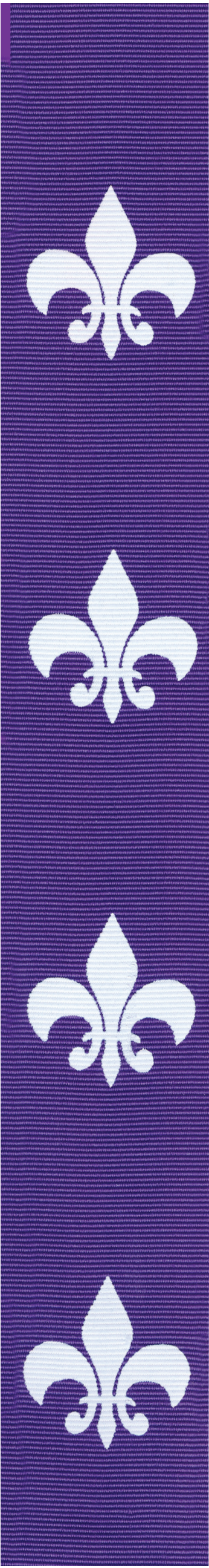


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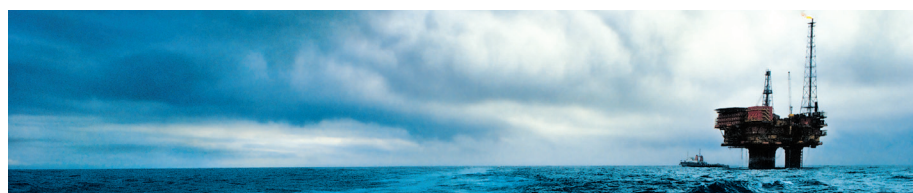
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New Orleans CityBusiness 2009
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Published by the NOPG LLC
 111 Veterans Memorial Blvd.,
 Suite 1440, Metairie, La. 70005
 504-834-9292; Fax: 504-837-2258.

Publisher: D. Mark Singletary
Associate Publisher: Lisa Blossman
Managing Editor: Greg LaRose
News Editor: Christian Moises
Associate Editor: Autumn C. Giusti
Art Director: Alex Borges
Photography: Frank Aymami
Account Executives: Liz Baldini, Jeanne Farrell, Cassie Foreman, Ginger Graf, Coco Evans Judd
Production manager: Julie Bernard





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Monica Frois

is a member in the healthcare section of McGlinchey Stafford.

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Monica represents health care providers on operations issues, transactional issues and litigation. Monica also specializes in complex litigation, insurance defense and defense of fellow professionals in professional ethics, malpractice and breach of fiduciary cases.



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When asked how they ended up in a legal career, the response from lawyers centered around one theme: helping people.

That connection and dedication to work with and fight for clients helped a selection committee choose the Leadership in Law Class of 2009, recognizing the area's 50 leading legal professionals based on their career and community achievements.

In the program's fifth year, honorees discuss their most challenging, memorable, difficult or rewarding case, and their stories are powerful.

More than three years later, many attorneys are still involved with Hurricane Katrina-related cases, while others have increased their pro bono work. Some have broken language barriers and others have crossed international borders to serve clients.

Working in the legal industry isn't always easy. Cases often take them away from their families, friends and social commitments and can often put them at high risk. Much of their work is done behind the scenes and many times goes unnoticed and unappreciated.

Many attorneys often are unfairly characterized and their decisions and actions are not

always well-received, but this year's honorees break that stereotype.

They prove that at the end of the day, attorneys are committed to fighting for what's right and are devoted to social justice. They defend the people and businesses that make our region what it is.

As part of the program's fifth anniversary, seven attorneys were the first to be inducted into the Leadership in Law Hall of Fame for their consistent commitment and willingness to go the extra mile.

Even though they are no longer eligible to be selected as honorees, these attorneys will continue to drive our region forward and serve as outstanding representative of the community while ensuring justice is served.

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

Congratulations to the Leadership in Law Class of 2009. •

News Editor Christian Moises can be reached at 293-9249 or by e-mail at christian.moises@nopg.com.



Christian Moises
 News Editor

The inaugural CityBusiness
Leadership in Law
Hall of Fame

The following honorees are the first to be inducted into the Leadership in Law Hall of Fame.



John Houghtaling



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past honorees

2008

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Nan Alessandra
Gilbert Andry
Raymond Areaux
Peter Barbee
Charles Branton
Kenny Charbonnet
William Credo
Taylor Darden
Christopher Davis
Bobby Delise
Richard Duplantier
Leslie Ehret
Richard Exnicios
Tracey Flemings-Davillier
Donna Fraiche
Duris Holmes
John Houghtaling
Chauntis Jenkins
Robert Kerrigan Jr.
Keva Landrum-Johnson
Walter Leger Jr.
Lynn Luker
Eve Masinter
Michael Mitchell
Max Nathan
Glenn Orgeron
Marshall Page
Erin Parkinson
Joseph Peiffer
Robert Perez
Frederick Preis Jr.
Deborah Rouen
David Sherman
Randall Smith
Renee Smith
Ray Steib
Martin Stern
Patrick Talley
Susan Talley
Patrick Vance
David Waguespack
Joel Waltzer
David Ware
George Wentz Jr.
Scott Whittaker
James Williams
Scott Willis
Brett Wise
Scott Wolfe Jr.

2007

Robert "Bob" Angelico
Mark Beebe
Lucia Blacksher
Kim Boyle
Peter Breslin
Dana Douglas
Sandra Feingerts
Janice Martin Foster
Alan Goodman
Deborah Harkins
Peter Hilbert Jr.
William Hines
John Houghtaling
William Howard III
Ashlye Keaton
Steven Klein
Stephen Kupperman
Robert Kutcher
Steven Lane
Wayne Lee
Walter Leger
Georges Legrand
Julie Livaudais
David Lukinovich
Nancy Marshall
Robert Mathis
Pam Metzger
Carole Cukell Neff
Robert Nuzum
John Olinde
Lawrence Orlansky
Allison Penzato
Keith Pyburn Jr.
Harry Rosenberg
Dionne Rousseau
James Roussel
Kyle Schonekas
Paige Sensenbrenner
David Sherman
Lloyd Shields
Stuart Smith
Peter Sperling
Marx Sterbcow
Jeffrey Thomas
Quentin Urquhart Jr.
Steve Usdin
Laurie White
Constance Willems
Henri Wolbrette III
Scott Wolfe Jr.

2006

Marguerite Adams
Nan Alessandra
Thomas Beron
Carmelite Bertaut
Kim Boyle
Elwood Cahill Jr.
Kathryn Caraway
James Carroll
Charlie Cerise
Shaun Clarke
Philip deV. Claverie
Miles Clements
Frank D'Amico Jr.
Nancy Scott Degan
John Duck
Val Exnicios
George Frilot III
John Galloway
Covert Geary
Russ Herman
John Houghtaling
Grady Hurley
James Irwin
Steven Lane
Patricia LeBlanc
Edward LeBreton III
Andrew Lee
Wayne Lee
Jon Leyens Jr.
Kelly Longwell
John Manard Jr.
Robert Manard
Joseph Marino III
Robert McCalla
Corinne Morrison
Thomas O'Brien
Paul Pastorek
Lawrence Ponoroff
Fredrick Preis Jr.
Richard Richter
Howard Shapiro
Jack Stolier
Noel Vargas Jr.
Nelson Wagar III
Kenneth Weiss
David Willenzik
John Wilson
Phillip Wittmann
Scott Wolfe Jr.
Robert Worley Jr.

2005

Donald Abaunza
Robert Acomb Jr.
Judy Barrasso
Hilton Bell
Edward Benjamin Jr.
Virginia Boulet
Kim Boyle
Alan Brackett
William Bradley
James Brown
Paula Brown
Joseph Bruno
Peter Butler Sr.
McChord Carrico
Roy Cheatwood
James Coleman
Keith Colvin
Howell Crosby
Howard Daigle Jr.
Christopher Dicharry
Anthony DiLeo
Kelly Duncan
Ernest Edwards Jr.
Michael Ellis
Frank Fontenot
George Fowler III
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Mat Gray III
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Roselyn Koretzky
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Steven Lane
Dwight LeBlanc Jr.
Wayne Lee
Jonathan McCall
Michael McGlone
Robert Mouton
Antonio Rodriguez
Dionne Rousseau
Leopold Sher
Mark Surprenant
Robert Vosbein
David Ware
Scott Whittaker

Hirschel Abbott

Position: partner, Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann

Age: 66

Family: wife, Mimi; children, Barkley Abbott Lang, Hirschel "Chip" Abbott III

Education: bachelor's degree of business administration in accounting, University of Mississippi; juris doctor, University of Virginia School of Law

Hirschel Abbott says success as an attorney is about finding a rewarding niche and a clientele that you really enjoy working for.

"Success is being satisfied with what you are doing and having clients that are satisfied with what you have done for them. I like being able to accomplish those professional objectives and have my clients be satisfied and appreciative," Abbott said.

As co-chairman of the tax practice group at Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann, Abbott serves as a counsel to private clients including individuals, businesses and boards. He represents and advises high net worth individuals and families seeking advice on business, property, tax and estate planning matters.

Abbott enjoys tax, business and estate planning because he can form personal relationships with his clients and see the direct results of his work.

"It's really the personal relationship that I like the best. I happen to like it better than general litigation because I enjoy dealing with individuals and their families in their business problems."

Abbott recalled a couple of cases where he was called in to help resolve internal disputes with a family business. He's also handled unique tax issues for very large estates and has helped clients avoid substantial federal estate taxes.

Abbott was admitted to the bars of Mississippi and Louisiana in 1971 and is a board-certified tax law specialist and a certified public accountant. He is also a member of the New Orleans Estate Planning Council, the Association of Employee Benefit Planners of New Orleans and a fellow in the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel.

In his civic leadership positions, he has also served on the board of directors and as chairman for Trinity Episcopal School and on the Vestry for Trinity Church. Abbott joined Stone Pigman in 1971 and previously served two terms on the firm's management committee.

Outside of the office, Abbott spends time at his family cabin in the North Carolina mountains. He also enjoys exercising, jogging and biking and may be one of the few attorneys who does not play golf.

"I have enough frustrations that I get paid for, and golf is one that I have never succeeded at."•

— Craig Guillot





Lawrence Abbott

Position: managing director, Abbott Simses

Age: 64

Family: wife, Linda; children, Kimberly, 38, Larry Jr., 34, Charles, 31

Education: bachelor's degree in history, St. Edward's University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

While winning a jury trial is always a challenge, even for an experienced litigator, it is never more challenging than when playing against a stacked deck because of unethical behavior on the part of an opposing counsel.

However, Lawrence Abbott has faced such challenges — and prevailed.

Abbott was representing DuPont in a four-month jury trial in Eagle Pass, Texas. Multiple plaintiffs had claimed that a DuPont fungicide had either damaged or destroyed their pecan orchards. And Eagle Pass was not known as a friendly area for civil defendants, Abbott said.

“The last jury defense verdict had occurred more than a decade before our trial began. Eagle Pass is a very plaintiff-friendly jurisdiction,” he said.

Despite the challenges, Abbott felt he made a compelling case for his client, and even though the trial had been contentious because of the circumstances and the substantial amounts sought by the plaintiffs, he felt he had prevailed. But the jury deliberations lasted for several days, which made him suspicious. It had gone on for too long.

Eventually, the jury notified the judge that the decision was “hopelessly deadlocked.”

Abbott moved for a mistrial. The judge denied the motion and sent the jury back with instructions to continue with the deliberations. Eventually, the jury returned with a multimillion dollar judgment against DuPont.

The trial then continued into the punitive damages phase. Once again, the jury deliberated for several days, piquing Abbott's suspicions. Finally, the jury awarded punitive damages as well.

Abbott and his team investigated the suspicious jury behavior.

“We learned the local counsel for the plaintiffs had approached a juror one night in a restaurant and offered to pay for her and her guests' dinner and drinks. ... That same local counsel approached another juror, a member of the local American Legion, and told him he would help pay to renovate the local hall if the ‘right verdict’ was returned.”

Because of those discoveries, Abbott was able to convince the judge to hold a post-trial hearing. When Abbott presented his evidence, the judge threw out the verdict because of jury tampering.

Throughout Abbott's career, in which he has tried more than 157 cases in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama and Montana, he still finds competing and prevailing against such difficult odds a big thrill.

“Every trial is like a football game.”•

— Fritz Esker

Jay Adams

Position: partner, Jones Walker

Age: 45

Family: wife, Carla; daughters, Katie, 15, Emily, 13

Education: bachelor's degree in business and accounting, University of Mississippi; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Jay Adams acquired his passion for law as a teen following his father, a longtime trial lawyer, to various trials and court proceedings.

"I was always captivated by the process and how it works," Adams said. "I always enjoyed hearing my father's stories from the courtroom and seeing the great love and respect he had for his profession."

Adams began his legal practice in 1990 in Washington, D.C., with the nationwide law firm Baker Botts. He learned the complexities of being a trial lawyer and discovered the level of preparation that goes into arguing a specific case.

"Each case is vastly different from the next and each requires a different level of research based on what is being argued," Adams said. "A lawyer must understand the business entity he or she is arguing for or against. I've learned more information about topics I never dreamed I would have to deal with as a lawyer."

Adams said he was drawn to cases that involved tax law, which worked well with his background in business and accounting because he was able to connect with his clients and understand the challenges they faced.

"Practicing law is about building relationships and working with people," Adams said. "You work as a team to help the people who work for the company you were hired to argue for."

Adams spent about five years at Baker Botts before returning home to do state and local tax work in New Orleans. Adams said the timing was perfect since it was right around the time he and his wife were having their first child.

"All of our family was back in New Orleans. It's just not as much fun to raise a child without any family around."

Upon returning home, Adams was drawn into what he describes as the most intriguing case he has ever been involved with: representing International Paper Co. in a battle over the taxability of purchased materials that are used to create a new product.

The decision provides businesses with guidelines to review whether materials purchased for manufacturing purposes are subject to sales taxes. Adams said the ruling, which ended in his client's favor, would result in refunds and future tax savings of tens of millions of dollars.

"The impact of this case was so broad and affects anyone in the state that manufactures anything."

Outside of the courtroom, Adams is involved in various neighborhood organizations and also works with the American Cancer Society. He said the bulk of his free time goes toward volunteering at Trinity Episcopal, where his children attend school. •

— Robin Shannon





Paul Andersson

Position: senior partner, Leake and Andersson

Age: 63

Family: wife, Bille; children, Dita, 36, Elizabeth, 33, Andrea, 29

Education: attended Louisiana State University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

In his more than two decades as a partner in the law firm of Leake and Andersson, Paul Andersson has taken great pride in winning countless cases covering a wide spectrum of law in such areas as insurance, employment, casualty, construction and products liability.

But few cases have given him as much personal satisfaction as *Lambert v. PepsiCo*, in which the soft drink company was sued after a carnival ride at the Superdome caught fire, seriously injuring scores of people.

“The contention was that basically everyone involved was liable,” said Andersson, “the roller coaster manufacturer, the amusement company, their insurers and Pepsi, which sponsored the fair.”

During a span of several years, all of the defendants in the case except for PepsiCo decided to settle.

“By being the only ones who did not settle, we were basically left by ourselves at the dam. And that can be a scary feeling especially when the plaintiffs want millions of dollars and a lot of high-priced plaintiffs’ lawyers are looking you over.”

Even more, Andersson said, “the case was dangerous because of the exposure and the terrible burns that these people suffered with resulting disfigurement and the like.”

But in the end, the Louisiana Supreme Court decided not to hold PepsiCo in judgment, leaving Andersson with a win that still amazes him to this day.

“It isn’t that we didn’t have a good case. It’s just that it is difficult to find corporate defendants with the chutzpah and intestinal fortitude to stand up to the claims made against them — which if successful would have significant financial consequences — when they think they are right.”

Andersson continues to urge clients to at least consider the possibility of fighting a case all the way — if they think they are right.

“But I am also a realist,” he said. “Fewer cases actually go to trial these days because so many defendants are satisfied with the known and calculated risk of a settlement, as against going for the unknown.”

In his free time, Andersson has served as honorary consul to Louisiana for the Federal Republic of Germany since the mid-1990s, a post that gives him particular satisfaction given he was born in Germany.

Andersson is also the legal adviser to the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, a post he has held for more than three decades. •

— Garry Boulard

Jonathan Andry

Position: part owner, The Andry Law Firm

Age: 43

Family: wife, Caroline Andry; children, Olivia, 7, Jonathan, 10, Victoria, 11, Sarah, 13

Education: bachelor's degree in English, University of Mississippi; juris doctor, and master's degree in energy and environmental law, Tulane University Law School

April 20 is a big day for Jonathan Andry. That's when he goes to trial as one of four members of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Steering Committee in the case of *Robinson v. the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*.

Andry is seeking monetary damages on behalf of six plaintiffs in St. Bernard Parish, eastern New Orleans and the Lower 9th Ward, arguing that the corps' negligent design, construction, maintenance and operation of the MRGO caused the devastating flooding after Hurricane Katrina.

"Hopefully, we'll come back in June and say we won," Andry said. "The only good fights in the legal business are the ones you win."

While the case has six plaintiffs, the potential exists for numerous beneficiaries under a Katrina victims' compensation fund.

Andry, co-owner of The Andry Law Firm with his brother, is a seasoned plaintiff's attorney, seeing himself as a vital hope for the mistreated citizen.

"We really are, as plaintiffs' lawyers, the last step between anarchy and the rights of individuals being taken away."

The MRGO case takes Andry back to Hurricane Betsy, when his father was the plaintiff's attorney in *Graci v. the United States*, arguing that the outlet caused the flooding after that storm.

"This is Graci 2 all over again, and it shouldn't be," Andry said.

He's no stranger to complex cases.

His current caseload includes *Sutton Steel v. BellSouth Mobility*, a class action including about 9 million plaintiffs that began in Louisiana in 1999 and now includes nine states.

Set for trial in October after years in appeal courts, the case concerns plaintiffs who say they were the victims of a discrepancy in phone service terms listed in the customer service contract when compared to the service agreement.

Andry was also one of seven Louisiana attorneys who participated in the 1996 class action case, *Ieyoub v. American Tobacco Co.* that resulted in a \$4.4 billion settlement for Louisianians.

Yet Andry has also come to the defense of the lone, vulnerable citizen in need of help and unable to pay.

He recalled the pro bono case involving a Terrytown neighbor, who at age 80 faced losing her home, where she had shared a lifetime with her husband, over a credit card issue. The credit card company threatened to seize her home when she was unable to pay her bill.

Andry supports the community by giving to charitable causes, including the Children's Museum in Acadiana and the Boys and Girls Club in Lafayette, the city where he relocated his family after Katrina. He continues to practice law and maintain a second residence in New Orleans. •

— Diana Chandler





Mark Carver

Position: senior associate attorney, Busch and Myers

Age: 43

Family: wife, Shelley

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

Mark Carver has handled plenty of high-profile, big money cases. He was part of the litigation team that won the reversal of a \$22.8 million judgment against a local school board before the U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth District, and successfully fought the plaintiff's writ of certiorari before the U.S. Supreme Court.

But the multimillion-dollar cases aren't the ones that mean the most to him.

"The most significant cases in my life have been the ones that have no dollar amount tied to them," said Carver, who heads the New Orleans office of Texas-based firm Busch and Myers.

One example is a pro bono case Carver took while working as a Judge Advocate General officer in the Army Reserve. Dispatched to Texas, he met a young Louisiana woman, about 19 years old, who was on active duty. She asked Carver to help her get custody of her younger sister because their mother was a drug addict who couldn't take care of the child.

For a young, would-be single parent in the military, it was a tough case. But Carver succeeded in getting the girl established as the soldier's legal dependant.

"She sent me a very beautiful thank-you card that I still have in my scrapbook," said Carver, who spent 21 years in the Reserves before retiring in 2006.

While Carver now focuses mainly on labor and employment law, he wasn't so specialized when he started his law career.

"In the beginning, when I was a brand new attorney right out of law school, I hung up my own shingle and took whatever cases walked through the door."

Carver serves as an assistant examiner for the civil procedure portion of the state bar exam, volunteering to grade exams twice a year.

"My grading these exams may very well determine whether an applicant becomes a licensed attorney, and that's a pretty important responsibility."

Leaving the military left Carver feeling a void he sought to fill with other ways to be of service. He joined the Men's Club at St. Ann Catholic Church in Metairie and was shortly elected to the executive board.

"We volunteer a lot of time to give back to the parish and the community. It might be something as simple as serving donuts and coffee after the Masses ... or something as significant as cooking Thanksgiving dinners and serving them to the public for free."

Described as deeply spiritual, Carver said that trait fosters "a sense of compassion and fairness" and a reluctance to view opposing counsel as the enemy. But he's quick to add: "At the same time, I'm always going to be a zealous advocate for my client."•

— Sonya Stinson

Robin Cheatham

Position: partner and executive committee member, Adams and Reese

Age: 55

Family: wife, Leslie; children, Erin, 30, Scott, 29, Cory, 26, Jenna, 21; four grandchildren

Education: bachelor's degree in business administration, University of New Orleans; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

It's the unusually challenging nature of bankruptcy law that appeals to Robin Cheatham.

"It's a learning experience every day," he said. "You're totally immersed in the business. You have to know how it was put together to restructure it. It's very technical and a very different type of law."

Bankruptcy law, he said, is complicated because lawyers must understand the business they're representing inside and out.

When Cheatham was in college, he drove back and forth every day from New Orleans to Buras to manage a motel, industrial laundry business and a tugboat company.

"I needed to be knowledgeable about the contracts and agreements between customers and clients. That's what interested me in pursuing a legal career," he said.

The Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1978, the year before Cheatham began practicing, drastically reformed bankruptcy law.

The law had not been changed since the 1800s, and because the lawyers at Cheatham's firm were more accustomed to the old code, Cheatham often got the bankruptcy cases.

"They kind of 'threw it to Mikey,'" he said. "I was pitted against more seasoned attorneys. I was always questioning whether I understood the 1978 law."

One of Cheatham's most prominent cases was a five-year-long case where he represented an oil and gas production company in Houston. Their partner in Lafayette wasn't paying its fair share under deadline, and Cheatham's firm decided to file involuntary bankruptcy against them from bankruptcy court in Opelousas. Meanwhile, they were also negotiating revisions that needed to be made to an oil concession with a Chinese oil company.

"It meant a lot of conference calls from Beijing," he said, recalling having to endure early mornings without coffee while it was late at night in China.

They ultimately came to a resolution, and the Houston company was awarded several million dollars, a result Cheatham said would have been unusual in any other type of court.

"There are resolutions that can be obtained in bankruptcy court that can't be obtained in other courts."

Cheatham said it's when he wakes up at 4 a.m. realizing he forgot to do something that reminds him being a lawyer is tough. But it takes meticulous diligence looking at all the documents in the transaction to win any bankruptcy case, he said. •

— Katie Urbaszewski





Christopher Couch

Position: managing member, Couch, Stillman, Blitt and Conville

Age: 34

Family: wife, Linda; children, Zoe, 7, Haley, 5

Education: bachelor's degree in general studies, University of New Orleans; certificate, George Washington School of Political Management program; juris doctor, Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center

Christopher Couch originally thought he wanted to be a teacher.

"But when I began to decide on a career," Couch said, "I chose law because I had a strong desire to be involved in a profession that helps people. As I work with my clients, I am teaching them at the same time, so I guess I killed two birds with one stone."

"I have been blessed with mentors in and out of my profession," Couch said. "Not only did I learn about taking depositions and about arbitrations and mediations, but I came to understand that success does not necessarily mean winning a trial. You have to acquire skill sets necessary to position your client to receive a favorable outcome in the case."

One of Couch's more memorable trials involved an 11-year-old girl who broke her pelvic bone during an accident while riding a school bus.

"The case involved the use of a converted cargo van purchased by a local private school. With the help of one of the nation's top school bus regulation experts, we were able to reach a resolution that was favorable to our client.

"More importantly, I believe our case caused a shift in the mentality of local schools as they examine transportation options for students and has hopefully made some children safer."

Another case Couch was involved in has relevance today in light of the current economic situation: a class-action suit against a company that did recording and transmission of consumer data for credit reports

"They would gather and resell the information and were accused of improper disclosure of credit information and failure to update that information."

"Now 90 percent of my practice deals with the legal rights of consumers and creditors," Couch said. "People have fallen on hard times, but most people pay their bills timely. Banks that are unable to lend play a large part in this credit economy. Also, out-of-state lenders want to know that they will be paid back."

Couch, who was recently elected to the National Association of Retail Collection Attorneys' board of directors, also is excited about his recent appointment to the Boy Scouts of America Southeast Council executive board of directors.

"I plan to do a legal profession explorer program twice a month with high school kids so they can see what it is all about and make a decision about their future."•

— Lisa Bacques

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James Daigle

Position: shareholder and partner, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell and Berkowitz

Age: 70

Family: wife, Peggy; sons, James Jr., 38, Christian, 35

Education: bachelor's degree in English and theater, Centenary College; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

James Daigle began practicing law in 1964 and has never looked back. Now 70 and a shareholder and partner at Baker Donelson, he continues to bring business to his insurance defense practice.

But as times have changed, so too has the type of law Daigle practices. He now handles insurance defense cases and relishes the opportunity to learn a new aspect of the law.

"I feel like I've been reborn," said Daigle, who's seen quite a change in the legal practice over the years.

"It used to be that language was the great tool in the art of persuasion," he said, referring to the fact that juries are now receiving information via videos and pictures, rather than the spoken word. "You can paint a picture with your mouth, your tongue, the words you use, just as well as with a television screen."

Success found Daigle, in his professional and personal life, because he worked hard for it. But his character certainly seems to have helped. When given a chance to talk, Daigle chooses not to discuss his successful trials or the laws he has helped shape, but rather the legal profession and the honor he believes each lawyer receives when he or she earns the license to practice law.

Daigle believes in practicing law because he believes in the integrity of people.

"This profession is an honorable one. Attorneys have the purpose to help society, not harm it," Daigle said. "I get frustrated and disappointed when I hear negative things about the reputation of our profession. We need to bring the integrity and honesty to our practice in all aspects."

When the conversation turns to the subject of law and his professional life, Daigle tells the story of how he began his career in maritime law and found a calling as a trial lawyer.

"I fell in love with it. I enjoyed being in front of a jury. It permitted me to travel all over the world and try cases throughout the country."

Daigle said he hopes he has been able to serve as a mentor to his colleagues and those choosing to enter the profession. •

— Abby Kral





Timothy Daniels

Position: partner, Irwin, Fritchie, Urquhart and Moore

Age: 48

Family: wife, Georgette; sons Brandon, 24, Brycen, 21

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center

When Timothy Daniels told his mother he was going to law school, her initial reaction was concern.

His mother, a devout Baptist, was worried her son was entering a profession full of compromised ethics. But Daniels reassured her, and he has spent his legal career proving it is possible to have integrity and ethics in a profession that often is stereotyped as the opposite.

"I feel I can practice and still be true to who I am," said Daniels, who primarily defends companies in civil court.

While he has worked with a number of interesting cases, there are two that stand out.

One of his clients is a railroad company that had a worker suffer serious injuries on the job and sued the company for negligence. Daniels' client sympathized with the worker and offered to settle, but the worker went to trial.

The tricky part for Daniels was that he genuinely believed his client was not negligent, but because the worker had sustained serious injuries, it would be the jury's natural inclination to side with the worker.

"As in most cases of this type, a significant challenge to winning the case on liability was to get the jury to look beyond any sympathy to the plaintiff and her injuries, and look to the lack of evidence supporting negligence on the part of our client," Daniels said.

While Daniels needed only nine jurors to win, all 12 jurors voted that there was no negligence. What made Daniels particularly proud was that "many of the jurors were emotional and expressed their admiration for the plaintiff while stressing their obligation to follow the law and the evidence in reaching their verdict."

Daniels also does pro bono work and one such case still sticks out in his mind. He once represented a woman who had her children taken away from her because she had been accused of being a drug addict and a prostitute. However, the accusation was based on a vindictive rumor spread by a neighbor, not fact, and Daniels was able to reunite the mother with her children.

"That's what we're supposed to do, make the system work for justice."•

— Fritz Esker

Kelly Duncan

Position: partner, Jones Walker

Age: 54

Family: wife, Carmen; son, Johnson III, 17

Education: bachelor's degree in government, Georgetown University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Even when he was young, Kelly Duncan always had an interest in the nuances of the law.

During the summer of 1974, while a student at Georgetown University, he worked at the White House with the Watergate research office. Exposed to challenges facing the administration and issues such as executive privilege, it further sparked his interest in the law. Duncan joined Jones Walker right out of law school in 1979 and has been with the firm since.

Now a partner at the firm, Duncan has more than 25 years of experience handling admiralty, maritime, and international and customs law matters. In his maritime practice, he handles matters related to marine acquisitions, financings, vessel construction, and regulatory issues and claims.

In 2008, Duncan represented Harrah's Entertainment Inc. in the marine financing aspects of a \$9.5 billion acquisition and a \$2.2 billion debt exchange offer. He is also representing Tropicana Casino in connection with the Louisiana gaming regulatory issues associated with its more than \$2 billion Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing from 2008.

"What motivates me most in my law practice is coming up with solutions to a client's problems. In the transactional and regulatory areas, I am particularly able to analyze problems and come up with creative solutions," Duncan said.

The 54-year-old attorney defines success as striking a balance between maintaining a strong family life while running an active legal practice and participating in the firm's management. Duncan serves as head of Jones Walker's gaming practice area and is a member of the International Association of Gaming Attorneys and the International Masters of Gaming Law.

Outside of the firm, Duncan serves as treasurer of the Bureau of Governmental Research, a nonprofit independent research group dedicated to using public resources to improve government in New Orleans. Duncan is also chairman of the Audubon Nature Institute.

Following the legacy of his mother, Kitty, who was the first chairwoman of the Zoo-to-Do fundraiser and a chairman of the Audubon board, Duncan sees Audubon as not just a champion of wildlife and the natural world but also as an economic driving force in New Orleans.

"I'm very proud to be a part of the organization and it is important to me that we do what we can to preserve the nature we have and make sure it is there for generations to come."•

— Craig Guillot





Lanny Edwards

Position: partner and executive committee member, Lemle and Kelleher

Age: 64

Family: single; children, Emily, 26, Laura, 23, Kathryn, 21

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, Tulane University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School; master's degree in international law, University of Manchester, England

Lanny Edwards said he has done nothing in his career but complex litigation and business transactions.

"Sometimes it may seem like it's too much. But if you have a good staff, which I do, they can not only keep track of things, but tell you what you need to say," Edwards said.

While Edwards' staff has been a big factor, his skills have stood out in some of the most difficult energy, public utility, environmental law and anti-trust cases of the past three decades.

Those cases have included serving as the lead counsel in *The Daily Advertiser et al v. Trans-La Louisiana Interstate Gas*, a class action decided by the Louisiana Supreme Court involving breach of contract claims, tort and anti-trust laws in the natural gas industry.

One of the most difficult cases Edwards remembers was born from a July 1999 explosion at the Kaiser Aluminum Plant in Gramercy, which injured nearly 30 people, severely damaged the plant and rattled homes and businesses in the vicinity.

"There were dozens and dozens of class-action suits filed by surrounding communities, as well as a number of individual lawsuits brought by people who were working in the plant," Edwards said of the case, which involved more than 20,000 plaintiffs.

"Ultimately we settled all of the class action cases, and in addition participated in a trial to recover additional monies — a trial that lasted for weeks."

The Kaiser case was so large that two firms were required to handle it: Lemle and Kelleher defended the class-action suits and the personal injury cases, while Stone Pigman Walther Wittman and Hutchinson sought to recover additional costs.

"It was an interesting trial and obviously a big case," said Edwards, adding that his satisfaction from winning such a case is often enhanced by the size of the challenge.

"You do feel good when you win one against the odds. That's hard to deny."

Edwards brings the same sense of dedication and follow-through to his community involvement, having served as chairman of the board of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Southeast Louisiana.

Edwards — on whom Queen Elizabeth II bestowed the Order of the British Empire, the highest honor given to a non-British citizen — has also served on the Marshall Aid Commission, a program that provides scholarships for American students to study in the United Kingdom. •

— Garry Boulard

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Gene Fendler

Position: president and managing partner, Liskow and Lewis
Age: 62

Family: wife, Linda; children, Julia, 27, Abby, 25, Ben, 23

Education: bachelor's degree in history, University of Virginia; juris doctor, Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center

Gene Fendler once considered following in his father's footsteps in medicine but found out early on it wasn't the right path for him.

"I never did well in any science courses," Fendler said. "I figured it would not behoove me to pursue medical school. After graduating from Virginia, I went into the National Guard and taught high school for a while before eventually being drawn into law. I was inspired by uncles who would often share stories."

Fendler said he considered attending law school on the East Coast but eventually settled on Louisiana State University, where he graduated at the top of his class in 1973.

Fresh out of school, Fendler spent a year working as a judicial law clerk for U.S. District Court Judge Alvin Rubin before building his private practice with Liskow and Lewis.

Fendler's practice consists of business law and personal injury, but most of his work has revolved around maritime law, which is where he got his start.

"Louisiana has the second largest number of maritime lawyers in the country," Fendler said. "It has a lot to do with the heavy amount of traffic along the river, as well as the industry from the Gulf of Mexico. Many young lawyers just starting out get their first opportunity to cut their teeth in maritime law. You often get the chance to go to trial and get experience."

In his largest case to date, Fendler served as lead counsel for a barge company that owned a craft that capsized in the Mississippi River in the middle of Baton Rouge.

"The tanker was full of benzene when it flipped," Fendler said. "It shut the city down for a day. Our team defeated a class action suit of over 20,000 toxic tort claims."

Fendler also served as defense counsel in St. Charles Parish when he defended a chemical company in a reported brain damage case.

"The case stemmed from a previous case that involved the uncle of the plaintiff in my case," Fendler said. "In the initial case, the chemical company settled and we advised them to quit settling and send the trial to court. As it turns out, the chemical company finally won and there has never been another law suit against them."

In his spare time, Fendler flies as a private pilot and is also active at Country Day School, where his children attended classes. He worked with his son as he ascended the ranks of the Boy Scouts to Eagle Scout. •

— Robin Shannon

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Robert Fisher

Position: equity partner and head of the admiralty and maritime section, Chaffe McCall

Age: 65

Family: wife, Lisa; son, Robert, 12

Education: bachelor's degree in English literature, Tulane University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

A burning 160-foot towboat carrying 40,000 gallons of diesel fuel was out of control in the Mississippi River, threatening to release toxic fumes from the cargo on its 28 barges now adrift downriver and in danger of damaging nearby docks and facilities.

The fire departments of West Feliciana Parish and St. Francisville and other entities responded to the accident on the night of May 23, 1999, battling the blaze on the Kay A. Eckstein through the morning and rescuing the seven-member crew.

The incident set up the perfect salvage case for Robert Fisher, head of Chaffe McCall's admiralty and maritime section.

Marquette Transportation Co. refused to reimburse the fire departments and other parties involved for the costs incurred in fighting the blaze, claiming the firefighters were not volunteers and did not exactly save the towboat, which sank still ablaze.

Representing the fire departments and other first responders, Fisher argued the incident was subject to admiralty jurisdiction and successfully asserted the right to a salvage award, resolving the case in mediation.

"A successful recovery in the case against the owners and underwriters of the towboat resulted in payment of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the volunteer fire departments and a salvage award to the crews of the rescue vessels and individual first responders," Fisher said.

Fisher has been successful in many admiralty and maritime cases during his career, including personal injury, arrests, collisions, dock damage, sinkings, strandings, salvage matters and those involving international law and damage to marine environment.

He's a member of the defense team in one of the Hurricane Katrina canal breach litigation cases in U.S. District Court.

Fisher's maritime experience began as a deck officer and navigator in the U.S. Navy from 1966 to 1970, serving on vessels in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and the South China, Mediterranean and Caribbean seas. He has handled cases involving collisions in international waters as well as inland waters of the United States.

A self-described workaholic, Fisher is a three-time cancer survivor who counsels patients as part of Houston's M.D. Anderson Cancer Center network and is a member of the West Feliciana Port Commission.

He is the founding editor-in-chief of the Tulane Maritime Law Journal and a board member for Editors of Shipping and Transport International magazine. •

— Diana Chandler

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Richard Foster

Position: partner, Lemle and Kelleher

Age: 49

Family: wife, Barry; son, Ben, 27; daughter Betsy, 22

Education: bachelor's degree in biology, Tulane University; juris doctor, Loyola University School of Law

Last year, Richard Foster, who specializes in admiralty and maritime law, settled a case for a client caught up in a stunning chain of mishaps.

Foster represented AEP River Operations, the owner of a tow boat pushing barges on the Ohio River. The process went out of control at one the locks.

"It wrecked the dam there and eventually caused the river itself to drop down to levels that had not been seen in a hundred years, which resulted in all sorts of havoc on the banks," Foster said. "When the water levels dropped so low, the banks started caving in and people's houses started sliding downhill into the river. There was quite a bit of litigation over that, and it was a very interesting case."

An added twist came a month before the trial date, when the state of Ohio filed a \$50 million claim for a stretch of highway it said had fallen into the river because of the accident.

"That changed the look of the case at the last minute," Foster said. "We had quite a bit of fighting over that, and eventually had that claim dismissed because it had been filed so late."

Foster, who heads the admiralty and maritime practice group at Lemle and Keller, links his affinity for the specialty with an interest in sailing that began in his college days. Today, his caseload covers matters ranging from crew member injuries and collisions between river barges and ships, to oil spills and business disputes.

"The thing that gives me the most sense of accomplishment is when I'm able to get dispute resolved in a way that is satisfactory to the client, whether it's in trial or by settlement, and where the client feels that the system has worked and gotten them a fair result," said Foster, who added that he especially enjoys untangling complex legal issues.

As a member of Lemle and Kelleher's management committee, Foster plays a large role in directing the firm's focus on community service.

"I think it's one of my responsibilities to make sure we are involved in the community and to direct some firm resources on a long-term basis toward giving something back."

Key projects include sponsoring the Tulane University Law School's Harry Kelleher Scholarship, named in memory of one of the firm's founders, and making major contributions to scholarships at Louisiana State University and Southern University law schools.

Foster, who took frequent sailing trips to the Caribbean with his wife, Barry, early in their marriage, still makes an occasional trip to the islands to be on the water. Only now his maritime adventures are a little more laid back.

"Lately, it's to go fishing rather than sailing."•

— Sonya Stinson

Gus Fritchie

Position: founding member, Irwin Fritchie Urquhart and Moore
Age: 52
Family: wife, Kit; children, Alec, 22, Gretchen, 19, Kendall, 18
Education: bachelor's degree in political science, Washington and Lee University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Gus Fritchie, who specializes in professional liability defense work, stresses the importance of hard work and the ability to anticipate surprises as keys to be a good lawyer.

"Preparation, preparation, preparation," he said.

A noteworthy case in which Fritchie was involved dealt with a Terrebonne Parish sheriff's deputy who killed a teller at a Houma bank and took six of her co-workers hostage, raping three of them during a day-and-a-half standoff in 1996.

Chad Louviere pleaded guilty to the murder charge in December 1998 and was sentenced to death in 1999. He remains at Angola waiting for the sentence to be carried out.

After the criminal proceedings, victims brought civil suits against the Terrebonne Sheriff's Office and the city of Thibodaux, where Louviere had worked as a policeman before joining the sheriff's office.

A jury had ruled the city of Thibodaux was negligent in not warning the sheriff's office about Louviere's mental health issues and awarded about \$10 million to the plaintiffs.

Representing the city, Fritchie and attorney Lane Roy were able to reverse the verdict on appeal with the Louisiana Supreme Court. Fritchie said it wasn't only the money that was at stake. Had the lower court ruling stood, it would have meant former employees could be held responsible for the damages of previous employees.

"Given the highly emotional and tragic facts of the case, our job was to keep the court of appeal focused on the applicable law, in order to reverse what was clearly a runaway verdict from the jury," Fritchie said.

Over the course of his career, Fritchie said the thrill during trials and oral arguments is what he loves most about being a lawyer.

He has had surprise successes and losses but always remembers that "you never know if you've won till the very end."•

— Katie Urbaszewski





Monica Frois

Position: partner, McGlinchey Stafford

Age: 43

Family: single; male dachshund Wilhelm, female dachshund Fielding

Education: bachelor's degree in psychology, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

After Hurricane Katrina, Monica Frois represented a national health care company that had numerous storm-related claims at all of its facilities. The company was having a tough time with its insurer, and claims reimbursement was crucial to staying in business.

Frois helped them obtain a multimillion-dollar settlement that kept the company's doors open. But before the situation even comes to that, Frois said one of her most important missions is to keep her clients out of the courtroom by providing some "preventative medicine."

"Clients can't really afford protracted litigation," Frois said. "There is always going to be a time and place for that and under certain circumstances, it is unavoidable. I focus on the risk management and do what I can to minimize the risk of litigation. If they don't have to get sued and spend all that money, I would consider that a win."

With almost 20 years of legal practice under her belt, Frois focuses on health care matters, insurance issues, legal ethics and professional responsibility litigation. She represents hospitals, physicians, nursing homes and other health care providers on operational and transactional issues.

In *Cheeks v. Mompoin* in November, Frois successfully litigated the first case in which a Louisiana court determined that a hospital's credentialing of its medical staff is covered by its malpractice act.

"I've also worked with several health care institutions to implement disaster plans both pre- and post-Katrina. It was very rewarding because the plans worked. They got the patients out and didn't have to deal with any post-hurricane litigation."

Frois has served on the hearing committee for the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board and was appointed by the state bar association to serve on the medical/legal interprofessional committee of the Louisiana State Medical Society and Louisiana State Bar Association.

Outside the firm, Frois has served as board president of the Southern Repertory Theatre and a board member of the Odyssey House of Louisiana. She is also a founding member and sits on the board of directors for NOLA City Park, New Orleans' first officially designated dog park.

As the daughter of two attorneys, Frois said the law had always been in her blood, and she knew it was her calling since she was a child. Taking the competitive instinct and determination from her father and civic responsibility from her mother, she said a legal career has brought her great personal opportunities along with the chance to give back to the community. •

— Craig Guillot

Lawrence Hand

Position: partner, Kean Miller

Age: 39

Family: spouse, Holly; children, Collin, 9, Kelsie, 7

Education: bachelor's degree in secondary speech education and communication training, University of New Orleans; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

Lawrence Hand remembers when it hit him that the outcome of a case could profoundly shape lives.

The case was different than the majority of his work in oil and gas industry corporate litigation. It was a life insurance case.

The unexpected death of a man about the same age as Hand, who is now 39, had left his wife and children dependent on the man's life insurance. The wife brought Hand in to settle a dispute with the insurer. If he didn't win the case, the family would be caught high and dry.

He won, recovering significant money and a trust for the deceased man's children.

"I am accustomed to helping corporations achieve their goals, but this felt different," Hand said, recalling the moment when he realized his peer's children would grow up financially secure because of the work he did.

Hand, the son of New Orleans City Attorney Lawrence Hand Sr., climbed the legal ladder quickly. At 39, the Loyola-educated lawyer serves as lead counsel in cases dealing with intrastate and interstate natural gas pipelines. Recently, Hand did all the contracting and consulting work for the construction of the deepest oil pipeline in Gulf of Mexico, an 8,000-foot deepwater pipeline with the potential to reshape the region's oil industry.

In the past year, Hand kept busy working on another major oil industry coup: the discovery of Haynesville Shale, a natural gas deposit found in Northern Louisiana and East Texas.

The underground shale field has brought a rush of speculators and natural gas companies to the area. A number of them have turned to Hand, who has experience with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regulations and Louisiana law. He says the boom is good not only for his practice, but the region as a whole.

"Even though we are in difficult economic times, these companies are investing billions in Northern Louisiana and creating hundreds of jobs," he said.

A New Orleans native, Hand is active in local political circles and works regularly with Rebuilding Together New Orleans, a recovery organization.

"After Katrina, we saw so many out-of-towners here. It was important to me that locals were also doing the work to rebuild our community," he said in explaining why he chose to dedicate time to rebuilding homes around the city.

Hand is optimistic the city will weather the national recession.

"Prior to the downturn, there was such a rush to get oil pipelines in the ground. Things are slowing, but we are still generating jobs and moving forward."•

— Ariella Cohen





Pauline Hardin

Position: partner, Jones Walker

Age: 59

Family: husband, Allain; daughter, Kathleen, 20

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

In any lengthy legal career, there will inevitably be some unique or quirky cases. Very few, if any, attorneys can lay claim to having prosecuted white supremacists for attempting to launch an invasion of a harmless Caribbean island.

Pauline Hardin can.

In 1981, some members of the Ku Klux Klan, headed by Don Black and assisted by a few other Neo-Nazis, decided to take over the island of Dominica.

Their plan, nicknamed "Operation Red Dog," was to meet up with local rebel leaders, overthrow the government and place the Confederate flag and the Nazi flag on an island where the majority of the population was of African descent.

Before they could launch their invasion, the activities of Black and his co-conspirators attracted enough attention that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the FBI investigated them. The men were eventually charged with launching an armed military expedition against a friendly nation.

Hardin, who is now a partner with Jones Walker, got to try the case, which the local media dubbed "The Bayou of Pigs."

"The trial was one of those amazing things you never get to see," Hardin said.

The entire courtroom was filled with guns, ammunition, ordnance, camo outfits — all of which had been logged in as evidence. The case attracted worldwide attention, and the courtroom was packed with journalists from all over the globe. Hardin's parents were in Belgium at the time and heard their daughter's name mentioned on the Belgian news.

Black and his co-defendants argued they were trying to rescue the people of Dominica from what they called a Communist government even though the island was a British protectorate and far from Communist. Hardin won the case.

It is cases such as the U.S. v. Don Black why Hardin loves litigation.

"The cases that you handle are all different."

The clients, the businesses, the points of contention can all vary wildly from case to case, she said.

Aside from her civil litigation work, Hardin devotes considerable time to pro bono cases, where she primarily serves as a defense attorney for people who cannot afford counsel, and representing clients on death penalty cases.

"My time is devoted to my work and my family."•

— Fritz Esker

A.J. Herbert III

Position: chairman of the business services section, Middleberg, Riddle and Gianna

Age: 46

Family: single; children, Katie, 18, Jonathan, 15

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, Loyola University; juris doctor, Tulane University School of Law; master's in banking law, Boston University

A.J. Herbert III is hard-pressed to think of a single case that has given him the greatest satisfaction during a two-decade career.

But a single principle, he said, has guided his work as a health care and corporate law attorney for Middleberg, Riddle and Gianna: If a client thinks they are in the right, he is willing to wage the battle for them at the appeal level.

In an era when many cases end well before that, such persistence is no small thing.

"Very often a client will approach things from a strictly cost-benefit analysis and make a determination on the fees that they are going to spend proving they are right, not to mention the emotional energy involved."

Herbert, who has served as a member of the Louisiana Healthcare Commission as well as treasurer for the Louisiana Leukemia Society, has emerged as one of the state's leading professionals in a field where health care and the law converge.

And that experience left him with the conviction that oftentimes defendants, even against the most daunting odds, will ultimately triumph if they are willing to persevere.

"Of course there are no certainties," said Herbert, who also specializes in insurance regulation and banking law. "And because of the delays in reaching a decision, there can also be a built-in incentive within the system to try and get people to mediate their disputes."

Yet, Herbert said he understands why clients often opt out of litigation.

"The risks of losing are great, not to mention the time delays and diversions from business. And every minute a CEO is thinking about a lawsuit is a minute less than he is thinking about how he is going to grow the business — and that's something that also has to be taken into consideration."

All an attorney can do is lay out the options and make a recommendation, Herbert said.

"But in the end, it has to be the client's call to make."

When clients do opt to pursue a case to the end, the rewards can be worth the anxiety and frustration.

"One case threatened to tear apart a successful company employing a lot of people," Herbert said, recalling his work in a corporate shareholder dispute. "It was a hard case, but we at least reached a settlement and in the process saved jobs. And that was a very good feeling."•

— Garry Boulard





William Hines

Position: managing partner, Jones Walker

Age: 52

Family: wife, Mary; children, William, 25, Mary, 21, Elizabeth, 15

Education: bachelor's degree/certificate of proficiency, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University; juris doctor, University of Virginia School of Law

As Hornets point guard Chris Paul sinks a 3-point-er at the New Orleans Arena, William Hines is working behind the scenes as part of the reason the city still has a National Basketball Association team.

Hines, managing partner at Jones Walker, assisted Hornets owner George Shinn with his legal affairs when Shinn bought out Ray Wooldridge's share of the team early in 2005.

It was reported that when Shinn and Wooldridge were co-owners in 2007, they often had disagreements. Before they split, they rarely spoke to each other, which slowed the growth of the franchise's success in New Orleans during its first two seasons.

"When you have two partners and one is buying out the other, there's emotion involved," Hines said. "It goes beyond the black and white items on paper. It was challenging."

When the Hornets moved to Oklahoma City for two seasons after Hurricane Katrina, Shinn had to decide whether to stay there or return to New Orleans.

"After a year, there was still some concern as to what the future held," Hines said. "Mr. Shinn wanted to come back, and I needed to assist him in whatever he wanted to do. Even an optimist would not have expected the record crowds that attend Hornets games today."

Hines is chairman of the board for the New Orleans Arts Council, which he said helps artists obtain health insurance and provides them with free legal services when they need contracts written.

"We have a better mix now of not just visual artists, but more representation of jazz, the symphony, opera and ballet."

Hines, whose work includes helping to create new businesses, is optimistic about Louisiana's future but said everything depends on how long the economy takes to turn around.

"Industries like shipbuilding, construction and health care are likely to do well," Hines said. "Gulf Opportunity Zone money is starting to flow to this area. Within a year the price of oil and gas will go up, which is the strength of Louisiana. It would be great for Louisiana to be in the forefront of alternative energy in the next 10 to 15 years."•

— Lisa Bacques

Ralph Hubbard

Position: senior named partner, Lugenbuhl, Wheaton, Peck, Rankin and Hubbard

Age: 59

Family: wife, Nancy; daughters, Jessica, 24, Caroline, 16

Education: bachelor's degree in history, Louisiana State University; master's degree in Russian history, LSU; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Ralph Hubbard has always enjoyed the art of compromise and said his skill at persuading people led him to pursue a career in law.

"It was something I enjoyed since high school," Hubbard said. "I am a good arguer."

Hubbard said he enjoys the competitiveness of the courtroom and being in situations where you either win or lose depending on how well you argue a point.

"You learn a lot about every aspect of humanity in law. It always pays off to be completely honest and always better off not being too greedy with what you ask for."

Hubbard's practice focuses on insurance law, which frequently ended up as the lead story for various news outlets in the past few years as insurance companies sorted through claims related to Hurricane Katrina.

In his highest profile case, Hubbard was co-counsel for Lafayette Insurance Co. in a case that decided many Katrina-related issues pertaining to flooding and what insurance companies could exclude from policies.

"The plaintiffs in the case argued that the definition of flooding is ambiguous," Hubbard said. "They argued that if it could be caused by nature, it could be caused by man. We argued that the definition is not ambiguous and that a flood is a flood no matter what."

The case, *Sher v. Lafayette Insurance Co.*, was taken to the Louisiana Supreme Court, where Hubbard and his team won a 7-0 decision in favor of the insurance company.

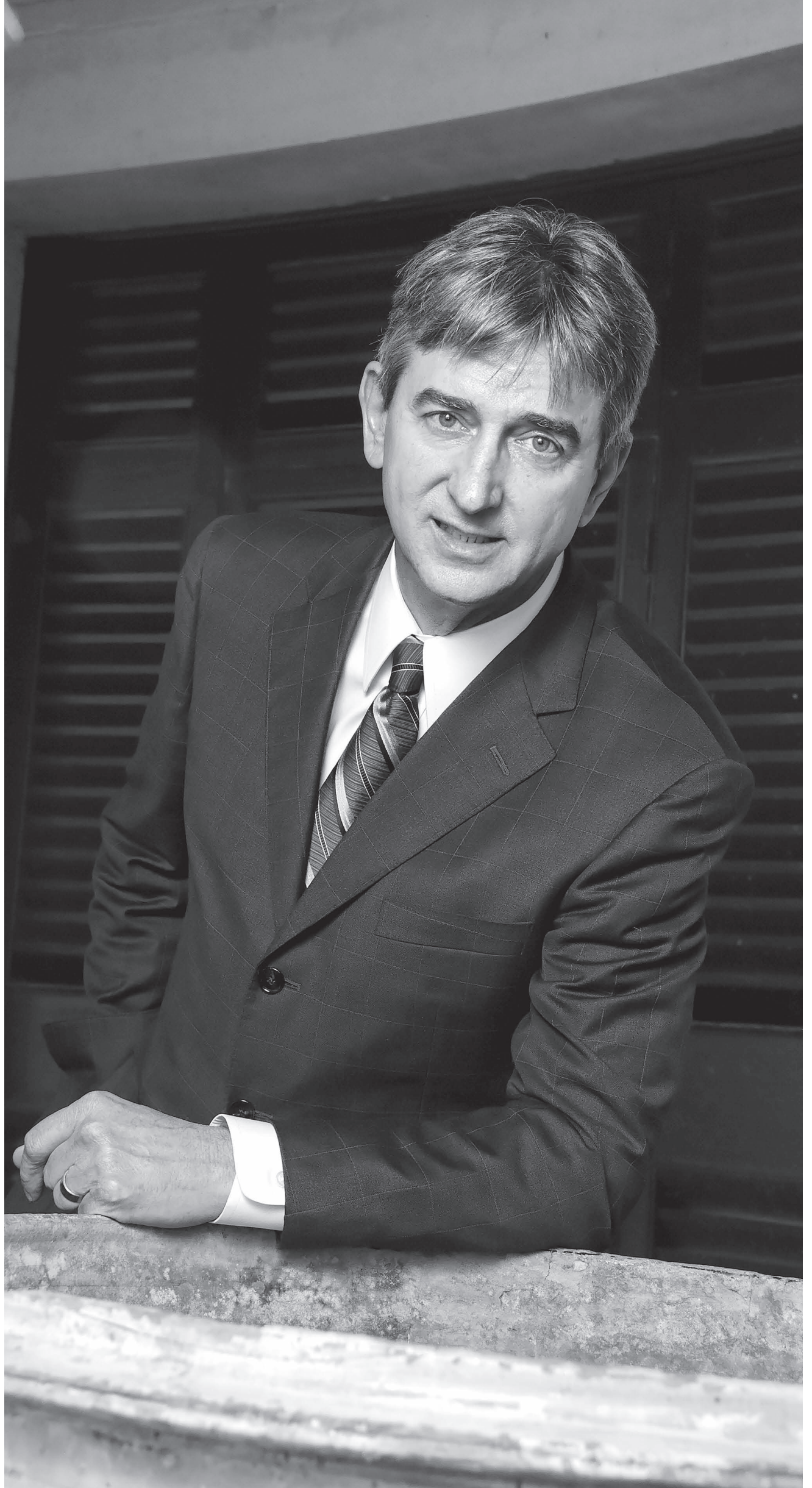
"If I had lost, the company would have had to pay billions to their insured. It would have changed the lives of several people in New Orleans."

Hubbard said he has devoted the past three years to insurance companies and insurance law. Since Katrina, he has acted as liaison counsel for the insurance industry in many cases pending in the Eastern District, as well as 19 cases in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.

"Everyone has been working so hard on both sides of the issue," Hubbard said. "I think the people in New Orleans represented themselves well and have done the right thing."

When he is not on the golf course, Hubbard spends most of his free time with his family or working on various civic organizations with his wife, Nancy. •

— Robin Shannon



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- George J. Fowler, III,
Managing Partner,
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Robert Johnston

Position: partner, Fowler Rodriguez Valdes Fauli

Age: 41

Family: wife, Michelle; daughter, Elizabeth, 4

Education: bachelor's degree in English, University of Georgia; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Pairing maritime and energy with an entertainment law practice may seem unusual to the casual observer, but for Robert Johnston it's a perfect fit.

The New Orleans firm of Fowler Rodriguez Valdes Fauli, where Johnston has been a partner since 2000, hired him to work in its marine and energy law practice. His interest in entertainment law grew out of 15 years of moonlighting as a guitar player in a band known as the Boondoggles.

"I also had a lot of friends who were musicians who were in desperate need of legal services," Johnston said.

Johnston's practice has expanded even more since Hurricane Katrina to include construction, class action litigation and other areas.

In one of his favorite cases, he represented Jefferson Parish marine company Crescent Ships Service, which had recently gone through a criminal prosecution for pollution violations.

"At the end of (the trial) they had purchased a lot of equipment to try to make sure they never had any problems in the future, and the equipment didn't work. The manufacturer, at least from our point of view, hid that fact from the company."

With his client at risk for future criminal sanctions because of the malfunctioning equipment, Johnston took the manufacturer to court. He and his legal team recovered more than \$500,000, including penalties, attorneys' fees and interest, and the \$50,000 cost of the equipment.

As the son of an attorney, Johnston remembers being fascinated by the cases of his father, Bob Johnston, and convinced that every legal dilemma had a clear-cut right and wrong answer.

"Then, of course I went to law school and found out it was all gray areas."

Trying cases is what Johnston loves most about being a lawyer.

"It's the most enjoyable, interesting part of the practice. I was trying a case in Lafayette about a year after Katrina. The judge saw me going into the courthouse and said, 'You look like you're having a lot of fun.' I said, 'I am.' This is why I do all the other stuff that I don't like about the practice law, so I can get to do this."

Outside the office and the courtroom, Johnston volunteers as vice president of the Audubon Riverside Neighborhood Association.

"My interest is primarily in public safety, trying to work with the police and the association to address crime in the neighborhood."

He also does pro bono work for fellow musicians.

"I've joked with some of my clients that the only people who need lawyers more than musicians are death row inmates, and neither of them has much in the way of resources to afford lawyers."•

— Sonya Stinson



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Howard Kaplan

Position: partner, Bernard, Cassisa, Elliott and Davis

Age: 49

Family: engaged to Jeannine Dickens; daughter Candace Ferrer, 23

Education: bachelor's degree in general business, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center

Howard Kaplan's passion is appellate law, which makes sense, given that his first job out of law school was serving as a clerk to the Louisiana Supreme Court, where he helped write opinions.

"If appeal work could keep me busy, that's what I would do. I always had a knack for writing, from the time I was in the legal writing class at LSU, to my work for Justice (Fred) Blanche," said the Shreveport native.

After clerking for Blanche, Kaplan accepted a job with Bernard, Cassisa, Elliott and Davis, where he has worked since 1985 and is now a partner.

Kaplan became a lawyer, like his father before him, knowing that a career in law was always where he was headed, even if he knew that he would practice a different type of law.

"My dad was a plaintiff's lawyer. I do mostly defense work." And Kaplan has made quite a name for himself as a defense attorney, particularly in the area of product liability and insurance defense, two areas where he has received successful rulings at the state and federal courts.

One of Kaplan's most recent and high profile cases, *Sher v. Lafayette Insurance Co.*, came about as a result of the insurance claims associated with Hurricane Katrina. Representing the insurance companies, Kaplan successfully established that flood damage is excluded under a homeowner's policy. And while the *Sher* case might not be the most popular ruling among homeowners, Kaplan is able to keep the courts' decisions in perspective.

"This was a once-in-a-lifetime case. Had there been a ruling the other way, it would have significantly and adversely impacted the insurance industry and business community."

He admits that his work has gotten more interesting in recent years because of the legal questions Katrina created.

"The practice of law changed overnight. Attorneys are dealing with legal issues that had never been dealt with, that had never been raised before, with little to no established law as a guide."

Though Kaplan spearheaded the *Sher* case, he is quick to share the success.

"There were many people involved in that case — Ralph Hubbard, specifically. Many people assisted in writing the brief. The entire industry was looking at it."

Kaplan is also quick to give back to the city through pro bono cases each year and participating in the Solace program, a New Orleans nonprofit designed to offer support and help to people in the legal community who have suffered because of a tragedy. •

— Abby Kral



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Brian Katz

Position: partner, Herman, Herman, Katz and Cotlar

Age: 39

Family: wife, Lisa; children Ethan, 7, Logan, 3

Education: bachelor's degree in broadcast communications, University of Alabama; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Brian Katz was one of many attorneys who represented Riverwalk Marketplace businesses when the Bright Field freighter hit the mall Dec. 14, 1996, a time when businesses were anticipating not only Christmas and the Sugar Bowl, but also the Super Bowl the next month.

The businesses had lost about \$15 million in income, but the Chinese vessel was worth much less.

"We were able to overcome that and resolve the case for a much fairer number," Katz said.

Post-Hurricane Katrina, Katz fought private insurance companies to regain lost income for small businesses.

"It was probably easier to deal with the Chinese government," he said.

Growing up calling his father's legal partners uncles, he worked at Herman, Herman, Katz and Cotlar many summers while he was in high school as a copy clerk, file clerk and even once as the janitor.

Katz originally went to school to become a sportscaster but turned to law soon after graduating.

Three lawyers had left the firm around the time he graduated from law school, and the day after his bar exam his mother told him he was going to work the next day. He had inherited all of the cases those men had left behind.

"I was assigned to trial the day after I was sworn in," he said. "Good thing it was settled because I didn't know what I was doing."

Katz worked in the firm for seven years before becoming a partner and said he learned a lot by watching his father treat his opponents respectfully.

"You'll get a lot further acting professionally than you can as a jerk."

After Katrina, Katz tried disaster cases and interruption insurance cases.

"Sometimes the only way these people can be heard is through their lawyer."

Katz said one of his proudest cases was when he was able to "recover every dime" for a West Bank woman who had lost her house.

"For me, it was personal because the same thing had happened to me," he said, referring to the 11 feet of water his house had taken after the storm.

Katz is still working on many disaster insurance cases for small businesses and said he feels a connection to helping them because it will help bring New Orleans back.

"Hurricane cases are so desperately in need of the money to fix their homes or restart their businesses."•

— Katie Urbaszewski





Robert Kerrigan Jr.

Position: partner, Deutsch, Kerrigan and Stiles

Age: 66

Family: wife, Kay; sons, Tyler, 35, Robert III, 32; grandsons, Thomas and Robert

Education: bachelor's degree, Spring Hill College; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

As head of the civil litigation department at Deutsch, Kerrigan and Stiles, Robert Kerrigan Jr. is a highly experienced trial lawyer who has tried disputes of just about any matter.

To cite any one case wouldn't be fair, Kerrigan said, but one of the bigger cases he's been involved with was between 1982 and 1985 when he served as lead trial counsel in about 200 suits arising from the Pan Am Flight 759 crash in Kenner in 1982.

Kerrigan is also liaison counsel in Louisiana and Arkansas in defending thousands of asbestos claims on behalf of members of the Center for Claims Resolution. He also represented an insulation manufacturer in a \$17 million asbestos abatement claim and represented the New Orleans International Airport in federal pre-emption litigation concerning interference with a local entity with an \$80 million runway project.

"I try lawsuits of all varieties and don't specialize in any one type of trial. I've tried products, medical malpractice, legal malpractice, aviation, construction, securities, expropriation and all types of disputes that find their way into a courtroom," Kerrigan said.

Kerrigan, whose father was a founding partner at the firm, joined immediately after finishing law school in 1969. He has worked on a number of other notable cases during his career and enjoys the challenges that each case brings and the opportunity to learn from clients, expert witnesses and other lawyers.

Kerrigan defines success as being open and cooperative with the firm's lawyers. When it comes to clients, it's about producing good results and when it's in the courtroom, he said success is about writing clearly and simply knowing what interest the courts have in a case.

"In terms of leadership, clients look for lawyers to lead them to matters that they cannot handle for themselves. Lawyers in this city also have to take on a bigger leadership role in ensuring that politicians and city government serve the people," Kerrigan said.

Kerrigan also plays a role in his firm's community involvement that includes White Linen Night, the Louisiana Bar Association Secret Santa Project and a program by the Preservation Resource Center to rehabilitate homes in the New Orleans area.

When he's not working, Kerrigan enjoys spending time with his family, traveling, hunting and playing golf. He also enjoys taking a role in marketing the firm's services and growing its clientele. •

— Craig Guillot

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Roselyn Koretzky

Position: partner and chairwoman of the health care department, Milling Benson Woodward

Age: 57

Family: husband, Barry Schwartz; children, Harlan, 23, Arielle, 18

Education: bachelor's degree in education, Louisiana State University; master's degree in education, Boston University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Roselyn Koretzky admired her late father's work as a physician but didn't want to venture into a medical practice.

So she chose instead a career dealing with the legal issues of health care.

"My father loved to heal people, and he was the type of doctor that made house calls. All he wanted to do was make people well," Koretzky said. "In my work, I try to heal people of their legal problems."

As a partner and chairwoman of the health care department at Milling Benson Woodward, Koretzky is not a litigator. Instead, she counsels clients such as hospital systems and physicians on a variety of legal matters, including medical staff issues, risk management, defense of medical malpractice claims, health care decision making, government compliance and regulatory matters. She also focuses on elder law, biotechnology and education law.

"I enjoy strategic negotiating and resolving disputes with others. Through the kind of work I do, we can avoid litigation," Koretzky said. "I have clients who are involved in so many different aspects of health care."

She stays abreast of the tremendous regulation in health care, including the fine print her clients may miss. Much of her work is confidential and not a matter of public record.

Koretzky is tremendously interested in elder law, which she persuaded Milling Benson Woodward to include, and has focused on the subject in community outreach and educational seminars and lectures.

She developed the interest through her community work.

"I was stunned to find out how prevalent the problem is and in many cases, who the abusers are."

She also serves as president of the New Orleans Council on Aging's board of directors and is a board member for the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, the advisory council of the Greater New Orleans Regional Center of the Alzheimer's Association and St. Anna's Residence.

Koretzky is excited about the future of health care in the United States, particularly regarding the renewed possibilities of stem cell research under President Obama.

"On a personal level, it is my hope that through stem cell research ... cures can be found for these horrible diseases and illnesses that will benefit everybody who suffers."•

— Diana Chandler

Gerald Meunier

Position: partner, Gainsburgh, Benjamin, David, Meunier and Warshauer

Age: 60

Family: wife, Kathy; children, Justin, 29, Claire, 26

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, Georgetown University; juris doctor, Georgetown University Law School

Even if the end result is not what the client and lawyer wanted, important legal work can still be done.

That was the situation for Gerald Meunier in the case of *Irma White v. Monsanto*.

White was a middle-aged woman who worked at the Monsanto agriculture plant in Luling. One day, she was hanging around co-workers who were doing something they shouldn't have been doing, and the supervisor saw it. Even though White said she wasn't doing anything wrong, the supervisor scolded White, using the "F" word repeatedly.

White suffered a panic attack because of the verbal assault and had to be hospitalized, later suing Monsanto for the intentional infliction of emotional distress. Meunier represented her, and while the initial jury verdict ruled in favor of White, the Louisiana Supreme Court overturned the verdict.

Despite a disappointing end result, Meunier still believes it was an important case.

"Even though Irma White didn't make a recovery for what she was willing to stand up for, we were able to establish what the criteria of proof would be for a new type of case," Meunier said.

A case with a happier ending for Meunier involved a class-action lawsuit over a chemical release at a plant in Bogalusa. The challenge was that the chemical plant was one of Bogalusa's biggest employers and most of the jurors were from Bogalusa.

Despite the challenge, Meunier was able to win the case for his clients and the jury awarded \$92 million in punitive damages.

"It was a case where the jurors really rose to the occasion," Meunier said. The jurors "put aside their fears for their economic security and jobs."

The plant was right across the street from a school, and a school bus had passed in front of the plant just before the explosion. Had the explosion happened a few moments later, several children might have died.

The case was important to Meunier because he believes corporations should behave responsibly.

Meunier was also chairman of the New Orleans Pro Bono Project, which provides free civil legal services to the poor, and he devotes a substantial amount of time to helping the homeless. Assisting the underdogs and disadvantaged has always been a passion for Meunier.

"I've always had the notion that we have to give back to the world from the gifts that we were given."•

— Fritz Esker





Christopher Mora

Position: officer-in-charge, Regional Legal Service Office Southeast, Branch Office New Orleans

Age: 34

Family: wife, Filomena; children, Peter, 3, Sofia, 3 months

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, University of New Orleans; juris doctor, University of Pennsylvania Law School; master's degree in public administration, Harvard University; master's degree in national security and strategic studies, U.S. Naval War College

As a Navy attorney, Christopher Mora wonders if a military jury is the jury that “was envisioned by the founders of our country.”

“When they thought of a jury of one’s peers, they thought of an educated and informed class of individuals,” said Mora, who is a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General Corps. “And a military jury is most likely that, comprised of commissioned officers as well as enlisted servicemen.

“That kind of jury is not always available in civil cases,” Mora said.

A citizen of the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, Mora is one of only two tribal members ever to have graduated from law school.

Receiving master’s degrees in national security and strategic studies, and public administration, Mora has served as a legal assistance attorney with the Naval Legal Services Office Central in Gulfport, Miss.

In that capacity, Mora has represented servicemen in Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee and Florida before dozens of courts-martial as well as administrative boards. From 2002-03, he also served as the sole legal counsel to more than 30 Navy commands on the Gulf Coast, offering advise in such areas as administrative, constitutional, contractual, criminal, employment, environmental, inter-agency and ethics laws.

“I will be rotated through different types of positions — one time I might be a general counsel, the next time might be more of a litigating type of position.”

Mora, who was briefly in private practice, said he’d consider going back to it but enjoys being an attorney in the military because it allows him to craft solutions for the people responsible for Americans having a free legal system.

In 2006, Mora served as executive director of the Northshore Business Council, concentrating on public policy issues such as development, infrastructure, taxation and legislation affecting St. Tammany Parish’s business community.

Just more than a year later, the Navy asked Mora to serve on active duty recall as officer-in-charge of the Regional Legal Services Office Southeast, Branch Office New Orleans, making him the sole military counsel for all Louisiana Navy installations.

Combining a love of the law with a love of country, Mora said his service as an attorney is not memorable because of any one case but rather because of the opportunity his work has given him to “preserve a democratic republic, a strong national defense and freedom of opportunity for citizens as individuals and as entrepreneurs.”•

— Garry Boulard

William Patrick

Position: partner, Heller Draper Hayden Patrick and Horn

Age: 54

Family: wife, Melanie; children, Meridith, 22, Madeleine, 20, William III, 15

Education: accelerated undergraduate law program, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center

William Patrick said he always was interested in law but was drawn into the profession because of an interest in people.

"I see it as one of the few professions where you can meet with people, talk on the phone and go to meetings to solve problems and come to a final solution," Patrick said. "That, and I never had an interest in science or math."

Patrick, who's been practicing law since 1977, joined Heller Draper in 2000, where he focuses on Chapter 11 business reorganization, debt restructure negotiations and insolvency-related litigation. He has been the principal reorganization counsel to debtors in large bankruptcy cases in the gaming, television, real estate, hotels, orthodontic practices and energy industries.

Patrick has represented casinos and creditors dealing with casinos in New Orleans and Baton Rouge but is best known for his work representing Harrah's Jazz Co. in bankruptcy proceedings pertaining to construction of the city's \$820 million land-based casino in the early '90s.

Patrick explained that Harrah's was temporarily operating out of the Municipal Auditorium while the permanent structure was being built. The company fell into bankruptcy in 1995, closed the temporary casino and halted work on the permanent building.

Patrick guided the company through Chapter 11 proceedings and brought the project back on track for completion in 1998. It was the first legal work he had done in the New Orleans area after spending most of his time in Baton Rouge.

"I was on television or in the paper almost every other day during that time. It was a very controversial case we were dealing with."

"Working through financial situations and helping businesses survive is a challenging way of life. It is a very tense and pressurized atmosphere during most of these cases. You learn that there are frequently many sides to a situation, and each side has an element of truth. You have to learn the value of compromise."

Other notable cases include representing the debtor in possession in the bankruptcy case of Cajun Electric Power Corp. Inc., as well as representing the holders of \$320 million in secured bonds in the bankruptcy case of Entergy New Orleans.

Patrick splits time between offices in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, where he engages in a good bit of pro bono work. He is involved in various organizations at University Methodist Church and spends most of his free time with his family watching his children play basketball. •

— Robin Shannon





Sharon Perlis

Position: president, Perlis and Associates

Family: single

Education: bachelor's degree in French, Principia College; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

While Sharon Perlis concentrates mainly on transactional matters nowadays, she had plenty of fun when her calendar was filled with litigation cases.

One memorable lawsuit required Perlis to find a creative way to establish ownership rights for an elderly woman who had been paying taxes on some Jefferson Parish land across from Lakeside Shopping Center.

"We were trying to get the parish's attention, and they would not respond," said Perlis, president of Perlis and Associates. "They did everything they could to delay the matter because they would not acknowledge that she had an interest in the property."

Then, Perlis and her fellow legal "young turks and mavericks," as she calls them, hit upon the idea of placing a large "for sale" sign on the property, a tactic that got the attention of parish officials.

"It was hysterical, and we got what we needed," she said. "They bought the property from her."

As a litigator, Perlis has done everything from representing families in wrongful death cases to defending a foreign airline after a plane crash.

Perlis is part of the family that has owned and operated the Perlis clothing store in New Orleans since 1939. That background fostered an affinity for entrepreneurs that she incorporated into her law practice by offering small business counseling. She also has testified before Congress on small business issues, having served as a Louisiana delegate to the White House Conference on Small Business, and is a two-time winner of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Advocate of the Year Award.

"I have always been convinced that small business was the lifeblood of the local economy and the nation. It's the small businesses that really provide more jobs and stability to local communities, and they care about their employees."

Perlis' volunteer service includes membership on the boards of the local Federal Reserve, the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, the New Orleans Board of Trade, the World Trade Center of New Orleans, the Louisiana Children's Museum, WYES-TV, the Christian Health Ministries Foundation and other groups.

She served on the Port of New Orleans' Board of Commissioners during a major expansion at the Nashville Avenue Wharf.

"I loved serving on the board of commissioners for the Port of New Orleans," Perlis said. "It was enriching. It fit right in with my interest in international trade and commerce. My work now with the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad is a natural fit with the former service on the dock board."

One of her most satisfying moments on the railroad board was seeing the recent completion of the new complex on Tchoupitoulas Street, she said. •

— Sonya Stinson

Kenneth Pickering

Position: partner, Pickering and Cotogno

Age: 70

Family: wife, Marguerite; children, Eric, 45, Pamela Cunningham, 43, Amy McClain: 41; grandchildren, Lily, Dixon, Alexander, Alex, Farris, Mckenzie and Madeline

Education: bachelor's degree in business, Louisiana Tech University; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

When Kenneth Pickering of Pickering and Cotogno first served as Louisiana's commissioner of financial institutions in 1976, he oversaw the closing of International Citibank in the largest state bank failure at the time in the United States.

"The system by which you closed a bank and then got court authority for another bank to take over was virtually unchartered," Pickering said.

The bank officially closed at 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2, 1976. After ruling in favor of Pickering and accepting the bank owner's consequential appeal, the judge ordered the Court of Appeals to organize at 1 a.m. Sunday morning. The case didn't end until 3:30 a.m. when the bank owner conceded.

When he started law school as a married man, Pickering planned to use his degree to expand his parents' business, Pickering Services. By the time he graduated, he and his wife, Marguerite, had three children. He decided it would be better to practice law than to continue with Pickering Services.

Forty years later, Pickering's practice has involved all aspects of banking law and bank regulatory practice, beginning with the chartering process and continuing to the merger and acquisition of healthy and problem institutions.

Throughout his career, he has also assisted clients in public, real estate and corporate law. For 25 years, he has served as the general counsel to the Crescent City Commission.

When giving advice to today's law students, Pickering said he tells them, "Work hard, be honest in every way that you deal, return all phone calls and be respectful to every one you deal with."

Pickering puts as much effort into his philanthropic as his law career. As an Eagle Scout, he has stayed involved with the Boy Scouts of America, including acting as chairman for Southeast Louisiana in 2005 and 2006.

"I've been everything there is to be in Boy Scouts," he said, adding that he is the chairman of the 100-year anniversary for 11 Louisiana parishes.

He is also active with Baptist Community Ministries, which makes grants to improve education, health and government supervision, and provides pastoral care and church nurse programs in 140 churches.

"Everyone needs to be involved to help the underprivileged, help in education and make our community a better place to live."•

— Amy Ferrara Smith



2009
LEADERSHIP
in
LAW

Event photos

More than 400 people attended the 2009 Leadership in Law cocktail reception March 5 at the New Orleans Museum of Art. CityBusiness presented medallions to the 50 honorees upon arriving, and News Editor Christian Moises and Associate Publisher Lisa Blossman recognized each honoree during a presentation later in the evening. Seven attorneys were also the first to be inducted into the Leadership in Law Hall of Fame. These photos and more can be seen on the CityBusiness photo gallery at www.neworleanscitybusiness.com.
Photos by Frank Aymami



Honoree Danny Shaw, left, and Dee Flint.



Honoree Randy Snyder with husband, Terry.



Honoree Mark Carver with Shelley, left, and Joan Carver.



Honorees Ken Pickering, left, and Jerome Reso with Carreen Reso.



Honoree William Reinhart and Claire O'Neal.



From left: Pat Baker, honoree Ken Pickering, Denise Johnson and Howard Clow.



From left: Linda Couch with husband and honoree Chris Couch and honoree Loulan Pitre with wife, Tiffany Peperone.



The 2009 Hall of Fame honorees are pictured with Craig Henley, second from left, director of sales for BCI Communications; CityBusiness Associate Publisher Lisa Blossman; and CityBusiness News Editor Christian Moises, top right. Hall of Fame inductees, from left: Wayne Lee, James Williams, John Houghtaling, Scott Wolfe Jr., Steven Lane, Walter Leger and David Sherman.



Honoree Tim Daniels with wife, Georgette.



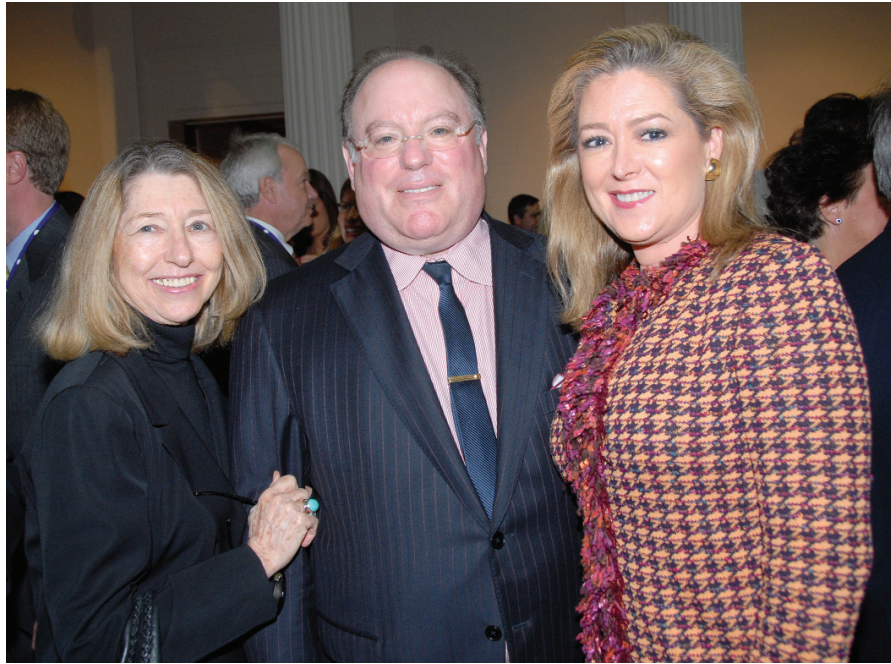
From left: Leo Hemelt, Peggy Vallejo and honoree Chris Ralston.



From left: Michael Minix, Vonde Rice with her husband and honoree Charles Rice.



Honoree Tara Richard with husband, Keith Hinson.



Hall of Fame honoree Steven Lane with Jerri Cullinan, left, and Juli Miller Hart.



From left: Marlis Perlis and David Perlis with honoree Shannon Perlis.



Honoree Brian Katz with wife, Lisa.



From left: Louana Frois, honoree Monica Ann Frois, Eve Masinter and Eddy Frois.



From left: Honorees Ralph Hubbard, with wife, Nancy, and Hal Welch, with wife, Judy.



Loulan Pitre Jr.

Position: partner, Gordon Arata McCollam Duplantis and Eagan
Age: 47
Family: wife, Tiffany Peperone; children, Emilie, 16, Mathieu, 13
Education: bachelor's degree in history, Harvard University; juris doctor, Harvard Law School

A former member of the Louisiana House of Representatives and a graduate of Harvard Law School, Loulan Pitre Jr.'s practice includes litigation and counseling involving oil and gas matters, environmental issues, construction disputes, and land and water rights in Louisiana's wetlands.

"I like working on challenging problems, especially in things that are distinctly Louisiana," Pitre said. "That's why I like things like property rights and environmental issues that are about our geography and uniqueness as a state."

Pitre's clients have included oil companies, construction firms and public agencies such as the Greater Lafourche Port Commission and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources.

His most monumental case, *Meaux v. Unocal et al.*, was in August, when he was lead trial counsel for two oil companies in a three-week trial in rural Louisiana. In 2006, he also served as a lead trial counsel for a major oil and gas company in a three-week jury trial. It was one of the first trial cases subject to a 2006 legislative enactment designed to ensure proper remediation of environmental damage caused by oilfield operations.

Pitre was first elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1999 and re-elected in 2003. He was an author and floor leader for several pieces of legislation affecting coastal restoration and highways. In 2007, Pitre completed his second four-year term in the House and served as chairman of Gov. Bobby Jindal's Transition Advisory Group on Coastal Restoration and Flood Control.

Born and raised in Lafourche Parish, Pitre said he has always had a strong interest in Louisiana's unique geography and natural treasures. Having left small-town Louisiana to attend Harvard, Pitre returned to practice in an area that was close to his heart. He credits his success as an attorney to finding what his passion was and following it.

"To me it is more of an intellectual interest than anything. Find those things and become good or better in a narrower area. You can be so much more competent and skillful if you focus on what you are good at."

Outside of work, Pitre enjoys spending time with his family and being on the water, whether it's rowing, scuba diving or sailing. He also enjoys reading nonfiction books and has been a die-hard reader of the "Economist" for more than 20 years. •

— Craig Guillot

Christopher Ralston

Position: partner, Phelps Dunbar

Age: 40

Family: single

Education: bachelor's degree in international relations, College of William and Mary; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Christopher Ralston believes pro bono work is “the rent lawyers pay for the space they occupy.”

The metaphor is an apt one for the 40-year-old attorney. A partner in the commercial litigation practice in Phelps Dunbar's New Orleans office, Ralston is well versed in all matters real estate — especially now in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans.

As a commercial litigator, the bulk of Ralston's practice focuses on anti-trust and business litigation, including intellectual property rights. Yet in the aftermath of a storm that left the fate of tens of thousands of properties hanging in the balance, the Tulane-educated lawyer has found himself handling more real estate-related cases than ever. Clients range from indigent homeowners in need of pro bono assistance to major developers seeking damages on a property claim or resolution to a title issue.

“After Katrina, there was a huge need for lawyers to take care of these things and bring properties back to productive use,” Ralston said.

One case that stands out in Ralston's mind is a \$26 million real estate development suit he successfully prosecuted. The case involved archaic Louisiana property law and a claim that Ralston's client could not use a property he owned for residential development, as he had been told he could when he bought it.

The young lawyer won the case by obtaining preliminary and permanent injunctions in favor of his clients, who were subsequently allowed to develop and use the property as they had been promised. Thanks to Ralston's hard work, the property is now being sold and is available for residential redevelopment.

He said such cases have a profound ability to reshape the city for all its inhabitants, not just his clients.

“These are business issues, but they are also very personal. If a property is tied up or not being used in the best way, it is no good for the property owner or the city in general.”

When he's not in the office, Ralston keeps busy within the city's legal community. As chairman of the public service committee for the New Orleans Bar Association, Ralston promotes his beliefs in pro bono work. Through the bar association, he has provided free legal consulting at two local homeless shelters and helped connect lawyers to people in need of assistance with the succession cases that flooded the area after Katrina.

Last year, Ralston worked with Harrah's New Orleans Hotel and Casino on its first Charity Poker Tournament in 2008, which raised more than \$13,000 for the Pro Bono Project.

“The indigent need help here and we as lawyers are uniquely suited to provide it.”•

— Ariella Cohen





William Reinhardt

Position: attorney and head of business section, and labor and employment law section, Blue Williams

Age: 64

Family: wife, Clare O'Neal; children, Trey, 38, Claire Wells, 36; stepchildren, Lydia Jenson, 37, Darren Slack, 35; nine grandchildren

Education: bachelor's degree in history, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center

For attorney Bill Reinhardt, representing businesses and employees in New Orleans is about much more than labor law.

In the Gulf Coast's post-Hurricane Katrina era and during the nation's increasingly bleak economic forecast, Reinhardt believes sustaining New Orleans' unique business culture has become even more important.

"A lot of people are still investing a lot of money in New Orleans because they see New Orleans as a unique city," said Reinhardt, who worked independently for nearly 30 years before joining the Blue Williams law firm in 2005, where he now heads the business section, as well as the labor and employment law section.

Through his own work, Reinhardt's efforts have helped to preserve various New Orleans traditions — perhaps most significantly its unique restaurant culture.

K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen is one of the restaurant clients Reinhardt has been represented for decades and continues to represent since moving to Blue Williams.

"When Paul (Prudhomme) first hired me to be his attorney, his office was his table right outside of the kitchen, and we would have meetings there and he would sample food coming out of the kitchen," Reinhardt said. "He would have me sample the food, too, and I put on like 30 pounds to represent him."

In addition to his legal work, Reinhardt has found ways to promote the city's culture through various nonprofit endeavors, work which became particularly meaningful after the 1992 birth of his grandson Max, who had profound cerebral palsy.

Reinhardt serves as chairman of the board for the Fore!Kids Foundation, which promotes the Zurich Golf Classic in New Orleans and does fundraising for local children's nonprofits.

"What that does, particularly since Katrina, is give us an opportunity to showcase to the world that New Orleans is still open for business and we can still do what we did before.

In his role at Fore!Kids, Reinhardt also goes on the road to recruit professional golfers and gets to act as an ambassador of New Orleans culture.

"We have somewhat of a mixed message that we're sending. One is that we're open for business and, from a tourist standpoint, things are back to normal. But we need your help in order to be able to bring back our citizens that were a part of the fabric of this city," Reinhardt said.

"And that's a message that sometimes can be difficult to deliver."•

— Leah Bartos

Jerome Reso

Position: member of the executive committee, Baldwin Haspel Burke and Mayer

Age: 72

Family: wife, Careen; children, Jay, 45, Patrick, 44, Robert, 42, Jennifer, 33

Education: bachelor's degree in business administration, Loyola University; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

In a long career as a tax attorney and certified planning and administration specialist, Jerome Reso Jr. has noticed the one unchanging ingredient in tax law is that everything constantly changes.

"Our tax laws are complicated really because our economy is complex," said Reso, who is a member of the executive committee at Baldwin Haspel Burke and Mayer and has been primarily responsible for building one of the state's largest tax groups at the firm.

"In addition, tax laws have often been burdened with social goals that Congress from time to time wants to achieve. If they want people to do a certain thing, they provide a tax incentive to do it and the result is that things get patched on."

For that reason, Reso's services as a tax attorney have always been in demand. His career began in the early 1960s when he signed on as an attorney for the Department of Justice's Tax Division.

Representing U.S. clients in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia, as well as throughout North America, Reso is widely published, having written on such issues as taxes and civil rights, estate planning, the challenges of the incorporated professional and Louisiana probate, and succession procedures.

"Some of the cases I've been involved with have ended up being landmarks in the tax field," he joked in response to colleagues who refer to him as a landmark attorney doing landmark work in his field. "But tax laws change frequently and sometimes these landmarks go with them."

Reso also has dedicated himself to education by serving as an adjunct faculty member at Loyola University's College of Law, where he has served as a visiting committee member and chairman of Loyola's president's council for five years.

In 1988, Reso joined the board of directors at Brother Martin High School and later became a member of the board at Mount Carmel Academy.

After Hurricane Katrina severely damaged both schools, Reso committed himself to help reopen the schools.

"Both of these schools were knocked flat by the storm, and both were up and running by January 2006, just four months later. That was really a great thing to take a part in."•

— Garry Boulard



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Charles Rice

Position: partner, Barrasso, Usdin, Kupperman, Freeman and Sarver

Age: 44

Family: wife, Vonda; children, Jordan, 14, Charles III, 11

Education: bachelor's degree in business administration, Howard University; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

While many lawyers are lured to the profession by prestige or aggressive recruiting from a high-powered firm, Charles Rice was lured back into the practice of law by a heartfelt letter from his son.

After working a stint for Jones Walker and as senior counsel for Entergy, Rice stopped practicing law to work as city attorney, later becoming chief administrative officer for the city of New Orleans.

He was in his third year with city government when he received a letter from his son, Jordan. In the letter, Jordan said he needed to see more of his dad.

"I decided to return so I could get more balance in my life," Rice said.

While family might have been the impetus of his return, there is still much about practicing law Rice enjoys.

Working in product liability and commercial litigation, he enjoys dealing with businesses and helping clients solve their problems, especially when one of their products comes under attack. Often, the products Rice defends are medical devices designed by companies that want nothing more than to help the community.

"When people manufacture a product, they take great pride in those products."

Last year, Rice represented the makers of a medical device against an attorney who claimed to have suffered damages from the device that caused him to lose his job, as well as a significant amount of income. He also claimed to have suffered mental anguish.

What made the case particularly challenging for Rice was that he took over the case from a lawyer who had admitted the device was defective before any independent tests were made.

However, after objective testing was completed, it was determined the device was not defective. In the middle of the trial, the plaintiff reduced his demand to 10 percent of the figure he had originally been asking for in the lawsuit.

In addition to his work with product liability and commercial litigation, Rice does pro bono work in family law with divorce and child custody cases.

"I enjoy public service, and it's a way to give back to the community while practicing law at the same time."•

— Fritz Esker





Tara Richard

Position: partner, Jones Walker

Age: 37

Family: husband, Keith Hinson; dogs Lexi and Enzo

Education: bachelor's degree in journalism, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; juris doctor, Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center

You can safely assume a typical bankruptcy involves a financially troubled client with one of the following circumstances: loans are coming due; they have productivity issues or they sell a product no one wants to buy anymore.

When Tara Richard began working on the Entergy bankruptcy case after Hurricane Katrina — and on the eve of Hurricane Rita — none of the above applied.

“It was completely different than any other bankruptcy you would ever have,” Richard said. “We always knew that we had to work through it — everyone needs electricity and gas.”

While Entergy hemorrhaged money performing infrastructure repairs, no money was coming in since the client's customer base had virtually vanished.

“The unsecured creditors wanted to go one way, and the company wanted to go another. We eventually came to an understanding, and the debtor's plan was what we went with.”

Richard's list of community involvement is long, and in many cases she's a founder or organizer, not just a participant.

She takes leadership roles as part of the American Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division Public Service Committee-New Orleans chapter, including organizing annual golf tournaments, and the New Orleans Bar and Grille, all of which raise money for legal assistance for the underprivileged.

On a smaller scale, Richard has informally “adopted” 10 blocks near her New Orleans home, which she keeps clean.

Richard's husband, Keith Hinson, is a major source of support for her civic activities.

“She's one of those people who, while she enjoys her work, it's the community service, that intangible stuff, that really drives her,” Hinson said. “No matter how heavy the workload gets, she always makes time to put together a fundraiser. She's amazing at that. She keeps on going, but you know, a lot of it is 8 a.m. till 8 p.m. (workdays).”

Richard, who represents debtors and people who are filing for bankruptcy as well as people who are owed money, said it's very important to her to protect their interests.

“On the other side, I kind of believe Gandhi's saying about ‘be the change you wish to see in the world.’ We all have to make a difference in our own little corner of the world,” she said. “You can't just sit by and complain about things. You need to take action. You become that change.”•

— Kathryn Jezer-Morton

Monica Sanchez

Position: managing partner, Cochran-Latino, The Sanchez Firm
Age: 36
Family: single
Education: bachelor's degrees in economics and political science, Ohio University; juris doctor; Loyola University College of Law; master's degree in international and comparative law, Tulane University Law School

Monica Sanchez received a call about a year ago from a Hispanic mother whose 16-year-old son was in trouble with the law and was considering dropping out of school. Sanchez represented him in court several times on a pro bono basis, clearing him of all charges.

"He called me one day and said, 'Not only am I going back to school, I want to go to college now. God and life have given me a second chance,'" Sanchez said.

"I touched his life and that's why I went to law school. I wanted to help people in their time of need."

Sanchez earns a living as a personal injury attorney, as managing partner of Cochran-Latino, The Sanchez Firm, but builds her career on helping the Hispanic community navigate the legal system, focusing on simple to complex problems.

"The Hispanic population here doesn't have a voice. They need help in everything," she said, pointing out that Hispanics are at a loss in the United States because they don't know the legal system and the basic rights it affords.

"If I can make life a little bit easier for them, it's better for me. I like helping the little guy."

The bilingual attorney grew up in Panama, where her parents and siblings still live. She fell in love with New Orleans while attending law school and has since settled in a home in Lakeview.

Sanchez estimates she spends just as much time on pro-bono cases, community outreach and free legal advice as she does making money on personal injury cases, but enjoys them all the same.

"I'm very passionate about my position. I'm a very fair person. If fairness is on my side, I'll fight that to the end. It's also rewarding when you give a multi-million dollar check to someone who's really hurt."

She's handled several personal injury cases in her 10-year career and served as second chairwoman on a jury trial in 2004 that recovered \$6.4 million for the client.

Sanchez participates in one or two community outreach events a month, offering free legal advice at events such as church fairs and sports tournaments and via a radio talk show.

She considers providing quality legal help to one client at a time to be her highest goal.

"If you do the right thing for the right reason on a consistent basis, the rest will take care of itself."

One of the few Hispanic attorneys in the city, she serves as vice president of the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Louisiana, a multi-cultural group she is working to reorganize. •

— Diana Chandler





Scott Schneider

Position: associate general counsel, Tulane University

Age: 36

Family: wife, Wendy; children, Emily, 9, Jacob, 6, David, 3

Education: bachelor's degree in economics, University of New Orleans; juris doctor, Washington and Lee School of Law

Though his professional experience is in law and his undergraduate studies were in economics, Scott Schneider takes a philosophical approach to his role as an employment lawyer.

"To break it down to a very simple level, if you want to engage in the antagonistic approach — which is you've got the protagonist employer and the antagonist employee, and you have to exercise dominion over the employee at all times — then there's going to be a response to that, and the response is typically either in poor performance or in litigation," he said.

Schneider, who works as associate general counsel for Tulane University, prefers to take a more inclusive approach.

"There are some who would say the only constituency that I should be concerned about is protecting the interest of the employer and the consequences that flow from that. I think that's entirely too narrow," he said. "The two aren't mutually at odds. It's not like if you care about employee issues that you're somehow in conflict with representing the needs of the employer — quite to the contrary."

Schneider's passion for philosophy, however, expands beyond the negotiation table. For leisure, Schneider verses himself in the works of existentialist philosophers, including Kierkegaard and Camus, and listens to philosophy courses on tape during his commutes.

And, as Schneider points out, one of the perks about working at Tulane is the opportunity for university employees to take courses tuition-free.

"I thought about getting an MBA because I guess that's what responsible old people like me do," Schneider laughed. "But there's a part of me (that's) really into philosophy and English. ... It's completely useless in terms of ever being able to make money, but it's just fascinating to me."

In addition to bettering himself through academics, Schneider is also engaged in various community service projects, including serving on the boards for the Louisiana Court Appointed Special Advocates, a children's advocacy group, and the Hospice Foundation of the South. Schneider is also one of Gov. Bobby Jindal's state ethics board appointees.

Schneider said some of his most meaningful community work came while serving as a defense attorney representing indigent offenders in Orleans Parish Criminal Court from 2006-08.

"It was the most pressure-packed thing I've ever done because you're not dealing with money anymore; you're dealing with someone's life," Schneider said.

"It really underscored to me so many problems in New Orleans and maybe throughout the country," Schneider said. "It's going to be a tremendous challenge to fix those problems, and you really get a sense of how tremendous the problem is by going down and getting involved in one of these cases."•

— Leah Bartos

Danny Shaw

Position: shareholder, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell and Berkowitz

Age: 61

Family: wife, Susan Shaw; children James, 24, Jesse, 21

Education: bachelor's degree in civil engineering, Louisiana Tech University; juris doctor, Georgetown University Law School

Danny Shaw knows the sleepless nights that come with working a life-or-death case. Unlike many construction lawyers, however, Shaw knows what it feels like to be the one whose life is on the line.

In the late 1980s, Shaw represented a general contractor building a major oil production facility in Kuwait in a dispute with a subcontractor on the project. As the dispute dragged on, tensions between the small Gulf nation and Iraq began to heat up.

In early 1990, as Saddam Hussein's missiles began to light skies across the region, Shaw was scheduled to fly to Kuwait to arbitrate the case. The life-threatening scenario was averted at the last-minute when Shaw successfully resolved the case in a London-based mediation shortly before the planned arbitration in Kuwait.

"Had the mediation not been successful, I very well could have been Saddam Hussein's house-guest," Shaw said.

After Hurricane Katrina, that training in battle zone conflict resolution came in handy.

Selected to represent the state owner of the Superdome in writing a contract to renovate the building, Shaw, along with Terry Brennan, who represented the contractor, took on the responsibility of getting a complicated contract done in time for the Saints to resume play there in September 2006.

In addition to protecting the state and obligating the contractor to perform the work on an expedited basis, the construction contract had to conform with overlapping state and Federal Emergency Management Agency requirements. Not to mention the fact that the entire city was anxiously watching for the deal to go through and the home of the Saints to be rehabilitated.

"All eyes were on the project," Shaw said. "It meant so much to the city and we had to do it right."

The Saints fan knew his hard work was worth it when the team beat the Atlanta Falcons 23-3 in a spruced-up and sold-out Superdome on Sept. 25, 2006.

Shaw's commitment to the region doesn't stop with his law practice. As a board member and co-chairman of the public policy committee for the region's public-private economic development organization, Greater New Orleans Inc., the Mandeville father of two advocates for the area's growth.

In his St. Tammany base of operations, Shaw has served as a board member of the West St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce and remains active with First Baptist Church of Covington, where he is one of four trustees. •

— Ariella Cohen





David Sherman

Position: partner, Donelon, Donelon and Sherman

Age: 57

Family: wife, Jane; children, Philip, 28, Matthew, 26, Amelia, 22

Education: bachelor's degree in business administration, University of New Orleans; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law; master's of law in taxation, Boston University

David Sherman came into his career the good, old-fashioned way — through the influence of his father.

The curious thing is that his father is a retired doctor.

Sherman, general counsel for East Jefferson General Hospital and a number of other local health care facilities, doesn't deny his father's role in his career.

"My first clients were friends of my father's," Sherman said. "He was a physician and he knew other physicians, and after a while I was representing a number of them."

That was 1977. Thirty-two years later, Sherman has made inroads in the medical community that are all his own.

"I would say in recent years I've done fine without too many recommendations from my father," said the chairman of the Jefferson Parish Health Services Task Force.

Appointed to Gov.-elect Bobby Jindal's Health Care Transition Team, Sherman doesn't hide his interest in the intersection of law and politics, especially when the politics have to do with health care.

"I'm not a lobbyist, and I don't hold myself out to be a lobbyist. But I do attend a large number of governmental meetings and promote the case of the hospitals I represent."

The softly rounded way he pronounces vowels, and the "r" sound in his hometown of Kenner, reflect his geographic mash-up.

"When I talk to old friends in New York they tell me I sound completely Southern. Here people tell me I have a New York accent."

Sherman moved to New Orleans from New York at age 6 when his father, instead of being called to serve in Vietnam, was ordered to work at the hospital at Camp Leroy Johnson, now the University of New Orleans, where Sherman graduated.

These days, Sherman, a past president of the University of New Orleans Alumni Association, does pro bono legal work for the university.

"It's an interesting circle." •

— Ariella Cohen

Randye Snyder

Position: shareholder, Liskow and Lewis

Age: 59

Family: husband, Terry

Education: bachelor's degree in education, University of Michigan; juris doctor, Michigan State University College of Law

Randye Snyder is constantly trying to make employees and employers happy.

"The most challenging thing is when you're doing mergers and acquisitions of two large companies and trying to meld and weld employee benefit plans," said Snyder, whose practice concentrates on employee benefit, tax and business law.

Originally from Brooklyn, N.Y., she worked as a legal secretary right out of college while she interviewed for teaching positions.

"I found it fascinating," she said of her first experience working in law. Five years later, after realizing she "could do what these guys are doing," she enrolled in Michigan State University's College of Law night school program.

One year earlier on Sept. 2, 1974, the federal government had passed the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. The attorney for whom Snyder worked at the time began handling the ERISA cases for his firm.

"I was like his secretary, paralegal and law clerk," said Snyder, who continued to work for him while she attended law school. As a graduate, she already had five years of experience working in employee benefit law.

Snyder came to New Orleans in 1987 when her husband, Terry, accepted a job in the city. They are now avid Saints and Hornets fans, and although they have lived here for more than 20 years, they frequently play tourist by staying in French Quarter hotels and touring museums.

"I love this city," Snyder said of her adopted home. "Its culture, its diversity, its food. I find it friendly like a small town, but a very exciting place to live in."

Snyder added that there is a great camaraderie among New Orleans attorneys, particularly in her specialty. Her involvement in the law community also includes serving as co-chairwoman for the 2009 Louisiana State Bar Association continuing legal education ERISA and Tax Law Seminar, which will be held in New Orleans in October. She is also active with Easter Seals of Louisiana, offering law advice and helping with fundraisers.

Snyder encourages recent law school graduates to ask questions often of their mentors as she once did.

"While your legal work will be paramount, the business, social and client interaction aspects of your law firm are essential new areas," she said. "Do not simply shadow your mentors and seniors. Ask questions ... not just the legal answers, but also the nuts and bolts of your new working environment and culture."•

— Amy Ferrara Smith





Mark Spansel

Position: partner and executive committee member, Adams and Reese

Age: 53

Family: wife, Joy; twins Shelly and Laura, 29, sons Erik, 26, Brett, 13

Education: attended Tulane University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

It was Sept. 15, 2001, when a tugboat pulling four barges crashed into a causeway in South Texas, taking out a 240-foot section of the bridge, killing eight people and opening a maritime law can of worms.

Who was responsible for the crash? Who would cover the damages, such as the cost of repairing the Queen Isabella Causeway, Texas' longest bridge and the only access road to South Padre Island?

For Mark Spansel, a partner with Adams and Reese, the event was a tragedy, but it also was wrapped in an opportunity to answer tough legal questions.

"It involved some interesting and complicated issues of maritime law," said Spansel, who represented the state of Texas against tugboat owner Brown Water Marine Services Inc., which argued its liability did not extend past the value of the rolled steel they pulled on the barges.

"We were able to overcome the defense of the towboat company and we were able to recover in settlement several million that was well beyond the value of the (cargo)," Spansel said, recalling what he described as the most notable case of his 30-year career.

"What I love most about the practice of law is tackling complicated legal problems and finding the best possible result for the client," said Spansel, who specializes in energy, maritime, environmental and toxic tort, encompassing commercial and class action cases.

Spansel attributes much of his success to the emphasis he places on protecting his clients' interests.

"If I can settle today, I would much rather do that than engage in lengthy litigation that's costly for the client and the legal system. I take a long view of client relationship."

Spansel values the New Orleans community and works to improve it.

He has a passion for his work with the Archbishop's Community Appeal, which he will lead in 2010, and is also active in the Christian Brothers School capital campaign, for which he's raising money to help the school in City Park build a cultural center with classrooms, a library and gym.

"You simply balance things as well as you can and make the time necessary to serve your community."

Spansel plans to continue tackling complicated legal issues and is considering qualifying for the bar in Texas, which is home for many marine and energy companies.

"My goals are to continue to progress into even more complicated litigation where clients have a lot at risk."•

— Diana Chandler

James Swanson

Position: partner, Fishman Haygood Phelps Walmsley Willis and Swanson

Age: 46

Family: wife, Marianne; children, Jimmy, 21, Christopher, 19, Kelly, 15

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

James Swanson's law practice focuses on what he calls "the more complex and esoteric kinds of litigation — a lot of securities, First Amendment and tax litigation."

In a case that garnered national attention, Swanson represented 30 elderly investors in a 2007 National Association of Securities Dealers arbitration involving a Baton Rouge representative of Securities America. The arbitration panel awarded his clients \$22 million, including \$3.5 million in punitive damages, one of the largest NASD awards ever made.

"There have been two other groups of plaintiffs in the same case since that time, and we've made very substantial recoveries," Swanson said.

Swanson, who said he relishes strategizing cases and writing briefs, has had his eye on a career as a litigator since he started law school, even if the choice was somewhat by default.

"When I went to law school, I think I only understood what litigation was," said Swanson, who now is managing partner and head of the litigation section at Fishman Haygood. "I didn't really understand what other things lawyers might do."

Swanson is an adjunct professor at Loyola University College of Law, where he teaches trial advocacy, and at Tulane University Law School, where he teaches media law.

"It's a real privilege to be able to get up in front of 10 or 20 people and give a talk every week. It helps you think about how you are going to make oral presentations, which ties back to what I do as a lawyer all the time."

Besides instructing future lawyers, Swanson recently helped start a venture to educate much younger students. He is vice chairman and co-founder of the Choice Foundation, which operates a kindergarten through eighth-grade charter school, Lafayette Academy.

"After Katrina, a friend of mine and I decide that we would attempt to get a charter for a school. We thought we could do a better job than the Orleans Parish School Board was doing in running schools. ... That was more challenging than we thought it was going to be."

A few months after the school opened, they realized the education management company they had hired to run the school was not working out.

"After a couple of months of warnings and admonitions, we told them that we were going to terminate them as the contract manager of the school," Swanson said. "They sued us for \$5 million and we sued them to terminate the contract. Our firm here handled the case entirely for free."

Swanson and his business partner prevailed and conducted a national search for a new headmaster. Today, he is proud to say the school's faculty is better organized and its physical plan has been upgraded.

"Everybody is pulling together."•

— Sonya Stinson





Frank Tessier

Position: member and past managing partner, Carver Darden Koretzky Tessier Finn Blossman

Age: 54

Family: wife, Carli; children, Mary Elizabeth, 25, Andrew, 20

Education: bachelor's degree in business administration, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center

When you think of a golf course, what generally comes to mind is manicured greens, birds chirping in the trees and fresh air.

Frank Tessier, a member and past managing partner of Carver Darden Koretzky Tessier Finn Blossman, had a different view of golf courses when he handled the purchase of the Belle Terre subdivision in LaPlace.

"It was a very challenging matter," said Tessier, who represented Standard Mortgage, which purchased the golf course and several hundred acres of undeveloped property from the Landmark Land Co. in late 1994.

The golf course had some maintenance problems, and a trash dump on the property had to be closed with the help of the Department of Environmental Quality.

"It was about 1,000 acres, and we had to get good title for the subdivided lots. North of I-10 was pure undeveloped land, and we had responsibilities to make sure there were proper right-of-ways and get title access to public roads and utilities. It took about six months, and it was resolved to our satisfaction."

Tessier has represented a number of developers involved in high profile projects in the New Orleans area, including the building of the Astor Crowne Plaza Hotel on the site of the old Woolworth's building on Canal Street and construction financing for the Elmwood Shopping Center. He acted as the developer's counsel for the acquisition and negotiation of all documents for the Lowe's Home Center of New Orleans, which included resubdividing and rezoning the property before construction.

"The economy has slowed down existing development in '09," Tessier said. "It's definitely a buyer's market — some property owners are selling at a loss and people with cash are taking advantage of that."

Tessier was counsel for the developers of the new Shintech Manufacturing Plant in Iberville Parish and is working with the developers of Ashton Plantation, a subdivision in St. Charles Parish that will have 2,000 homes.

Tessier is on the board of the southeast chapter of the American Red Cross, which includes 13 parishes, and will take over as chairman July 1.

"I've been working with the CEO helping to raise funds. Many people think we are a governmental agency, but we are a nonprofit. Our mission is mainly that of disaster preparation and recovery."•

— Lisa Bacques

Tania Tetlow

Position: associate professor of law and director of the Domestic Violence Clinic, Tulane University Law School

Age: 37

Family: husband, Gordon Stewart; stepson, Noah, 3

Education: bachelor's degree in American studies, Tulane University; juris doctor, Harvard Law School

Tania Tetlow always knew she wanted to work for women's and minority rights, but until recently, her civil rights efforts had been somewhat peripheral to the rest of her career.

Now, as an associate professor at Tulane University Law School and as director of the university's Domestic Violence Clinic, Tetlow can pursue both.

"When this job opened up, it was a great chance to both be in academia — which I was very interested in — but also to do profoundly meaningful work and still practice law. And that's a rare combination," said Tetlow, who had previously worked as a federal prosecutor before taking the job at Tulane in 2005.

"The clinic gives me a chance not just to represent clients, but also to do a lot of policy work in the community and in an issue that I think is the most important civil rights issue of the day," Tetlow said. "Giving people who are trapped in a system of torture the possibility of escape is about as important a job a lawyer can do that I can imagine."

The clinic's students represent domestic violence survivors and work to ensure their personal safety and economic independence by helping them obtain protective orders against their abusers, divorces and custody of their children.

In addition to representing domestic violence victims, Tetlow has also steered the clinic toward policy change and raising general awareness about the issue within the justice system.

"We've spent a lot of time training professionals in the city, from lawyers to police officers to judges, about domestic violence because there are certain aspects of it that are counter-intuitive."

Through teaching Tetlow strives to help her students become strong community leaders, as well as proficient lawyers.

"At our clinic, specifically, we work very hard to make them understand the gaps between the law on the books and what actually happens. We teach them that their obligations as a lawyer are to do more than to just operate within broken systems; that good lawyers are leaders in their community and they work for change of the legal system."

Tetlow believes this approach is particularly important when dealing with the issue of violence against women, citing statistics that an estimated one in four women will be beaten in the United States and that 1,300 women are murdered each year.

"There are multiple other effects that I can cite to people to make them care but the prime one should be that women are dying. The real war here is to convince people that domestic violence is serious."•

— Leah Bartos





Derek Walker

Position: partner, Chaffe McCall

Age: 54

Family: wife, Lynette; sons, Christopher, 21, Phillip, 20

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

Derek Walker has seen it all — flood, fire, oil spill and collision.

The 54-year-old head of Chaffe McCall's international law practice pauses when you ask him to reflect on his most notable case.

"There are a lot of notable cases."

Born in Bogota, Columbia, the son of a Columbian flight attendant and an American oil executive, Walker began his foray into international commerce early. As a young boy attending an elite preparatory high school in Lawrenceville, N.J., during the year while living in Latin America with his family on vacations, he was exposed to the global marketplace before many of his peers even knew it existed.

These days, the trilingual lawyer — he speaks Spanish, Portuguese and English — lists the bulk of his clients as businesses that are either foreign or do business abroad. His international background is a big reason why.

"I can empathize with a different cultural way of thinking, and in a litigation context, that extra ability to communicate comes in handy," he said.

It's not just his background, however, that won Walker his position at Chaffe McCall. Walker's cases run the gamut from personal injury and death to contractual disputes, property damage, products cases, insurance and other international business disputes. A significant portion of his clients come from the oil and gas sector, though he also represents maritime, insurers, trucking and cement interests.

In New Orleans, Walker is representing the owner of the barge that entered the Lower 9th Ward during Hurricane Katrina.

"It is a case that is close to everyone's soul," he said.

While Walker learned the ropes of lawyering in Napoleonic Louisiana, he has in the past three decades tried judge and jury cases throughout the United States, including Puerto Rico, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, Texas, Alabama and California. He estimates that 50 percent of his clients are outside of Louisiana.

An early adaptor to the global economy, the Columbian-born lawyer predicts that in coming years there will be even greater need for lawyers like him who are comfortable moving between distinct international settings.

"Clients are increasingly not looking for a lawyer to handle a case in a specific location, but rather, a lawyer to handle clients wherever they happen to be doing business."

Even as he revels in his jet-setting, ocean-hopping practice, Walker said he hopes more of these companies will do business here in his adopted hometown.

"Traveling is great, but certainly I wouldn't mind having a few more clients with offices right here in my backyard."•

— Ariella Cohen

Hal Welch

Position: partner, Lemle and Kelleher

Age: 57

Family: wife, Judy; son, Thomas, 26

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center

Hal Welch can't think of a downside to being a lawyer.

"The stress of trials is hard, but even that's also very stimulating," he said.

Welch is a partner in the admiralty and maritime law and environmental law sections at Lemle Kelleher, and is primarily involved in litigation involving personal injury, death and property damage.

Welch, who said he wouldn't quit practicing law if he won the lottery, can trace his interest in the profession as far back as 4-H public speaking and eighth-grade debate team competitions.

"But the real blessing of my professional career is how much I like my clients," he said.

One of the cases that stands out in his career determined if a person working on a drilling rig was a seaman and if that drilling rig was a vessel. It drastically affected the people involved, he said.

"I was very happy with the outcome because I thought it was the correct decision. Otherwise, it would be unclear to employers of people building vessels what the status of their workers was, and employers would be less sure of the type of insurance they should buy," Welch said.

Cain v. Transocean Offshore USA Inc. ultimately kept vessels under construction from being defined as vessels in the Fifth Circuit. The New Orleans Bar Association has since asked him to speak about the case because a lot of maritime attorneys thought it was going to be expanded.

"That was a law school exam," Welch said.

He said he gains a deeper understanding of the law from every case, but that case was an especially meticulous learning experience. Despite the effort put into the facts of the case, Welch still stressed the importance of the individual.

"In factual cases like this, I learn a lot about people," he said. "You meet doctors, engineers, deckhands, presidents of companies ... a variety of people that you don't run into every day at your office."•

— Katie Urbaszewski





James Williams

Position: partner, Gauthier, Houghtaling and Williams

Age: 35

Family: wife, Elizabeth; children, Jordan, 5, Kendall, 2

Education: bachelor's degree in psychology, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, Washington and Lee University School of Law

James Williams' most challenging court case to date concluded recently with a \$10 million victory for his client.

Williams, along with colleague Stephen Huber, represented a family-owned company, Firststate Insurance Agency, which began in Boca Raton, Fla., and expanded to Puerto Rico. In its expansion, the insurance agency partnered with JM&A Group, one of the largest providers of finance and insurance products in the automotive industry. JM&A Group, Williams said, agreed to the partnership just to have a Puerto Rico presence.

"JM&A took over and cut our client out as a middle man," said Williams, who added that JM&A Group created an "artificial debt" against the family-owned insurance agency.

In defending Firststate against JM&A, Williams went up against the largest law firm in South Florida in what he described as a "very hostile environment."

"It was the toughest case professionally because it was incredibly evidentiary and documentary-intensive," he said. "There were 50,000 pages of exhibits."

Aside from the volume of the case, Williams said it was difficult for him to see what the powerhouse company had done to his client, a husband-and-wife-team.

"It was also tough being away from home," said Williams, who had to live in Florida away from his wife, Elizabeth, and their two young daughters, Jordan and Kendall, for some of the case.

A New Orleans native, Williams served as a law clerk to Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Bernette Johnson and has since authored several scholarly publications. He also worked as an adjunct professor at Tulane University, where he taught a course in the legal aspects of sports.

"It's truly a matter of sweat-equity," Williams tells young lawyers entering the profession. "You really can get out of it what you put into it."

Williams has not only established a presence in the courtroom but also in the community, serving on the board for the New Orleans Bar Association and for the Good Shepherd School, for which he co-sponsors a scholarship with his law partner, John Houghtaling.

"For those who have been blessed with talents and success, it is incumbent upon us to give that much back."

This perception of his role in the community mirrors that of his affinity for the profession of law.

"I really like taking up for people who can't take up for themselves."•

— Amy Ferrara Smith

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2009, 2008, 2007 “Louisiana’s Super Lawyers”

2008 Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Award - U.S. Sailing Association and U. S. Coast Guard
Commendation for Rescue and Lifesaving

2008 Louisiana Association of Justice President’s Award

2007 Federal Bar Association President’s Award

2007 “Ten Outstanding People”, Family Services Foundation

2006 “Man of the Year” – St. Bernard’s Business & Professional Women’s Club

2005 “Role Model” – Young Leadership Counsel

2005 Finalist for “Trial Lawyer of the Year” Award - Lawyer’s for Public Justice Foundation.

2006, 2000, 1982 *New Orleans Magazine*, “People to Watch”

1999 “Volunteer of the Year,” the Southern Economic Development Council

1999 “Volunteer of the Year,” the Louisiana Industrial Development Executives Association)

1999 Boy Scouts of America, Southeast Louisiana Council,

“The Walter J. Leger, Jr. 1999 Class of Young Americans”

1996 Citizen of the Year”, St. Bernard Parish Chamber of Commerce

1994 Distinguished Community Service Award, Alliance for Good Government

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