

PUBLICATION

Spotlight on Robert Tom

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Although born in Dallas, Texas, Robert Tom traces his roots back to China, the homeland of both his maternal and paternal grandparents. After coming to the U.S., his paternal grandparents settled in Arcola, Mississippi, where they had a small grocery store, while his maternal grandparents lived in Helena, Arkansas, where they also had a small grocery store. The oldest of three boys, Robert was raised in Memphis, Tennessee. After graduating from Memphis University School, he moved to Atlanta, Georgia to attend college at Emory University. Then, it was on to law school at Tulane University in New Orleans. Upon graduation from law school in 2004, Robert relocated again to join a full-service firm in Tampa, Florida, where he practiced in the area of commercial litigation with a focus on banking litigation.

In 2007, Robert accepted a job in Baker Donelson's Memphis office. So he returned home, bringing with him his wife Margaret, a physician, whom he had known since college and married while in Florida. At Baker Donelson, Robert has focused his practice on commercial litigation with an emphasis on financial services litigation. His practice involves defending financial institutions and other businesses, handling business litigation cases centered on contract disputes, representing the creditors' rights of both special servicers and financial institutions, and defending actions involving business torts and class actions. Meanwhile, Margaret, who is a child psychiatrist, is currently working on a fellowship at the University of Tennessee which she expects to complete in July 2012.

One of Robert's most successful cases came through his representation of The Board of Education of the Memphis City Schools. In that case, The Board was sued by a bus contractor who claimed \$4.5 million in damages resulting from wrongful termination of a contract. Robert, in conjunction with Bruce McMullen and other attorneys from the Memphis office, tried the case before a Shelby County jury in 2010. In less than two hours, the jury returned a verdict in favor of the Board, and the opposing bus contractor recovered nothing. Robert's tireless advocacy was critical to the successful representation.

In the five years since he began working at Baker Donelson, Robert has served as a role model and mentor for other attorneys, both diverse and nondiverse.

Robert is Chair of the Associate Advisory Board at Baker Donelson and serves on the Memphis Recruiting Committee. Robert is Secretary to the Tennessee Asian Pacific Bar Association.

Robert's commitment to the legal profession, which is evident in his active leadership and service, is attributable to his drive and dedication, but it may also have some genetic basis. With an aunt, uncle and brother who also are attorneys, Robert comes from a family that seems to have an innate passion for the law.

Outside of the office, Robert can be found working out, playing basketball for the firm's lawyer-league team and fishing.

Steven W. King, an associate in the Memphis office, is a member of the Advocacy Department. As a litigator, he works on government investigations, construction litigation and health care matters.