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USA, goes to the top performing Mercedes Benz dealership for demonstrating superior performance in various areas of business, including customer satisfaction, new vehicle sales, certified pre-owned sales, leadership and management, parts operations and market penetration.

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On the site of the historic Barton 1792 Distillery, established in 1879 near the "Tom Moore Spring", the same spring we draw our iron-free limestone water from today. The 192-acre distillery is home to beautiful wildlife and many historic buildings, including our still house and 28 aging warehouses. The legendary 'Warehouse Z' stands tall on the western bluff enjoying full summer sun and optimal air-circulation for aging bourbon whiskey.

Every batch of 1792 Ridgemont Reserve is comprised of only the best barrels – each tasted and selected by Director of Distillation and Quality Assurance, Ken Pierce. Not only does Ken have talented taste buds, but years of experience. In 1994



he began work at the distillery and immediately started crafting the flavor profile for 1792. Quality ingredients and barrel aging are two of the most important factors in making great bourbon. "Quality in, Quality out" Ken says, "and when it comes to barrel

aging, it's just like real estate – location, location, location. That's why 1792 ages in 'Warehouse Z' up there on the bluff. Hope you enjoy the taste as much as I do!"

PERFECT 1864 VODKA

Perfect 1864, "The Smoothest Vodka on Earth" is an ultra premium French vodka with a rich tradition that distinguishes it clearly from



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Perfect is the only vodka in the world that can provide certificates of origin and quality for each ingredient and every batch produced. This policy mirrors that of the appellation control system that France maintains to ensure the quality and consistency of the ingredients in its best French wines, champagnes and cognacs. For more information visit www.Perfect1864.com.

PEOPLES HEALTH

Peoples Health strives to optimize the health and well-being of plan members.

Established in 1994, Peoples Health administers Medicare Advantage plans in 14 parishes in south-east Louisiana. Owned by New Orleans area physicians, Peoples Health provides proactive healthcare solutions for plan members fostering better health and affordable care.

Peoples Health also sponsors a variety of programs and organizations that positively impact plan member's health. Some of the programs and organizations sponsored include American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area, Council on Aging and Greater New Orleans Senior Olympics.

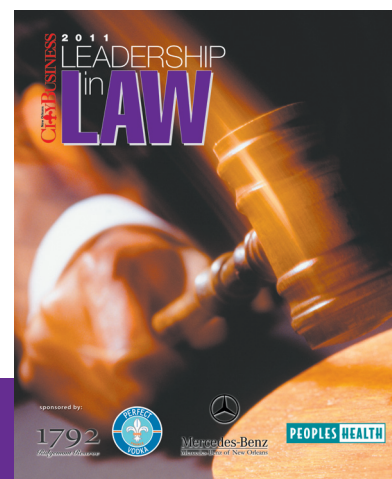


In addition to providing healthcare opportunities for plan members, Peoples Health recognizes that our capacity for suc-

cess is advanced through life experience. That's why, in collaboration with the New Orleans Saints, Peoples Health recognizes individuals for exceptional achievement they have made after age 65.

Above all, Peoples Health also values the people that make all of this happen. The company provides its staff with the opportunity to learn, grow and improve. Professional development and ongoing training are supported through specialized programs, seminars, conferences and tuition reimbursement. The company has been named one of the Best Places to Work by New Orleans CityBusiness.

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The attorney responsible for this advertisement is John W. Houghtaling, II, who can be contacted at our Metairie office.



INTRODUCTION



Christian Moises
 News Editor

Educating the public and facing challenges.

That's what drives the New Orleans City-Business Leadership in Law Class of 2011, which recognizes the area's 50 leading legal professionals based on their professional and community achievements.

In this special issue that highlights the program's seventh year, honorees discuss their most challenging, memorable or rewarding case. Others tell the story of how they ended up in the legal profession.

Many of this year's honorees say the constant introduction of new cases and issues, in addition to the challenges they bring, is why they remain invigorated after decades of practicing law.

Education is also a key element in the lives of local lawyers, whether it's teaching classes at the area's law schools, holding forums for the general public or reaching out to elementary and high school students.

From admiralty law to real estate transactions, employee benefits to medical lawsuits, the 2011 honorees practice the gamut of specialties. Many have argued cases that have paved the way for future rulings or fought for standards that have had a profound impact of the general practice of law.

Some have gone back to school to earn a degree in their specialty to give them an advantage in the courtroom while others have crossed international borders to defend their clients.

Four honorees are being recognized for a second time: Joseph Bruno, Donna Klein, Christopher Mora and Antonio Rodriguez.

All but seven of this year's 50 honorees graduated from a law school in Louisiana, with 18 earning their juris doctor from Tulane University Law School, 18 from Loyola University's College of Law and seven from Louisiana State University's Paul M. Hebert Law Center.

Those are encouraging figures, showing our legal community is committed to staying in the area and helping the region grow.

Many in the industry often are unfairly characterized, but this year's honorees prove those judgments are unwarranted. They show that at the end of the day, attorneys are committed to fighting for what's right and are devoted to social justice.

CityBusiness thanks each of them for their professional and civic efforts and the differences they make.

Congratulations to the Leadership in Law Class of 2011. •

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

Congratulations



Daniel E. Davillier

**On being named to
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**Congratulations to
 Timothy H. Scott**

For Being Included in CityBusiness Leadership In Law 2011



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PAST HONOREES

2010

Neil Abramson
Paul Batiza
Christopher Beary
Walter Becker
Marcus Brown
Stephen Bruno
Leon Cannizzaro
David Carrigee
Richard Chopin
Celeste Coco-Ewing
Stephen Conroy
James Conway
Christopher Couch
Meredith Cunningham
Rene Curry
Martha Curtis
Leonard Davis
Richard Exnicios
Delos Flint
Philip Franco
Francine Giugno
Lambert Hassinger
Jan Hayden
Stephen Herman
Stephen Huber
Greg Johnson
Henry King
Ted Le Clercq
Andrew Lee
Ivan Lemelle
Jim Letten
Marjorie McKeithen
Malcolm Meyer
Lori Mince
Jeffrey Mitchell
Kim Moore
Bryce Murray
Edward Poitevent
Christopher Ralston
Monica Sanchez
Bradley Schlotterer
Seth Schmeeckle
Marta-Ann Schnabel
William Schwartz
Richard Simmons
Robert Steeg
Charles Taylor
Rykert Toledano
Marie Williams
Rachel Wisdom

2009

Hirschel Abbott
Lawrence Abbott
Jesse Adams
Paul Andersson
Jonathan Andry
Mark Carver
Robin Cheatham
Christopher Couch
James Daigle
Timothy Daniels
Kelly Duncan
Ernest Edwards
Gene Fendler
Robert Fisher
Richard Foster
Gus Fritchie
Monica Ann Frois
Lawrence Hand
Pauline Hardin
A.J. Herbert
William Hines
Ralph Hubbard
Robert Johnston
Howard Kaplan
Brian Katz
Bob Kerrigan
Roselyn Koretzky
Gerald Meunier
Christopher Mora
William Patrick
Sharon Perlis
Kenneth Pickering
Loulan Pitre
Christopher Ralston
William Reinhardt
Jerome Reso
Charles Rice
Tara Richard
Monica Sanchez
Scott Schneider
Danny Shaw
David Sherman
Randy Snyder
Mark Spansel
James Swanson
Frank Tessier
Tania Tetlow
Derek Walker
Hal Welch
James Williams

2008

William Aaron
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
Fredrick 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 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
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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
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Wayne Lee
Jonathan McCall
Michael McGlone
Robert Mouton
Antonio Rodriguez
Dionne Rousseau
Leopold Sher
Mark Surprenant
Robert Vosbein
David Ware
Scott Whittaker

Mark Davis

Title: Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy director

Age: 57

Family: wife, Susan; children, Isaac, 8, Joanna, 4

Education: bachelor's degree in accounting, Indiana University; juris doctor, Indiana University School of Law; master of laws in taxation, Georgetown University Law Center

A long-time expert on water resource management and stewardship, Mark Davis has helped raise public awareness of damage to natural resources as a result of the Deepwater Horizon platform explosion and ensuing oil spill last summer.

"What we learned from all of this is that if you really want to do things well, you have to have your plan laid out before trouble arrives," said Davis, who is a senior research fellow and director of the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy.

Immediately after the accident, Davis spearheaded a workshop for responders and others involved in the cleanup designed to explore and promote better ways of coordinating community response to such accidents.

"The default rule is that you go back and do the same things you did before," Davis said. "But with Katrina as well as the BP spill, we have tried to make the institute a part of helping people to understand not just the laws and policies that we have related to this area, but helping them to do the ground work."

Davis formerly served as a general counsel to the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation and was general director of the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana for more than a decade.

"If you don't use your laws and policies for change," he said, "you should not be at all surprised when not that much good comes from a really bad event."

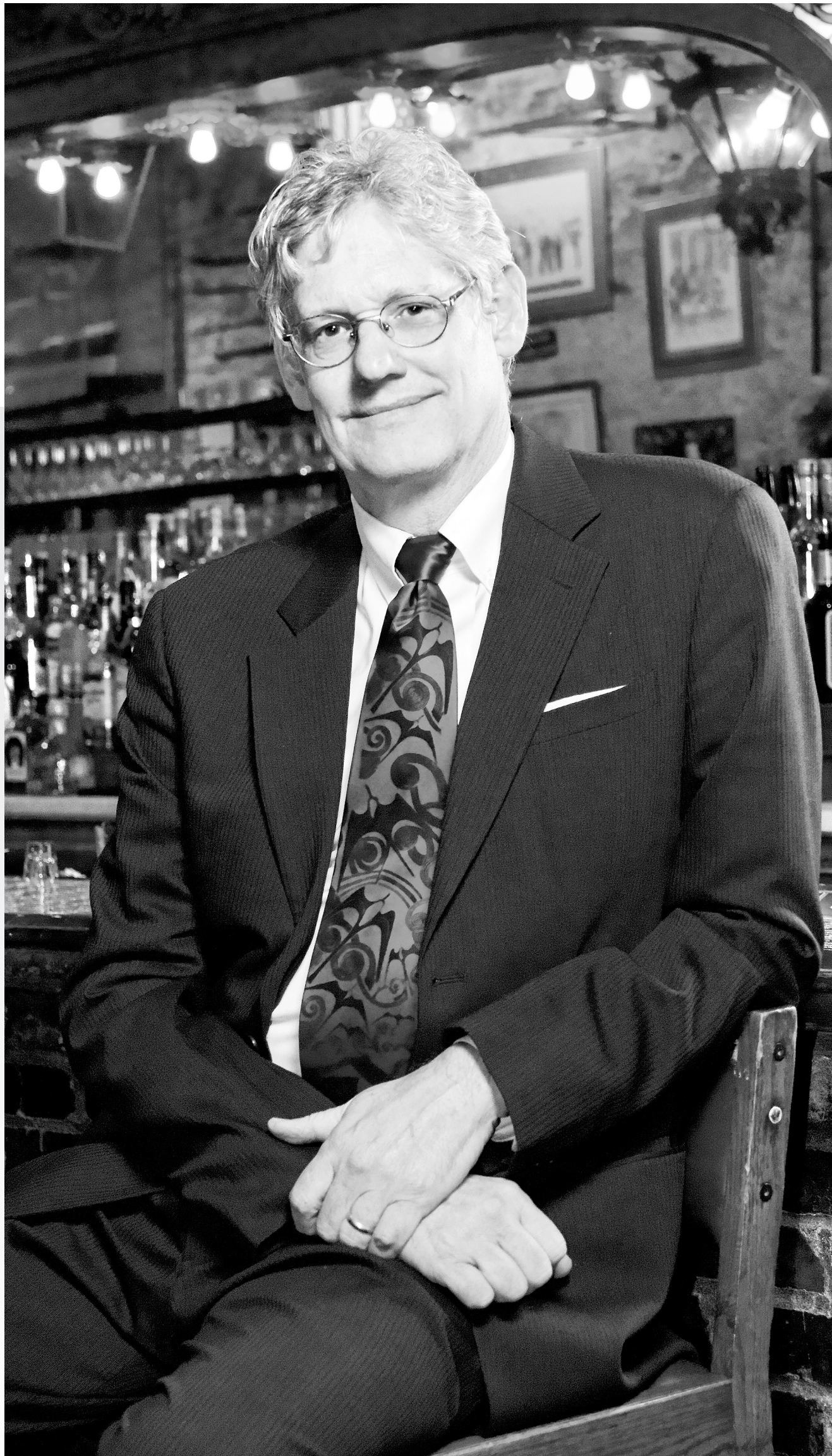
Davis was instrumental in the creation of the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy, which was officially launched in 2007.

"I regarded it as a career milestone being given this opportunity, and I still try to make the most of it every day," he said. "This is a place and community where how we manage water is going to in many ways define the future. And that is not true just from an academic standpoint."

Davis' community involvement intersects with his work at Tulane, such as his participation in a public ceremony last summer hosted by the United Houma Nation, a Native American tribe whose land was impacted by the spill.

"Community service is not what we are doing here outside of work," Davis said. "It is part of what we do in our work. If we are not helping to serve the public interest of the community, then we are probably not doing what we are supposed to do."•

— Garry Boulard



Oliver Houck

Title: Tulane University Law School professor

Age: 72

Family: wife, Lisa; children, Cyprian, 34, Gabriel, 30

Education: bachelor's degree in English, Harvard University; juris doctor, Georgetown University

Oliver Houck said his passion for the environment goes back to his early years in Massachusetts. But he didn't realize it would end up becoming a career until he was into his 30s.

"I grew up in the woods and spent summers on Cape Cod marshes," Houck said. "I worked in national forests and I have always been close to natural resources. I will use any excuse to be outside."

Houck practiced as a law clerk, criminal lawyer and federal prosecutor after graduating from law school in 1967. That was when he realized the direction his career would take.

"At about the same time I was getting out of law school, the movement surrounding the creation of Earth Day was getting started," Houck said. "I happened to be there and it rang a bell."

After practicing in Washington for a few years, Houck came to New Orleans in 1971 as an environmental lawyer to begin working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on an 18-year project to help devise legislation to save the Atchafalaya Basin from development.

Ten years in, Houck began looking for another place he could work as he continued his work with the swamp, so he took a job with Tulane University.

"I never decided at any point in my life that I wanted to teach," Houck said. "I was always a lawyer pushing an agenda. I was looking for a place to be that was close to the Atchafalaya. The job at Tulane was actually rather accidental, but it has been extremely satisfying for me."

He has also served as general counsel and vice president of the National Wildlife Federation and consulted the government in Cuba and other Latin American countries on developing environmental law.

Houck has taught courses in environmental law dealing with coastal issues, wetland issues and endangered species, as well as environmental human rights. He also has authored two books on historical environmental issues.

Most recently, his work has involved classes and curricula pertaining to last year's Gulf of Mexico oil spill, in addition to the Deepwater Horizon Lecture Series organized by Tulane Law School that addressed legal, technical, economic and community impact from the spill.

"The BP blowout lecture series attracted more than 120 students," Houck said. "It was a very popular and gratifying course of lectures for the students."

Although his passion is strong for his work, Houck said he realizes sometimes it can be a losing proposition.

"More things get polluted than we can clean up," Houck said. "We lose more than we can restore, but you just keep doing it. The wins are sometimes temporary, but it is satisfying."•

— Robin Shannon

Donna Klein

Title: People's Health general counsel

Age: 64

Family: husband, Russell; children Robin, 39, Steven, 47

Education: associate's degree in nursing, Manatee Community College, Florida; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

During her last year at McGlinchey Stafford law firm, Donna Klein spent so much time at Peoples Health, one of the firm's clients, she decided to transfer to full-time employment with the Medicare plan provider.

Supervising Peoples Health's buyout of Tenet's 50 percent ownership of the company consumed most of her final months with the firm. Klein describes it as a very large and complicated case, encompassing taxation, regulatory and corporate law issues.

She supervised a team of attorneys from a dozen or so firms.

"It was pretty intense for about five months. I was involved so heavily in the transaction, I think it was a catalyst," Klein said of her move. "I was here probably more than I was at the law firm. I think it made it an easy transition."

Today, Klein oversees a team of attorneys as general counsel of Peoples Health and still considers her job challenging. She participates in two or three national Internet-based seminars each week on Medicare and Medicaid and takes continuing education courses to keep up with changing laws and regulations in the industry.

"In this role, you're day-to-day responsible for overseeing all the legal issues," she said. "I have to be aware of what the company is doing day-to-day. It's a challenging but very rewarding job."

Health care has always been central to Klein's career. She was a registered nurse before going to law school and had a short stint as a stay-at-home mom in between.

"I thought that the combination of having a medical background and a legal background just seemed like it would be a good combination," she said.

But she had no idea 30 years ago about the legal issues that would surround health care today. The heavy regulation of the industry came after she graduated from law school.

"It wasn't nearly so regulated and complicated for health care providers back then," she said. "I don't think anybody back in the late '70s thought that it would become this highly regulated and complex system. It's almost like I was in the right place at the right time."

Klein works to improve educational opportunities in Louisiana, spending a couple of days a month in Baton Rouge as a member of the Louisiana Board of Regents for Higher Education. She's especially concerned with health care education, focusing on training and retaining physicians and nurse practitioners to meet a growing need in the state.

Among the nonprofits she supports is Louisiana Artworks, where she serves as chairwoman of the board and is working to complete the Lee Circle facility designed as an incubator for artists with several venues for visual arts. She is also a board member of the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts. •

— Diana Chandler



Christopher Mora

Title: Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans commanding officer

Age: 36

Family: wife, Filomena; children, Peter, 5, Sofia, 2

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

What Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Mora likes most about his job as officer-in-charge of the U.S. Navy's Region Legal Service Office Southeast is the built-in diversity of duties.

"I am both a Naval officer as well as a lawyer," said Mora, the sole military commander for all Navy installations in the state, including the Naval Support Activity in Algiers and Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse. "This means that I often end up serving in roles that are not necessarily legal-oriented, as well as roles that are."

Mora came to his current post in the fall of 2007 after serving as staff judge advocate at the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport, Miss., and legal adviser to the NATO Allied Joint Force Command and U.S. European Command Send State Office in Italy.

Mora points to last summer's BP oil well explosion in the Gulf of Mexico as an example of how his job duties change.

"When that happened, I was on duty as the Naval Air Station's battle watch captain," he said. "I was therefore responsible for coordinating an emergency standup of the runway on our air station where we could receive air-lifted injured workers."

But as a lawyer for the facility, Mora also has been responsible for managing the Navy's local litigation process, which he said centers on recovering the cost of the work the Navy did in terms of its aid response.

"It is litigation but it is also domestic operational law, which includes the intersection of the Stafford Act, the Oil Spill Act and the environmental and legal issues associated with the oil spill and response," Mora said.

That was not the first time Mora has directed a large and complicated project for the Navy. He also has helped guide the Naval Support Activity's transition under the Base Realignment and Closure process, which is redeveloping the base into Federal City, a 162-acre, \$500 million public-private partnership project considered one of the largest of its kind in the nation.

"The Naval Air Station will be the only Naval base here when the Naval Support Activity closes," he said. "So it's important that things do not occur that will impinge on or threaten the operational viability of the base."

That includes making sure the runway at the Belle Chasse Naval Air Station remains operational, which has led Mora to help acquire land around the base and install restrictive easements.

A member of the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, Mora also has spent countless hours providing indigent representation to Chitimacha members while guiding the tribe in a full-scale review and updating of its code. •

— Garry Boulard



Robin Pittman

Title: Orleans Parish, Criminal District Court judge, Section F

Age: 41

Family: husband, Keith; children, Kaitlyn, 11, Keith Michael, 7

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

Years after they had been raped, the victims stood in Judge Robin Pittman's courtroom.

"Rape cases are the most emotional cases I have," Pittman said. "Those women had changed ... someone had become a fiancée, someone's wife, and yet they had to describe what happened all those years ago."

In one case, the accused rapist showed no remorse, even after being found guilty on every count. But he did have a parting message for Pittman, who had given him the maximum sentence: He said he hoped she'd rot in hell.

"A rapist wants control and power," Pittman said. "At sentencing, I have the control and the power, and rapists hate it. Sometimes they're beyond all help."

Pittman brings cold cases to trial and moves them along for the victims and defendants, and she takes pride in managing her courtroom efficiently, staying as late as a jury dictates.

She began her career as a prosecutor in Orleans District Attorney Harry Connick's office. One of her earliest cases involved a teenage girl who accused a young man of rape, but the girl's story was questionable. And when her mother inquired about getting rich from the case, Pittman sat down with her young client.

"I was your age once," Pittman remembers telling the girl, "and I remember liking boys."

By the end of their talk, the girl had confessed to making up the rape claim as revenge because the boy hadn't returned her affection. The first day of the trial, Pittman went into the courtroom and dismissed the charges against the boy.

"I could have won the case, knowing that she wasn't telling the truth," Pittman said. "But I wasn't a rogue attorney. I had to do what was right."

After having her first child in 1999, Pittman decided to cut back her hours at the DA's office.

"Besides, I was doing only rape and drug cases," she said. "It got to be depressing and overwhelming for me as a new mother."

When she returned to the courtroom in January 2009, it was as judge for Orleans Parish Criminal District Court, Section F. Today, Pittman talks to schoolchildren of all ages, hoping to inspire them to stay in school and stay out of her courtroom as defendants.

"I do invite them to sit through a trial and see people their age come before me and face charges," Pittman said.

Pittman also invites them to contact her, and last Thanksgiving one high school graduate did that. The girl wanted to be a nurse but had never learned to read and couldn't afford a tutor. Her mother was a drug addict.

"We held hands in my chamber," Pittman said. "She said that I was more of a mother to her. And I said, 'If you want to help yourself, then I'll help you.'"

— Anne Berry



Henry Sullivan

Title: 24th Judicial District Court judge

Age: 63

Family: wife, Judy; children, Henry III, 43, Kathleen, 39, Lauren, 37, Alicia, 32

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

As a 15-year veteran of Division M for the 24th Judicial District Court for Jefferson Parish, Judge Henry Sullivan hears cases ranging from first-degree murder to child custody disputes.

“When dealing with cases involving children, those are the ones that weigh heavily on your mind,” said Sullivan, who has four children and six grandchildren. “Sometimes I have to decide on custody cases, who can have the kids or not have the kids. My decision really affects the kids.”

On the civil side, Sullivan presided over a nine-week jury trial in 2000 that was particularly challenging because it included thousands of exhibits. The case, *Access Global Communication of America Corp. et al v. Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. Ltd. et al*, was based on Access Global's complaint that Matsushita, which is now Panasonic, committed fraud, breached fiduciary duty, breached its contract and participated in unfair trade practices. The plaintiff was seeking millions of dollars in damages. With a jury verdict of 11-1, Access Global received nothing.

Sullivan graduated from Loyola University College of Law in 1974. Before his election as judge in September 1996, he practiced law for 22 years. During that time, he served as Jefferson Parish's assistant parish attorney during Harry Lee's tenure as parish attorney. When Lee became sheriff, he asked Sullivan to be the department's legal adviser.

Sullivan later served as an assistant district attorney for Jefferson Parish until 1996, when he resigned to run for judge.

“I thought it was a high ambition or honor to become judge,” Sullivan said. “I am a good listener, and I have the ability to look at both sides of a case.”

Sullivan was also president of the Fourth and Fifth Circuit Judges Association in 2010 and serves on the John C. Boutall American Inn of Court board of directors.

Although he is modest about his volunteer activities, Sullivan is involved in nonprofits that “are all important charities we can relate to because of our different life experiences.” Those organizations include the Gretna Historical Society, Gretna Community Association, Gretna Farmer's Market, St. Michael's Special School and Westbank ARC.

“Although judges are prohibited from fundraising,” he said, “it is extremely important that judges and other local leaders lead by example.”•

— Amy Ferrara Smith

Hank Arnold

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

Age: 50

Family: wife, Gina; children, Ashley, 20; Edward "Chip" IV, 18, Cooper, 10

Education: bachelor's degree in general studies, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

Edward "Hank" Arnold III has a can-do attitude. When the National Board of the Turnaround Management Association asked the Baker Donelson shareholder to participate in a revitalization program for natural disaster-affected areas, he arranged a series of workshops focusing on business recovery, troubled loan workouts and a 13-week cash flow model to be presented in New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

Arnold's positive attitude and what he calls a "cooperative style" are also reflected in his legal practice, which focuses on real estate deals, marine finance transactions and bankruptcy.

"It's always trying to build a consensus and getting the deal done," Arnold said. "It can't always be a win-win. It's all about people and getting people to reach an agreement."

Arnold said the model he's followed in his career is based on the principle that "practicing law is more than just an occupation; it's a profession."

"People who (practice law) have an obligation to help the community and do for those who can't," he said.

Arnold lends his expertise in writing legal articles and speaking engagements relating to real estate loan terms, foreclosure, bankruptcy and purchasing law. He is a member of several professional associations and has served as president of the Louisiana chapter of the Turnaround Management Association as well as on the association's national and Louisiana board of directors, which works to help troubled companies in the recovery process.

When he's not helping clients and legal colleagues, Arnold participates in Baker Donelson's community outreach program, Hands of Hope.

"We have a duty to do more for the community," Arnold said.

Through Hands of Hope, he has worked with Habitat for Humanity, participated in the Walk to Cure Diabetes, Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk and has volunteered as a server at Ozanam Inn, where he took his family on Thanksgiving to lend their services.

This past Christmas, Arnold volunteered through Hands of Hope with the Salvation Army, ringing the famous bell for donations.

"It teaches you," Arnold said. "It teaches you your perceptions of people may not always be accurate."

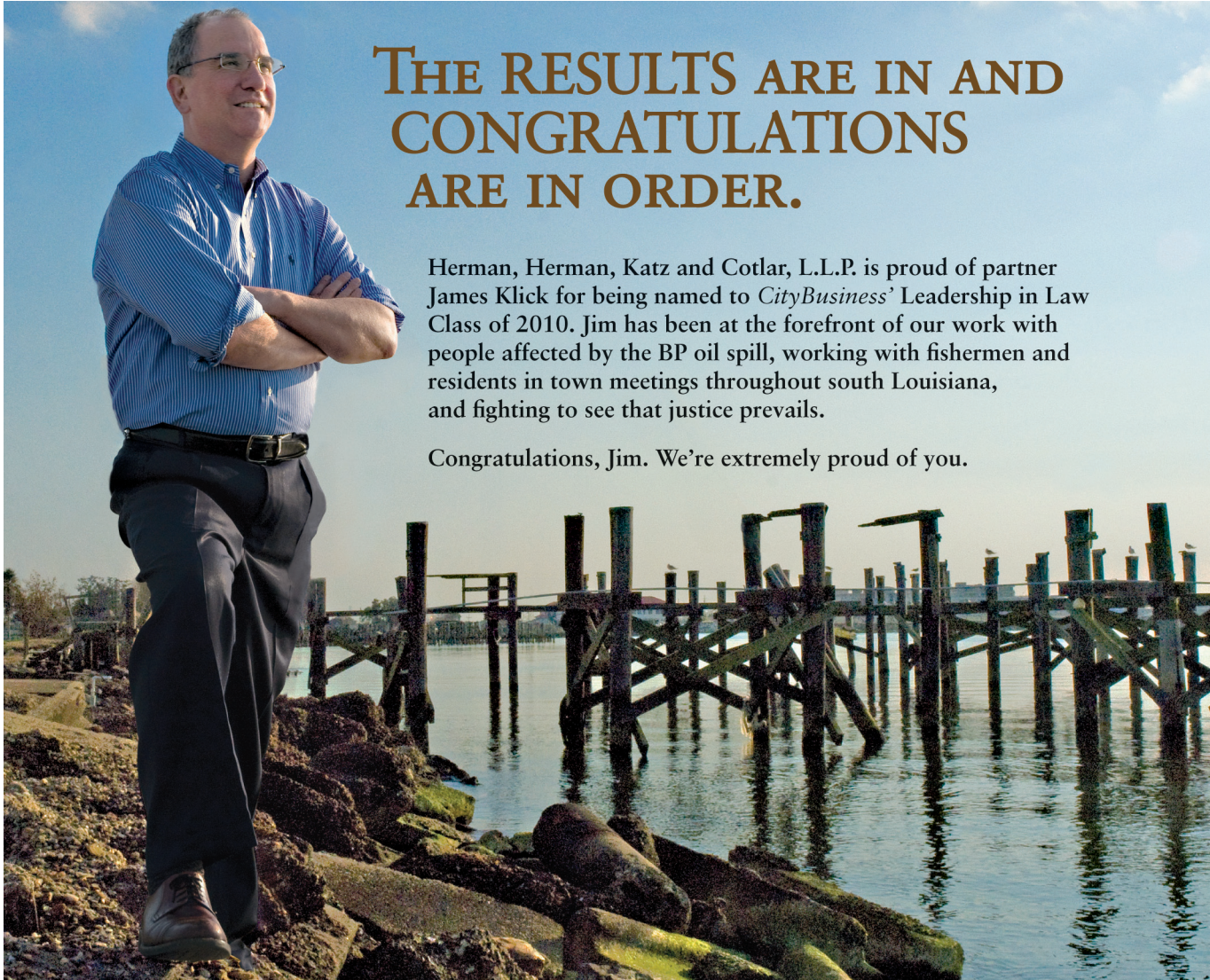
He has served as a former president of the Junior Catholic Charities Association and has volunteered with the United Way, the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, Academy of the Sacred Heart and Jesuit High School.

Arnold also has worked with charter schools, ensuring every student had a Christmas gift and a new school uniform at Lagniappe Academies.

"We're always looking for things to do," Arnold said. "Anything I can do (to help), I do."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora





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Brent Barriere

Title: Phelps Dunbar partner and head of the New Orleans commercial litigation group

Age: 55

Family: wife, Judy Barrasso; daughters, Jennifer, 27, Ashley, 24
Education: bachelor's degree in history and government, Hamilton College; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Phelps Dunbar partner Brent Barriere represents clients in what he calls “good deeds gone bad” in the financial arena, particularly officer and director disputes, creditor rights issues and thorny business valuations.

He’s the firm’s New Orleans commercial litigation practice coordinator and is active in community work at WRBH 88.3 FM, the city’s radio station for the blind.

Last year, he helped settle a case involving the Superdome roof, which was replaced several years before Hurricane Katrina but gave way during the storm. He was lead attorney in the \$125 million Orleans Civil District Court case pitting the Louisiana Stadium and Exposition District, the state of Louisiana, Superdome manager SMG and insurers against designers, contractors and manufacturers over improper design and the installation of materials.

“I’ve also worked on a number of cases involving the failure of strong, regional companies taken over in leveraged buyouts and burdened with unsupportable debt,” he said. “For example, the Delchamps grocery store chain was basically run into the ground a decade ago after it was taken over and saddled with more debt than it could bear.”

More than 500 employees were let go and hundreds of creditors were unpaid following the deal, leading to lawsuits.

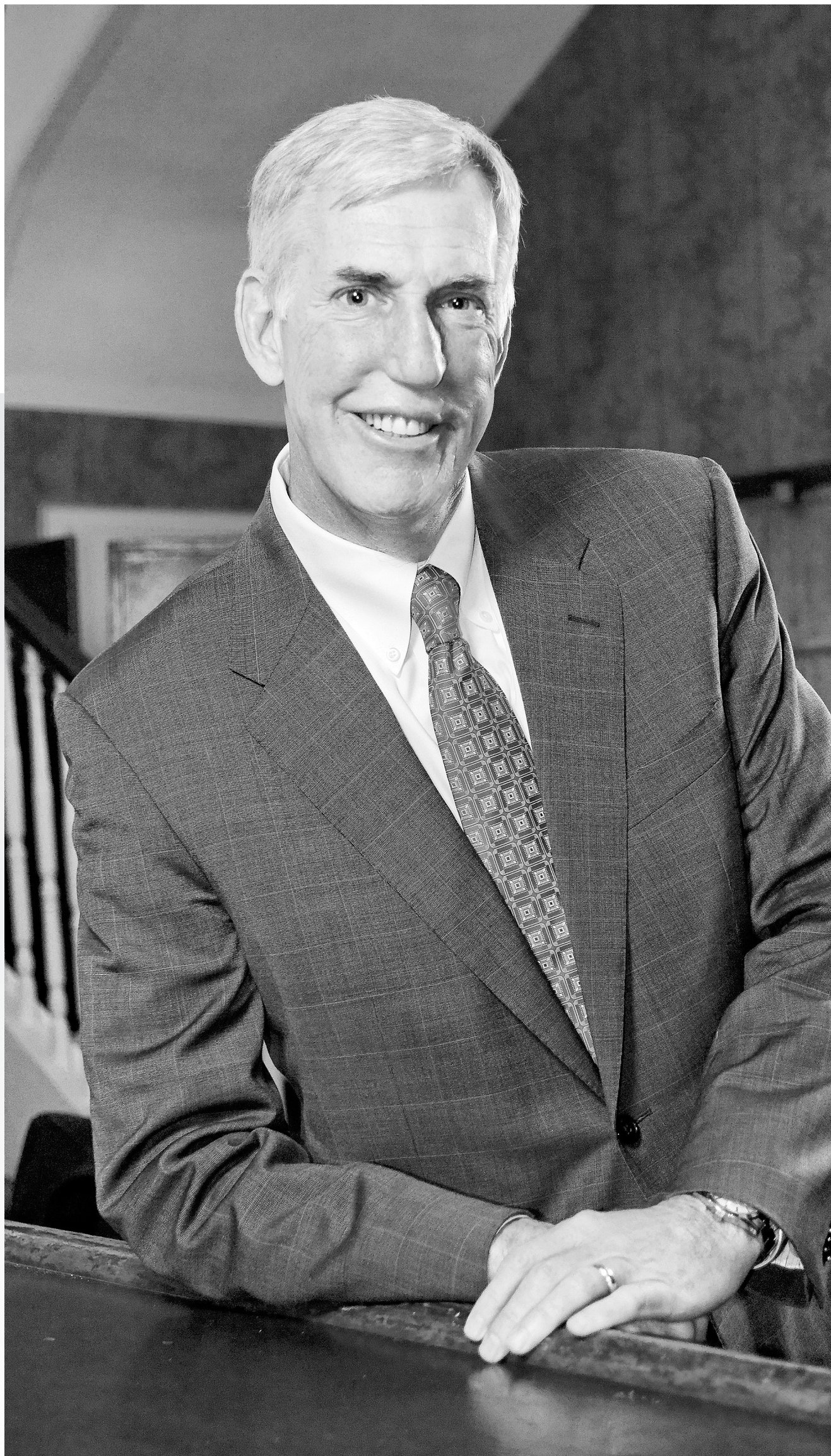
As for volunteering, Barriere is in his second year as board president at WRBH, a station that turns printed publications into the spoken word.

“WRBH is a unique asset to the community and one of only two such radio stations in the country,” he said. “We have replaced equipment that was destroyed in Katrina and expanded program offerings that should be of interest to diverse listeners.”

As an alumnus of Tulane University Law School, he is a member of its Inn of Courts, supports the Tulane Law Review and helped during the interview process for a new dean.

Barriere participated in a multi-week seminar on corporate governance litigation in Greece last July. He serves on the Louisiana State Bar Association’s business bankruptcy committee and the Chapter 11 reorganization subcommittee. He has been a member of the LSBA’s House of Delegates for more than 20 years, served on the organization’s budget committee for several years and is a member of the Texas State Bar and the American Bar associations. •

— Susan Buchanan





Regina H. Bartholomew

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Regina Bartholomew

Title: Boykin, Ehret and Utley of counsel

Age: 39

Family: fiancé, Jimmie Woods; three sons

Education: bachelor's degree in English, Southern University at New Orleans; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

Regina Bartholomew wanted to be a lawyer since elementary school, but her decision was cemented during a 10th-grade career day when her class talked about Supreme Court justices.

"I was intrigued about the role of the judiciary and the role lawyers play with social justice and social reform. I knew I wanted to be part of that movement that shaped the world," said Bartholomew, of counsel with Boykin, Ehret and Utley.

Today, Bartholomew is a champion for children's education. Her current specialty is civil law, and what she enjoys most is assisting schools in the education law arena.

"I want to serve those who I believe need it the most, and that's our children," she said. "I worry about the future of our children a lot."

Much of Bartholomew's service to children is through her community work. She is a board member with the Early Childhood and Family Learning Foundation, a group that raises money for the Mahalia Jackson Early Childhood and Family Learning Center. The center offers educational and community services for children from birth to age 5 and features on-site day care, immunizations and resources for food stamps and Women, Infant and Children programs.

Bartholomew is also a board member with the Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Louisiana, which offers after-school programs for students in the New Orleans area.

Bartholomew's career has steered her toward education law. A decade ago, she worked for the New Orleans firm of Rodney, Bordenaze, Boykin and Ehret, where she practiced civil law ranging from insurance defense to representation of colleges and school boards.

A few years later, she became general counsel for the Orleans Parish School Board, where she acted as board lawyer for all of its meetings and legal decisions. She was there during the tense period after Hurricane Katrina when the state removed failing schools from the board's jurisdiction, which meant widespread layoffs for district employees.

"One could see the concerns in their faces and hear it in their voices. They were traumatized and full of pain from Hurricane Katrina, and the possibility of losing their jobs added to their pain," she said.

Bartholomew had to hand down the legal opinion that the board was constitutionally bound to follow the state's orders, a decision she calls one of the most difficult of her career.

"I think I'm still trying to reconcile that," she said. "I think that's why I'm on the boards that I'm on, trying to ensure the future of our kids."

From 2007-09, Bartholomew served as general counsel for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System in North Carolina. She continues to advise other lawyers who serve as general counsels for public school districts.

"I still do interact a lot with my colleagues from other school districts from across the nation. At the same time, I carry on my own practice of law that's separate from the traditional education arena I've been in for the past five years," she said. •

— Autumn Cafiero Giusti



Kay Baxter

Title: Swetman Baxter Massenburg founding partner
Education: bachelor's degree in history, University of Arkansas at Little Rock; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law
Family: children, Amy Norman, Colby Baxter

When people band together in class-action lawsuits claiming corporations have damaged their health or property, Kay Baxter comes to the defense of the accused.

She has defended Fortune 500 companies, public utilities, shipyards, chemical facilities, refineries, and manufacturing and construction companies.

One of the largest insurance companies in the United States recently asked her to defend the first Chinese drywall claims accepted for defense.

"Corporations generally are portrayed as the big evil corporation, but corporations are people," said Baxter, who specializes in toxic tort. "I've never found anyone who wasn't trying to do the right thing. All of our clients have always been shocked when they were sued."

Baxter enjoys the challenges of her profession.

"I like the different science of the cases," she said. "I enjoy the mental challenge. I enjoy the fact that for me, every case is different."

The Chinese drywall litigation is multidistrict with two areas of origin — federal and state — and includes reports of personal injury and property damage.

"Therefore, you have to be aware of the laws that affect property damage," she said. "You have to know the facts and science of the case."

Baxter also has experience with asbestos litigation, for which she says the body of knowledge is always increasing. She touts her ability to get to the meat of the case and find experts able to speak factually and vindicate her clients.

Baxter works to encourage other attorneys, especially females. Baxter, a founding partner in her firm, says women can still encounter glass ceilings in the profession.

"I am my father's son, I guess," she said. "I was the first female in my family to go to college. I've always been very autonomous. I've always been a self-starter and a team player."

She mentors through speeches to freshman law classes at her alma mater, Loyola University College of Law, and encourages young attorneys to seek her advice. She employs interns from the university and takes the time to show them what they can expect in the field.

"I found that law school taught you how to research what the issues were and not necessarily how to handle them," she said.

In addition to Louisiana, Baxter is licensed to practice law in Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas. •

— Diana Chandler

Michael Brandner

Title: The Brandner Law Firm owner and managing member

Age: 35

Family: wife, Katie; children, Hannah, 6, Abigail 3, Matthew, 1

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law; master's degree in tax law, Boston University School of Law

Michael Brandner admits that the thorny issue of flood insurance claims and how they are processed have come to define his practice and career.

"I started out doing some insurance work, but was also extensively involved with tax litigation," said Brandner, who is owner and managing member of The Brandner Law Firm, which he opened in 2007. "So I was aware of insurance matters before Katrina. But it really was that storm that changed things for me career-wise."

That's because Brandner was hearing complaints from friends and family who were having problems with their insurance companies.

"They were being taken advantage of," Brandner said. "So I decided it would be a good time to hang out a shingle and go on my own, focusing on that kind of litigation."

Brandner said the majority of his cases in the past five years have shared the same theme: insurance companies failing to honor claims or just not paying for what the policy provided.

"And many of those companies were using a good deal of their imagination coming up with reasons why they weren't going to honor a particular claim or were only going to pay for part of a claim," he said.

As a result, Brandner, who is also a member of the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce and is interested in the challenges confronting small businesses, has won a series of suits that have seen insurance companies eventually honoring storm-related claims.

"I have learned that when confronting a large and powerful insurance company, it is easy for a smaller business to be taken advantage of," he said. "For that reason, I decided a long time ago to only represent small businesses as well as individuals."

Brandner served as treasurer of Desire NOLA, helping small businesses in the metro area recover from Hurricane Katrina. He's also a member of Leadership Jefferson's class of 2011 and a graduate of the Young Leadership Council's Leadership Development Series. He most recently served on Kenner Mayor Michael Yenni's transition team last year.

With a master's degree in tax law from Boston University School of Law, Brandner is a proponent of education, which has led to his involvement as a board member of Jefferson Dollars for Scholars, a program dedicated to providing money for students in the Jefferson Parish Public School system who want to go on to college but may not have the financial means to do so. •

— Garry Boulard



Joseph Bruno

Title: Bruno and Bruno partner

Age: 56

Family: wife, Stephanie; children, Joseph Jr., 31, Marian,

28, Melanie, 26, Suzanne Michelle, 18, Blake and Chase, 9

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

Louisiana native Joseph Bruno has been trying top cases for more than 20 years.

"I have been very blessed and fortunate, having had a lead role in most of the major litigation in the city going back to the Shell-Norco explosion in 1988," Bruno said.

He is particularly proud of his work on legislation, which is still pending, to create a healthier Louisiana.

"If we succeed," Bruno said, "Louisiana will have the only cigarette-funded smoking cessation program available for all Louisiana smokers. That's what makes me feel good about being alive."

Bruno has taken on major opponents including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, insurance companies and BP. He served as the plaintiffs' liaison counsel in federal court for hundreds of thousands of individual and business claims after Hurricane Katrina.

He recently received word that one of his dismissed lawsuits, which challenged a private contractor doing remediation work near a failed floodwall, can continue, which revives the claims process for people in the affected area.

Bruno also was one of the lead trial lawyers in a case claiming the corps' mismanagement of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet was responsible for flooding in St. Bernard Parish and the Lower 9th Ward after Katrina. The lawsuit is on appeal.

A lifelong New Orleanian, Bruno is invested not just in the health of the city and its residents but also in its artistic and cultural traditions. Inspired by trips to the opera as a boy with his father, Bruno now assists with recruiting major donors for the New Orleans Opera Association.

Bruno also works to support arts education as a member of the governor-appointed board for the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts.

"Students can not only get their arts training, but they can get their academic training as well so they can get an actual diploma from NOCCA," he said of the school's switch to a full-day schedule.

Bruno's passion for the arts extends to architecture. He played an integral role in the restoration of the Piazza d' Italia that was in disrepair because of a lack of revenue.

"We were successful in persuading the city to allow the piazza to retain the income from parking lots that it owned, and with that revenue we were able to negotiate with Darryl Berger to agree to improve the piazza as a component part of the development of the Loews Hotel on Poydras."•

— Leigh Stuart

Bob Burvant

Title: King, Krebs and Jurgens member

Age: 52

Family: wife, Nancy; children, Ben, 26, Bobby, 19, James, 18

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

Mentoring attorneys has been an important role in the legal career of Robert Burvant, associate coordinator and member at King, Krebs and Jurgens. He has developed a hands-on approach for guiding new lawyers who want to carve out a future with the firm.

Burvant designed and implemented the associate development program to put rookie attorneys in the spotlight. It calls for new associates to present specific legal topics to their peers.

"I think it is empowering to the older associate attorneys who put (on the presentations) and empowering for the newer associate attorneys because they see they are not that far from their counterparts," Burvant said. "They get to spend some time showing some of the skills or knowledge they have developed in a certain area."

Burvant is also a commercial litigator, primarily focused on protecting the interests of clients who have business disputes with other entities. He represents the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and its affiliated entities with regard to the investigations and litigation involving failed banks.

Regardless of the size or complexity of the case or client, Burvant said he treats each one with the utmost care and consideration.

"I think it's very important to make sure you are communicating with the client... (so) the client really understands what is going on with the case," he said. "The worst thing is to have a client who is surprised at the end of the case."

Burvant also uses his legal skills through his community involvement. He said he's most proud of his recent service as board chairman of the Sojourner Truth Academy Charter School, which has led to his overall endorsement of the charter school movement in New Orleans.

"It is a real initiative that will leave an incredible mark here in the city," Burvant said. "What I've learned from being a lawyer and dealing with people and difficult situations is very helpful in being chairman of the board of a charter high school in New Orleans. ... I thought that this was an area where I could affect change for the positive in a very dramatic fashion."

When the nonprofit New Schools for New Orleans put out a call to see who would like to help, Burvant said he was one of a number of people who answered the call. He has been involved with Sojourner Truth Academy for three years.

"I wasn't just interested in putting something on a resume," Burvant said. "I wanted to do something where I could really be in it and be in it for the long haul, and be able to say, directly or indirectly, I was in the success of this."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora



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Carl Butler

Title: LeBlanc Butler member

Age: 50

Family: wife, Joyce; children, Kayla, 20, Karl, 18

Education: bachelor's degree in labor relations and labor economics, Cornell University; juris doctor, University of Michigan Law School

Carl Butler, who co-founded LeBlanc Butler in 2000 with Patricia LeBlanc, says litigation offers a sneak peak into human nature and its inner workings in today's tightly wound society.

As a civil litigator, he represents large and small businesses, individuals and public entities in a general practice that covers personal injury, municipal liability and commercial transactions.

"In a memorable case, a walk-up window patron requested a cup of ice at a fast-food establishment, and the cashier wanted to charge \$2 for it," Butler said.

The customer tossed the ice back at the worker, who dipped a cup in hot grease and threw it at the patron, causing second- and third-degree burns.

"We successfully defended the fast-food establishment by keeping the jury verdict within reason," he said. "In personal injury cases, tempers flair when people have one too many chips on their shoulders and lose perspective."

His list of clients includes Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, Federated Department Stores, Intex Recreation Corp., St. Paul Traveler's Insurance Co., the city of New Orleans and the St. John the Baptist Parish Council.

He calls lawyers social engineers, who are called in when there's a need to readjust society after relationships have broken down.

"We work in a good system, and we have access to some great tools and resources to do our jobs."

Butler, who enjoys communication and fleshing out ideas with others, switched from agricultural engineering to labor relations and economics after his freshman year at Cornell University.

This year, the Louisiana Supreme Court appointed him to a three-year term on its attorney disciplinary panel. He is also vice chairman for the American Bar Association's toxic torts and environmental law committee.

In past years, Butler has been an attorney instructor for Loyola University's College of Law's trial advocacy program and Tulane Law School's professionalism orientation program.

Early in his career, Butler performed community work with the Young Leadership Council and the New Orleans Children's Bureau and served on the New Orleans Regional Loan Corp.'s board.

He and his wife, Joyce, now live in St. John Parish, where most of his free time has been spent on recreation programs, his church and parish work.

He is a member of the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, the River Region Chamber of Commerce and the St. Andrews Place Homeowners Association board in LaPlace. •

— Susan Buchanan



Ray Cornelius

Title: Adams and Reese partner and public finance team leader

Age: 57

Family: wife, Gloria; children, Brian, 26, Emily, 24, Tim, 22

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

Putting new developments on the map is part of Ray Cornelius' job description.

In his three decades as a bond attorney, he has made a career out of getting new projects off the ground and pushing through expansions.

"I don't have the skills to design or build a bridge, but if I can bring together the parties in a way that it results in the project becoming a reality, it's fun," said Cornelius, partner and public finance team leader for Adams and Reese.

One of Cornelius' most significant accomplishments was helping to draft Louisiana's tax increment financing laws, which allow the creation of special taxing districts where a project is being built so that any increased sales tax collection that occurs from the project can be used to reimburse the developer.

The laws have allowed a number of major projects to move forward in Louisiana, including the Cabela's store in Gonzales and a project that helped establish a TIF district at The Esplanade in Kenner to include a Target store there.

In the past few years, he has been involved in the financing of more than \$2 billion in post-Katrina projects and recovery work in Louisiana. He is now serving as bond counsel for International-Matex Tank Terminals of New Orleans and its development along the Mississippi River in Geismar.

When Cornelius graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1979, he intended to start his own law practice. That was until the law school dean contacted him about a legal department starting up at what was then a little-known retailer in Bentonville, Ark. — Wal-Mart.

"They offered me \$4,000 more than I could have gotten at a law firm," he said. "So I took the position rather than take the headaches of opening an office."

Cornelius worked in an office a few doors down from Wal-Mart's founder, the late Sam Walton. During his year and a half with Wal-Mart, the retailer was positioning itself for a massive expansion and tapped Cornelius to work in 11 different states, including Louisiana. It was then that New Orleans law firm Foley and Judell recruited him. Cornelius stayed with the firm until 2003 when he joined Adams and Reese.

Over the years, Cornelius has represented corporations and local governments, and worked with public agencies such as Louisiana Economic Development and the now-defunct Louisiana Import-Export Trust Authority.

He also worked with the New Orleans Industrial Board, steering the evolution of the Warehouse District and the now-shuttered Six Flags in eastern New Orleans.

Outside the office, Cornelius is secretary for the Louisiana Industrial Development Executives Association. He also does pro bono work for the city of New Orleans and other local government and economic development entities. •

— Autumn Cafiero Giusti

Daniel Davillier

Title: Davillier Law Group manager

Age: 43

Family: wife, Germaine; children, Dominique, 11, Daniel Jr., 9

Education: bachelor's degree in general business, University of New Orleans; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Small- to medium-sized businesses don't generally have attorneys on their staffs to help in times of legal need, so they rely on outside counsel to do the job.

That's the specialty of Daniel Davillier, who left a partnership with Phelps Dunbar three years ago to start the Davillier Law Group and specialize in general business transactions.

In one of his more notable local cases, he represented Metro Disposal and Richard's Disposal when Mayor Mitch Landrieu sought to reopen bids for garbage collection in the city after the previous administration awarded contracts to his clients three years earlier. Landrieu was seeking to lower the city's costs.

"We didn't believe the city had the right to do that," said Davillier, who reached a settlement with the city for both companies. As the companies' outside legal counsel, he was already familiar with the contracts.

When he establishes a relationship with a company as its general counsel, Davillier meets with its leadership to identify the company's strategies and current legal issues. When needed, he will secure litigators for a case from outside of his four-attorney firm.

Clients like the convenience and value of outside general counsel services, Davillier said.

"They're not concerned about calling us to discuss strategy because it's not costing them any more money," he said.

Davillier hopes to grow his firm to about 10 attorneys and continue to help small businesses meet their objectives. A business major at the University of New Orleans, Davillier said he has long held a passion for business, pointing out an appreciation that typical business transactions bring people together. Attorneys in such cases, he said, tend to be cordial and less antagonistic.

Davillier co-founded the New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce and sits on the board of the state Black Chamber of Commerce. He works to provide growth opportunities for disadvantaged and small black-owned businesses.

The regional chamber works with groups such as the Hispanic and Asian chambers and Greater New Orleans Inc. Under Davillier's leadership, the group helped champion the public-private partnership for economic development the New Orleans City Council instituted last year, promoting diversity in job creation and retention.

He also reached out to the area's youth by serving on the board at St. Augustine High School, his alma mater, and as a member of the Sigma Pi Phi fraternity, speaking to area students about career opportunities. •

— Diana Chandler



Edward Downing

Title: Gauthier, Houghtaling and Williams attorney

Age: 57

Family: wife, Julie

Education: bachelor's degree in finance and accounting, University of New Orleans; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

Edward Downing has been representing plaintiffs for more than 20 years and is well known in the field of products liability. As a litigator, Downing has spent the better part of his career arguing for safer products and manufacturer accountability.

Downing argued against motorbike manufacturer Baja Motorsports Mini Bikes and Go-Carts in regard to leaking gas caps that had seriously injured several people, including a very young child. The essential matter involves a leaky gas cap that didn't keep gasoline from splashing out of the tank. Though the case is still pending, about 308,000 mini-bikes have been recalled.

Downing has also worked to improve the safety of gas-powered water heaters. He spent more than 15 years working with manufacturers, gas companies and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to correct a design flaw that resulted in flammable vapors exploding and seriously burning individuals.

Downing served an integral role in collecting data and evidence, analyzing product safety and even engineering as it pertained to the product.

"I'd say I've been involved in about 50 of those cases around the country," he said.

The first water heaters manufactured to the new, more strenuous standards hit the market more than 10 years after Downing first approached the matter. Today, all water heaters manufactured in the United States now are flammable vapor resistant.

Downing considers it his biggest career accomplishment.

"It was a hard fight against a powerful lobby, but we were able to get them to change the product. We're just motivated to protect these kids, so it was easy to keep going. Lucky for us, we won a whole lot more than we lost."

Downing is also working on a number of hurricane-related claims and personal injury matters in Louisiana and Texas.

"I just have a tendency to think I can win most cases. It doesn't happen all the time, but I have a tendency to think I can find a way it can be done," he said.

Outside of the office, Downing volunteers as a consulting attorney for the National Doberman Pincher Club of America.

"I love going to dog shows, and I love dog people."•

— Leigh Stuart

Brooke Duncan

Title: Adams and Reese partner

Age: 58

Family: wife, Karen; sons, Brooke IV, 32, Jack, 15

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

As the charter school movement picked up speed after Hurricane Katrina-related levee failures devastated the city's public school system, Brooke Duncan III found a new type of client for his legal expertise.

Principals and administrators, cut loose from a centralized school board, now navigate a network of charter schools where they can entice teachers with bonuses, hire from a wider pool of applicants and more easily fire instructors who don't perform.

"It's like helping a brand new business get started," said Duncan, who helps these emerging schools codify human resources policies.

One thing he strongly advises: keeping the teachers' union out.

"They're almost solely responsible for the state of education today," Duncan said. "The only person who benefits when unions come into a company is me."

He has held that belief since he was a young manager in his family's awning business, where he said he "crushed" a union trying to organize his factory workers.

"I instinctively knew, at age 25, that the more I interact with employees, the less likely employees need to go outside for representation," Duncan said.

Serving as a detective with the New Orleans Police Department also helped him empathize with the working man, he said.

Duncan's landmark case came about a decade into his career as a labor lawyer. Local exhibition and production companies were complaining about the temporary workers the Stagehands Union provided for conventions.

"The union had a stranglehold in New Orleans, and the city was slowly losing convention business," Duncan said.

A dozen companies hired Duncan to represent them in the summer of 1997, when Stagehands workers went on strike.

"My clients had to scramble to find employees," Duncan said. "Some companies were unable to function, shows were canceled."

Six years later, a judge ruled the strike was illegal.

"If the biggest economic engine in the city had failed, everyone would have suffered," Duncan said.

The case reinforced his philosophy that companies could hold off unions by being proactive with their employees.

These days, Duncan is hardly in court. He advises companies on how to handle performance problems, as well as hiring, firing, wage and benefits issues.

"Forget the law," he tells his clients. "What do you want to do? What's best for your business?"

Even companies with more progressive human resources practices find themselves vulnerable to unions. For example, a fair-trade coffee roasting company found that employees were buzzing about organizing. It hired Duncan to help supervisors translate their philosophy of fairness and equality into their personnel practices.

"If they take the same corporate culture they apply to their farmers and the way they deal with the world, then their employees won't feel the need for a union," Duncan said. •

— Anne Berry



Stephen Dwyer

Title: Dwyer, Cambre and Suffern partner

Age: 62

Family: children, Rachel, 37, Jeremy, 34, Jessica, 32, Meaghan, 21, Brooke, 18

Education: bachelor's degree in English, College of the Holy Cross; master's degree in English, University of New Orleans; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

When Stephen Dwyer graduated from the University of New Orleans, he thought he was meant to be a teacher.

"Law school was the furthest thing from what I ever thought I wanted to do," Dwyer said. "When I finished college, I taught school for four years — high school English and freshman English at UNO. I was teaching school and planning a family and getting poorer every year."

Dwyer decided it would suit his family and his interests well to try law school, a decision that has led to a 30-year legal career.

As a partner at Dwyer, Cambre and Suffern, he practices real estate and business law, representing major developers, contractors and banks in the greater New Orleans area. Dwyer has executed several real estate and economic development projects, including the Sheraton Metairie, Crowne Plaza Airport, Staybridge Suites New Orleans and Woodward hotels.

Dwyer is also a founder and an operating partner of Keller Williams Realty in Metairie and New Orleans.

He also helped organize a tax increment financing district to redevelop the former Lake Forest Plaza shopping center and helped St. Margaret's Daughters acquire financing to convert the former Mercy Hospital into a nursing home, specialty hospital and medical office building.

An adjunct professor at Loyola University's College of Law, Dwyer also leads St. Tammany Parish Recreation District No. 14. He helped establish the 150-acre district in western St. Tammany Parish and oversaw millions of dollars in construction during the past 10 years.

After St. Tammany voters approved a bond issue for the project, the district was able to create the Coquille Sports Complex.

"It is really close to my heart," Dwyer said. "It's a labor of love for me. I'm very hands on with it. It's my job away from my job. I spend time on that every day."

The complex includes baseball and softball triplexes, soccer fields, gymnasiums and a jogging trail.

"All of this happened from an idea, and we haven't received one nickel from the government. Everything we've done has been from people voting for bond issues. Their vote is a vote of confidence."

The district has an operating budget of more than \$500,000 and spends several million dollars on a continuing basis.

"We handle millions of dollars of public money. It takes an attention to detail, and it takes a lot of detail in caring for excellence," Dwyer said. "If it's going to be excellent, I know it's going to take a lot of my time, and I give it a lot of my time."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora

Michael Ecuyer

Title: Gainsburgh, Benjamin, David, Meunier and Warshauer member

Age: 43

Family: wife, Ann; sons, Blake, 12, Stephen, 10

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

Michael Ecuyer, a member at Gainsburgh, Benjamin, David, Meunier and Warshauer, has been involved with two of the biggest court cases to affect South Louisiana in years: the Chinese drywall litigation and the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

Chinese drywall cases were transferred to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana in June 2009 and Ecuyer's firm was among those the court appointed to serve on the plaintiffs' steering committee, representing homeowners who were affected by the defective product installed during a post-Hurricane Katrina shortage of building materials.

Ecuyer worked with a legal team on the first three trials in the Chinese drywall multi-district litigation in New Orleans. The first and second trials resulted in verdicts for homeowners and established remediation guidelines for residences containing Chinese-manufactured drywall. The third case was settled just before trial.

The Knauf Pilot Program, a system designed by the litigators and the court to potentially settle claims against Knauf Drywall, one of the companies behind the defective product, came out of the first two trials.

"For many people, their homes are their largest asset, and Chinese drywall is destroying the asset, turning lives upside down," Ecuyer said. "Some families have moved because of the off-gassing from contaminated drywall."

Ecuyer said he has worked with talented lawyers on both sides of the drywall litigation and added that everyone's goal is to repair the homes and allow displaced residents to return to them as soon as possible.

In 2010, the BP oil spill plaintiffs' steering committee selected Ecuyer to serve as co-chairman of the document depository for BP's multi-district litigation.

"We expect to review and prioritize a tremendous volume of documents and e-discovery, such as e-mails, texts, draft documents in computer systems and other recoverable or recordable digital media to be used in depositions and the subsequent trial," he said.

In the community, Ecuyer volunteers at the Harry Tompson Center for the Homeless, notarizing documents, making phone calls and putting clients in touch with the right government offices.

"Our goal is to provide access to the legal system for people who too often fall through the cracks," he said.

His pro-bono work is part of the Homeless Experience Legal Protection Program, which U.S. District Judge Jay Zainey started in New Orleans in 2004 and has since spread to nearly 20 cities.

Last year, Ecuyer was elected to the board of directors of the Federal Bar Association's New Orleans chapter. He also serves on a committee to organize the annual Judge Alvin B. Rubin Symposium on professionalism and ethics.

He is a hearing officer for the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board and an officer of the New Orleans Bar Association's health law section. •

— Susan Buchanan



William Forrester

Title: Lemle and Kelleher partner

Age: 67

Family: wife, Regan; daughters, Celine Penn, 31, Tully Anne, 34

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

If there's a change in the works for Louisiana's Civil Code, there's a good chance William Forrester Jr. is part of it.

For the past decade, Forrester has been the reporter for the Louisiana State Law Institute's Code of Civil Procedure Committee. The institute is a think tank for proposing new laws and revising old ones to present to the state legislature. As reporter, Forrester drafts new laws, circulates them to a panel of about 30 lawyers, judges and professors and then presents the proposals to lawmakers in Baton Rouge.

"Most of the changes to the Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure have been ideas I've promoted through the legislature," Forrester said.

Forrester's work as partner with Lemle and Kelleher keeps him busy, but making time for his civic commitments is a key priority, he said.

"My feeling is that if you want to support the community, you can't just sit around and complain. You've got to get in on the action and try to make a difference," he said.

Forrester points to his institute work as his most recent significant civic contribution, focusing his energy on revising the code to "eliminate traps for the unwary to make the practice of law more efficient," he said.

"We have completely modernized Louisiana's procedural laws on pretrial discovery, notably (those involving) producing electronically stored information and the simplification of subpoenas and serving papers for proceedings," he said.

Forrester has worked at Lemle and Kelleher for his entire four-decade career, specializing in commercial litigation and municipal bonds. He represents the city of New Orleans with the issuance of bonds for public improvements.

He's also in his 35th year of teaching Louisiana civil procedure at Tulane University Law School.

"(The code) is basically 'Grey's Anatomy' to lawyers — how do you take a deposition, how do you file a lawsuit, where do you file it, how do you make an appeal," Forrester said.

Forrester's other community involvement includes having served on the New Orleans Civil Service Commission for 18 years and sitting as chairman for the past decade. Commission members serve as judges for appeals of disciplinary actions placed against classified city employees.

The Louisiana Supreme Court has ruled on two of his opinions, including the police officers' bill of rights.

"I found (working for the commission) to be closely connected with the morale and rights of municipal workers in the government system," he said. •

— Autumn Cafiero Giusti

Mike Gertler

Title: Gertler Law Firm managing partner

Age: 65

Family: wife, Marcy; children, Louis, 41, Danielle Weintraub, 39, Joshua, 29

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

Mike Gertler, a managing partner of the Gertler Law Firm, says there's a lot of power in being an attorney, and he enjoys using it to help others.

"I can do that every day from the office," he said. "I try to do my best to only take valid cases. I think we owe it to the legal field to be responsible because who is going to be responsible, if not us?"

Last year, he helped a young mother whose obstetrician assigned a resident physician to deliver the mother's child without the patient's informed consent. When the mother suffered complications during the delivery and the child was born with paralysis, Gertler stepped in to help.

He saw an opportunity to establish a patient's right to choose a doctor and execute consent for a resident to perform procedures in the physician's stead.

Gertler settled the case in his client's favor. The doctor admitted she was responsible for the resident's actions and for allowing the resident to perform the procedure, Gertler said.

"I think it was important for the physician and hospital to take the responsibility for the resident's actions," he said. "It was a good result, but it won't set a precedent. I hope in the future that this particular hospital changes its policy and (requires) a written consent from patients when they allow residents to perform procedures."

Gertler, a trial attorney who has worked throughout Louisiana, doesn't consider himself a specialist in any particular area, but a bulk of his work involves toxic tort.

He was a lead attorney in the historic class action suit that won a judgment initially ordering the tobacco industry to establish a \$519 million smoking cessation program for Louisiana citizens, although the judgment has been reduced and the U.S. Supreme Court is reviewing the 15-year-old state case.

The fact that his mother-in-law died of lung cancer increases his concern the tobacco case is finalized and victims in the state can benefit from the smoking cessation program.

Gertler's family experiences have heavily influenced his practice of law and contributions to society.

His father, the late Judge David Gertler, started the firm in 1969 and invited the younger Gertler to join the practice six years later. Michael Gertler's two sons have also joined the firm.

Gertler serves the community as a pro bono general counsel for the Early Childhood and Family Learning Foundation, which works to provide prenatal care, early childhood education and parenting classes to underprivileged families. After his brother died from leukemia in the 1970s, Gertler helped start Cancer Crusaders of New Orleans and is still active in the nonprofit research group. •

— Diana Chandler



Joseph Giarrusso

Title: Liskow and Lewis shareholder

Age: 34

Family: wife, Katherine; children, Sofia, 4, Marta, 1

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

Joseph Giarrusso III's ties to the legal industry began at a young age when he watched his mother, also an attorney, battle an insurance company for claims owed to his sister, who is a quadriplegic.

His mother's passion for standing up for what was right was his inspiration to become an attorney. But doing something unique every day is what excites Giarrusso the most about practicing law.

"I love what I do because I feel that I am always learning something new," said Giarrusso, a shareholder at Liskow and Lewis. "In this business, there is always something different going on, not only about the law, but the people you are involved with, so you are constantly a student."

During his time at Liskow and Lewis, Giarrusso has played a part in at least nine trials, which he considers a large number from the perspective of a big law firm.

"I was also lucky that in the early part of one particular class action case, trying only the damages portion, I got to try hundreds, if not thousands, of very small cases, 15 to 20 minutes at a time," he said. "To get that kind of experience, understanding what works and what doesn't, was invaluable."

The son of attorneys Robin and Joseph Giarrusso Jr. and the grandson of former New Orleans Police Chief Joseph Giarrusso Sr., Giarrusso served as a law clerk to Justice Harold See Jr. in the Alabama Supreme Court from 2001-02 before practicing law for two years in Houston with Vinson and Elkins, where he met his wife, Katherine.

In 2004, Giarrusso returned to New Orleans and signed on with Liskow and Lewis, where he has since argued at the trial, state and federal court levels while also submitting briefs to the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Giarrusso, who specializes in business torts, health care legislation, unfair trade practices, transactional disputes, securities litigation, tax disputes and grand jury investigations, is a courtroom enthusiast.

"The fun things include winning on motions," he said. "When you file motions and can dispose of either the entire or parts of the case based on your legal argument and briefing and save your clients time and expenses, that's a good thing."

Away from the office, Giarrusso has also been a supporter and member of the Young Leadership Council for the past six years. He became the group's president in January.

"It's exciting to be a part of a group with such a rich history," he said. "Many of the members of that group have gone on to leadership positions in government and business."•

— Garry Boulard

Richard Goins

Title: Sutterfield and Webb special counsel

Age: 61

Family: wife, Nannette Smith

Education: bachelor's degree in history, Yale University; juris doctor, Stanford University Law School

Richard Goins has been working to change the Louisiana bar exam for more than 15 years.

"What I've done with the bar committee is something that I perceive of as being one of the more important things that I've done in my legal career," he said.

Roughly 10 years ago, the Louisiana Supreme Court's Committee on Bar Admissions took on the task of evaluating how the bar exam is administered. Goins, a member of the committee since 1996 and a former director of its character and fitness screening process, has been a part of the project since the beginning.

"Louisiana's bar exam, through the present, is an unusual bar exam," Goins said. "We wanted the exam to be fair to the applicants, but at the same time we wanted the exam to more closely resemble the kind of situation that a new lawyer experiences when the new lawyer is seeing his clients."

In at least 32 states, the exam comprises three parts: a performance exam, multiple choice exam and essay writing exam. But in Louisiana, future lawyers are tested with essays alone.

Goins said that when he began his two-year chairmanship of the committee in 2008, his goal was to put together a recommendation to the Louisiana Supreme Court that involved completely recasting the exam and changing it so that the questioning was similar to exams in other states.

In December, the committee shared its point of view in a meeting with Supreme Court justices and is awaiting their final decision.

The suggestions also call for getting more professionals to give opinions on matters such as exam questions and character and fitness. If passed, the proposed changes will go into effect in 2015.

"My focus on being fair to the students ... comes from having been a law professor at Loyola," said Goins, an assistant professor at Loyola University from 1981-84.

Goins serves as special counsel at Sutterfield and Webb. His employee benefits practice was involved in the design and the drafting of pension and welfare benefit plans for the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. He also focuses on real estate and personal injury cases. •

— Leigh Stuart



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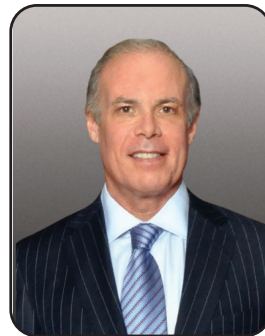


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Alida Hainkel

Title: Jones, Walker, Waechter, Poitevent, Carrère and Denègre partner

Age: 44

Family: father, the late John Hainkel Jr.; mother, Kathleen Roth; brother, John Hainkel III; sister, Juliet Holton

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

It was May in New Orleans and Alida Hainkel's air conditioner broke, so she went to stay with her sister's family in Mandeville. She got a text message from the office the next day, Memorial Day, at 7:15 a.m. saying the firm had been hired to challenge the two-day-old deepwater drilling moratorium.

"There was real tension because there was no end in sight" to the oil spewing from BP's Macondo well, Hainkel said. "It was fast-forward from then on."

Hainkel and her Jones Walker colleagues accepted the case on behalf of vessel supply companies, dozens of which joined the complaint.

"We had to show substantial threat of irreparable harm to our drilling service supply clients," Hainkel said. "We were concerned with meeting that standard."

Rigs were sitting idle, and the vessels supporting them remained docked. Thousands of Gulf Coast businesses and families' livelihoods were at stake. As one of the lead lawyers on the case, Hainkel filed an injunction against the federal government, asking that the deepwater drilling moratorium be lifted. The court rushed a hearing date within weeks and granted the request.

The federal government then asked the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals to resume the moratorium. Though Hainkel was out of the country during the hearing, she learned her original injunction request had been upheld.

"It was a long shot," Hainkel said, "but we were delighted with the result."

It's not the first time Hainkel has taken on the federal government, but this case was different in that it was ongoing.

"It's such a contemporary issue, it's happening before your eyes," she said. "There's more room for creative legal thinking."

Four days after Hainkel returned to Louisiana, the government issued a second moratorium.

"It was serious but dream litigation," she said. "It only happens once or twice a lifetime."

Hainkel shares that passion for problem solving with her students at Tulane University Law School, where she teaches oil and gas law. She focuses on onshore cases, collecting new ones throughout the year to supplement the textbook.

She has an even greater impact on the high school students she interviews on behalf of her alma mater, Georgetown University. But linking talented students from borderline schools to the elite college isn't always easy.

"She was terrific. She knocked my socks off, but she still wouldn't have met Georgetown's standards," Hainkel said of a teen who emigrated from the Dominican Republic and was at the top of her class. Hainkel stepped in to ensure that the girl's college application got attention, and she was accepted. •

— Anne Berry



Susan Henning

Title: Curry and Friend partner

Age: 61

Family: single

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

Shortly after becoming a lawyer, Susan Henning represented a hospital in connection with an infant that was in a profound and irreversible coma. The health care providers determined it was appropriate to remove the child from life support but because of a complicated legal environment, the matter was resolved only through intensive legal proceedings.

After an impassioned and collaborative effort by all parties involved, the decision made the matter a significant case, determining a child in such a condition has the right to have life-sustaining procedures withdrawn.

Henning said the case created “good law for health care providers” and provided some certainty in an area of law which until that time had been uncertain.

“For me, it was sort of an epiphany,” Henning said. “We are dealing with human beings. This is not just an exercise of law. ... It’s about real lives being affected by this. From that point, I’ve always realized it’s not about winning the argument. It’s about the people whose lives are in the hands of very complicated laws.”

A partner with Curry and Friend, Henning focuses on medical malpractice litigation, defending nursing homes, physicians and hospitals in malpractice cases.

“The manner in which I fulfilled my original plan of improving the lot of folks who are vulnerable was done from within the health industry,” Henning said.

While working in Baptist Hospital’s health information management department and taking a course in gerontology at William Carey College School of Nursing’s satellite school on the Baptist campus, Henning was assigned to visit a nursing home. It was that experience that inspired her to go to law school and become a health care attorney.

At a time before nursing homes had evolved to their current state of regulation and attention to quality, Henning “ended up seeing a nursing home that was pretty upsetting.” Her visit resulted in her co-authoring a report, submitting it to the Louisiana Senate Select Committee on Aging and testifying before the panel.

“My intention was to become an advocate for change for vulnerable people in the health care industry,” Henning said.

She retained her position as assistant director of medical records at Baptist Hospital while attending law school. After graduating, Henning became the assistant legal affairs administrator at Baptist and later was appointed senior vice president and general counsel. She helped facilitate the development of the charter for the hospital’s bioethics committee and institutional review board, and she served on both bodies for several years.

Henning works with the Louisiana Society of Health Attorneys creating health care- and hospital-related legislation, and she is a member of the Louisiana Nursing Home Association. •

— Whitney Pierce Santora

Keith Jarrett

Title: Liskow and Lewis president and managing partner

Age: 52

Family: wife, Holly; children, Kelsey, 24, Zack, 20, Sarah, 18

Education: bachelor's degree in marine engineering and nautical science, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Few lawyers are ever tasked with being part of one of the biggest litigation cases to play out on a world stage. But Keith Jarrett, president and managing partner at Liskow and Lewis, has a key role.

He is part of the firm's team defending BP in the multi-district litigation pending in federal court in New Orleans. The claims came out of last April's well blowout and the sinking of the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig, which caused 11 deaths and a months-long oil spill.

BP has been one of Liskow and Lewis' largest clients for years, and the firm is one of several playing a supporting role in the defense. Chicago law firm Kirkland and Ellis is the lead firm representing BP.

"The litigation is very far reaching. It involves a lot of people at the law firm, including me, and we're very proud of the engagement," Jarrett said.

Catastrophic cases are within Jarrett's purview. His trial experience includes major well blowouts, pipeline damage and explosions involving multiple deaths.

"The Deepwater Horizon is the latest and largest in those kinds of cases. I find those cases professionally and emotionally challenging. They are interesting because of their technical complexity, and the answers to those technical questions are not always easy to come by," he said.

In addition to the BP case, Jarrett is representing another major oil company in an onshore environmental contamination case in which the claims are in the billions.

Jarrett was introduced to the legal profession three decades ago when a course in maritime law at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy piqued his interest in the profession. After graduation, Jarrett worked as an officer on naval vessels and cargo ships before shifting gears to attend law school at Tulane University.

Jarrett joined Liskow and Lewis after his clerkship with Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Alvin Rubin and has been with the firm for 25 years. His penchant for maritime and energy cases has helped the firm grow in that specialty.

The nature of the work is what Jarrett says keeps him motivated.

"It's just an interesting and challenging profession. Every case is different. Each one involves different problems and people with different challenges and solutions. And often they provide me with an opportunity to learn outside of the office."

Jarrett is a fellow with the Louisiana Bar Foundation and is involved in the Maritime Law Association of the United States, among other professional and civic associations. He said one of his career goals is to earn the respect of his peers and colleagues.

"I just want to be viewed as a lawyer's lawyer," he said. •

— Autumn Cafiero Giusti



James Klick

Title: Herman, Herman, Katz and Cotlar partner

Age: 56

Family: wife, Astride; children, Laura, 20, Jacques, 18

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

In the immediate wake of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, James Klick went to bat representing a group of fishermen, shrimpers and others who had been adversely affected.

"I had already represented them in other potential litigation," said Klick, a partner at Herman, Herman, Katz and Cotlar. "And now they were inviting me down to Plaquemines Parish to review contracts that would be coming out of BP under the Vessels of Opportunity program."

That program made it possible for commercial fishermen with vessels to assist in the cleanup efforts being coordinated by BP and the Coast Guard.

It was while Klick was down on the coast that he learned BP was requiring the same fishermen and shrimpers to sign waivers and releases of all rights regarding future litigation before doing any cleanup work.

So Klick contacted BP, which helped lead the company to agree that any money the fishermen received through the Vessels of Opportunity program would not be deducted from claims they might still have against BP for lost earnings.

"One of the things that we learned from the Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska was that when Exxon hired fishermen to do oil containment and cleaning operations, which were essentially hazardous operations, they deducted from later claims whatever they had been paid for the cleanup work," he said. "And we did not want to see that happen with the fishermen and BP."

Klick's outreach to BP underlines what he considers one of his strengths as an attorney; he is willing to take a case to court but skilled at out-of-court negotiations.

In court, Klick's victories include affirming a multi-million dollar verdict against Nissan Motor Co. in 1992, a \$12 million recovery in an offshore injury claim against Oryx Energy Co. in 1995 and a \$1.1 million medical negligence claim against Ochsner Foundation Hospital in 2003.

"You have to have good people working with you," he said. "I have a strong staff that keeps me well organized. Plus, there are a number of different lawyers in this firm who work in different areas with different experiences, and I can go to one partner or another for advice."

Klick, who is hearing impaired, has served on the board of Families Helping Families in Louisiana, a statewide group devoted to assisting families raising children with disabilities. •

— Garry Boulard

Amelia Koch

Title: Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell and Berkowitz shareholder

Age: 52

Family: husband, John; children, Amelia, 19, Jack, 17

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

Playwright Tennessee Williams has the words to describe Amelia "Mimi" Williams Koch's outlook: "Enthusiasm is the most important thing in life."

Koch, a shareholder at Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell and Berkowitz, specializes in employment law and is a member at-large on the Tennessee Williams Literary Festival board. She moved to New Orleans in 1983 even though she had only visited the city once.

"Everyone in my family ... thought it was unusual to move somewhere you'd never really been," Koch said.

That didn't deter Koch, who started working in antitrust law and found a connection to employment law, something most of her peers found unique.

"They seem unrelated on the face," Koch said, "but I found them to be somewhat connected."

She has experience in employee litigation and counseling concerning state discrimination statutes, the Family Medical Leave, Age Discrimination in Employment and Americans with Disabilities acts, and Title VII issues. Her antitrust experience has focused on the health care industry, including litigation, formation of provider networks, mergers and acquisitions, and joint ventures.

Lately, those areas of expertise have proven useful, as more professional malpractice cases are popping up, partially because of the recession but probably as part of a larger trend, Koch said.

"When you have a recession and people are in fear of losing their livelihoods, I think they become a little more aware of their rights and how they might be impacted," she said.

Regardless of why so many cases are going to court, Koch said she had several "punitive class actions involving wages and tips that we handled very successfully, and I found it gratifying."

Her enthusiasm, though, extends beyond her job.

She moved to New Orleans, she said, because she loves the city, and she has been giving back for the 28 years she's called it home, serving as past president of the Garden District Association.

Her community work also has included serving on the boards for the New Orleans chapter of the Federalist Society, Save Our Cemeteries and the Louisiana Supreme Court Historical Society, where she is treasurer.

"I try to focus outside the profession a little bit with my energies," she said. •

— Travis Andrews



A.J. Krouse

Title: Frilot partner

Age: 55

Family: children, Michael, 24, Thomas, 24, Sal, 19, Ally, 11

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

Washington, D.C., has always been important to A.J. Krouse. He was born in the nation's capital and while he was an Army captain stationed at Fort Meade, one of his duties was to serve at President Ronald Reagan's inauguration. Krouse's grandfather was a veteran prosecutor in the Kennedy administration.

"He was my role model," Krouse said.

Krouse returned home again in February to argue a case before the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. He represented his adopted state of Louisiana in a case that had at its core the Road Home program and its compensation formula.

To prepare, Krouse reviewed briefs and related cases, went through a mock trial and had other lawyers critique his arguments.

"You bury yourself in the material as if it was a final exam," he said. "It's what any good lawyer would do."

Krouse is trained to be an arbitrator, directing disputes and rendering decisions, and is also a mediator.

In 2007, New Orleans taxpayers were furious with what they considered to be unfair property tax assessments, so the city council hired the Frilot firm to oversee the appeals process. More than 6,500 homeowners disputed their property taxes at the Superdome, where Krouse had hired local real estate agents to hear their appeals in 20-minute increments over six weeks.

"There were no incidents, no protests, and we put real estate professionals to work at a time when they needed work," Krouse said. "And I'm glad taxpayers had someone to talk to ... who was knowledgeable about their issues and the area."

Krouse and his family evacuated to Washington, D.C., for Hurricane Katrina. He was still there when he heard that the Murphy oil storage tank had ruptured in St. Bernard Parish. As the floodwaters receded, the oil spilled, seeping into the ground and damaging schools, businesses and about 40,000 homes with a million gallons of crude oil.

Krouse represented Murphy in creating a voluntary settlement program and in less than a year, all the settlement checks had been cut.

Another of Krouse's high-profile cases involved a woman in Hollywood who had sued her employer for sexual discrimination. Krouse and his team undermined the plaintiff's expert witness by pointing out that the psychiatrist wasn't board certified.

"Her case crumbled after that," he said.

Away from the office, Krouse spends much of his free time driving his young daughter to her traveling soccer team's games.

"It's a three-ring circus, but you keep it positive with kids," Krouse said. "You don't want the day to come where she doesn't enjoy it."•

— Anne Berry

Terrence Lestelle

Title: Lestelle and Lestelle esquire

Age: 61

Family: wife, Andrea; children, Evan, 29, Nicole, 25

Education: bachelor's degree in psychology, Tulane University; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law; master's of law, University of London

Terrence Lestelle is a problem solver, and with that ability comes the responsibility to help those who do not possess that skill.

"I often get calls from former clients and I try to talk to them and give them some guidance, even if it's a case I'm not interested in taking," Lestelle said. "As a lawyer, we're problem solvers, and there are many who do not have that ability."

An attorney for more than 30 years, Lestelle represents individuals and corporations in personal injury, admiralty and maritime cases, mass torts, product liability and class actions. Lestelle, who practices with his law partner and wife, Andrea, at their firm Lestelle and Lestelle, balances the demands of his work while maintaining a hands-on approach in every case.

"I try to do it one client at a time, and I try to give them the care and attention they deserve," Lestelle said.

One case Lestelle said stands out is *Chauvin v. State Farm Fire and Casualty Co.*, commonly known among lawyers in the field as the case that brought the valued policy law to the forefront. Lestelle, who led the effort with seven other law firms, argued that insurers must pay the full value of an insurance policy when a home or commercial property is rendered a total loss by covered and excluded perils. The Louisiana Supreme Court has yet to consider the case.

"The ability to try and help has some type of relief or benefit through the law, and that can be very rewarding," Lestelle said. "It's very challenging to do that because there are so many forces beyond our control where it's sometimes difficult to make that happen."

In *Smith v. Southern Gulf Marine Co.*, he helped establish the law regarding the duties vessel owners have regarding passengers. Plus, Lestelle has spent the past 30 years representing offshore workers in Jones Act cases.

Lestelle encourages his clients to know the law. He helped organize and continues to serve as a moderator and speaker for the People's Law School, a five-week series of instruction presentations the Louisiana Association of Justice sponsors for the benefit of the general public.

"It was done where anyone could come, and we presented various topics of the law to them in layman's terms so they would have a better understanding of the way (the law) worked," Lestelle said.

Lestelle calls his practice and being able to help individuals not for the faint of heart, but he says it's been enjoyable and hopes to practice for years to come.

"I hope that I can continue to do what I've been doing, help one person at a time, and try to mentor some of the lawyers I deal with to continue on beyond the time I can practice," he said. •

— Whitney Pierce Santora



Paul Masinter

Title: Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann member

Age: 49

Family: wife, Eleanor; daughter, Renee, 15

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

As a complex commercial litigator for Stone Pigman, Paul Masinter handles a varied law practice that includes real estate, banking and environmental issues.

His career has run the gamut from representing Kaiser Aluminum in a class action suit over an explosion at their plant to working with businesses on Hurricane Katrina insurance claims and representing a New Orleans businessman suing a major investment bank in connection with a financial collapse in Europe.

"We are often able to get resolutions for our clients that are positive," Masinter said. "It is not always perfect, but problems are getting resolved."

He began his career in 1987 as a law clerk for then-Louisiana Supreme Court Justice James Dennis. He then worked a brief stint at another firm before moving to Stone Pigman in 1990, where he became a member in 1995.

One of his more memorable cases involved representing a real estate developer in federal court in Mississippi over a Clean Water Act dispute. Masinter said the federal government accused his client of developing land for real estate on federally protected wetlands.

"It was an interesting case from a legal sense because we had to work to determine whether the Clean Water Act applied," Masinter said. "The development in question was north of Pascagoula and north of Interstate 10. The federal government was trying to broaden the scope of the act. It was ultimately determined that the development was in violation of the act."

Masinter said his legal career has opened the door to projects and causes he never would have been involved in otherwise, including the New Orleans Museum of Art and Trinity Episcopal School boards.

"I have had the luxury of having the knowledge to help various organizations I want to see flourish," Masinter said. "I never would have gotten that if not for my legal career."

Masinter is particularly proud of his work with the Lighthouse for the Blind, where he serves on the board of directors. He said the organization contacted him after he purchased devices from the organization to help him with his work.

He also is a big supporter of City Park, where he has been involved in its post-Hurricane Katrina resurrection since 2007. He is a past president of its board of commissioners and is acting chairman of the executive committee's legal committee.

Masinter helped the park secure Federal Emergency Management Agency dollars to repair Katrina damage and helped guide renovations at Tad Gormley and Pan American stadiums, the amusement park as well as construction of the Great Lawn and City Bark Dog Park and the Big Lake project. •

— Robin Shannon

Carey Menasco

Title: Liskow & Lewis shareholder

Age: 33

Family: husband, Michael; sons, Trey, 4, Tommy, 4 months

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

At a time when most new moms juggle diaper changes, pre-dawn feedings and recovery from having a baby, Carey Menasco was back in court.

Only five weeks after the birth of her second son, Tommy, a major case Menasco had been working on for the past two years required her to be out of town for a two-week trial. Wanting to support her legal team, Menasco, a shareholder with Liskow and Lewis, volunteered to assist with the trial with baby in tow, occasionally even at the courthouse.

"That particular case has been one of the most rewarding and most challenging," she said.

Menasco acknowledges her profession isn't an easy one but said she's able to meet those challenges by drawing motivation from the people she serves.

"Some days it requires more motivation than others, but I think it's the same for other lawyers," she said. "Generally it's knowing my clients are relying on me to help them with whatever issues they're facing."

Menasco joined Liskow and Lewis immediately after taking the bar exam in 2002. She specializes in commercial litigation and bankruptcy and enjoys taking on large, complex cases.

"The types of cases I work on give you a chance to advocate for your client and possibly make new law, and that's exciting," she said.

Menasco has put most of her recent time into defending a major law firm in an ongoing legal malpractice case. She also worked with a team of attorneys in 2009 to secure the dismissal of breach of contract and wrongful termination claims against a major investment firm.

But some of Menasco's proudest moments came from making a difference in someone's life, she said. Last year, she took on a pro bono case in which she helped a transgender woman secure a new birth certificate. The woman was born a male and later had surgery to become female.

"It was important to her because it impacted her ability to get a (new) driver's license," she said. "She had these constant reminders that something was always wrong to her. Helping her get that birth certificate helped her move forward and put those things behind her."

Menasco's public service extends beyond the law office. As chairwoman of the New Orleans Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section, she has helped organize several charity events to provide pro bono legal services for the poor.

"Just being able to hand an organization a check for \$10,000, knowing it's going to make a huge difference for the services they're going to be able to provide, is rewarding," she said. •

— Autumn Cafiero Giusti



Michael Mentz

Title: Hailey, McNamara, Hall, Larmann and Papale managing partner Age: 55

Family: wife, Wendy; sons, Michael, 18, Jared, 15

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

Michael Mentz spoke with A.J. McNamara after graduating from law school about applying for a law clerk position at McNamara's firm. When asked what he should bring, the current federal judge instructed him to provide a resume.

"I didn't have one typed up," Mentz said. "So he asked me to just write it out on a piece of paper. In spite of it, the firm hired me anyway."

Mentz believes staying with the same firm for 30 years has been one of his greatest opportunities. He says Hailey, McNamara, Hall, Larmann and Papale allowed him to gain knowledge from trial lawyers who were willing to take the time to show him the ropes.

"They demonstrated the appropriate way to practice law," said Mentz, who became a partner in 1985 and was elected managing partner in 1999. "I still try to follow in those fellows' footsteps."

Mentz said his role as an attorney and his appreciation of the legal field allows him to work with and against some of the best legal minds in the city and state.

"Every day is a new challenge," Mentz said. "There is a great sense of satisfaction when I have been able to successfully guide a client through the minefield of litigation and obtain a favorable result for them."

Mentz adopted the giving nature he learned from his mentors and has applied it to community service, using his legal knowledge to improve the quality of life in Jefferson Parish.

"I believe that the service of lawyers is to perform in a way that benefits the community," Mentz said.

One of those projects has him working with the Jefferson Edge 2020 Crime Abatement Strike Force to reduce crime in Jefferson Parish and to craft changes to parish ordinances and state statutes that have allowed for increased code enforcement and blight reduction.

He also serves as treasurer of the Jefferson Business Council and was co-chairman of the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce Governmental Affairs Committee in 2010. Mentz also was vice chairman of Jefferson Parish's citizens committee on jail overcrowding in 1995, which resulted in the funding and expansion of the parish's jail.

"Quality of life is important. It can either adversely or positively affect a person's or business' desire to move to a certain area," Mentz said. "I hope to improve the quality of life not only in Jefferson Parish but in the city and the region as a whole, so that our kids can continue to have a place to work, play and raise their families."•

— Maria Barrios

David O'Quinn

Title: Irwin Fritchie Urquhart and Moore member

Age: 48

Family: wife, Pricilla; daughters, Eleanor, 19, Maisie, 16

Education: undergraduate work in accounting, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

If David O'Quinn has any problems, it's that he thinks he's boring.

The Irwin Fritchie Urquhart and Moore member has divided the past 24 years three ways: business litigation and products liability, taking care of his family and teaching third graders about contract law.

He split his career between business litigation and products liability, picking up the latter later because, "I like the fact that it gives me a change of pace."

"I knew from the start I wanted to do litigation," O'Quinn said, adding that he finds transactional work to be dry.

With a business undergraduate background, he set off to do litigation, quickly finding that success was based on one thing.

"The main thing is you just gotta keep working hard," he said. "There are no shortcuts. You have to realize people are putting their trust in you."

O'Quinn has represented pharmaceutical groups Johnson and Johnson Co., Smith and Nephew, and Pfizer on cases involving medicines and medical devices such as spinal implants, Fen-phen, Rezulin, PPA, Propulsid and Risperdal.

O'Quinn put himself through law school by teaching a legal writing class as a research assistant and later became an adjunct professor at Loyola University College of Law for one semester, teaching students how to identify and prepare expert witnesses. He considers teaching a second career in the back of his head.

"I enjoyed working with the younger people and (offering) whatever knowledge was mine to offer," he said.

O'Quinn even took an odd teaching detour and taught a business class to third graders at St. Rita School in Harahan.

While appreciating the opportunity to explain the law to elementary school students, O'Quinn has his career goals set on loftier audiences.

"I've never orally argued a case in front of the Louisiana Supreme Court," he said, "and I'd really like to do that."

His ultimate dream is arguing a case in front of the U.S. Supreme Court, though he chuckles at the thought of it.

O'Quinn says he derives great joy out of being fairly "boring." Working hard and taking care of his family is what drives him.

"I do love much of what I do. I also don't want to let my clients down, and I don't want to be embarrassed professionally. I don't want to put my name on a bad piece of work." •

— *Travis Andrews*



Brian Quirk

Position: Irwin Fritchie Urquhart and Moore managing partner
Age: 49

Family: wife, Katherine; children, Andrew, 11, Michael, 9, Sarah, 7

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

Brian Quirk is one of six founding members of Irwin Fritchie Urquhart and Moore, which has grown from seven associates upon its start in 2000 to 36 lawyers and more than 50 staff members today.

Quirk's practice centers on handling complex cases and defending manufacturers of pharmaceutical drugs throughout the state and country in multi-district litigation. The firm also has been asked to serve as a manager for national litigation.

"One thing that's unique about my practice and the firm in general is that we've developed a national reputation as a go-to law firm for complex product liability and multi-district litigation," said Quirk, who has served as the firm's managing partner for 10 years. "What has stood out for me professionally is playing a role in starting a firm and building and managing it to what it is today."

His work with products liability and litigation has included national and regional defense counsel involving hip and knee implants, orthopedic bone screws, latex gloves and other medical and pharmaceutical products.

A member of several professional organizations and the Louisiana State Bar Association's House of Delegates, Quirk was elected president of the in New Orleans Bar Association in November.

He hopes to continue the association's efforts to enhance the administration of justice, improve access for the poor to legal services and the courts, provide the highest quality of professional programs to bar members and promote a higher participation of minorities, young lawyers and small and solo practitioners in the association.

Quirk said that while many voluntary bar associations are losing members, the New Orleans bar has been gaining them.

"I want to continue that trend," Quirk said. "I want to foster a good relationship of the members of (NOBA) and the members of the judiciary and provide a resource to the public for issues relating to the bar."

In addition to being a past president of the Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Quirk also has served as president of the Louisiana Children's Museum board, which he has been involved with for the past seven years.

As an advocate for early-childhood education, Quirk remains involved with the museum and its plans to build an early learning village, which would move the facility to City Park. •

— Whitney Pierce Santora

Michael Riess

Title: Kingsmill Riess founding partner

Age: 53

Family: wife, Donna; sons, Robert, 21, Christopher, 18

Education: bachelor's degree in management and master's degree in business administration, Tulane University; juris doctor, Tulane Law School

Not much has changed for Michael Riess in the more than 21 years since he co-founded Kingsmill Riess, where he focuses on construction litigation, transactions, maritime law and contract work.

"I specifically enjoy the transaction work and the buying and selling of business commodities," Riess said. "It is rewarding work and always positive."

Riess said one of his more notable transactions includes the 2008 sale of about 10 drilling rigs and other equipment by Pride International to Blake International of Houma for \$66 million in cash. He also represented a local DNA testing company sold to Pfizer for about \$20 million.

"Those were some of the larger transactions I have been a part of," Riess said. "But it is also a sample of what I get to deal with regularly."

Riess was also counsel on the first jury trial after Hurricane Katrina in Plaquemines Parish, a zero defense verdict in favor of Hercules Offshore, which wrapped up in April 2010.

Riess has represented domestic and international corporations and individual clients in complex litigation and transaction matters. His emphasis has been on maritime defense, premises liability, roadway construction and design, marine construction, banking law, lender liability, real estate litigation and transactions, including stock mergers and asset acquisitions.

Outside of the office, Riess has been active in his children's schools, St. George's and Newman, and has volunteered with the Carrollton Boosters, where both of his sons played baseball.

"They have an amazing operation out there and they really do it right for the kids," Riess said. "There were many afternoons spent out there helping out with the operations while the kids played baseball."

Most recently, Riess has been pegged to head up the capital campaign to renovate St. Stephen's Church on Napoleon Avenue, where he attends services every Sunday.

"The initiative just got under way not too long ago," Riess said. "We are shooting for a \$2.5 million to \$3 million budget to renovate the entire church. The church is home to some of the best workers in town."•

— Robin Shannon



Women of the Year

Recognizing exceptional achievement among local professional women

In a special New Orleans CityBusiness supplement, CityBusiness will recognize 50 women from the area whose successes in business and contributions to the community have set the pace for our region's future. We are looking for innovative leaders who are making waves with their energy, ideas, achievements and commitment to excellence in the area. Nominations are welcome from all business sectors, and self nominations are accepted. A panel of judges will use the nomination forms and independent research to make final selections. Honorees also will be honored at a special event.

Nominee: _____

Title: _____

Company/organization: _____

Business address: _____

City, state, ZIP: _____

Nominee's phone number: _____

Nominee's e-mail address: _____

Business accomplishments (job responsibilities, special projects, business-related affiliations): _____

Community involvement (nonprofits, civic, state and national organizations): _____

Achievements and awards: _____

Nominated by: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone number: _____

Four ways to submit a nomination form

- (1) Submit electronically at www.neworleanscitybusiness.com
- (2) E-mail it to christian.moises@nopg.com
- (3) Mail it to Women of the Year, CityBusiness, 111 Veterans Memorial Blvd., Suite 1440, Metairie, LA 70005
- (4) Fax it to Women of the Year at 504-832-3550

Entries are due August 12

Please attach additional sheets if necessary

Antonio Rodriguez

Title: Fowler, Rodriguez, Valdes-Fauli managing partner

Age: 66

Family: wife Virginia; sons, Jake, 43, Stephen, 35

Education: bachelor's degree in marine engineering, U.S. Naval Academy; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

Imagine a ship picks up cargo at a foreign port and docks in the United States, just before a bomb hidden in one of the containers explodes, killing several crew members and releasing a deadly radiation cloud over a heavily populated port city.

Who is liable for the damages? What if surviving victims sued the ship owner and operators, claiming they should have prevented the attack?

After the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the passage of the Maritime Transportation Security Act, Antonio Rodriguez began to study the ramifications of a terrorist attack at sea.

"I enjoy thinking through things," he said. "I try to work through those problems in advance and where they would take us. Anything that happens on land can happen at sea."

His paper on the subject, "When Your Ship is in the Bull's Eye," has been broadly studied in the legal industry. A maritime law attorney specializing in maritime casualty and pollution, Rodriguez routinely deals with complicated cases. He's currently co-lead counsel for BP in the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

"Highly technical" is how he describes most of his cases, while declining to discuss the legal ramifications of the BP case.

It's not the first time Rodriguez has handled an oil spill case. He was lead counsel for the Puerto Rican government in the 1994 Emily S spill of 750,000 gallons of oil off the coast of San Juan that cost more than \$100 million to clean.

Rodriguez developed an interest in maritime law while serving four years in the U.S. Navy, which involved study in military law and Naval justice. After leaving the military, he enrolled in law school and tailored his studies in maritime law. Rodriguez never returned to active duty but served 25 years in the Navy Reserve, retiring as a captain.

With 38 years in the law industry, Rodriguez has contributed to the development of his field through practice, teaching and writings.

He is an adjunct law professor at Tulane University Law School where he has an opportunity to impact young attorneys at a school that attracts a number of foreign students seeking a degree in maritime law.

Without adjunct professors, Rodriguez said, Tulane could not afford the cost of running the program. He serves on the advisory board for the Tulane Admiralty Law Institute.

"I think it helps the area to have a law school that's so recognized in the field," he said. •

— Diana Chandler



David Salley

Title: Salley, Hite and Mercer senior partner

Age: 51

Family: wife, Margarite; children, Katherine, 20, Sarah, 18

Education: bachelor's degree in geology, University of New Orleans; juris doctor, University of Mississippi School of Law

After 22 years of practice, David Salley still reflects back to his first jury trial as a lead counsel as a tone setter for his successful career. It happened two years after he graduated from law school.

"I realized how the (legal) system works and that it does work if you break it down to the ultimate facts," said Salley, who tried the case in Louisiana's U.S. Eastern District Court.

He credits his mentor, the late Owen Neff, for first encouraging him to follow this rule.

"He taught me that no matter what the evidence is, you have to let the jury know your story and why it makes sense," Salley said. "I took that throughout my career over the next 20 years."

Salley has focused his 22-year litigation practice primarily on representing insurers and corporations in state and federal courts. The Louisiana Supreme Court also has occasionally appointed him to sit as judge ad hoc for vacationing judges. In 2004, he co-founded Salley, Hite and Mercer.

One case Salley considers a significant part of his career involved defending an insurance company against a plaintiff's claims of injury because of asbestos exposure.

Julie Welsh tried to recover life insurance benefits under a policy Paul Revere Insurance Co. argued had not been issued at the time of the death, which occurred only a few days after the application was submitted. The case, which was tried in front of a jury in St. Bernard Parish in 1992, lasted six weeks and resulted in the jury ruling in favor of Salley's client.

"The jury was able to focus on the specific issues I had established and then answered the questions presented to them in my client's favor, giving the client a complete victory on the issues it had decided to go to trial on. . . . The case solidified my belief that when you properly prepare and present the evidence at trial, our judicial system can work exactly as it is supposed to."

For more than 10 years, Salley has also been an advocate of WYES, serving as its auctioneer for the annual Art, Wine and Travel auction. He also encourages his firm to work with local nonprofits, including Second Harvest, Bridge House, Legal Aid and Cancer Services of Louisiana.

"We are all trying to help in whatever way we can at the local level because that helps the population of the city become more self-sufficient, which leads to less crime and other problems."•

— Amy Ferrara Smith

2011 Best Places to Work

DO YOU WORK FOR A GREAT EMPLOYER?

New Orleans CityBusiness wants to know.

Submit nominations online now for the 2011 Best Places to Work event.



For the ninth year, CityBusiness will rank companies doing business in the area according to how well they treat their most important asset — their employees. Eligible companies must have an office in the New Orleans area but can be headquartered elsewhere. Final rankings will be based on results from the Best Places to Work survey as well as a separate survey of employees. Honorees also will be recognized at a special event Dec. 9 at the New Orleans Sheraton and in a special section to run in the Dec. 16 issue of CityBusiness.

Nominations are due July 29

For more information,
call Christian Moises at 293-9249
or e-mail christian.moises@nopg.com.

To complete a nomination form, go to
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Michael Schneider

Title: Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann partner

Age: 53

Family: wife, Jill; children, Elie, 24, Casey, 21

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

Michael Schneider's career with Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann began in 1984, just a year after he earned his law degree from Tulane University. He became a partner at the firm in 1990 and eventually was named co-chairman of its real estate practice group.

Schneider specializes in commercial real estate and represented shopping center developers before moving on to larger projects such as hotels and subdivisions.

"It's very pleasing to actually see something productive built out of your work," he said.

One of his more notable clients is the Benson family, who Schneider has represented in matters relating to Benson Tower and the New Orleans Centre redevelopment. Schneider played key roles in acquiring the real estate, completing the purchase agreement and executing successful negotiations with state agencies.

"That was a very interesting project that probably is the most interesting one I've done in the past several years because of its importance to the region," he said. "It was a real estate deal, but it was also tied into the retention of the Saints."

He also represents the owner of the Shops at Canal Place and the owner of downtown's Loews Hotel, where he has served as lead counsel since 2004 for financing, lender agreements and hotel management.

Schneider also is active in his neighborhood as president and commissioner of the Lakewood Crime Prevention and Improvement District. He played a role in changing legislation that ultimately increased safety for the neighborhood.

"The Crime Prevention District contracts with a private company to provide security, and we had the money to do that because of the parcel fee that's imposed through legislation," he said, adding that the original parcel fee for the district was only collected on improved properties.

"I, as well as the other members of the board of commissioners, thought that it wasn't fair that the vacant lots were getting a free pass. So we went to the legislature and they agreed and amended the law so that all properties in the neighborhood paid their fair share."

Schneider said the level of security in the Lakewood area has finally returned to its pre-Hurricane Katrina strength.

"Now we have the funds to continue to provide 24-hour patrols," he said. •

— Leigh Stuart



Louisiana Press Association Better Newspaper Competition 2010

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- 3rd Place, Best Investigative Reporting
- Honorable Mention, Best Investigative Reporting
- 3rd Place, Best News Coverage
- 1st Place, Best Regular Column
- 1st Place, Best Graphic Design
- 1st Place, Best Editorial Cartoon
- 2nd Place, Best Editorial Page
- 2nd Place, Best Headline
- 2nd Place, Best Special Section
- 2nd Place, Best Graphic Design
- Honorable Mention, Best News Story
- Honorable Mention, Best Regular Column

Press Club New Orleans – 2010

- 1st Place, Business
- 1st Place, Investigative Reporting
- 1st Place, Science, Health & Technology
- 1st Place, Special Sections
- 1st Place, Editorial Illustration
- 2nd Place, Best Local News Website
- 2nd Place, Business
- 2nd Place, Column
- 3rd Place, Business
- 3rd Place, Science, Health & Technology

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- Bronze, Best Body of Work, Single Reporter —
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Timothy Scott

Title: Fischer and Phillips partner

Age: 44

Family: wife, Peggy; sons, Michael, 11, Jack, 7

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

A broken economy may mean less work for most, but it turns into more work for employment lawyers.

Tim Scott learned that this past year as a labor employment lawyer and a partner at Fisher and Phillips.

"We've had a number of tough cases this year, and it seems like with the economy, the cases in the employment arena ... have grown a lot more," Scott said. "With that, the cases are going further than they ever had."

He also said employees are much more likely to bring a borderline claim than in the past. Instead of moving on and finding new jobs after being let go, people are now sitting around for months.

"Bringing a lawsuit becomes their only way to move forward," said Scott, who also handles matters involving Occupational Safety and Health Administration compliance issues. He's also labor counsel to the Louisiana Automobile Dealers Association and represents several private schools throughout the area.

Scott is a frequent lecturer on the Americans with Disabilities, Fair Labor Standards, and Family and Medical Leave acts.

He said his work with the ADA is important because the legislation has changed vastly since its inception in 1990, but most employers remain unaware of those changes.

It "used to be fairly limited in its scope," he said, requiring substantial limitations to major life activities, so only a "very narrow type of individual could be considered." But the change recently was set up to broaden the scope of the law and now encompasses pretty much anyone with an ongoing medical condition, forcing companies to make accommodations "without undue hardships."

During a time when layoffs are peaking, those changes have become more relevant, as does the Fair Labor Standards Act, which Scott called "probably the most misunderstood law and misapplied ... by employers."

Despite a full plate, Scott, a sports fan, also coaches children's baseball and basketball at Carrollton Playground. He helped open several YMCA centers in Plaquemines Parish and a new facility at Audubon Park's Fly, where his sons, Jack and Michael, just finished their first baseball season.

He said he chose employment litigation because "you're dealing with things everyone has dealt with at one time in their lives."

And, ultimately, he likes his job because he gets to help people.

"The most rewarding part of my job is working with clients who want to do the right thing."•

— Travis Andrews



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Karen Shipman

Title: Kean Miller Hawthorne D'Armond McCowan and Jarman partner

Age: 39

Family: husband, Otis; daughters, Ruby, 3, Olive, 1

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

Maritime lawyer Karen Shipman, a partner at Kean Miller, expected to specialize in intellectual property at Tulane University Law School but reconsidered after taking a class called "The Law of the Sea" while enrolled in the university's summer program in Greece. The course was taught at a location next to the Aegean Sea.

"Most of my cases these days involve contract disputes and casualties in the oilfield offshore or onshore, including well blowouts, transfers of personnel, vessel collisions with pipelines or platforms, or just about anything you can imagine happening in one of our state's most important industries," Shipman said.

Several years ago, she won a \$10 million judgment for a large natural gas producer involving a well blowout after a lengthy trial and years of litigation.

"Every case brings new challenges and things to learn to adequately represent my clients, like how to jack up a drilling barge or how a petroleum engineer calculates reservoir damage," Shipman said.

After a brief stint as a lawyer in New York, the New Jersey native decided to return to the Crescent City, where she clerked for Judge Fredericka Wicker in the 24th Judicial District Court. Wicker, who also is from New Jersey, understood Shipman's desire to work in New Orleans. She says she benefited from the judge's mentoring and tries to pass on what she learned to Kean Miller's younger lawyers.

Most of Shipman's practice has been in federal court, though she has handled cases throughout Louisiana.

"Something I love about my work here is that no matter how contentious the issues are in a case, lawyers on all sides still generally treat one another with respect. For example, we will share a beer together following an out-of-town deposition."

She has been involved with the Homeless Experience Legal Protection (HELP) program U.S. District Judge Jay Zainey started in 2004.

"I've assisted with something as simple as notarizing a document to something as complicated as helping someone with an out-of-state child custody issue," she said.

Shipman also has volunteered with Rebuilding Together New Orleans, repairing houses for low-income residents in several Kean Miller-sponsored projects.

Shipman spends as much time as possible with her husband and daughters and said one of the things she enjoys about Kean Miller is that the firm's many female attorneys face the same challenges she does in balancing work and family life. •

— Susan Buchanan



Phillip Shuler

Title: Chaffe McCall partner

Age: 66

Family: wife, Patricia; children, Stephanie, 42, Sarah, 40, Matthew, 39; grandchildren, Hannah, 9, Jack, 5, Ellie, 5

Education: bachelor's degree in history, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, University of Kansas School of Law

When labor lawyer Phillip Shuler walks into a negotiation with union representatives, he has an advantage. He spent high school summers at an Oscar Meyer meatpacking plant in Wisconsin, working around fiery ovens and hauling 100-pound bags of pork and beef scraps.

"It was a well-paying job for those who didn't have an education. They had good wages and benefits," said Shuler, the descendant of wheat farmers and Midwestern homesteaders. "Having worked in a union alongside union members, I understand them."

Later, Shuler saw how a union — and its artificially high salaries — could hurt a company.

"This economic crisis has exposed the United Auto Workers in terms of causing problems for the U.S. auto industry" by making American cars too expensive, he said.

As a labor lawyer, Shuler represents management and negotiates labor contracts with union representatives. He starts by getting to know his adversary.

"I try to get their bottom line," Shuler said. "I know what ours is."

Emotions can run high at the bargaining table and work environments can become dangerous. Shuler was involved in a case where angry union employees at a roofing plant sabotaged shingles by soaking them in tubs of water.

Shuler claimed the employees had carried out an illegal in-plant strike because by destroying their product, they were refusing to work. Eventually, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals would agree.

While the case was being debated, workers formally went on strike, intimidating other employees as they entered the plant.

"It was very threatening, very highly charged," Shuler said. "I learned that labor relations is a tough business."

More recently, Shuler represented Eddie Jordan, the embattled Orleans Parish district attorney whose former employees sued him and his office for racial discrimination.

"It was a big win for us," Shuler said, because the jury found Jordan not to be personally liable. He says he got through it by relying on the endurance he had developed over decades of marathon training and running.

Shuler also coached his daughter's high school track team, as well as the Greater New Orleans Junior Olympics track and field team.

These days, he laces up at 4:30 a.m. to run along the levee or in Audubon Park. •

— Anne Berry

Robert Stefani

Title: King, Krebs and Jurgens member

Age: 49

Family: wife, Kristin; daughters, Ellie, 16, Maddie, 14

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

One of the biggest challenges of Robert Stefani's career has been his work in commercial and maritime transactions and litigation since the national financial crisis that reached its peak in 2008.

As banks and insurance companies were failing and receiving bailouts from the federal government, several elements of Stefani's practice came to a complete halt.

"We are now navigating a different economy which has changed the way lenders look at and document transactions," Stefani said. "Lenders have had to figure out how to make money in this new environment. The financial climate will likely never get back to the way it was before, but it is always changing and there is always something new to learn."

One of Stefani's largest financing cases began in 2004 when he handled the bankruptcy of a large international commercial financing firm and marine services company.

"My biggest responsibility was getting their collateral sold and cleared out," Stefani said. "The company had many investments and quite a few large vessels they had to get rid of. It ran the gamut of what I do as an attorney."

Although the atmosphere has stabilized, Stefani says there's not likely to be a consistent "normal" in the lending and financing business for the foreseeable future.

Stefani said his law school experience differed from most in that he went into it and left knowing what he wanted from his practice.

"When you go into law school, most of what you study is case law," Stefani said. "You leave with a clear litigation bend. I, however, came out knowing that I wanted to go into maritime transaction law. I look back and see that this is exactly what I wanted to do."

Stefani says he appreciates the transaction side of his practice in that it typically is a resolution all sides can be happy with.

"When people complete a transaction, they shake hands and they are usually happy with each other," Stefani said. "I like to be involved in those types of transactions that benefit our economy."

Growing up in New Jersey, Stefani came to New Orleans to attend Tulane University Law School. After graduation, Stefani moved to Washington, D.C., to practice but wanted to return to the Crescent City to set up a practice.

Outside the office, Stefani serves on the board for Akili Academy Charter School.

"I got drawn in last year and I am really proud of the work of the teachers and staff there," he said. "Education reform in New Orleans is an important part of our economic development."•

— Robin Shannon



Charles Stern

Title: Steeg Law Firm member

Age: 57

Family: wife, Jacquelyn; children, Erica, 26, Rebecca, 23, Lily, 18, Eleanor, 14, Emma, 12

Education: bachelor's degree in math, Harvard College; juris doctor, Yale Law School

When a developer sells a condominium, they usually control the association that oversees the building for a few years before transferring power to individual unit owners.

“Frequently when control passes, the owners begin to find defects at the cost of several hundreds of thousands of dollars, depending on the size of the building,” said commercial real estate litigator Charles Stern.

Those are the circumstances in a case he’s handling for a condo association in the Warehouse District.

Owners in a 100-unit complex in the neighborhood contend they inherited a \$500,000 roof repair expense from a developer who misrepresented the condition of the building in his disclosure document. While condo dues are supposed to cover basic operation expenses, unanticipated expenses require special assessments.

Stern said he is confident he will settle the case in the condo owners’ favor, with the developer, inspecting engineer and roofer who evaluated the structure sharing the blame.

“We ended up in fairly complicated litigation that we are now trying to settle. The law in the area of condominium law is still generally undeveloped,” Stern said. “(That’s) part of what makes it challenging. Neither I nor the lawyers on the other side have a good handle on what the legal rules are.”

The developing nature of condominium conversions law is one of the things Stern finds fascinating about his job.

“Every case you handle is unique,” Stern said. “There’s no real pattern to them, and the bodies of law applied are often different.”

Stern said he has represented several condo associations seeking justice in problems they say they have blindly inherited from developers.

“It seems like a growth industry. Condos have a lot of advantages for people,” especially the elderly or those who travel frequently, he said.

Stern lends his legal skills to a variety of nonprofits, often helping them secure tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service.

Stern helped incorporate the Greater New Orleans Youth Orchestra and, as board president, helped revitalize the Shir Chadash Synagogue in Metairie after Hurricane Katrina.

“I try to spend at least some of my time as a lawyer doing things that I don’t get paid for,” he said. “I consider it part of my obligation to make the city better. I’m not just here to make a bundle of money and sail off into the sunset. That’s never been primarily what’s triggered me.”•

— Diana Chandler

Margaret Sunkel

Title: Geiger, Laborde and Laperouse partner

Age: 42

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

Trial lawyer and Chicago native Margaret Sunkel has made a name for herself as a top litigator and dedicated community member.

Sunkel joined Geiger, Laborde and Laperouse in 2002 and became its first female partner in 2006.

"It wasn't like breaking any sort of glass ceiling," she said. "If you're qualified and you like to litigate and you work hard, that's what's going to make you a partner here."

Sunkel said she's spending a great deal of time helping Habitat for Humanity work through the group's Chinese drywall issues, which requires dealing with foreign companies and laws in their country.

"Getting the Chinese manufacturers to stand up and accept their responsibility has not been easy," she said.

Sunkel, who also specializes in motor vehicle accidents, product liability and personal injury cases, is always up for a challenge.

"My favorite cases are those where there's questionable liability," she said.

And while she's committed to her practice, her passion to the city also shines bright. Sunkel has served as a mentor to a young woman, now a sophomore in college, since the girl was in third grade. She has also worked with Kingsley House for more than a decade.

Her relationship with the community center dedicated to family, education and civic involvement began with an internship 12 years ago.

During her tenure as president of the board, Kingsley House initiated its partnership with Bayou District and Columbia Residential to provide community and support services to former St. Bernard Public Housing residents, as well as new residents of its new incarnation, Columbia Parc. Services offered at the development include job skills training, household management, budgeting and money management, GED preparation and child care.

"It's unfortunate that it's kind of New Orleans' best kept secret," she said of Kingsley House. "They're focused on building people's ability to be self-sufficient."

Sunkel said her partners are very understanding of her busy schedule outside the office.

"They know that there is a value to the firm for members of the firm being out in the community and being good stewards."•

— Leigh Stuart



Max Swetman

Title: Swetman Baxter Massenburg founding partner

Age: 43

Family: wife, Margaret

Education: bachelor's degree in English literature, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center; master's degree in epidemiology, Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

Law and hard science don't normally go hand in hand. But for Max Swetman, founding partner of Swetman Baxter Massenburg, the two dovetail in his profession.

In addition to his law degree, Swetman has earned a master's degree of public health in epidemiology and is three classes away from a master's degree in environmental science from John Hopkins University.

Swetman began his career in real estate law but quickly became interested in legal environmental issues.

"When I first started practicing, I was doing quite a bit of transactional work ... which I found interesting but not as interesting as those transactions that involved some sort of environmental problem with the land that had to be transferred," Swetman said.

After branching out into environmental and toxic tort issues, he said he was "killed" on a cross examination with an expert witness who was an epidemiologist.

"I was taught exactly what I didn't know," he said.

Immediately after the trial, he applied for the master's of epidemiology program at Tulane University's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Even when other lawyers argued a second degree was unnecessary, Swetman pushed on.

"I occasionally ran into people who say almost this exact quote: 'You don't need to know this stuff. That's why you hire experts.' And that almost drove me harder because that's absolutely not what I believe."

He uses his dual degrees to offer advice on scientific legal issues, a background that became relevant in the wake of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

"The spill was not just a local tragedy, but it was also very interesting to me from a scientific perspective," he said. "I knew it was going to be an enormous legal issue, but I was honestly more interested in the intersection in what it was going to do to the environment, how it could potentially have an impact on the area."

He has been speaking with Environmental Protection Agency officials about updating outdated storm water rules, which he said is one of the reasons New Orleans flooded in 2005. They still need work on "the little things people don't think about," such as three-car driveways that displace water.

Though Swetman has found a niche with his legal and scientific background and has served as an adjunct speaker on environmental science, he says he couldn't leave the law.

"It's true that the law is a jealous mistress," he said, though "I do like keeping the edges sharp all around."•

— *Travis Andrews*

Bobby Truitt

Title: The Truitt Law Firm managing partner

Age: 48

Family: wife, Kathy; sons Alfie, 17, Daniel, 16, Jackson, 7

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

Even a highly trained lawyer relies on experts, which Bobby Truitt realized while defending a personal injury case.

A New Orleans artist had sued Truitt's client, a global retailer, blaming a faulty car repair for an accident that left him with whiplash, a hand tremor and a multi-million dollar claim.

Truitt sought to defeat the claim, and one of his secret weapons was surveillance video that proved the artist was unharmed. When the judge refused to allow the tapes as evidence, things looked grim for the defense.

"It got to the point where the opposing counsel and I almost went to swinging at each other in the hallway," said Truitt. "This was a hard-fought case."

Without his key piece of evidence, Truitt decided to get an education in car repair. An expert mechanic explained to him that a botched front-end repair couldn't have led to a loss of control of the car.

"I realized that if you want to win a case where experts are involved, you have to immerse yourself in the expert's world," said Truitt, who went on to win the case for his client.

Doing his homework paid off again during Truitt's defense of a national drugstore chain. The claimant this time was a school-aged boy who accused the drugstore's pharmacist of overfilling a prescription for Prozac.

Realizing two pharmacists had made it onto the jury, Truitt spent hours learning technical details from a pharmacology doctor.

"During the trial, I could see it in the eyes of the pharmacists. They appreciated me ... being on the same wavelength," Truitt said.

By knowing that the boy couldn't have become immediately violent after the reported overdose, Truitt won that case, too.

"I didn't make law review in college, but one thing my parents instilled in me was that I had to work hard to make up for that," said Truitt, who has managed his own law firm since 1997. Even when the levees failed after Hurricane Katrina, Truitt kept his employees paid by working as a claims adjuster, scaling rooftops and entering flooded homes.

Soon after that, Truitt took a case that would cost him one of his biggest clients. A woman had sued the same global retailer, claiming she had broken a leg in one of their New Orleans stores. For Truitt, the trial was a no-brainer — until he lost.

"But I suspected something was wrong, and it was," he said. "The fix was in on the case."

The presiding judge was convicted of taking bribes, so Truitt urged his client to sue the judge for corruption. Worried about negative publicity, the company told Truitt to put on the brakes and then fired him.

"Sometimes I'm too candid, and clients don't want to hear it," Truitt said. "But at night you've got to sleep and feel good about the decisions you've made."•

— Anne Berry



FIRM ASSOCIATED

Jason Waguespack

Title: Galloway, Johnson, Tompkins, Burr and Smith managing director

Age: 45

Family: single

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

Jason Waguespack, managing director at Galloway, Johnson, Tompkins, Burr and Smith, likes the combined local and international flavors of his maritime, corporate and insurance defense law practice.

But he says he didn't intend to become a maritime lawyer.

"It was a big part of my job when I started at Galloway in 1994, and now I feel incredibly fortunate to have ended up in this area of law," Waguespack said. "The clients are knowledgeable, the cases are interesting and challenging, and the New Orleans maritime bar is, in my opinion, the best in the U.S."

In a case involving complicated jurisdiction laws, Waguespack represented a vessel owner who belatedly found out that a multimillion-dollar judgment had been rendered against his company in a Turkish lawsuit.

"We filed an anti-foreign suit injunction and then brought a suit against our Turkish agent and their Norwegian parent in U.S. District Court in New Orleans for their negligence" for not notifying the company, he said. The case involved trips to Turkey, Norway and elsewhere.

After winning the challenge to personal jurisdiction the Turkish and Norwegian companies raised, the case was settled a week before trial, he said.

Waguespack teaches international business law at Tulane University's A.B. Freeman School of Business and a course in maritime charter parties at Tulane Law School.

"Very bright students choose to take these elective courses, and it helps keep me updated on the law," he said.

Waguespack has served on the city's Board of Zoning Adjustments since Mayor Ray Nagin appointed him to the position in 2006.

"I read all the reports and recommendations the week before the actual meeting," he said. "From the board's perspective, the city is coming back strong, with a lot of investment in neighborhoods and new money coming in for business ventures."

Waguespack has also served as president of the Constance-Upperline Street Neighborhood Association for 15 years.

He has raised money and done pro bono work for several charities, including Project Lazarus' hospice house in the Marigny. He is board president of Halloween's in New Orleans Inc., a nonprofit that has raised more than \$4 million for Project Lazarus since 1985.

Waguespack said he appreciates being part of a vibrant, growing firm and has watched Galloway, Johnson, Tompkins, Burr and Smith swell from 13 lawyers in one office in Louisiana, when he started in 1994, to 100 lawyers in nine offices in six Gulf Coast states today. •

— Susan Buchanan

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William Wright

Title: Deutsch, Kerrigan and Stiles partner

Age: 61

Family: wife, Alice; children, Matthew, 32; Carrie, 30

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

Bill Wright has his hands full with a demanding law career. But these days, he juggles that responsibility with maintaining one of the largest nonprofit rebuilding operations in a city still recovering from one of the worst disasters in U.S. history.

Wright, a partner with Deutsch, Kerrigan and Stiles, is serving his second year as president of Habitat for Humanity New Orleans.

"We're proud of our leadership role in bringing New Orleans back," he said. "We've built more than 300 houses since Katrina, and we're about to open the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music at Musicians' Village."

Wright became a Habitat board member in 2006 and has been active in the organization since then.

"After Katrina, I was looking for places where I could help and found Habitat for Humanity," he said.

In addition to rebuilding the city, Wright has focused his practice on helping professionals rebuild their careers. He specializes in commercial and professional liability cases, in which he represents professionals such as attorneys and accountants who are the targets of damage claims.

"More often when things go bad, people tend to blame the professionals who had been assisting them. It's always rewarding to try to assist professionals who always have pride in what they do and assist them in the defense of claims," he said.

Wright's most noteworthy case involved representing a national actuarial firm that was sued in connection with work it had done for a pension plan.

"That was a real challenge just because of the nature of the business," he said.

The case taught Wright a lot about the actuarial industry, he said.

"It's kind of a low-profile business, yet every pension plan has an actuary that has to do annual evaluation reports," he said. "It was just interesting learning the industry and litigating the case."

The case was tried in 2006, and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in his client's favor in 2008. It ended up being a landmark decision in the area of actuarial liability.

"It was a high-profile case within the insurance industry that I do a lot of work for, so it helped me there," he said.

Because of the case, Wright now fields questions from lawyers throughout the country who handle those types of cases.

In choosing his career path, Wright followed in the footsteps of his father who was also a lawyer.

"I was just interested in helping clients solve problems," he said.

Wright found his niche as a commercial litigator early in his career. He joined Baldwin Haspel Burke and Mayer two years out of law school and stayed with the firm for 15 years, representing closely held corporations.

"I was a litigator, so I ended up getting exposure to a variety of different corporate and business issues," he said.

In 1991, he moved to Deutsch, Kerrigan and Stiles, where he has used his commercial litigation background to grow his practice. He made partner with the firm in 1993. •

— Autumn Cafiero Giusti

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