



George T. Lewis

Shareholder

Memphis | 901.577.2256 | blewis@bakerdonelson.com

Buck Lewis leads Baker Donelson's Appellate Group.

George T. "Buck" Lewis has practiced law for almost 40 years. His clients have included prestigious companies such as American Home Shield, FedEx Ground, First Horizon Bank, Geico, International Paper, TruGreen, USAA, and Wright Medical. His class action, business litigation, and appellate work has resulted in him being named Class Action Lawyer of the Year and Appellate Lawyer of the Year (thrice) by *Best Lawyers in America*® and Lawyer of the Year by the *Memphis Business Journal*. Buck was recently inducted into the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers. He serves as chair of the Firm's Appellate Group and is the past chair of the Business Litigation Group and Litigation Department.

Buck's service to the profession has included President of the Tennessee Bar Association, President of the Memphis Bar Foundation, Chair of the ABA Pro Bono and Public Service Committee, and Chair of the Tennessee Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission. He is the Larry Wilks Distinguished Practitioner In Residence at the University of Tennessee College of Law and co-founder of the Institute for Leadership and Professionalism. He has also taught leadership courses at Tulane Law School and for a Fortune 500 legal department.

Buck has received two ABA Presidential Citations, one from President Laurel Bellows in 2013 and another from President Bob Carlson in 2019, in addition to receiving numerous other professional awards. He has authored or co-authored more than 40 publications and made more than 40 presentations on topics such as access to justice, appellate practice, arbitration, class actions, good faith/bad faith, insurance coverage, judicial recusals, statutory damage caps, leadership, summary judgments, the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act, and 30(b)(6) depositions.

He is a Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 31 listed mediator and an American Arbitration Association arbitrator.



Case Studies

- [Appellate Victory in Non-Compete Agreement Enforcement for Home Warranty Company](#) - Breach of confidentiality/non-compete agreement
- [Successful Result for Client in TCPA Class Action](#) - Telephone Consumer Protection Act Class Action



Representative Matters

- Successfully represented a Tennessee-based home warranty company in U.S. District Court and before the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals seeking enforcement of a non-compete agreement against a former employee who lived and worked solely in California.
- Represented a publicly traded national bank in an American Arbitration Association proceeding in which an adverse New York bank sought repurchase of approximately 500 home equity loans totaling approximately \$30 million in unpaid balances.
- Successfully defended an automobile dealership in a putative class action seeking certification of approximately 14,000 class members challenging a charge imposed by the dealership, with the result that the state supreme court reversed the trial court, holding that class actions were not allowed under the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act.

- Won a nine-day jury trial for a national property and casualty insurance carrier. The plaintiff was a local physician's widow who sued the carrier for bad faith and violation of the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act. The defense presented cause and origin experts and electrical engineers who testified the fire was caused by arson. The jury returned a verdict in favor of the defendant in one hour.
- Defended a global automobile and truck manufacturer with respect to a nationwide class action alleging defective brake assemblies on one of the manufacturer's truck lines. After we removed the case to federal court under the Class Action Fairness Act and filed a motion to dismiss under the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act and common law fraud, the plaintiffs filed a notice of voluntary dismissal.
- In a case of first impression in the Sixth Circuit, obtained ruling establishing the standard of review to be used by a District Court in the Sixth Circuit in reviewing a decision by a United States Bankruptcy Court.
- Obtained a favorable settlement after a chancellor held that a chancery court could properly review whether a state complied with procedural due process in awarding its first private prison contract.
- Obtained a ruling by the Tennessee Supreme Court holding that a physician cannot properly enter into a contingent fee arrangement to serve as an expert witness for his/her patient.
- On appeal of a matter originally tried by another firm, obtained a reduction in judgment to \$500,000 from the original \$14 million in compensatory and punitive damages. The decision was significant on several issues including the definition of a trade secret, the damages available under Rule 65 for wrongfully obtaining a temporary injunction and the extent to which damages must be reasonably specific in order to be sustained as a remedy.



Professional Honors & Activities

- Named Best Lawyers® 2024, 2016, and 2020 Appellate Practice "Lawyer of the Year" in Memphis
- Named Best Lawyers® 2023, 2021 and 2015 Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions – Defendants "Lawyer of the Year" in Memphis
- Named Best Lawyers® 2023 Litigation - Banking and Finance "Lawyer of the Year" in Memphis
- Listed in *Mid-South Super Lawyers* since 2006
- Visiting Faculty – Lawyer As Leaders, Tulane Law School (January 2020)
- Co-founder and lead legacy donor, UT College of Law Institute for Professional Leadership.
- Recipient – Frances Perkins Public Service Award, ABA Labor and Employment Law Section (2020)
- Recipient – American Bar Association President's Citation for Leadership (August 2013, August 2019)
- Founder – Institute for Professional Leadership, University of Tennessee College of Law
- Recipient – Best of the Bar Award, *Memphis Business Journal* (2018)
- Member – Legal Services Corporation National Disaster Taskforce (2018 – 2019)
- Recipient – Lewis Donelson Award (2017)
- Recipient – Virginia State Bar Pro Bono Hero (2017)
- Member – American Academy of Alternative Dispute Resolution (admitted 2017)
- Member – University of Tennessee President's Council (2016 – present)
- Recipient – Reese Smith Service to Pro Bono Award, the National Association of Pro Bono Professionals (2016)
- Member – Chair of University of Tennessee College of Law Dean's Circle (2016 – present)
- American Bar Association, Special Advisor to the Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service (2021 – present)
 - Chair of the Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service (2016 – 2019)
 - Chair of working groups for ABAFreeAnswers.org, a project to launch a 50-state pro bono website (2015 – 2018)
 - Primary fundraiser – ABA national pro bono website, ABAFreeLegalAnswers.org
- Member – UT College of Law Institute for Professional Leadership Advisory Board (2015 – present)

- Recipient – The Justice Janice M. Holder Award for Access to Justice, Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services (2014)
- Member – Planning Committee and speaker/panelist for two national leadership conferences attended by deans and faculty convened by UT College of Law Institute for Professional Leadership
- Recipient – Inaugural Baker Donelson Pro Bono Impact Award (2014)
- Chair – UT College of Law Alumni Advisory Council (two separate extended terms since ~ 1985)
- Recipient – University of Tennessee National Alumni Association, Alumni Service Award (2013)
- Larry Wilks Distinguished Practitioner in Residence, University of Tennessee College of Law (2012 – Present)
- Fellow – American Academy of Appellate Lawyers
- Fellow – Litigation Counsel of America
- Chair – American Red Cross Mid-South Chapter, Memphis, Tennessee (June 2012 – June 2014); Outstanding Board Member of the Year (2014)
 - Board chair – American Red Cross East Tennessee Chapter
 - Board chair – American Red Cross Mid South Chapter (While board chair, chapter raised funds for new building.) (2009 – 2011)
- Recipient – American Bar Association Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section Public Service Honor Roll Award (2009, 2010)
- Tennessee Bar Association (President, 2008 – 2009); President – Tennessee Legal Community Foundation (2009 – 2010)
- Past President – Memphis and Shelby County Bar Foundation
- Recipient – Memphis Bar Association W. J. Michael Cody Pro Bono Award (2008)
- Life Member – Sixth Circuit Judicial Conference
- Recipient – University of Tennessee College of Law Outstanding Service Award (1998)
- Recipient – Tennessee Supreme Court Outstanding Service Award (1996); Member – Tennessee Supreme Court Advisory Commission on Rules of Civil and Appellate Procedure (1999 – 2009); Electronic Discovery Committee (2007)
- Recipient – Memphis Legal Secretaries Association Boss of the Year Award (1994)
- Co-chair – UT College of Law Join the Journey Campaign
- Chair – Memphis Area Legal Services Campaign for Equal Justice
- Member – Steering Committee, TBA/ACC Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Initiative Gala
- Fellow – Tennessee Bar Foundation and American Bar Foundation



Law Firm Management Experience

- Current Chair – Appellate Practice Group for Firm's appellate practice in eight states in Firm's footprint (2009 – present).
- Past Chair – Litigation Department
- Past Chair – Business Litigation Group



Publications

Publications on Legal Issues

- "Tennessee Supreme Court Decides that Personal Injury Claims and Derivative Loss of Consortium Claims are Aggregated for the Purposes of the Tennessee Damages Cap Statute" (June 2021)
- "Tennessee Supreme Court Accepts Certification of Non-Economic Damages Cap Question" (June 2019)
- "The Pros and Cons of Arbitration," Litigation Counsel of America 2013 *Litigation Commentary and Review*
- ABA Counsel of Appellate Lawyers' Appellate Practice Book, author of Tennessee chapter, "The Insider's Guide to the Tennessee Appellate Courts," ABA Appellate Judges Conference (2010)

- "Tennessee Supreme Court Holds Class Actions Are Not Allowed Under Tennessee Consumer Protection Act," *Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry Business Insider* (November/December 2008)
- "Recent Developments in Insurance Coverage Litigation," *Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Law Journal* (Spring 2008)
- "Rule 56.03, Whatever Will Be Will Be," *Tennessee Journal of Practice and Procedure*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer 2002)
- "Supreme Court Decides Arbitration Agreements Between Physicians and Patients Are Not Per Se Void as Against Public Policy," *Health Care News* (June 1996)
- "Arbitration and Mediation Clauses in Health Care Contracts," *Nashville Medical News*, Vol. 5, No. 7 (July 1994)
- "Secrets of Success from Trial Lawyers," *Memphis Lawyer*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (July 1994)
- "Physician Deposition Fees," *Nashville Medical News*, Volume VI, No. 1 (January 1994)
- "Resolving Priority Disputes under Section 9-306 of the Uniform Commercial Code: Who Wins Between A Creditor Bank and Inventory Lender with Respect to Proceeds of Inventory?," *Tennessee Bar Journal* (1991)
- "Inadequate Trust Deed Waivers of the Statutory Right of Redemption: The Nightmare Reoccurs," *Tennessee Bar Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (October 1986)
- "Pritchard v. Rogers and the Nightmare of Defective Trust Deed Forms," *Tennessee Bar Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (May 1985)
- "The Tennessee Recording Tax Statute and its Effect on Perfection of Security Interests," co-author Mary Aronov, *52 Tennessee Law Review* 355 (1985)

Publications on Issues Affecting the Legal Profession

- As President of the Tennessee Bar Association, Mr. Lewis authored the President's Perspective column, which is published monthly in the *Tennessee Bar Journal*. To read these columns, please go to "President's Perspective."
- "Take it from Doris, Amanda, C.S., and John: Leadership Requires Action," *Leading as Lawyers Blog* (June 2021)
- "Servant Leadership From a Marble Floor," *University of Tennessee Leading As Lawyers Blog* (January 2021)
- "The Business Case For Pro Bono," *Baylor Law Review* (2020)
- "Guest Column: Innovative Solutions Key to Addressing Access-to-Justice Gap," *Memphis Business Journal* (April 2020)
- "Insider's Guide to Tennessee Appellate Courts," *ABA Appellate Practice Compendium*
- "A Greater Fool: Pro Bono Experiences, Opportunities, Vision," *Tennessee Bar Journal*, Volume 55, No. 1 (January 2019)
- "Building a Worthy Legacy," *Leading As Lawyers blog* (Fall 2018)
- "Imagine," *Dialogue*, ABA Division for Legal Services, Volume 21, Number 2 (Spring 2018)
- "Driven by Dollars," *Dialogue*, ABA Division for Legal Services, Volume 21, Number 1 (Winter 2018)
- Co-author – "Artificial Intelligence: State of the Industry and Ethical Issues," *Tennessee Bar Journal*, Volume 54, No. 3 (March 2018)
- "Thanksgiving in America," *Dialogue*, ABA Division for Legal Services, Volume 20, Number 4 (Fall 2017)
- "The Justice 'Canyon'," *Dialogue*, ABA Division for Legal Services, Volume 20, Number 3 (Summer 2017)
- "Law School and Law Student Pro Bono Leadership," *Dialogue*, ABA Division for Legal Services, Volume 20, Number 2 (Spring 2017)
- "The Profound Joy of Pro Bono," *Dialogue*, ABA Division for Legal Services, Volume 19, Number 3 (2016)

- "Training Leaders the Very Best We Can," authors George T. "Buck" Lewis and Doug Blaze, 83 *Tennessee Law Review* 771 (2016)
- "Adding On-line Pro Bono to Your Access to Justice Toolkit," ABA Center for Pro Bono Exchange (March 2015)



Speaking Engagements

Speaking Engagements on Legal Issues

- "Litigation Law Forum – Appellate Practice Panel," Litigation Section Tennessee Bar Association (with Justices Lee and Kirby, Judge McBrayer, and Chancellor Perry) (September 2021)
- "Effective Oral Argument in a Virtual World," Knoxville Bar Association Webinar (January 2021)
- Panelist – "Remote Oral Arguments," Appellate Practice Section Roundtable with Justice Lee, Tennessee Bar Association (May 13, 2020)
- "Legal Issues Confronting Inside Counsel" (November 2019)
- "Developments in Good Faith, Bad Faith and Tennessee's Statutory Damage Caps," (Firm CLE for inside counsel) (2019)
- ACC Knoxville Breakfast CLE for inside counsel (May 2018)
- "Mediation, Arbitration, and Class Actions," Knoxville Bar Association (April 2016)
- "Recent Amendments to the Tennessee Rules of Civil and Appellate Procedure and Evidence," Greater Memphis Paralegal Association (February 2016)
- "The Intersection of Class Actions and Arbitration Agreements," Greater Memphis Paralegal Association (February 2016)
- "Recent Amendments to the Tennessee Rules of Civil and Appellate Procedure and Evidence," Greater Memphis Paralegal Association (February 2016)
- "Defending Against Class Actions In and Out of Arbitration," Lipscomb Pitts Breakfast Club (April 2015)
- "Class Actions, Arbitration, and Elements of an Effective Arbitration Agreement," Association of Corporate Counsel, Tennessee Chapter (February 2015)
- "Proposed Amendments to Tennessee Supreme Court Recusal Rule and Rules of Appellate Procedure," Memphis Area Paralegal Association (January 2015)
- "Tennessee Motions to Dismiss and Motions for Summary Judgment by Rule and By Statute," Memphis Area Paralegal Association (January 2014)
- "The Pros and Cons of Arbitration in Tennessee," Memphis Bar Association (July 2013)
- "Taking and defending Rule 30(b)6 depositions," Tennessee Bar Association (April 2013)
- "The Pros and Cons of Arbitration," University of Tennessee College of Law CLE (November 2012)
- "Judicial Recusal and Interlocutory Appeals," Tennessee Bar Association statewide webcast (June 2012)

Speaking Engagements on Issues Affecting the Legal Profession

- "Leaving A Legacy," Tennessee Bar Association Leadership Law Class (June 2023)
- "How to Be Happy and Healthy Practicing Law," Tennessee Bar Association, with Dean Emeritus Doug Blaze (June 2023)
- "Vulnerability, Credibility, and Leaving a Legacy," Tennessee Bar Leadership Law (June 2022)
- Speaker and Panelist – "FreeLegalAnswers and Law Firm Pro Bono Opportunities," TechBridge National Social Justice Summit (March 2022)
- "Leadership For Lawyers," Santa Clara University School of Law (November 2020)
- "Remote Pro Bono: FreeLegalAnswers," American Bar Association (October 2020)
- "Access to Justice and the Role that Law Schools Play," Baylor Law School's Vision For Leadership Conference (September 2020)
- "Leaving a Legacy: David Brook's Second Mountain," University of Tennessee College of Law (September 2020)

- "The Soul of a Hero," ABA Labor and Employment Section annual pro bono luncheon keynote speaker (2019)
- Keynote Speaker – "Why Pro Bono Feeds Our Souls," ABA Annual Labor and Employment Law Section Pro Bono Luncheon (November 2019)
- "Leadership and Leaving a Legacy," East Tennessee Federal Public Defender retreat (November 2019)
- Inaugural leadership training for FedEx Ground legal department, (Designed and taught eight two-hour sessions.) (November 2019)
- "Why Pro Bono Is Important," UT Pro Bono 25th anniversary celebration (April 2019)
- Keynote Speaker – "The Legacy of Tennessee Exceptionalism," TBA Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Gala (March 2018)
- Tennessee Bar Association Leadership Academy, full day leadership workshop (2014 – 2019)
- "Finding Your Passion and Defining Your Legacy," Tennessee Bar Association Leadership Law final retreat (June 2017)
- "Why Lawyers Do Pro Bono," University of Memphis Law School (March 2017)
- "The National Pro Bono Web Site, ABAFreeLegalAnswers, Born and Raised in Tennessee," Leo Bearman Inns of Court (November 2016)
- "Finding the Leader in the Mirror," Greater Memphis Paralegal Association (October 2016)
- "The Soul of a Hero," Virginia State Bar annual Access to Justice luncheon (June 2016)
- "Leadership and Leaving a Legacy," Tennessee Bar Association Leadership Law Program (June 2016)
- "The new national pro bono website 'ABAFreeLegalAnswers.org,'" ABA Equal Justice Conference (May 2016)
- "Empowering the Next Generation of Pro Bono Lawyers: Innovative Technologies," American Bar Association (May 2016)
- "The ABA National Pro Bono Web Site Project," Tennessee Bar Association Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Gala (March 2016)
- "Leadership Characteristics, Habits, and Styles," Tennessee Bar Association Leadership Law Opening Retreat (January 2016)
- "Why Now Is the Time to Add an Interactive Pro Bono Web Site to Your Access to Justice Toolkit," National Conference of Bar Presidents Opening Plenary Session (January 2016)
- Keynote Speaker – UT College of Law 125th Anniversary Gala (November 2015)
- "The History, Achievements, and Strategic Planning of the Tennessee Access to Justice Commission," Virginia Access to Justice Commission (September 2015)
- "Launching A Virtual Pro Bono Legal Clinic: The OnlineTNJustice Model," American Bar Association Equal Justice Conference (May 2015)
- "Leadership – Characteristics, Barriers and Leaving Legacies," Tennessee Bar Association (April 2015)
- "Keynote Address to Entering Class," University of Tennessee College of Law (August 2013)



Service to the Profession and Public

- Special Advisor – ABA Pro Bono and Public Service Committee (2021 – present)
- Chair – ABA Pro Bono and Public Service Committee (2016 – 2019) (Member 2014 – present)
- Chair – Technology Subcommittee, ABA Pro Bono and Public Service Committee (2019 – present)
- Member – Board of Directors, Tennessee Justice Center (2018 – present)
- Member – ABA House of Delegates (2010 – present)
- ABA Pro Bono Committee representative to Legal Services Corporation's Disaster Preparedness Task Force (2018 – 2019) See report at www.LSC.gov.
- Chair – Board of Directors, Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc. (~ 2012)
- Chair – Board of Directors, Mid-South Chapter, American Red Cross (~ 2009 – 2011).

- President, Tennessee Bar Association (2008 – 2009).
 - President-Elect (2007 – 2008)
 - Vice-President (2006 – 2007)
- Member and Chair – Tennessee Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission (Member ~ 2009 – 2015. Chair ~ 2010 – 2011).
- President – Tennessee Legal Community Foundation (2009 – 2010)
- Member – Tennessee Supreme Court Advisory Commission on Rules of Civil and Appellate Procedure (1999 – 2009)
 - Co-chair – Electronic Discovery Committee (~ 2007)
- Member – Tennessee Appellate Court Nominating Commission (~ 1994)
- Member and Chair – Tennessee Judicial Selection Commission (~ 1996 – 2004)
- Member – American Arbitration Association National Roster of Arbitrators
- Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 31 listed General Civil Mediator



Education

- University of Tennessee, J.D., 1980
- University of Tennessee, M.B.A., Finance Concentration, 1980
- University of Tennessee, B.S. in Business Administration, 1976



Admissions

- Tennessee, 1980
- U.S. District Court, Western and Middle Districts of Tennessee, 1980
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit, 1980
- U.S. Supreme Court, 1980