William E. Robinson

Of Counsel

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Bill Robinson concentrates his practice in ERISA and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Robinson works in the areas of employee benefits and estate planning and estate administration. Mr. Robinson has broad experience in all areas of employee benefits, including pension and welfare benefits. He has extensive experience with 401(k) plans and 403(b) plans, having assisted many companies of all sizes in designing such plans to take maximum advantage of the benefits they provide, both to the employer and its employees. He assists clients when plan issues arise and makes corrections to such plans through the IRS voluntary compliance program. He also has experience representing clients when their qualified plans are audited by either the IRS or the DOL. He advises corporate 401(k) committees and has experience preparing 401(k) committee charters and advises 401(k) plan sponsors that are changing service providers. He also provides advice on all types of benefit plans in connection with mergers and acquisitions. He has represented multi-employer pension and welfare plans and advises corporate clients on multi-employer plan issues, particularly withdrawal liability matters, which can be financially devastating.

Mr. Robinson represents governmental entities such as towns and cities, counties, governmental hospitals, city departmental pension funds, such as fire and police pension funds and other governmental entities in connection with retirement plan matters. He represents both "for profit" and "tax exempt" employers with respect to non-qualified deferred compensation and other areas of executive compensation, including designing, drafting and advising with respect to the tax implications of such plans. Mr. Robinson advises publicly traded companies on the tax implications of stock related deferred compensation plans as well as other bonus and deferred compensation plans. He also works with the labor and employment and litigation attorneys in support of employee benefits litigation and advises business clients on ESOP matters. Mr. Robinson advises clients regarding issues related to the Affordable Care Act, as well as COBRA, cafeteria plans and other welfare related issues.

Mr. Robinson has over 40 years of experience representing clients with estate planning or estate administration needs. He drafts and amends a broad range of estate planning documents, such as wills, trusts, and powers of attorney. No matter how simple an estate is, all estate planning is complicated to the client. Mr. Robinson attempts to simplify these matters as much as possible but is competent to address the most complex estate planning issues. Mr. Robinson understands the emotional issues related to estate administration and guides survivors through the intricacies of probate and estate and trust administration.

Professional Honors & Activities

- AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell
- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Employee Benefits (ERISA) Law since 2007
- Named the Best Lawyers® 2025, 2023, 2021, 2019, 2017, 2015, and 2012 Employee Benefits (ERISA) Law "Lawyer of the Year" in Chattanooga
- Listed in *Mid-South Super Lawyers* in Employee Benefits (2016 and 2017)
- Chattanooga, Tennessee and American Bar Associations
- National Association of Public Pension Attorneys
- Chattanooga Estate Planning Council
- Chattanooga Tax Practitioners
- Former President, Board of Directors – Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Public Library

- Former Chairman, Board of Directors – WTCI-Public Television
- Former Chairman – Endowment Committee, Grace Episcopal Church
- Former President – Chattanooga Arts and Education Council
- Member, Board of Trustees – Sculpture Fields at Montague Park

Publications

- "Health Plan Compliance Concerns for Year-End 2024," republished in *Benefits Pro* (September 2024)
- Co-author – "Defective Retirement Plans," *Employee Benefit Plan Review* (January 2012)

Speaking Engagements

- "Tax Advantaged Sales to an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP)," National Business Institute Seminar on "Handling the Sale of a Business" (December 2016)
- "Using Retirement Accounts to Fund Franchise Growth," Franchise Business Network South Spring 2016 Quarterly Meeting (April 2016)
- Panelist – ERISA Expert Panel member on benefits issues, the Tennessee Society of CPAs 2015 Employee Benefit Plans Conference, Nashville, Tennessee (May 2015)
- "401(k) Plan Liabilities and Fiduciary Responsibility," Tennessee Bar Association 2015 Corporate Counsel Forum, Nashville, Tennessee (March 2015)
- "Affordable Care Act," County & Local Governments Workshop, Gatlinburg, Tennessee (June 2013)
- "Fiduciary Duty: An Overview and a Guide to Common Mistakes in 401(k) Plans," Chattanooga, Tennessee (March 2013)
- "Little Noticed Provision of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act May Cause Big Mistakes," Chattanooga Society for Human Resources Management Annual Legal Round-Up, Chattanooga, Tennessee (February 2013)
- "DOL Issues Final Regs on Fee Disclosures," ERISA Seminar Series (2012)
- "Surviving and Succeeding in the World of Health Care Reform," 2011 Tennessee SHRM Conference and Exposition, Society for Human Resource Management, Chattanooga, Tennessee (September 2011)
- "Sponsoring Your 401(k): Things You Have to Do and Things You Shouldn't Do," Brentwood and Chattanooga, Tennessee (2011)

Education

- University of Tennessee, J.D., 1980
- University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, B.A., 1977

Admissions

- Tennessee, 1980
- U.S. Tax Court, 1986
- U.S. District Court, E.D. Tennessee, 2004
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, 2016