the Housing Authority from day one," Blacksher said. "It's a wonderful organization."

The Fair Housing Center recently filed suit against St. Bernard Parish to stop enforcement of its single-family and blood relative rental restrictions, arguing the policies amount to discrimination under the Fair Housing Act.

GNOFHAC has also taken on Jefferson Parish's plan to offer tax credits for development of single-family apartments and homes in Terrytown and Gretna, arguing it would discourage construction of multifamily homes in these areas.

"I feel frustrated by the different forms of inequality in New Orleans, but that drives me to stay here and make it a better place," Blacksher said. "Housing choice affects school choice, neighborhood safety and transportation access, and everyone deserves a fair opportunity."

Blacksher's commitment to the city has led her to a legal specialty she admits is "less prestigious" than her previous work.

"This is a difficult path for an attorney because there aren't many opportunities for financial reward," she said.

For now at least, Blacksher's idea of career achievement includes more than monetary compensation.

"Success for me will be to see New Orleans become a more integrated community where everyone can have fair choices and opportunity."•

— Thomas Leggett



# Kim M. Boyle

**Position:** partner, Phelps Dunbar

**Age:** 44

**Family:** parents Ernest Jr. and Connie Boyle

**Education:** bachelor's degree with teaching certificate in secondary education, Princeton University; juris doctorate, University of Virginia



A defense attorney in the private sector, Kim Boyle has been recognized for three consecutive years as a Leadership in Law honoree by CityBusiness. She has practiced since 2001 in the employment law group at Phelps Dunbar, where she also handles commercial and general litigation.

Boyle is also involved in the region's post-Hurricane Katrina planning and recovery. She was appointed as a board member for the Orleans Indigent Defender Program and is also involved with the Louisiana Recovery Authority and the Unified New Orleans Plan.

"UNOP's community plan is currently before the City Planning Commission and will hopefully, after public meetings, go to Louisiana Recovery Authority," said Boyle.

Born and raised in New Orleans, Boyle credits her parents for her success.

"I am so blessed to have them," she said. "They are my rock, my motivation. My mother was a public school teacher for almost 30 years, and I am a product and graduate of public schools here." Boyle graduated from Ben Franklin High School when it was still on South Carrollton Avenue.

Boyle's career began at Barham and Churchill after which she taught law at Xavier University and Loyola University. She went on to become judge pro tempore for Orleans Parish Civil District Court. She was the first African-American to serve as president to the New Orleans Bar Association.

In the 20th year of her legal career, Boyle's goals include constantly improving as a lawyer and continuing to offer professional representation to her clients.

"In a broader context, my goals are to continue to be involved, even in a very small part, in the recovery and rebuilding of our beloved city," she said. "The biggest challenge right now is balancing professional, civic and family obligations and ensuring that I am doing all I can do in each aspect of my life."

Boyle takes a collective view when it comes to a philosophy on business and life.

"We as a community have got to figure out some very specific goals and an action plan to give the perception across the country that New Orleans is a great place to start, grow and build their respective businesses.

"We've shown that we're bent but not broken. We have a vision of what we want our city to be in post-Katrina."•

— Robyn Loda

# T. Peter Breslin

**Position:** president, Breslin Law Firm

**Age:** 57

**Family:** wife, Peggy; children Catherine, 32, Amanda, 31, Julia, 26, Tommy, 24

**Education:** bachelor's degree in political science, Tulane University; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School

For more than 17 years, T. Peter Breslin was part of the law firm Chehardy, Sherman, Ellis, Breslin, Murray, Recile, and Griffith.

On Sept. 1, 2006, Breslin started his own firm.

"It's something I've wanted to do for some time," he said. "It's been exciting. I went from working with a staff of over 20 people to my own staff, which consists of myself and my secretary. My name is now on top of the letterhead."

Breslin was born and raised in New Orleans. As a high school student he thought he might become a priest and went to high school and one year of college at St. Benedict Seminary.

"But I decided I liked girls too much," Breslin said. He finished his undergraduate education at Tulane University, then continued to Tulane Law School. He is a "big time" Green Wave fan.

When Breslin left Tulane he worked briefly for former New Orleans District Attorney Harry Connick before going into private practice as a personal injury attorney.

Breslin's day begins with a 6 a.m. walk at Clearview Mall. He returns to the office shortly afterward.

"As a lawyer, you never really stop working, especially in the age of the Blackberry," Breslin said.

Much of his job consists of making presentations for clients, and the day he spoke to CityBusiness he was headed to traffic court for a friend — "one of the occupational hazards of the job."

Breslin said he is a firm believer in the U.S. legal system. "It almost always works correctly," he said. "Of course, every time you have humans there are going to be mistakes." He gets frustrated when people form opinions about well-publicized cases without having all the information. "You hear a media blurb, and you don't understand all the facts of the case," he said. "And the insurance companies want you to believe that everything is out of control."

Breslin cited the case of an elderly woman who was scalded by coffee from McDonald's a few years ago.

"The public thinks, 'Oh, that crazy lady got millions,' but that's not the whole story. ... People think the system's out of whack, but the \$2-million figure is two days worth of coffee sales for McDonald's. This is a classic case of why people believe the legal system is out of control, but I believe in the system and I feel lucky to be an attorney."•

— Lisa Bacques



# Dana Douglas

**Position:** associate, Liskow & Lewis

**Age:** 31

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree in social work, Miami University; juris doctorate, Loyola University School of Law



Raised in a family full of law enforcement officials, Dana Douglas has been interested in practicing law since she was in junior high.

One uncle served as New Orleans police chief, another served in the U.S. Customs and Drug Enforcement Agency and other relatives worked for a variety of agencies including the New Orleans Police Department.

"I've always been around the law but knew I didn't want to take that path. In high school, I worked for the civil sheriff's office and came in contact with a lot of attorneys and judges and just developed an affinity for the law," Douglas said.

Crime, justice and punishment originally attracted her to the legal system but corporate work has become her profession. Douglas finished law school in 2000 and worked a clerkship before starting with Liskow & Lewis just a day before the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Douglas practices corporate law and commercial, energy and intellectual property litigation. Her cases have involved representing a newspaper in a trademark dispute, helping an oil company prosecute the theft of a trade secret and working with a cruise company in the prosecution of the theft of a customer list.

Drawn to commercial litigation by what she calls sophisticated cases and challenging issues, Douglas said there is always something new and interesting to learn in the profession.

"You work with so many different companies and so many different disciplines. That is what really drives me in commercial litigation — it's never the same," Douglas said.

The 31-year-old said legal work can involve spending lots of time to get the right answer for clients and deliver the best possible product to the court. She said success as an attorney calls for attention to details.

Douglas has been active in a number of programs in the city, including the New Orleans Civil Service Commission, the New Orleans Children's Bureau and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court System Teen Court as a volunteer judge. While studying at Loyola University School of Law, she served as editor of the Poverty Law Journal and the president of the Black Law Student Association.

After Katrina, Douglas pursued her passion for cooking and opened a franchise of Vitality, a nutrition store and restaurant that serves vitamins, smoothies, supplements and a healthy lunch menu.

She said it's her way of investing money back into the city and bringing back a "healthy and flavorful" New Orleans. •

— Craig Guillot

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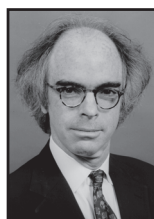
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# Sandra M. Feingerts



**Position:** partner, Fisher & Phillips LLP

**Age:** 60

**Family:** husband, Jacques; children Leslie, 25,  
Bradley, 23, Bret, 21

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Bucknell University;  
juris doctorate, Temple University

In 1974, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act became law. Before that, there was no federal regulation of employee retirement plans.

A whole new field of law was created overnight. Experienced lawyers largely wanted nothing to do with it. As a result, Sandra Mills Feingerts, fresh out of law school in 1975, began a career in employee benefits law.

"I was the newest person in the door and had to do ERISA because no one else wanted to," Feingerts said. The field gradually grew into something bigger, she said.

"It mushroomed into a large and really complex area of the law. Almost every company has to deal with this law," she said.

Because retirement, disability and health insurance plans and severance packages are highly regulated, companies need all newest updates to the laws.

Feingerts, a native of Johnstown, Pa., keeps her clients abreast of new regulations, answers any questions they may have and helps clients design plans in accordance with the laws.

The practice provides a number of interesting challenges for Feingerts. The laws are extensive and complex. Understanding these laws is one thing. Being able to explain it to clients is another.

"You really need to be able to boil down all this complexity and explain it in a way that is manageable and understandable," she said. "It's such ongoing advice. You have to be able to communicate and relate to clients."

Feingerts has worked in the legal profession for more than three decades. Her work included a stint on Capitol Hill as a member of the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, where she worked on drafting legislation as it went out of various subcommittees. She also served with Melrod Redman in Washington, D.C., and McGlinchy Stafford in New Orleans before landing at Fisher & Phillips, where she has worked since 1994.

Feingerts is most proud of the relationships she has nurtured with her clients. "I'm proud that my clients still want to work with me ... and I'm proudest of the long-term relationships and friendships I've gained."

Despite these good relationships with her clients, Feingerts still strives to be better.

"You can always service your clients better. You can always be better."•

— Fritz Esker

# Janice M. Foster

**Position:** partner, Jones Walker

**Age:** 64

**Family:** children Suzanne, 30, and Sean, 27

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Chestnut Hill College;  
juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School

Janice Martin Foster has for decades exemplified the spirit of the public citizen, signing on to an array of local educational and civic endeavors, all in hopes of "giving something back to a community that has been very good to me all of my life," she said.

For Foster, 60, a partner at Jones Walker Waechter, Poitevent, Carrere & Denegre and native of the Seventh Ward, that meant serving on the board of trustees for Xavier University, Baptist Community Ministries and the Greater New Orleans Foundation "to improve things as much as I can through my own small contribution."

Foster has also served on the board of the School Leadership Center of New Orleans, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the city's public schools by training principals and teachers.

Foster's contributions include service as a member of the Louisiana State University board of supervisors and chairwoman of Mercy Hospital and Mercy+Baptist Medical Center's boards, as well as work on the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, Junior Achievement Board of Directors and the Civil Service Commission of New Orleans.

A 1970 graduate of Tulane University's law school, Foster's appreciation of life is partly nourished by the work she does at Jones Walker in estate planning and probate law.

"I was about two years into my career here before I became exclusively involved with estate planning and probate work," she said. "The more I did, the more I liked and have been in this section ever since."

"It is not usually the type of law where you end up fighting out these big cases in court, which is OK ... because I am not really a very contentious person."

Foster helped families wade through the arcane thickness of estate planning and probate law, a practice she likes "because it really is very people-oriented."

"For many people this is an area that is very complicated and my job is really to sort things out for them, relieve their anxieties and help them through what is usually a difficult time, which is a service I feel very good about offering. This is an area where the law helps people and I like being a part of that."•

— Garry Boulard



# Alan H. Goodman

**Position:** partner, Lemle & Kelleher

**Age:** 61

**Family:** wife, Sherrie Burstein Goodman; children Tiffany, 31, Allison, 28, Dustin, 16, Brittany, 14

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Tulane University; juris doctorate, Georgetown University Law School



Before entering law school, Alan Goodman figured he knew basketball better than anything in the world so he would probably be a coach.

He graduated from Newman High School as the No. 2 honors student while excelling in sports. His athletic performance earned him recognition as one of the Top 100 prep basketball players in New Orleans history, according to *The Times-Picayune*.

After earning his degree from Tulane, Goodman said he wasn't quite ready to end his scholastic pursuits.

"I always enjoyed the academic atmosphere and wasn't ready to get out of school," he said. "I think I was trying to avoid the real world. Law was simply one alternative. It was simply a question of what further education I pursued."

After his first year at Georgetown, Goodman discovered his passion for law. He served as the articles editor for the *Georgetown Law Journal* and was selected best editor.

After passing the bar, Goodman served as a law clerk for Judge Charles Fahy on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. He also worked as an associate at Covington & Burling in Washington, D.C.

Goodman returned to his native New Orleans in 1975 and has been with Lemle & Kelleher ever since. His areas of practice include bankruptcy, loan restructuring, business litigation, class actions, complex litigation, corporate and commercial lending, real estate law, securities litigation, intellectual property law, products liability and construction law.

Goodman describes himself as an idealistic child of the 1960s who uses law to further the notions of civil rights.

"I'm among the 1 percent or 2 percent of lawyers who actually enjoy practicing law," he said.

Practicing law in New Orleans is particularly satisfying because of the sense of community, he said. Since Hurricane Katrina, the connection between the practice and the people of New Orleans is even more evident.

"A lot of the matters I'm handling are related in one way or another to Katrina," he said. "It's one of the reasons I remain in New Orleans. I want to be part of the rebuilding. I think Katrina has given everyone a different sense or purpose about the city, and for me it's been a positive one."•

— Angelle Bergeron



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# Deborah D. Harkins



**Position:** member, McGlinchey Stafford

**Age:** 56

**Family:** husband, Corky; children Gregory, 39, Jason, 36

**Education:** bachelor's degree, University of Southwestern Louisiana; juris doctorate, Loyola University School of Law

Deborah Harkins has been practicing law since 1979 and knew from an early age it was what she wanted to do.

"I knew I wanted to be a lawyer in the fourth grade," she said. Harkins, whose brother is also a lawyer, figured she would follow in his footsteps.

"It was sibling rivalry," she said.

Harkins joined McGlinchey Stafford in 2000 and was voted a partner in 2002. She also is chairwoman of the government relations section and co-chairwoman of the gaming section.

At McGlinchey Stafford, her practice includes environmental law, gaming, health care, and government contracts and relations.

On the government relations team, she works with clients to help navigate the aspects of local and state governments.

"It is a 24/7 job that places high value on leveraging relationships and knowing how to facilitate the process."

Harkins says 90 percent of her cases involve post-Katrina issues. Immediately after the hurricane, she spent most of her time trying to move abandoned and flooded cars out of the state. Issues such as economic development and tax credit bonds continue to consume her days.

She said one of the most challenging issues she has dealt with since Hurricane Katrina is working with the Orleans Parish School Board in reopening schools and helping with the legislative and regulatory process.

"It has been an ongoing process but much has been done, and the school board is definitely on a positive path in moving forward."

Harkins, who is originally from Eunice, emphasizes the importance of New Orleans and what it means to her to stay here.

"New Orleans is where my heart is," said Harkins, who lives in the French Quarter.

Looking back to early in her career, she has some words of advice for aspiring lawyers. "Do your homework, know your issue, keep an open mind because there are always two sides to every issue and don't burn bridges."

In addition to her hectic schedule, Harkins is a member of the Greater New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, the French Quarter Business Women's Association, the Louisiana Lobbyists Association and the French Quarter Round Table.

She is also chairwoman of the French Quarter Revitalization Committee for the Farmer's Market, a board member and secretary of the French Market Corp., on the advisory board of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation and a board member of State Law Resources. •

— Jennifer Nall

# Peter L. Hilbert Jr.

**Position:** partner, Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klein & Hilbert

**Age:** 54

**Family:** wife, Sissy; son Duval, 18

**Education:** bachelor's degree, University of New Orleans;  
juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School

The mental challenges are what attracted Peter Hilbert Jr. to the law profession, and his areas of expertise demonstrate his passion for acquiring knowledge.

He helped start his firm in 1999 and continues to practice his original area of interest — maritime law — expanding recently to include insurance, toxic tort and commercial litigation. In addition to being engaged in numerous areas of maritime law, Hilbert has served as trial counsel in major litigation concerning personal injury and death claims and has litigated claims for property damage.

He has actively litigated indemnification contracts, contractual liability, insurance coverage and the applicability of the Louisiana and Texas oilfield anti-indemnification statutes.

"I've always wanted to be a lawyer because I enjoy problem solving, identifying issues, working through the issues, identifying which laws are applicable and gathering the evidence required to meet the burden of proof," he said. "The next step is presenting all of that evidence in a coherent, understandable way to the judge or jury to get the result your client wants. Doing that is always interesting and sometimes it can be fun."

Practicing law is continually challenging, a methodical building and learning process that involves hard work every day, Hilbert said.

"If you've worked on a case and obtained a good result, you can't rest on that but you must turn the page quickly and get onto the next project," he said.

Hurricane Katrina and the resulting litigation presented the legal community with unique, unprecedented challenges, according to Hilbert.

"Our practice has changed significantly since the hurricane," he said. "We are representing business owners and individuals in their legal and business issues that the hurricane presented, mainly dealing with government agencies and their insurance."

A proposed class action litigation against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the failure of levees along outfall canals in New Orleans provides a "tremendous opportunity for lawyers in this city," he said.

Hilbert expects parties to be brought before a judicial forum and held accountable for their actions and inactions regarding the flooding of New Orleans, St. Bernard and parts of Jefferson parishes.

"The allegation is that the levees were deficient for a number of reasons and that will be tried in a court of law," Hilbert said. "It's never been tried before."•

— Angelle Bergeron



# William H. Hines

**Position:** managing partner, Jones Walker

**Age:** 50

**Family:** wife, Mary; children, Walker 23, Mary Wyatt 19, Ashland, 13

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Princeton University; juris doctorate, University of Virginia School of Law



After majoring in international economics at Princeton, Bill Hines focused his legal studies on mergers and acquisitions in an effort to combine his business interests with his attraction to the legal profession.

Hines was also drawn to the collaborative nature of company purchases and mergers. Collaboration with others can be a rare thing in the often-contentious world of law, he said.

"You build or create things as opposed to fighting about things," Hines said. Assisting businesses worldwide enabled Hines to travel to such far-flung locations as Indonesia, Singapore, China, Brazil and France.

Hines' collaboration skills also carry over to his work with clients and other lawyers. As managing partner for Jones Walker, he oversees lawyers in the Baton Rouge, Houston, Miami, Lafayette and Washington, D.C., offices as well as his home base in New Orleans.

"It's challenging to balance my workload with my clients with managing the firm, with my family life and with my civic work."

Civic work in the New Orleans area is especially important to Hines.

"I'm a die-hard New Orleanian. I want to do everything in my power to see that New Orleans comes back better and stronger than it was pre-Katrina," he said.

Hines' charitable work is varied but a great deal of it focuses on economic development. He served as the first chairman of Greater New Orleans Inc., the city's public-private partnership that seeks out economic development opportunities, and was chairman of GNO Inc.'s predecessor MetroVision for three years. He has also served as chairman of the United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area, as well as chairman of the Community Advisory Board for the regional chapter of Teach for America.

In 2005, he became vice chairman and an executive committee member of the New Orleans Arts Council. Hines believes developing the city's artistic scene is integral to economic development.

"The arts and the music are an important part of both our culture and our economic development."

Hines, who said one of his biggest goals for the future is to continue providing the same quality service for his clients while helping Jones Walker grow, credits much of his success to people he works with.

"It takes high energy and hard work, but I've been able to get involved with a lot of New Orleans' best and brightest. And they deserve a lot of the credit." •

— Fritz Esker

# John Houghtaling

**Position:** managing partner, Gauthier, Houghtaling & Williams

**Age:** 35

**Family:** wife, Brittany

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Emory University; juris doctorate, Loyola University School of Law

John Houghtaling's mother planted the seed of a legal career that would include working for one of America's most successful plaintiff's attorneys.

"My mother was trying to get me to go (to law school) in Louisiana," said Houghtaling, who earned his law degree from Loyola after completing his undergraduate studies at Emory University. "She cut out an article on Wendell Gauthier from the front page of *The Times-Picayune*, leaning against his Rolls-Royce, when he had just launched the tobacco lawsuit."

Remembering his childhood fascination with fancy cars, Houghtaling's mother mailed the article with a note saying, "You should work for this guy."

Houghtaling joined the firm of Gauthier, Downing, LaBarre, Dean & Sulzer straight out of law school in 1997. In 2005, following Gauthier's death from cancer four years earlier, he formed a partnership to buy the firm from Gauthier's daughter, Celeste.

Houghtaling had been a noticeable employee at the firm even before he was hired as an associate. While interviewing for clerking positions after his first semester in law school, he ran into another law student who was working at the firm's warehouse, moving boxes full of documents for Gauthier's landmark class action lawsuit against tobacco companies. Seeing what seemed like a small opportunity with the potential to grow into something big, Houghtaling called and got a job doing the same thing.

"Every day I showed up with a laptop and a tie," he said. "The office manager, who now works for me, laughed at me."

The success that put Houghtaling in a position to purchase the firm has continued.

"Over the last four years, I've personally collected over \$60 million for civil victims," said Houghtaling, who defines a good litigator as "a professional fighter."

Along with nine other attorneys at the firm, Houghtaling spends a significant amount of time doing pro bono work. He also funds a scholarship for the Good Shepherd School and is on the board of Cancer Crusaders, a nonprofit supporting medical facilities chaired by Wendell Gauthier's widow, Ann. The group sponsors the French Quarter Classic, an annual sports car show that helps a different charity each year. •

— Sonya Stinson



# William H. Howard III



**Position:** shareholder, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC

**Age:** 55

**Family:** wife, Nell; children Helen, 20, Dalton, 18, Madeline, 15

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Mississippi State University; master's degree, Central Michigan University; juris doctorate, University of Mississippi

While Bill Howard has represented a wide variety of clients, his central practice focuses on representing a major railroad company for Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz PC.

Howard is listed in The Best Lawyers in America in mass tort litigation, railroad law and transportation law. He serves as national counsel on matters of federal noise regulation compliance, claims and litigation.

Howard has defended insurers in cases involving industrial accidents and chemical manufacturers in suits related to long-term exposure to substances. He also has defended product liability cases.

In 1980, after graduating from law school in Mississippi, he came to New Orleans and went to work for Phelps Dunbar. He moved to Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz in 2005. Growing up in Jackson, Miss., Howard never dreamed he would be a lawyer.

"I wanted to be center fielder for the Yankees," he said.

While he still admits aspirations to join the Bronx Bombers, Howard's career goals are altruistic.

"I want to continue to do a good job for my clients and to help younger lawyers become better lawyers," he said.

He is diplomatic in describing that his biggest career challenge "has been coordinating people who have different temperaments and skill sets, harmonizing them all in a way that gets the job done, helps people grow and avoids acrimony."

Lofty goals are the norm for Howard, even during his personal time. He has run six marathons and logged a 24-mile training run for an October marathon in Chicago on the Saturday before Hurricane Katrina. But his family's upheaval to Baton Rouge for the past 10 months has taken priority ahead of his marathon training recently.

He has, however, been doing some "light" reading in the meantime. "Last year I said I was going to re-read all the (William) Faulkner books," he said. "I think he was a genius. But just today my colleague told me when I wrote a memo that she could tell I was reading Faulkner because I had too many run-on sentences." •

— Robyn Loda

# Ashlye Keaton

**Position:** director, The Entertainment Law Legal Assistance Project

**Age:** 28

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Auburn University; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School

Ashlye Keaton admits both sides of her brain are busy at work.

"I am really more of a right-brained person, in that I like and participate in the arts," she said. "But I am also left-brained enough to get through the day."

That mental duality serves Keaton well. Specializing in intellectual law with Eveline, Davis & Phillips, Keaton is also a visual artist who teaches ballet and tap in her free time. Her twin passions — the arts and the law — come together in her work as the supervising attorney for the Entertainment Law Legal Assistance Project, a program dedicated to providing free legal counsel to more than 150 low-income musicians, artists and entertainers.

"Artists in New Orleans have for so many years been taken advantage of," said Keaton, "that it just made sense to get involved with something that in some way or other supports and hopefully protects them."

ELLA, jointly sponsored by the Tulane Law School, the Arts Council of New Orleans and the Tipitina's Foundation, helps artists with intellectual property and business formation issues.

"Every artist should be legally protected," said Keaton, who graduated from Tulane Law School in 2003. "Particularly with contracts, which historically have presented problems for New Orleans musicians, especially when it comes to major labels that offer them little money and end up taking a musician's entire catalogue for their own use."

Keaton also made note of another contract problem she said has plagued New Orleans musicians for years.

"The major labels used to be interested in working with an artist and really trying to develop them. But too often we see cases where they just wanted one song and then pretty much lose interest, even though that artist may have signed over a good deal of their work to them."

Originally planning to become an environmental lawyer, Keaton moved in the direction of representing entertainers and artists after receiving a certificate while she was still at student at Tulane in intellectual property law from the University of Amsterdam.

"I realized that New Orleans just would not be the same place at all without its artistic community. It is a vital part of our culture. And for that reason I want to do everything I can to support and help it."•

— Garry Boulard



# Steven I. Klein



**Position:** member, Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klein & Hilbert LLC

**Age:** 57

**Family:** wife, Patricia; children Michael, 27, Jonathan, 26, Laurie, 22

**Education:** bachelor's degree in accounting, University of Maryland; juris doctorate, University of Maryland School of Law; master's of law in taxation, New York University School of Law

In dealing with old and new clients, Steven Klein's approach is simple — listen carefully to the clients to devise “practical and constructive” methods to address their needs.

At Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klein & Hilbert, Klein specializes in tax law. He became a certified tax attorney through the Louisiana State Bar Association in 1985 and focuses primarily on business structuring, mergers and acquisitions, and joint ventures.

He has been practicing law for 32 years and said new developments, such as ways to structure organizations and corporations, are constantly emerging for business lawyers. To assist clients, he is required to stay abreast of changes in business law.

“I enjoy the challenge of analyzing what the situation is (and) coming up with solutions that address those challenges in an effective, practical and tax-saving manner,” he said.

Klein said his career is challenging but experience helps him narrow his analysis quickly and “to the extent that there may be two or three solutions” for clients.

His first job was with the Internal Revenue Service-District Counsel from 1975-80 as an attorney. He was also a member at McGlinchey Stafford PLLC from 1981-98.

Klein is an adjunct professor at Tulane Law School, where he has taught a natural resources tax course since the late 1980s, and has more than 14 published works.

For the past six years, Klein has been editor of *Business Entities*, a magazine targeting tax professionals, and compiled the “Louisiana Liability Company Forms and Practice Manual,” a form book for Louisiana law practitioners.

In 2004, Klein was named a leader in business in Corporate Law/Mergers and Acquisitions by Chambers and Partner. He is a former chairman of the American Bar Association's corporations committee, a past member of the Louisiana State Bar Association and served on the board of directors for the Legacy Donor Foundation from 1999-2003.

Klein, who was born in Washington, D.C., enjoys assisting his son with his business, membership at his church temple and synagogue, working out and spending time with Jamal, his 6-year-old pit bull. •

— *Nayita Wilson*



# Stephen Kupperman

**Position:** founding member, Barrasso Usdin Kupperman  
Freeman and Sarver LLC

**Age:** 53

**Family:** wife, Mara; children Zack, 24, Shane, 22, Jake, 17

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Duke University;  
juris doctrate, Tulane University Law School

Despite practicing law for about 30 years — the first 26 with Stone Pigman Walther Whitmann and the next four with Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman and Sarver, the firm he co-founded in April 2003 — Stephen Kupperman still learns something new from every case.

His work primarily consists of litigation in business cases such as breach of contract and business deals gone bad. Through the years, he's worked with businesses ranging from contractors to brokerage houses to rare coin dealers.

"You get to learn a little bit about a lot of different businesses," Kupperman said.

Each case requires him to learn something about the business or industry he's dealing with, he said.

"You're not repeating things over and over again. ... It's a little like school. You're teaching and leading your client about the law while you're learning about their business."

As in any business, things have changed for Kupperman after Katrina.

The biggest challenge that remains, he said, is the complexity of dealing with a large variety of personalities in every new case.

"You have to learn how people react to things and you have to know how to read people right. You have to know when to back off and you have to know when to be aggressive."

Because so many different personalities and interests are involved in each case, "you have to look for imaginative solutions."

Kupperman attributes a large part of his professional success to being able to come up with creative solutions that work well for all the parties involved.

Kupperman is actively involved in the community. For the past 20 years, he has taught a class in litigating commercial fraud at Tulane University. He has been chairman of the board at Touro Infirmary for two years and spent four years as chairman of the Anti Defamation League's South Central Region, which includes Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas. He has also worked extensively with Jewish Family Services, Goodwill Industries and the Legacy Foundation.

When asked what he is proudest of in his career, Kupperman said he is proudest of his children and his firm.

"Everyone here gives it their all."•

— Fritz Esker



# Robert A. Kutcher

**Position:** partner, Chopin, Wagar, Richard & Kutcher LLP

**Age:** 56

**Family:** wife, Renee; children J.C., 31, Skylar, 27, Andrea, 20, Jessica, 18

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Cornell University; juris doctorate, Loyola University School of Law



Growing up in the hotel business on the East Coast, Robert Kutcher saw the success of a business was dependent upon some people who didn't necessarily have a vested interest or motivation.

"The beauty of practicing law is that you live by your wit," Kutcher said. "If you're successful, that's great. If you're not, it's really nobody's fault but your own or the merit of the case."

A member of the bar in New York and Louisiana, Kutcher was a frequent visitor to the Crescent City before he moved here permanently 21 years ago.

"I met my wife at Galatoire's where I was having lunch with one of my former law partners," Kutcher said. "The man at the door tried to seat her with me. I thought that was a terrific idea, and she didn't."

Kutcher's primary area of expertise is business litigation, and he's successfully tried several multi-week cases in front of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans and the U.S. Supreme Court, winning more often than losing.

"Business litigation is fun because you actually sit in front of a jury for a month and a half or two months, so you better darn well be prepared," he said. "It beats the hell out of a 9-to-5 job. The variety is what keeps it interesting. Every day is a new day, and there is a significant amount of strategy involved. If I had to do the same thing every day, I'd be bored."

Kutcher served as a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association House of Delegates from 1995-99 and on the board of directors of the Federal Bar Association as president in 1991-92.

He was a board member of the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board and served as chairman in 1999. Kutcher has been an associate commissioner of the Anti-Defamation League National Commission, regional chairman and continues to serve as a regional board member.

Kutcher enjoys working out at the gym daily and playing golf as often as possible.

"I will never be a scratch golfer. I'm useless around the house. I can't fix anything, and I don't do gardening," he said. "The only thing I'm really good at is practicing law, so I might as well do it."•

— Angelle Bergeron

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# Steven J. Lane

**Position:** managing partner, Herman, Herman, Katz & Cotlar Freeman and Sarver LLC

**Age:** 51

**Family:** daughter, Lauren, 17

**Education:** bachelor's degree, State University of New York at Buffalo; juris doctorate, Loyola University School of Law

Steven J. Lane, who has won notable individual and class-action suits against insurance companies, banks and the state boxing and wrestling commission, takes a youthful approach to his work.

"The real excitement is the next difficult case," said Lane, a managing partner with Herman, Herman, Katz & Cotlar. "Whether it's a personal injury or a class action or a family law case where somebody has been wronged or someone needs protection or relief for them in a courthouse, it's always the challenge ahead that excites me the most."

That enthusiasm, along with his legal skills, propelled Lane into the top ranks of his profession. Listed as one of the best attorneys in family law in "The Best Lawyers in America," Lane last year was also named as one of the top 500 attorneys in the country by the publication LawDragon.

A native New Yorker and 1977 graduate of the State University of New York at Buffalo, Lane attended Loyola University's School of Law. Nearing his graduation in 1980, he realized he had fallen in love with New Orleans.

That devotion inspired Lane's participation in many community events, including his membership in the New Orleans Music Legends group, which paved the way for a restaurant and park in the French Quarter that features statues of some of the city's greatest artists, including Al Hirt, Pete Fountain and Fats Domino.

After Hurricane Katrina, Lane's love of the Big Easy was displayed in a decision he and other members of his firm made. When the firm temporarily resettled in several other locations, Lane said its leadership was put in a difficult position.

"That would have been the time for us to permanently open a new office outside of the city. But some of us have been here for decades and we were all determined that if we did not come back, we would not be able to live with ourselves."

Now Lane wants to serve Katrina litigants — and in a timely manner.

"The longer it goes without people getting access to our courtrooms and an opportunity for relief, the greater the possibility that they will give up and go someplace else. We owe it to the city not to let that happen."•

— Garry Boulard

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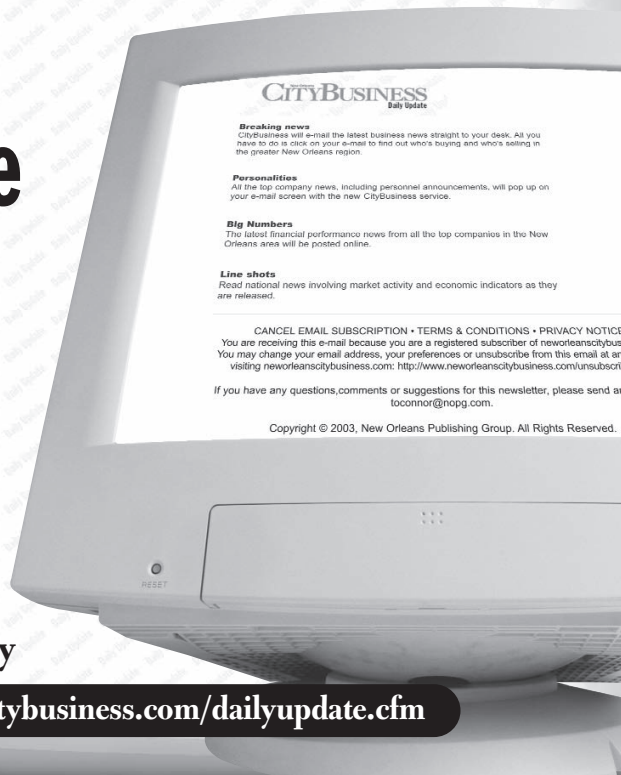
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# Wayne J. Lee

**Position:** member, Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann LLC

**Age:** 57

**Family:** wife, Pamela; children, Wayne Jr., 36, Jennifer, 31

**Education:** bachelor's degree in political science, Tulane University; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School

While studying as an undergraduate at Tulane University, Wayne Lee thought about what he was going to do with his political science degree. He did not realize until his junior year of college that he wanted to become a lawyer and decided to go to law school.

In 1974, Lee worked part time at Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann while earning his law degree from Tulane and became a full-time employee after graduating.

Lee became partner in 1979 and practices commercial litigation. His other areas of emphasis are antitrust, insurance coverage and regulation.

"The issues tend to be complex and both intellectually and factually challenging," he said.

Lee has represented major insurance companies as well as small Louisiana insurance firms in class action lawsuits and likes the fact no two cases are the same. "The cases are seldom repetitive and the legal issues are often significant."

He said he enjoys his profession and appreciates the experience of working with and against lawyers who are outstanding practitioners on major cases.

"Practicing law is an important effort and is personally rewarding," he said.

Lee was the first African-American president of the Louisiana State Bar Association, serving from 2003 to 2004.

After Hurricane Katrina, reaching clients proved to be a challenge, Lee said. Stone Pigman opened a temporary office in Baton Rouge and was back in the New Orleans office by November 2005.

A New Orleans native, Lee wanted to stay in the city to remain active in civic and community affairs.

He has worked as chairman of the New Orleans Community Support Foundation, serves on the Tulane Board of Administrators and was chairman of the Audubon Nature Institute from January 2005 to January 2006.

Looking back at his career, Lee considers himself lucky to be where he is today.

"I've had the good fortune of good mentors at my firm and the support of family and friends."

His advice for aspiring lawyers: "Show up, do quality work and keep the clients' interest at the forefront."•

—Jennifer Nall

# Walter Leger

**Position:** principal, Leger, Shaw & DeSue

**Age:** 55

**Family:** children Walter III, 28, Rhett, 25, Elizabeth, 22

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Louisiana State University;  
juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School

Throughout his career, Walter Leger has been an advocate for the underdog. Although he has represented big business, his focus has been on fighting for the interests of small business and working people.

"I refer to myself as a civil prosecutor because I prosecute violators of the civil law," Leger said. "I have always been idealistic. My practice is one I've enjoyed because I am fighting for people who are less fortunate, who are having difficulties and problems."

Leger has represented clients in maritime, complex, class-action and toxic and environmental litigation. He was the lead trial attorney in the Louisiana Attorney General's class-action suit against the tobacco industry and the designated lead counsel in the Bright Field/New Orleans Riverwalk disaster.

His appointment by Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco as chairman to the Louisiana Recovery Authority's Housing and Redevelopment task force is a natural extension of his life's work in practicing law.

"It's what I did before, fighting for people — homeowners and families — to be restored to a life," Leger said. "I lost my house, as did so many family and friends, and I guess that's the biggest loss, individually, that we all have."

The governor's call came as a surprise and on the heels of a meeting during which Leger had criticized everyone on the local, state and federal level for not assuming a leadership role in the recovery.

"I jumped at the chance," said Leger, a St. Bernard Parish native who had seen the devastation of his community and been personally involved in coordinating the rescue of about 3,000 people who had been stranded at the Chalmette Slip.

"I offered to work 24/7 but didn't realize it would be so many sevens," he said.

Leger is unpaid for his role with the LRA but is rewarded by the personal satisfaction of playing an integral role in the recovery.

"I always told my children that the book of Matthew in the Bible says, 'To whom much has been given, much will be required,'" he said. "Our time on Earth isn't just for us to create benefit for ourselves. When we have been fortunate, we should help others."•

— Angelle Bergeron



# Georges M. Legrand



**Position:** founding partner, Mouledoux, Bland, Legrand, and Brackett

**Age:** 52

**Family:** wife, Andrea; children, Andrew, 21, Philip 11, Annie and Julia, 15

**Education:** bachelor's degree, University of New Orleans; juris doctorate, Loyola University School of Law

As a young man working his way through college and law school, Georges Legrand worked on boats in the offshore oil industry as a deckhand for Garber Bros. and Offshore Logistics. The experience led to him pursuing maritime law once he received his degree from Loyola School of Law.

"It's a very exciting field and it's rare that any two cases are the same," said Legrand, who serves as a corporate lawyer at the firm he co-founded 10 years ago.

Legrand views himself as a "glass is half-full guy," so it's hard for him to single out any major obstacles from his career.

The biggest challenge is "managing your time and directing your work to where it's needed."

Legrand attributes his success to hard work, an attention to detail, a positive attitude and integrity, in which he takes the most pride.

"When I tell you something, you can take it to the bank," he said.

Community involvement is a source of intense pride for Legrand. One of nine children, Legrand credits his parents for a positive influence.

"My parents set wonderful examples for us to be stewards of our church and our community," he said.

Legrand has coached basketball, baseball and cabbageball at Pontiff Playground and has led the pastoral council at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Metairie. The council advises the parish's pastor on all operations of the church.

Legrand is a founder of the Livingston Place Civic Association, has served as a Cub Scout den leader and is president of ushers at St. Catherine of Siena.

Legrand said his greatest honor when he and his wife, Allison, received an Order of St. Louis medallion from the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The award is given for "tireless effort in support of the church."

In the true spirit of a community leader, Legrand deflects the praise elsewhere. "I wouldn't be able to do any community participation without the support of my wife, my family, and my law partners."•

— Fritz Esker



# Julie Livaudais

**Position:** partner and practice area coordinator for labor and employment law section, Chaffe McCall

**Age:** 52

**Family:** husband, Edward "Ted" George; children Will, 17, Ellie, 13

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Stanford University; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School

For Julie Livaudais, the workplace is an office, restaurant, hotel or any other job site where all employees should be treated fairly and with dignity. Anything short of that, she said, portends problems for those on the payroll and for the people who hire them.

"It is really a matter of communication," says Livaudais, coordinator for the labor and employment law section at Chaffe McCall.

"One of the things I like best about this kind of practice is not only representing defendants in lawsuits but having the opportunity to advise clients ahead of time in an effort to keep the workplace fair," she said.

A 1982 honors graduate of Tulane Law School who also served as a member of the Tulane Law Review's board of editors, Livaudais joined Chaffe McCall immediately after graduating and has established herself as a leading attorney in federal and state disability, sex, age, race and national origin discrimination suits.

Livaudais has gotten an inside view of how dozens of businesses work.

"The idea is to really get to know your clients, the supervisors and the managers," she said, "and to work with them to make the workplace a better place for everyone."

"In a very real sense issues affecting labor law are issues that affect America," Livaudais said. "When AIDS was on everyone's mind, we were dealing with it from a labor law perspective. The same goes for immigration issues as they affect labor law. It is a field that is current and new all of the time, which I like."

A member of the Tulane Law School Dean's Advisory Board, Livaudais also serves on the boards of Long Vue House and Gardens and Country Day School and is a past president of the Junior League of New Orleans.

She is a member of the board of Children's Hospital of New Orleans and chairwoman of its community benefits program.

"Children's Hospital sponsors a wide range of programs in the community for the working poor and Medicaid patients so that they can get effective medical care for their kids," she said. "It's the kind of institution that you can only feel good about being involved with."•

— Garry Boulard



# David J. Lukinovich



**Position:** president and CEO, The Law Offices of David Lukinovich

**Age:** 47

**Family:** wife, Kim; children, Joey, 15, Joshua, 14, Mary, 11, Sarah, 10, Paul, 8, Peter, 7, Phillip, 5

**Education:** bachelor's degree in accounting, Louisiana State University; juris doctorate, Loyola University School of Law; master's degree in tax law, New York University

**B**alancing a career as president and CEO of his own law firm with his role as father of seven school-aged children, David Lukinovich has his work cut out for him.

But he refuses to take all the credit for his success in both areas.

"I have a dedicated staff who helps me make it work," Lukinovich said. "The key is organization and structure, keeping strict appointments like a doctor or dentist."

Add to his workload the post-Katrina tasks of driving back and forth between two homes and offices — one in Harahan and the other in Baton Rouge — and his accomplishments command even more admiration.

"Since our firm has so much business in Lafayette and Baton Rouge, after Katrina it made sense to settle my family in a second home in Baton Rouge, establish a second office there and commute when necessary," he said.

After earning an undergraduate degree in accounting from Louisiana State University, Lukinovich worked as a certified public accountant for several years before entering Loyola School of Law, where he graduated first in his class. With his sights on a specialized practice, he went on to earn a master's degree in tax law from New York University in 1987.

For the next nine years, Lukinovich worked as a tax attorney with Stone Pigman Walther Whittmann, where he became partner after six years. On Jan. 1, 1995, he left the comfort of an established firm to start his own, which has grown to include six other attorneys and 17 employees.

Lukinovich also is an adjunct professor of tax law at Loyola and remains involved in a variety of charitable organizations.

A member of Legatus Association of CEOs, Lukinovich serves as chairman of the board for Woman's New Life Center and is a board member of Investors Bank in Baton Rouge. He remains involved with the Catholic Foundation and planned giving to Jesuit High School, his alma mater.

"I like working with inspired people with dreams," Lukinovich said of his work with charities as well as his legal career. "My goal is to help the transition of businesses within families to keep the families or businesses from disintegrating."•

— Thomas Leggett



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Author: Charles P. Adams, Jr.

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### Focus

May - Banking/Real Estate  
June - Legal Report/Great Escapes  
July - Health Care/Boating  
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October - Health Care- Women's Health/Tech Specs  
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# Nancy J. Marshall

**Position:** partner, Deutsch, Kerrigan & Stiles

**Age:** 53

**Family:** husband, Steven; children Willie, 38, Louie, 36, Margaret, 18, Robert, 16, and the late Tim Marshall

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Tulane University; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School; Master's degree in tax law (in progress), Tulane University Law School

For attorney Nancy J. Marshall, law isn't just a business — it's a profession.

"It's not just about making the most money you can but about being the best lawyer you can be and doing the best job you can," she said.

Marshall, a partner at Deutsch, Kerrigan & Stiles, has been practicing law for 27 years. She heads the firm's professional liability section and also works in commercial litigation — specifically legal malpractice, representing the endorsed insurer for the Louisiana State Bar.

Twice named to Best Lawyers in America and recently voted by her peers for the 2007 Louisiana Super Lawyer Award, Marshall also received the Association of Women Attorneys' Special Recognition Award. She has recently led the board of St. Andrew's Episcopal School and has been a board member of Crescent Academy. She is on the editorial subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Lawyer's Professional Liability and is a board member of Odyssey House.

With Deutsch, Kerrigan & Stiles she supports the national Pro Bono Project. Her most labor-intensive pro bono work comes from winning the New Orleans District 6 assessor seat on last year's "I Quit" ticket, an effort to consolidate the city's seven assessor offices into one.

Marshall and the six other candidates who ran on the I Quit ticket vowed to quit their offices if elected, creating a de facto one-assessor system. They also refused to accept a salary or participate in the generous retirement program for assessors.

"My goal is to make sure that the people in my district are fairly assessed at the fair market value," she said. "This is very important right now because the majority of people whose properties have been fairly assessed so far are those who just bought a house. This is a disincentive in New Orleans because if you buy a house here, you're going to be paying more than everyone else. Fair assessment may mean that you will be paying more if you were under assessed previously."

Marshall's biggest challenge has been balancing a demanding career with children.

"It's a test to juggle it all. I heard someone say once that it's not how brilliant you are but that it's a kind of endurance test," she said. "You have to keep dealing with things and keep moving."•

— Robyn Loda



# Robert A. Mathis

**Position:** managing partner, Newman, Mathis, Brady & Spedale

**Age:** 56

**Family:** wife, Cheryl; children James, 28, and David, 24

**Education:** bachelor's degree in accounting, University of Southwestern Louisiana; juris doctorate, Paul M. Hebert Louisiana State University Law Center



Robert Mathis' career started in 1975 when he joined Ronald Newman's law firm in New Orleans.

Mathis followed Newman around for four years and was his protégé until Newman passed away in 1979.

"I learned a lot from him. He introduced me to all of the banks," Mathis said.

But Newman's legacy will not be forgotten. "His name will always be there to honor him," Mathis said.

At Newman, Mathis, Brady & Spedale, Mathis practices banking and commercial law. He advises banks and sits in on boardroom meetings. In 1989 he became managing partner of the firm.

But Mathis hadn't always intended on studying law. He did not know he wanted to become a lawyer until he took a business law course while working on his undergraduate accounting degree at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

"The course was about commercial law and contracts, and I knew that is what I wanted to do."

Being at the right place at the right time, hard work and surrounding himself with good people got Mathis to where he is today, he said.

One of the biggest challenges in Mathis' career was the crash of the New Orleans economy from 1985 to 1992.

"The clients had a lot of difficulty, which in turn was difficult for us."

Mathis believes New Orleans will bounce back from Hurricane Katrina just like it did in the early 1990s when the city was suffering from a plunge in the real estate market and banks were failing.

The firm's building suffered roof damage, broken windows and mold during Katrina, and employees worked out of the Baton Rouge office for six weeks.

On the upside, new young lawyers have since joined the firm. "They are teaching us things," Mathis joked.

In addition to his busy work schedule, Mathis finds time to support a cause close to his heart.

A cancer survivor, he has been active in raising awareness about cancer research and devotes his time to bone marrow and blood donor drives, in addition to supporting the National Bone Marrow Foundation. •

— Jennifer Nall

# Pamela R. Metzger

**Position:** associate professor of law and director of the Tulane University Criminal Law Clinic

**Age:** 41

**Family:** children Coltrane, 8, Phoebe, 6

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Dartmouth College; juris doctorate, New York University

An Atlanta native, Pamela Metzger arrived at the Tulane University Law School in 2001 after teaching at Washington and Lee Law University's law school in Virginia. Before that, she worked for the public defender's office in Boston during her undergraduate and graduate studies and later worked as a federal defender in the southern and eastern districts of New York.

Metzger credits her interest in questions of fairness and social justice for helping steer her career path to the Tulane University Criminal Law Clinic. While her profession focuses on educating future lawyers, Metzger said she is not immune from litigation as cases at the law clinic are given much attention and handled with rigid professionalism.

"Look around New Orleans and it's hard to find a place that hasn't been touched by the law clinic," Metzger said.

Being in a position to make lasting contributions to law on the local and national levels is important to Metzger. The time she contributes to the New Orleans Public Defender's Office affords her such opportunities.

The office has made "revolutionary" changes since Hurricane Katrina by obtaining investigators, conducting community outreaches and implementing an internship program, Metzger said.

"Today we have a professionally staffed public defender's office that's committed to providing its lawyers with the tools that they need to guarantee that New Orleans' working people and New Orleans' working poor will have the vigorous and effective assistance of counsel that the United States Constitution promises to every citizen," she said.

Metzger serves on the board of directors for the Jewish Community Center in New Orleans, chairing the early childhood committee, and recently became a tenured professor at Tulane University Law School where she plans to continue to train lawyers she hopes will make a difference nationwide.

Other long-term goals include writing a book of essays on practicing law in Louisiana before and after Katrina and having an active role in "re-imagining" public defense and public advocacy in New Orleans.

Metzger's challenges to date have included balancing motherhood and career, and not having enough time to spend with students and cases. "I'm blessed with an embarrassment of riches; the only obstacle I really have is not having enough time in the day to enjoy them all," she said. •

— *Nayita Wilson*



# Carole Cukell Neff

**Position:** partner, Sessions, Fishman & Nathan LLP

**Age:** 53

**Family:** husband, Richard; children Alex, 24, Hilary, 20

**Education:** bachelor's degree in elementary education, State University of New York at Buffalo; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School



Carole Cukell Neff's law career began in the late 1970s, when men thought leisure suits were hip and most women could aspire only to being the secretary of an attorney.

"In 1977, women were asked questions (in an interview) that they can't be asked today," Neff said. "The concern was if they hired a woman, would she start having babies, or would she leave if her husband was transferred?"

Neff, originally from upstate New York, came to Tulane in 1973 after meeting a friend who was studying to become an attorney.

"I had an elementary school teaching degree (from State University of New York in Buffalo), but I wanted more challenge," Neff said of her decision to attend law school. "I did it on a whim. I had never even met a lawyer before."

While at Tulane she worked as a law clerk for Justice John A. Dixon Jr. at the Louisiana Supreme Court. Dixon later "steered me in the right direction" by encouraging Neff to take a job at Sessions, Fishman & Nathan. Now 28 years later, she's still there.

"Staying at the same firm is very unusual," Neff said. "Most lawyers move around but I've nested here."

Neff faced obstacles while learning to navigate a male-dominated field. "There was a lack of presence of women in the field (of law), and there were few women professionals having a family," Neff said. "We had to pave the way, and I think we started the Superwoman Syndrome. We were trying to figure out how to balance work and family. Now we're recovering Superwomen. We realize we don't have to do it all."

She is president of the Jewish Endowment Foundation, an arm of the Jewish Federation.

Neff serves on the board of the Rotary Club and is one of the founding members of the Women's Professional Council, which started more than 20 years ago as a networking organization.

Professionally, Neff is proudest of the book she co-authored with fellow partner Max Nathan, a three-volume set titled "Louisiana Estate Planning, Will Drafting, and Estate Administration."

"One of the main goals of my practice is to help people get their affairs in order," Neff said.

Personally, Neff is proud of her family and looks forward to the future. "I want to keep doing this as long as I possibly can," Neff said. "I'm happy with my life."•

— Lisa Bacques



# Robert W. Nuzum

**Position:** partner Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz PC

**Age:** 54

**Family:** wife, Julia

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Louisiana State University; juris doctorate, Paul M. Hebert Louisiana State University Law Center; master's degree in law, concentration in tax law, New York University

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina has created a number of intricate and potentially beneficial tax incentives and benefits for New Orleans businesses. Bob Nuzum, a shareholder at Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz PC, helps his clients navigate those tricky waters.

For his 30-year legal career, Nuzum has done "nothing but tax law." He started out in the chief counsel's office at the Internal Revenue Service, moved to New Orleans law firms Jones Walker and then to Phelps Dunbar in New Orleans before settling into his current practice after a brief period of running a solo practice.

Since December 2005, Nuzum has devoted much of his time to working with Gulf Opportunity Zone tax legislation. The laws were designed to give tax incentives and benefits at the federal level for rebuilding and renovation projects in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

Nuzum helps maximize the tax benefits for businesses and challenges the IRS and the Treasury Department when they take stances against his clients.

"It's very rewarding," Nuzum said. "Not only am I supporting my clients, but I'm doing some good in letting the IRS and Treasury know that some of their positions might not be in accordance with the new laws ... (the IRS and Treasury positions) may be technically correct but not correct when you interpret Congress' intent in enacting the legislation."

Nuzum is involved with many community activities. He is on the board of Catholic Charities and is chairman of the Archbishop's Community Appeal, a subgroup of Catholic Charities. Both endeavors have him helping citizens find low-income housing. For several years, Nuzum has also been involved with local chapters of the SPCA and the Make a Wish Foundation. Aside from those activities, Nuzum teaches at Tulane University Law School and has helped develop charter schools in Tremé.

Nuzum credits his success and enjoyment of his job to several factors, starting with Ed Benjamin, his mentor at Jones Walker.

"He took me under his wing and taught me how to practice," he said.

Nuzum gets a thrill out of assisting local businesses in the rebuilding process. "I've seen a lot of good come out of what we do and that makes it exciting."•

— Fritz Esker





# John Olinde

**Position:** partner, Chaffe McCall LLP

**Age:** 50

**Family:** wife, Anne; children Chris, 22, Rebekah, 21, Sarah, 16, Abby 14, Matthew, 8

**Education:** bachelor's degree in accounting, Emory University; juris doctorate, Paul M. Hebert Louisiana State University Law Center

John Olinde has been with Chaffe McCall LLP for 24 years, 15 in management. He defends pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers statewide and regionally in a variety of class action and multi-plaintiff lawsuits.

An active member of the International Association of Defense Counsel, the Defense Research Institute, the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel and the National Institute of Trial Advocacy, Olinde has also been involved with the Client Assistance Fund Committee of the Louisiana State Bar Association since 1988. His experience in product liability and tort claims makes him an in-demand speaker.

Olinde is also on the parish council at St. Pius X Church in Lakeview.

Olinde, a Baton Rouge native, and his wife, Anne, whom he met at Emory, will celebrate their 25th anniversary in July.

"We ended up in New Orleans because she found a job at Newcomb College and she gave a commitment to be there a few years ... so I figured I'd better find a job in New Orleans."

It wasn't long before Olinde was working for the Louisiana Supreme Court under Justice Fred Blanche Jr.

"He was a fantastic person. He was so fun-loving. He liked to sing at parties and play musical instruments. None of us could keep up with him."

He went to Chaffe McCall in 1983. While advancing his legal career, John has raised five children with his wife.

"My long-term goal is to find time to enjoy my family life," he said. "Because the practice is so demanding for your time, it's difficult to balance everything. Where the future is going is very hard to tell.

"When I first started here 25 years ago, we didn't have computers. You never get any privacy now with cell phones or the Blackberry in many professions."

In business and in the bigger picture, Olinde says he tries to remember it's not a sprint, it's a marathon, and actions speak louder than words and determine one's character.

"People follow by example and I hope I accomplish this over time because you can then feel good about yourself," he explained. "I tell my kids this. You have to maintain your own integrity."•

— Robyn Loda

# C. Lawrence Orlansky

**Position:** member, Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann

**Age:** 48

**Family:** wife, Naomi; children Adam, 14, Shana, 19

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Louisiana State University;  
juris doctorate, Paul M. Hebert LSU Law Center

Since he began working for Stone Pigman in 1984, C. Lawrence Orlansky has worked in commercial and gaming litigation and professional liability.

Orlansky said the opportunity to learn about different businesses and industries is one of the most stimulating aspects of his job.

"You need to learn about the business to handle the dispute capably," he said.

Orlansky has represented a number of businesses throughout his career, from banks and oil and gas companies to Papa John's Pizza, which Orlansky defended in a lawsuit from Pizza Hut.

In addition to his commercial litigation work, Orlansky serves as the Louisiana Gaming Counsel for Pinnacle Entertainment, the parent company for Boomtown Casino and L'Auberge du Lac in Lake Charles, among other casinos throughout the state.

The gaming industry is highly regulated and gaming companies need constant advice and counsel on a variety of issues, he said.

The third branch of Orlansky's practice is ethics and professional liability, where he defends against charges of malpractice.

According to Orlansky, the greatest challenge as a litigator is understanding the opposing side's position and advising his client accordingly.

"It's lawyer as adviser and counselor in addition to being a zealous advocate," he said. "You have to explain the challenges of a case while remaining confident."

Orlansky is a member of the board of trustees at Touro Synagogue and has served as chairman of the regional branch of the Anti-Defamation League and the Henry S. Jacobs Camp, a Jewish community center for a four-state region of which Louisiana is a part.

Over the span of his career, Orlansky is proud of the service he has provided his clients in difficult times.

"It's important for a lawyer to recognize what you don't know and not give off-the-cuff, superficial responses. If you don't know, you say you don't know and you go find out," he said.

Orlansky attributes much of his success to his colleagues and the work environment at Stone Pigman.

"I've been fortunate to work in an environment that emphasizes excellence and not just settling for good enough."•

— Fritz Esker



# Allison Penzato

**Position:** partner, Talley, Anthony, Hughes  
and Knight, L.L.C.

**Age:** 49

**Family:** husband Russell; children Robin, 24,  
Megan, 20

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Southeastern  
Louisiana University; juris doctorate, Loyola  
University School of Law



Growing up in Bogalusa, Allison Penzato didn't know many lawyers personally but she recognized the high regard for those in her community and the influence they had.

"I knew they were very well-respected and had the reputation of making a difference in the right way," Penzato said. "I always wanted to be a lawyer."

Thoughtful and meticulous, Penzato found she was a natural at speech and debate.

"I enjoy the strategy of putting the case together and planning how to present that case while at the same time evaluating how and what my opponent plans to present," Penzato said.

Her straightforward approach has served her well during 26 years of practice. "I'm a believer that you're not lucky, but you make your luck," she said. "Hard work and dedication are the keys to success."

Penzato's personal attention to detail and quiet consideration make her popular with clients. "I believe it's the day-to-day things you do — being conscientious and responsive to your clients — that makes a difference," she said.

Penzato focuses on medical malpractice defense work. She was introduced to health care-related defense work in her early years as an associate and continued to acquire knowledge while handling cases for major insurance providers.

As the years passed, Penzato found medical malpractice increasingly intriguing. "I just grew into it," she said.

Community service has been ingrained in Penzato since her Campfire Girl days, she said.

In the professional community, Penzato is a member of the Covington, Slidell and Washington Parish bar associations. She is also a member of the 22nd Judicial District Inn of Court, a mentoring program that meets every two months.

Penzato also serves as a probation monitor for the Office of Disciplinary Counsel and has served on the board of directors of the Youth Service Bureau and the St. Scholastica Academy School Board.

She is a member of the West St. Tammany Business and Professional Women and is a 1995 graduate of Leadership St. Tammany, serving on its board of trustees. She is a past president of the Junior League of Greater Covington and in 2006 received the honor of Sustainer of the Year. •

— Angelle Bergeron

# Keith M. Pyburn Jr.

**Position:** regional managing partner,  
Fisher & Phillips LLP

**Age:** 56

**Family:** wife, Barbara; children, Keith, 25,  
Brad, 24

**Education:** juris doctorate, Tulane  
University Law School

Keith Pyburn moved to New Orleans in 1968 to attend Tulane University and fell in love with the city.

After graduating from Tulane Law School in 1974, he joined Fisher & Phillips LLP where he still practices law today.

He practices labor and employment law and represents management, while his areas of emphasis are collective bargaining, union avoidance and employment discrimination and harassment. He said the changing issues keeps his work interesting.

"It's a people business. All of our cases involve people in a variety of jobs and careers facing a whole range of issues," Pyburn said.

When choosing what area of law he wanted to practice, Pyburn said labor and employment law found him. "I had an opportunity early in my career to work in labor law and found it to be interesting, so I stayed with it."

He has been involved in major civil rights class actions involving employment discrimination and has represented the Louisiana State Police. He considers all of his civil rights cases great accomplishments.

"I want to continue to focus on and assist clients in solving employee relations problems."

Pyburn, who was born in Shreveport and raised in Washington, D.C., said practicing law runs in his family.

"My father was an attorney and so were some of my uncles," he said.

Pyburn has some advice for up-and-coming lawyers: "Be ready to work hard and focus on ethics because that will build your reputation."

A problem Pyburn and his firm faced after Hurricane Katrina was communicating with and finding staff. When many people chose to relocate after Katrina, Pyburn said it was not even an issue for him.

"New Orleans is home."

He said the legal profession has changed since he entered it but he looks forward to the challenge.

"The changes are never ending, so you're constantly having to adjust to the changing profession," Pyburn said. "In some ways that's an obstacle, but in another it's what keeps it challenging and interesting."

Pyburn supports primary and secondary education in New Orleans and was the former chairman of the board of directors at St. George's Episcopal School in New Orleans. •

—Jennifer Nall



# Harry Rosenberg

**Position:** partner, head of regional commercial litigation practice, Phelps Dunbar

**Age:** 58

**Family:** wife, Kimberley; children Jonathan, 30, Walker, 20

**Education:** bachelor's degree in secondary education and history, Case Western Reserve University; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School



As a partner in the New Orleans commercial litigation practice of Phelps Dunbar, Harry Rosenberg concentrates in the areas of trial practice, business torts, civil rights and criminal law. Rosenberg originally studied to be a schoolteacher, but successful at his backup career.

After law school, Rosenberg clerked for U.S. District Court Judge Jack M. Gordon before moving to Phelps Dunbar in 1974. In 1990, he was asked by former President George Bush to serve as a U.S. attorney for the eastern district of Louisiana. He served until 1993 when he returned to the firm where many of his high-profile clients and cases often landed him on the evening news.

"I do think every day brings a new opportunity to help others. To try to ensure that we are preserving the constitutional framework that we have which allows us to resolve disputes and maintain society's interest in an orderly fashion," he said.

The 58-year-old said success as an attorney takes lots of hard work, preparation and people skills along with "a little helping of good luck."

Rosenberg also said lawyers need to be able to educate clients so they can understand and appreciate how the system works. He enjoys the challenges of litigation and said arguing a case calls for intensity, preparation and attention to detail. Often involved in complex commercial disputes and white-collar crime cases, many of Rosenberg's clients would rather not be named.

"Litigation is a serious business. When someone comes to me for legal advice, I take care of them like a surgeon would a patient. Litigation affects people's wealth, their families and sometimes their freedoms when criminal proceedings are involved."

The husband and father of two balances the stress and pressure of litigation with daily exercise to stay in shape and clear his head.

Rosenberg is also serving as a member of the Orleans Public Defender's Board and said proper funding and operation of the criminal justice system is critical in helping New Orleans rebuild. •

— Craig Guillot

# Dionne M. Rousseau

**Position:** partner, Jones Walker

**Age:** 43

**Family:** husband, John Pojman; son, John, 5

**Education:** bachelor's degree in history, Georgetown University; juris doctorate, University of Chicago Law School

Spring in New Orleans means mudbug season, and Dionne Rousseau of Jones Walker is planning a special party.

Twenty-five graduate students from Rousseau's alma mater, the University of Chicago, spent spring break working for Habitat for Humanity."

"I'm organizing a thank-you crawfish boil for them," Rousseau said. "I'm really excited."

Hurricane Katrina flooded Rousseau's Lakeview home, and she moved back to New Orleans in August after working a year in the Jones Walker office in Baton Rouge. She and her family are renting in the Uptown area.

Rousseau served on the board of the Bureau of Governmental Research, a nonprofit that promotes good public policy in city government.

"It's basically a watchdog organization," Rousseau said. "They analyze the city's contracting process, the issuing of bonds and how the money is being spent. I was in line to be chairman, but when I had my son I wanted to devote more time to him, so I stepped away. But I enjoyed it. It's a terrific organization."

Rousseau also stays busy as a board member of Junior Achievement.

"Before Katrina, we made an unprecedented effort to have JA taught at every public school (in New Orleans)," Rousseau said. "The main thing we do is teach young people about the free enterprise system," she said. "There are lesson plans for each grade level (K-8), and volunteers teach the lessons."

Rousseau has worked at Jones Walker for 16 years and said her biggest challenge professionally was making the switch from a "worker bee associate" to being the person who generates business for the firm, which is one of the largest in Louisiana.

Rousseau said she wants to continue to build the corporate and securities practice group, which represents half of the public companies in Louisiana.

She said having a career and raising a child is a "balancing act. It constantly requires adjusting, and it's a work in progress."

Rousseau said her son, now in pre-k, is a joy.

"It's wonderful to be able to revisit your childhood. We just watched 'Star Wars' with him, which is something we probably never would have done otherwise."•

— Lisa Bacques



# James H. Roussel



**Position:** counsel, Baker Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz PC

**Age:** 67

**Family:** wife, Puddin; children James Jr., 41, Ranson, 37, Christophe, 36

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Dartmouth College; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School

James Roussel has come a long way from his first job as a law clerk at Phelps Dunbar in 1961. Aside from his clerk duties, he has also worked as an investigator for the firm.

"I spent a lot of time on boats, barges and drilling rigs."

After receiving his law degree, Roussel worked in the firm's maritime division until retiring in June 2005.

Roussel continues to do maritime work for Baker Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz PC, covering "just about anything that happens on the water except criminal cases."

Primarily, he represents the owner of a vessel or an insurance underwriter in the case of a maritime accident. An example of this type of case, and Roussel's most famous case, is when he defended the owners of The Bright Field, the ship that crashed into the Riverwalk in December 1996.

For most of his life, Roussel was connected to the water. Growing up in New Orleans, Roussel's father was a coffee broker and spent some of his college years working on the riverfront. His lifelong association with open water carried over into his legal work.

There are two specific things about maritime work that continue to stimulate Roussel after more than 40 years. The first is travel.

In his career, Roussel has visited China, Egypt, Singapore, Indonesia and Panama, among other places, for work-related trips.

Second, "The cases are generally large cases involving complicated, complex issues," Roussel said. The complexity means the work is always mentally stimulating.

Roussel also finds a great deal of enjoyment from the work itself.

"You get a degree of satisfaction from just representing your client ... being able to defuse the situation, represent your client, and come away with a win."

In doing so, he helps his business clients get back on their feet.

Regarding the skills needed to help bring his client and their adversary closer to an amicable solution, Roussel said, "You have to have a certain amount of knowledge, confidence and BS."

Roussel is also on the board of directors of the local World Trade Center and has been a president of the New Orleans Diabetes Association. •

— Fritz Esker



# Kyle Schonekas

**Position:** managing member, Schonekas, Winsberg, Evans & McGoey LLC

**Age:** 53

**Family:** wife, Patricia; children, Myles, 26, Parker, 24, McClain 21, Halley and Logan, 19

**Education:** studies in political science, University of New Orleans; juris doctorate, Paul M. Hebert Louisiana State University Law Center

During his second year of law school, Kyle Schonekas was drafted for the lead role in “Assault and Flattery,” a play that mocked faculty and staff.

Schonekas’ classmates recognized his ability to imitate several professors and to this day, he still remembers stepping on the stage for the first time to entertain an audience with his amateur acting.

Schonekas may have become an actor had he not gone into the legal profession. While his name appears in dockets instead of movie credits, he has been successful in his default career.

He worked with Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann LLC 19 years before associates encouraged him to go out on his own. Founding the firm with Marc D. Winsberg, Joelle Flannigan Evans and Patrick S. McGoey in 1999, Schonekas sought to practice law with autonomy while making his own decisions.

The firm handles a wide array of cases and litigation ranging from commercial, construction, oil and gas, and banking to personal injury, tax litigation, white-collar crime and family law litigation. Motivated by a competitive nature and a desire to take on difficult cases, Schonekas thrives on challenges.

“If it’s controversial and it’s going to be hard fought and a real tough case, I like to think that’s why they come to us. Our practice is not routine and that’s one of the things I like best about it,” Schonekas said.

He describes the challenges of the law as “trying a case where there is so much pressure to achieve a certain result but someone else is on the other side trying to upset that.” Passion and creativity are the two most important traits of a successful attorney, he said.

Schonekas relieves work-fueled stress with an intensive exercise schedule that helps recharge and fuel his passion. When not working off the calories, he’s an avid food connoisseur — with tastes that range from Juan’s Flying Burrito to Brigtsen’s — and an amateur art collector. Schonekas also loves to travel, and he’s visited Europe, South America and the Caribbean, and hopes to get to North Africa soon. •

— Craig Guillot



# E. Paige Sensenbrenner



**Position:** partner, Adams and Reese LLP

**Age:** 50

**Family:** wife, Madeleine Landrieu; children Erica, 13, Hannah, 12, Alexandra, 10, and Olivia, 6

**Education:** diploma, Charity Hospital School of Nursing; bachelor's degree in nursing, Loyola University New Orleans; juris doctorate, Loyola University School of Law

As an attorney at Adams and Reese, Paige Sensenbrenner's practice includes medical malpractice defense, pharmaceutical products defense, complex mass-tort litigation, governmental relations and general legal advisory work for health entities.

Sensenbrenner's career in medical law started when he became a registered nurse at Charity Hospital School of Nursing in 1978. Having worked in the medical field gives him a well-rounded understanding of what his clients need, Sensenbrenner said.

His interest in medicine and law prompted him to serve on the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center Foundation Board of Directors, the Children's Hospital Institutional Review Board, the Health Education Authority of Louisiana Board of Trustees, the American Association of Nurse Attorneys, the American Society of Lay and Medicine and the New Orleans Health Care Managers Association, among others.

"One of the great assets that New Orleans has that is under-appreciated is two downtown medical centers," he said.

The Louisiana State University and Tulane medical centers are second only to the Mississippi River, he said, in providing research and education opportunities and a large potential for economic growth.

Sensenbrenner said most health care professionals continue working in the city where they receive their degrees. Thus having two medical schools in New Orleans is a great asset, he said.

His goal is to see the completion of the Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium, a National Cancer Institute-designated research center in New Orleans that partners with LSU and Tulane.

The center was about to be built when Hurricane Katrina hit. Since LSU and Tulane have decided to keep their medical schools in New Orleans, plans are starting up again on the project.

Sensenbrenner is also a member of the American Bar Association, the Defense Research Institute, of which he sits on the Blood Products Subcommittee. He was a member of the New Orleans Alcohol and Beverage Control Board from 1987 to 1992, the Loyola Institute of Politics in 1989 and the New Orleans Regional Leadership Institute in 2005.

Sensenbrenner said he is most proud of his family. He and his wife, Madeleine, who also has a busy career as an Orleans Civil District Court judge, have achieved a balanced family life through teamwork and sacrifice. •

— Alethia Picciola

# David R. Sherman

**Position:** member, Chehardy, Sherman, Ellis, Murray, Recile, Griffith, Stakelum & Hayes, LLP

**Age:** 54

**Family:** wife, Jane; children, Philip, 26, Matt, 23, Amelia, 20

**Education:** bachelor's degree, University of New Orleans; juris doctorate, Loyola University School of Law; master of laws in taxation, Boston University

David Sherman wanted to be a lawyer for as long as he can remember, although initially he dreamed of courtroom drama, not the behind-the-scenes business and tax law he now practices.

"When I started law school, I wanted to be a hot-shot litigator and had no interest in doing transactional work," said Sherman, whose job includes helping clients with estate planning, negotiating business deals and getting out of trouble with the IRS.

But Sherman enjoyed business law courses at Loyola University, and clerking at local law firms convinced him the life of a litigator was less appealing than he once thought.

"I like everything in its place, and litigation is the opposite," Sherman said. "It's kind of minute by minute, and things constantly change. You really can't schedule things and get organized because you don't know what's going to happen next."

After graduating from law school, Sherman became an associate at the firm of Donelon and Canella, led by state insurance commissioner Jim Donelon and Kenner city attorney Jim Canella. His earliest clients were the physicians referred to him by his father — himself a doctor — and his best friend, a certified public accountant who specialized in work for medical practices.

After five years with Donelon and Canella, Sherman and close friend Lawrence Chehardy, now Jefferson Parish assessor, joined the firm of Gauthier Murphy to help launch a new business section at what had been strictly a personal injury practice.

Several years later, the business section spun off into the nearly 20-year-old firm headed by Sherman and Chehardy.

Sherman's personal style and interests have guided his professional career and steered him toward certain types of community service.

A self-proclaimed "sports fanatic" who was born in New York but has lived in the New Orleans area since he was 6, Sherman is one of the founding members and chairman of the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation, which brings major events such as the Super Bowl, the NBA All Star Game and the NCAA Final Four to the city.

He is also chairman of the Jefferson Parish Hospital Force and a board member of the East Jefferson General Hospital Foundation, the Southern Hearing and Speech Foundation, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Congregation Gates of Prayer and Children's House Montessori School. •

— Sonya Stinson



# Lloyd 'Sonny' Shields



**Position:** partner, Shields Mott Lund LLP

**Age:** 55

**Family:** wife, Laura; children Carolyn, 24, Ellen, 21, Audrey, 20

**Education:** master's degree in architecture; Tulane University; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School

When Lloyd Shields is not handling construction-related litigation, he's helping rebuild the city by fighting to preserve historic properties.

Shields, a partner at New Orleans-based Shields Mott Lund LLP, is serving his third term as president of the Preservation Resource Center, an organization dedicated to preserving New Orleans architecture.

Preservation is especially important to post-Katrina New Orleans as officials try to lure tourists back, he said.

"That largest push is to restore housing as much as and as soon as possible, because in order to restore the viability of our city, housing is our No. 1 need," he said. "And we have so many structures, historic structures, that can be renovated and restored, and it is cheaper to renovate an historic house than it is to tear it down and build a new one."

Shields said his top volunteer projects involve preservation.

He sits on the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission, and in the past he has led the New Orleans HDLC.

Since Katrina, he has volunteered to gut houses in the Upper Ninth Ward with his church, St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church, which has gutted homes through its Rebuilding Hope in New Orleans program.

Shields describes preservation as a lifelong passion; even as a teenager he enjoyed visiting historical structures.

It was that love that got him interested in architecture.

He worked at New Orleans architectural firm Sizeler and Muller while he went to law school at Tulane University.

But after becoming intrigued by the thought process in law, he decided to leave architecture to pursue law full time. He received his law degree in 1977.

"It's so interesting," he said of the legal profession.

He and some partners founded Shields Mott Lund LLP in 1995, specializing in construction industry, surety and insurance defense, labor and employment law, products liability, general commercial litigation, bankruptcy, real estate and zoning law, communications systems regulation, general corporate matters and intellectual property matters.

The Kilgore, Texas, native came to New Orleans in 1969.

"I found it so fascinating, I just stayed," he said. •

— Deon Roberts

# Stuart H. Smith

**Position:** senior partner, Smith Stag LLC

**Age:** 45

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree in general studies, Louisiana State University; juris doctorate, Loyola University School of Law

Since entering the legal profession in 1986, Stuart Smith has been an advocate for the disregarded worker. He has taken aim at workplace injustices and the environment, especially in the oil industry.

A self-proclaimed environmentalist, Smith grew up in New Orleans and began work at a small plaintiff firm defending workers who had unknowingly been exposed to toxic materials. Within a decade, he became a leading lawyer who helped pave the way for the practice of environmental and toxic tort law.

"We created a whole new field of law," said Smith, referring to groundbreaking suits involving naturally and technologically enhanced radioactive materials.

In 2001 Smith was lead counsel in a suit against ExxonMobil. In *Grefer v. ExxonMobil*, Smith represented Judge Joseph Grefer, a Harvey resident who leased 33 acres of land to ExxonMobil. In finding the land was contaminated, the Grefer family was awarded more than \$1 billion in damages — the second-largest civil judgment of the year.

Smith said similar lawsuits have forced oil companies to spend millions of dollars cleaning up the Gulf Coast.

"I'd like to see the government and industry become better financial stewards of our national research and environment," he said.

Smith takes delight in providing pro-bono services to the French Quarter neighborhood where he lives.

"I became active in that after my home and property sustained a series of fire bombings," he said.

The heat began for Smith when a neighbor retained him in a dispute involving a bar situated on city-owned property at the French Market. Smith said Molotov cocktails were thrown into the back of his house and his partner's car, resulting in about \$100,000 worth of damage.

"I'm the only lawyer in history firebombed for a case he wasn't charging on," he said.

Threats didn't stop Smith from his commitment to the community. He's a member of the Louisiana Landmarks Society, the French Quarter Citizens and Vieux Carre Property Owners.

Smith said he's trying to slow down and smell the roses but he still loves being in court.

Smith is proud his firm, Smith Stag LLC, litigates in cases against the nuclear power, oil and phosphate industries. •

— Coleen O'Lear



# Peter E. Sperling



**Position:** partner, head of the medical liability section at Frilot Partridge

**Age:** 48

**Family:** wife, Vicky; children Andrew, 14, Elliot, 10, Frances, 7, and Olivia, 5

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Vanderbilt University; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School

In 1994, after spending the early years of his career with Lemle & Kelleher, Peter Sperling left that firm to become one of the founding members of Frilot Partridge law firm.

Sperling's work focuses on litigation in medical liability cases, defending physicians, hospitals and health care providers in medical malpractice suits. His interest in this field can be traced back to his family background — his father was a physician and "it seemed like an interesting challenge to combine the two fields," Sperling said.

Aside from the family connection, what makes his work so interesting to him is each case is different.

"You need to learn the medicine to understand the issues and properly defend the case," he said. Depending on each individual case, Sperling must research and learn about a specific field of medicine.

But there's a sad outcome behind every medical litigation suit, he said.

"The issue is 'Is there any fault?'" or, was the unfortunate outcome just a result of nature, bad luck or the situation being so bad the doctor couldn't fix it."

Even though working his own cases while managing members of the Medical Liability Section at Frilot Partridge keeps him busy, Sperling finds the time to remain active in the community. He is on the board of directors at the Jewish Community Center and the Southern Eye Bank. He coaches soccer and basketball at Carrollton Playground and works with Touro Synagogue; Book by Book, a book drive designed to benefit New Orleans Charter Schools; and Habitat for Humanity.

When asked to what he would attribute his success, Sperling replied, "It sounds trite, but ... hard work and enjoying what I do. Enjoying what I do makes it easy to work hard."

Sperling's greatest source of pride is being able to balance his work life and his family life while raising four children. After that, he is immensely proud of his firm.

He's thankful for his ability to defend clients while treating opposing colleagues with respect.

"I'm proud of our ability to grow our practice and for our firm to be so successful after starting out as a small firm."•

— Fritz Esker

# Marx Sterbcow

**Position:** attorney, Sterbcow Law Group

**Age:** 36

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree in political science/history, Tulane University; juris doctorate, Gonzaga University School of Law; Master of laws, John Marshall Law School's Center for Real Estate Law

Marx Sterbcow's career focus has centered on building and then rebuilding New Orleans since the time he graduated from Gonzaga University Law School.

Sterbcow is the only attorney in Louisiana with a master's degree in real estate law, and he specializes in commercial, residential and international real estate transactions and closings.

A New Orleans native, Sterbcow works to make his hometown a "thriving metropolis."

"New Orleans is a miniature Chicago," said Sterbcow, who strives toward expanding a vision of developing New Orleans into what he calls a "full-blown Chicago."

"(There is) a vibe in the city that you can't get anywhere else," he said.

His most monumental challenge has been combating negative stereotypes people may have because of the political history of New Orleans and convincing non-natives to invest in the city.

"It's my job to change perspectives," Sterbcow said. And he's often successful.

When Michael Sharpe, a Chicago-based real estate developer, expressed hesitation about investing in New Orleans, Sterbcow invited Sharpe and his wife to stay at his home for a few days to experience the 'vibe' of New Orleans.

And that was before Hurricane Katrina came and put a bump in the road to Sterbcow's dream of a thriving New Orleans.

But the storm did not slow him much. Sterbcow is still committed and optimistic about his visions, leaving "some sort of major footprint in the development of downtown."

Sterbcow takes a "they grow, I grow" philosophy in dealing with his clients.

What's allowed him to remain successful, he said, is maintaining a sense of humor and thinking outside of the box.

"You can't get the lawyer mentality," Sterbcow said. He stressed the importance of being able to think like an accountant or a businessman as well as an attorney to truly help his clients. •

— Alethie Picciola



# Jeffrey J. Thomas

**Position:** associate, Simon, Peragine, Smith & Redfearn LLP

**Age:** 35

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Millersville University; juris doctorate, Tulane University Law School



Jeffrey Thomas' career has taken him from high school biology teacher to environmental policy analyst to attorney with one of New Orleans' largest law firms.

Since Hurricane Katrina, Thomas has been essentially "on loan" from Simon, Peragine, Smith & Redfearn LLP as a pro bono recovery planning adviser to government and community groups. He is taking an indefinite leave of absence from the firm to serve as special assistant to the director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery Management, where he'll be responsible for handling legislative and policy affairs, developing partnerships between the recovery office and the private sector, and providing the office with legal counsel.

"Another thing I'll be doing is to develop alliances with the local legal community," said Thomas, who was on the Urban Planning Committee of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission. "There's a wealth of expertise in the legal community here in New Orleans, and the city recovery process needs to tap into that expertise."

For example, he said lawyers can help decode the rules of eligibility for federal funding and streamline the city's adjudication process for transferring ownership of abandoned and blighted property.

"The big challenge is to identify where you can successfully maneuver within the existing law and where the law needs to change," Thomas said.

The Pennsylvania native is an active member of the American Bar Association, the New Orleans Bar Association, the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education, the New Orleans Pro Bono Project, the New Orleans Young Leadership Council, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation and the Sierra Club. He conducts monthly legal clinics at the Westwego Elderly Center and is a delegated adviser to Orleans Parish Schools.

For Thomas, the law profession has proven an ideal vehicle for turning his passions for the environment and public service into practical solutions for community and economic development.

"The nice thing about being a lawyer is that I never have to look far to see the difference I can make," Thomas said. "That's never been more apparent than in the past year. Armed with my law degree, I feel like I've really been able to get involved in this recovery process and contribute to it — and that's a nice feeling." •

— Sonya Stinson



# Quentin F. Urquhart Jr.

**Position:** founding partner, Irwin Fritchie Urquhart & Moore LLC

**Age:** 48

**Family:** wife, Anne; children Katey, 19, Elizabeth, 16

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Trinity University; juris doctorate, Paul M. Hebert Louisiana State University Law center; masters of laws (in progress), Tulane University

Quentin F. Urquhart Jr. has practiced law for 23 years. Beginning his career with Montgomery Barrett, he and five partners from the firm founded Irwin Fritchie Urquhart & Moore LLC, which specializes in litigation.

Engaged in a general civil litigation practice, Urquhart concentrates on the defense of personal injury and property damage claims. His extensive experience in the products liability field includes defending claims involving electrical components, medical devices, pharmaceuticals and industrial machinery. He also defends toxic tort litigation, including class actions and individual claims involving chemical substances.

He was named chairman of the drug, device and biotechnology committee of the International Association of Defense Council in 2002.

A triathlete and native New Orleanian, Urquhart's greatest source of pride is his firm.

"I think we set very high and rigorous goals for ourselves. I'm very proud of the way we've all worked to achieve them. The most recent specific triumph I've been involved (with) was in the defense of an environmental land contaminated case in spring 2006," he said.

Urquhart said the case was probably one of the first jury trials in federal court post-Katrina in which the firm successfully defended a multimillion-dollar claim for remediation costs. The prevailing attorneys demonstrated to the jury the levels of chemicals that remained on the property in question did not pose harm to humans or the environment.

Urquhart cites keeping up with technology to more efficiently and effectively serve clients as his biggest career challenge.

"Our ultimate goal is always to provide a very high level of quality in the work we provide to our clients, but at the same time, remain sensitive to doing that in the most cost-effective way possible.

"I'm pretty much living my career goal — to be involved in a legal practice that is challenging and rewarding. Our current firm gives me that opportunity," he said. "And working toward my (master of law) so I can more effectively represent clients' environmental and energy concerns. I think law is a great career because it's so interesting. You have the opportunity to learn new things all the time with the research you are required to do."•

— Robyn Loda





# Steven Usdin

**Position:** managing partner, Barrasso Usdin Kupperman  
Freeman & Sarver LLC

**Age:** 52

**Family:** wife, Melanee G.; children Matthew, 19, William, 17

**Education:** bachelor's degree in sociology, Trinity College;  
juris doctorate, University of Virginia School of Law

During his youth, Steven Usdin first learned about challenging cases by accompanying his father, a psychiatrist for the Orleans Parish Prison, on trips to complete competency exams for his clients.

Years later, and with more than 25 years' experience of commercial litigation under his belt, Usdin, managing partner for Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver LLC, said his abilities to communicate effectively, interest in problem solving and willingness to work until a problem is solved have helped him establish successful attorney/client relationships.

"I'm most proud that I have long-term clients that have confidence in me," said Usdin, who broke into the profession in 1980 as a law clerk for Judge Adrian G. Duplantier in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

From there, he worked at Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann LLC for more than 10 years, starting out as an associate and later becoming a partner.

In 2003, Usdin and partners founded Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver in New Orleans, which now has more than 20 attorneys.

As a commercial litigator, some of the cases Usdin handles involve oil and gas, class-action suits, securities and bank fraud, products liability and commercial contracts.

Usdin is a former co-chairman of the Louisiana Bar Association's Summer School for Lawyers, a position he held for two consecutive years from 2003-04. He has taught seminars for various organizations and is active in several local educational and community organizations.

He serves on the board of directors for Isidore Newman School, the New Orleans Science & Mathematics High School, Audubon Institute and the Tulane Cancer Center, and is involved in local grass-roots efforts supporting levee and assessors' reform.

"I think it's important for everybody to participate in their community, and the need is so great right now. If we want our children to come back, then it's going to take a lot of hard work by a lot of people," Usdin said.

His time is spread thin between work and community, but family and immediate family are of highest priority for this New Orleans native and aficionado. •

— *Nayita Wilson*

# Laurie A. White

**Position:** principal, Laurie A. White & Associates

**Age:** 48

**Family:** husband, Thom Wilson; stepchildren, Doughty, 30, Courtney, 28, Ashley, 25

**Education:** bachelor's degree in criminal justice, Louisiana State University; juris doctorate, Southern University Law Center

Anyone in need of a criminal defense attorney is understandably anxious, so Laurie White makes a point of introducing new clients to officemates who have a knack for putting people at ease.

White brings her two Labrador retrievers, a golden “doodle” (part golden retriever, part poodle) and at least one bird to the office with her every day. She says the menagerie helps make the atmosphere a little less tense — the dogs are especially good with calming clients.

“My animals are so intuitive,” White said. “If you cry, they’ll come and put their head on your lap.”

White founded her own criminal defense firm in Metairie in 1991. With White and one associate, the firm handles a wide range of cases, from DUIs to drug trafficking and murder. A nationally recognized expert in post-conviction proceedings, White served as local counsel with attorney Barry Scheck and The Innocent Project of New York in a case that used DNA evidence to exonerate Gene Bibbins in 2003 after he spent 16 years in prison for a rape he did not commit.

“To actually have someone freed based on the DNA that exonerated them was really a highlight in my career,” White said.

White began her law career as an assistant district attorney in Orleans Parish. She later became a civil defense lawyer in Metairie, representing insurance companies, a sex crimes prosecutor in East Baton Rouge Parish and a New Orleans city attorney assigned to defend police officers. Her real passion, she said, has always been criminal law, no matter which side of the case she was on.

White’s community service has included a number of programs assisting ex-offenders. She has also followed an interest in crime prevention by becoming a board member of Crimestoppers. Her professional affiliations include the Louisiana and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the Orleans Indigent Defender Program and the Association for Women Attorneys.

White hopes to add another law practice in Houston, but she recently abandoned one of her previous career ambitions.

“I had always wanted to be a criminal court judge and Katrina kind of changed my mind,” White said. “I think I can do a lot more good and have a more full life as a lawyer, and I’ve sort of reinvigorated my law practice in my own gut. I’ve got fire in the belly again about the legal work, and I’m just glad to be doing it.”•

— Sonya Stinson



# Constance C. Willems

**Position:** member, McGlinchey Stafford

**Age:** 64

**Family:** husband, Sean; children, Mo, 39

**Education:** bachelor's degree in sociology, University of New Orleans; juris doctorate with honors, Tulane University School of Law



When Constance Charles Willems, known to her friends and associates as “Conny,” was an undergraduate student at the University of New Orleans, she majored in sociology, a study she says has repeatedly influenced her work as a member of the firm of McGlinchey Stafford.

“Sociology is the study of how people behave in groups and what rules and regulations they adhere to or don’t adhere to,” Willems said. “And that, of course, is what the law is - the regulation of people and groups in our society and community. So, for me, one thing led to another.”

Graduating from University of New Orleans in 1974, Willems went on to graduate from Tulane University’s School of Law three years later, joining McGlinchey Stafford shortly afterward and quickly establishing herself as a knowledgeable and skilled expert in business law, as well as utilities, water, transportation and telecommunications law, among other fields.

“Both of these areas of law have become so much larger now than they were when I first came to them,” Willems said, “Particularly utilities, because as time progresses energy becomes more important to us while at the same time it is subject to more and more rules and regulations.”

How important her expertise is was dramatically demonstrated when Willems represented more than 200,000 plaintiffs in a class-action suit against a natural gas supplier, which was, she said, “not living up to its obligations to deliver the gas to the power plants of what were then called NOPSI and LP&L.”

The result of that litigation saw a judgment of some \$75 million for the plaintiffs and the creation of a scholarship fund with the Greater New Orleans Foundation that awards scholarships for New Orleans residents attending any of the city’s five colleges or universities.

She is the wife of Casey Willems, a well-known Uptown potter with a national clientele and mother of Mo Willems, an Emmy award-winning children’s television writer.

Willems, who was born in Holland, is the honorary counsel for the Netherlands in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

“I want to attract as many Dutch businesses to this area as possible,” said Willems, who views her consul work as an extension of her devotion to New Orleans, “when it is more important than ever to bring new resources to the city.”•

— Garry Boulard

# Henri Wolbrette III

**Position:** partner, McGlinchey Stafford

**Age:** 58

**Family:** wife, Linda Case; children, Stephanie, 35, Michelle, 29, Melissa, 28; grandchildren, Dominic, 3, Celia 1, Harry

**Education:** bachelor's degree in economics, Tulane University; juris doctorate Tulane University Law School

Raised in a family of lawyers, Henri Wolbrette found it only natural to fall into a career that surrounded him at the dinner table and family outings.

After finishing law school more than 30 years ago, he took a position as a clerk for a new firm that would turn out to be a lifelong employer. Now a partner with McGlinchey Stafford, Wolbrette focuses on the representation of pharmaceutical and medical products, chemical manufacturers, physicians and hospitals.

Aside from his pharmaceutical cases with the firm, Wolbrette spends a lot of time working with the New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation, an organization that supports the operations and capacities of the New Orleans Police Department. As chairman of the foundation, he meets with the district attorney and police chief to work out various issues. He helped provide housing for officers after Hurricane Katrina. Wolbrette was drawn to the organization 10 years ago after his wife was a victim of a robbery.

"What we're doing as an organization is extremely important. We're trying to make changes in the way the system works here in Orleans Parish because it works differently here than it does anywhere else in the country," Wolbrette said.

Outside of work, Wolbrette enjoys golfing and serves as a rules official for the U.S. Golf Association, which usually puts him on the course for the U.S. Open and the U.S. Senior Open. He recently returned to his other passion — music — when he picked up the trumpet after taking a 30-year break since his days of playing the instrument in high school and college. Wolbrette enjoys the symphony and also serves on the board of the New Orleans Opera Association.

Wolbrette is listed in Best Lawyers in America for personal injury and is recognized in Louisiana's 2007 issue of "Louisiana Super Lawyers." He credits his success as an attorney to lots of time preparing for complicated cases and creativity in his presentations. Wolbrette says honesty is one of his most important traits.

"I don't lie to judges or other lawyers and it drives me nuts that a lot of lawyers do. Ultimately, everybody knows who is honest and who is not. It gets around," he said. "I'd like to think that people know when I tell them I'm going to do something, I do it."•

— Craig Guillot



# Scott G. Wolfe Jr.

**Position:** owner and partner, The Wolfe Law Offices

**Age:** 26

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree, Southern Methodist University; juris doctorate, Loyola University of New Orleans



For a young lawyer finishing law school, starting a practice from scratch is difficult and intimidating. Doing so in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina is even more so.

Scott Wolfe Jr.'s bar exam results were delayed because of the storm. When he returned to the city to set up shop in October 2005, "there was nothing," Wolfe said.

Initially, Wolfe took on a number of insurance cases, helping arrange more than \$1.5 million in settlements. While he still has a number of insurance cases in play, his primary focus is on business and construction law. He hopes to provide legal assistance to small to medium-sized businesses and construction firms. His work includes putting together contracts, litigations and settling disputes between contractors or between contractors and property owners.

The attraction to the field of business is a natural one for Wolfe, who comes from an "entrepreneurial upbringing" — family members own Wolfman Construction and Wagner's Meat. While a student at Brother Martin High School, Wolfe started his own tech company — The Web Lab and its offshoot, In Charge Technology — which he still runs.

He designs Web sites and does some programming, notably a software for contractors to help them organize, a must for contractors inundated with clients post-Katrina.

"I've never had a job where I worked for anyone else," he said.

Wolfe acknowledges starting his own business was a challenge, especially after his Lakeview home flooded during Katrina.

"The toughest thing was starting with zero clients," he said. But the process of going from a one-man office with no clients to an office of six with a strong client base has been rewarding.

Wolfe hopes to expand his practice, especially in regard to the city's many contractors and small construction businesses he feels are underrepresented. Wolfe also recently took the bar exam in Washington and hopes to open a second office in the Seattle area.

In addition to his legal practice, Wolfe dedicates time to the March of Dimes and Challenge Air, a company that provides plane rides to people with illnesses and disabilities who would like to fly.

Wolfe is also a licensed pilot and flies a Cessna. •

— Fritz Esker

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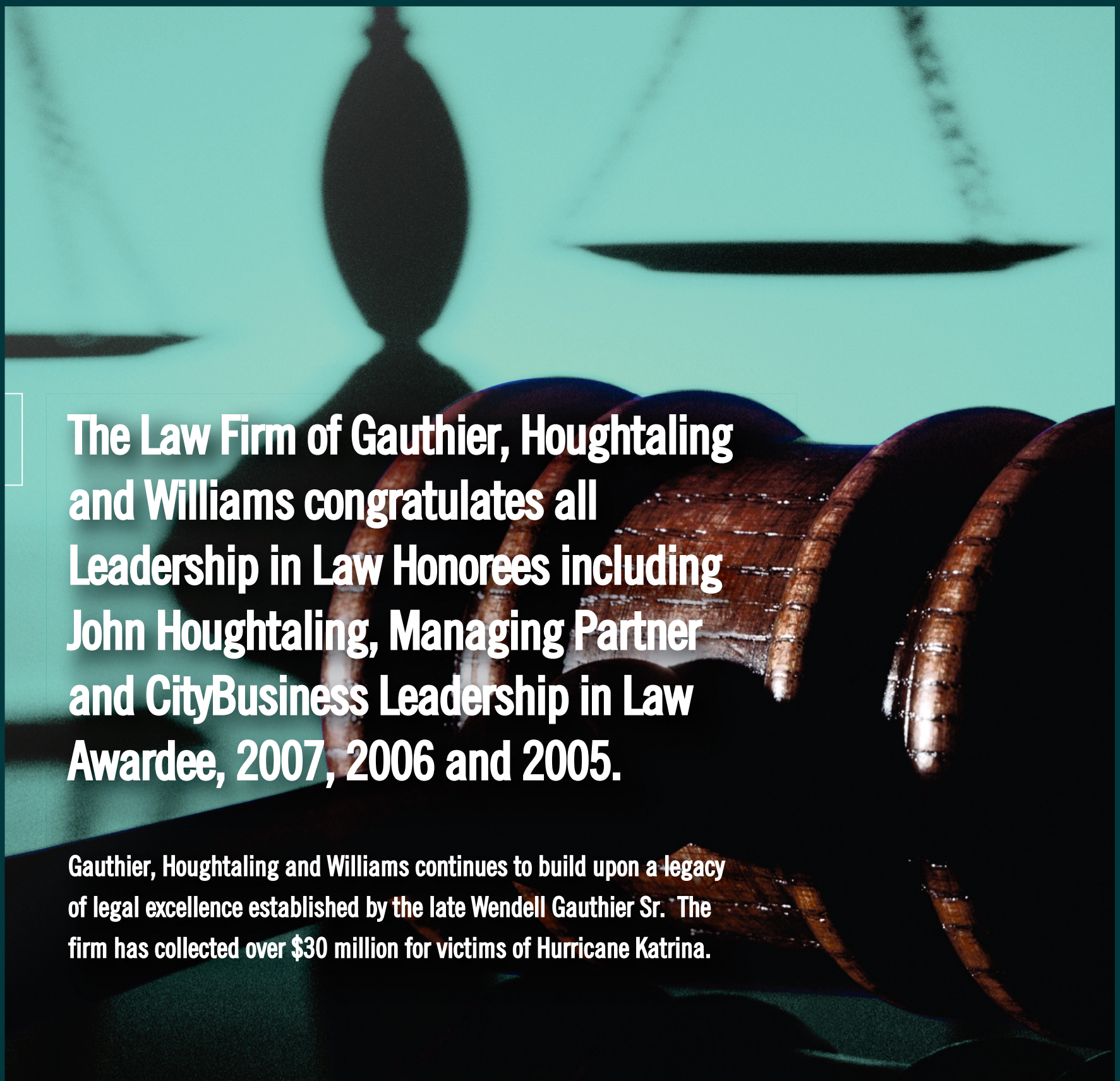
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