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Issue 1, 2015

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Q&A with Jennifer Keller



[Amy Mahone](#)
423.209.4183
amahone@bakerdonelson.com

In January, Baker Donelson's CEO, Ben Adams, announced that [Jennifer Keller](#), a shareholder in the Johnson City, Tennessee, office, would become the Firm's next President and Chief Operating Officer effective April 1, 2015.

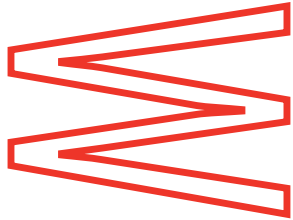
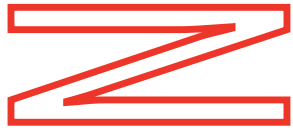
Jennifer has been with Baker Donelson for 20 years – her entire legal career – practicing in the Labor and Employment Group and serving as the L&E Department Chair for the last six years. Attorneys in that group cannot say enough about Jennifer's leadership and have expressed that, while they are excited for her new role, they will deeply miss her.

Before I ever met Jennifer, and while considering co-chairing this newsletter with her, I asked Jerry Stauffer, Jennifer's predecessor as COO, for his thoughts on whether I should take on such a role.

He immediately encouraged me to do so, indicating that Jennifer is an absolute star. He told me then that Jennifer has a wonderful understanding of people and the ability to be tough but fair and, through all of her actions, extraordinarily kind. When I did meet and start working with Jennifer, I could see instantly what all of the fuss was about. Jennifer is a natural leader and her style is both very thoughtful and also practical.

As our readers are well aware, having a woman in one of the highest levels of leadership at a firm of more than 650 attorneys is a big deal, because despite the fact that half of associates in law firms are female, only about 20 percent of equity partners in firms are female and only a handful of "Big Law" firms have a woman in the C-suite. In this issue of the newsletter we wanted to take a moment to spotlight this transition in the Firm and to talk to Jennifer about her new role.

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Upcoming Events
4/30/15
Derby Days (Knoxville)

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Q&A with Jennifer Keller, *continued*



What are your thoughts on being named the President and COO of the Firm?

I am honored and extremely grateful to the Firm for the opportunity to be of service in this way. I love this Firm, and I have loved it for as long as I can remember. Our people – lawyers and non-lawyers alike – are fabulous; our work is challenging and rewarding; and our values and culture are without parallel in this industry (in my humble opinion). I look forward to the new path that lies ahead. I know that the law firm of today is very different from the law firm of 50 years ago or even 20 years ago and that it faces significant challenges. But I also know that our Firm is well-positioned to face those challenges head on and to excel in exciting ways. I am deeply appreciative to all of the leaders of the Firm who have mentored me and served as great examples throughout my career. I am so very thankful for the opportunity to work with Jerry Stauffer through, and well past, the transition; his generosity in imparting wisdom and experience is treasured.



What are your passions?

Family, service (both professionally and in the community), faith and Firm. I have wanted to work at Baker Donelson since I was in high school. I worked for another firm as a runner and got so excited every time I delivered something to Baker Worthington (the Firm's predecessor in Knoxville, Tennessee). Every time I went, I hoped I might run into Senator Howard Baker in the hall, the elevator or the reception area. I admired him as a public servant and brilliant conciliator, having followed his political career. It seems silly, but my dream was to work at the Firm, and I am proud to be one of its leaders.

I also love to travel, as does my family. We especially love Disney, and visiting all of the Disney parks around the world is on my bucket list. I love to dance, scrapbook and am a pop-culture trivia nut. I try to be passionate about working out and becoming more fit, having devoted more than a year in an attempt to conquer CrossFit "Lite." It's still a struggle.

Another one of my passions is football. I love, love, love football, especially the Tennessee Vols and whoever Peyton Manning plays for (I even named my daughter Peyton!). We hope to make it to Denver to watch him play in what may be his final season this year.



We know you have been dedicated to the Firm for 20 years. At the risk of asking the cliché question all female leaders are asked, how have you balanced career and family?

I have been married to my husband, Jeff, for nearly 24 years. We were high school sweethearts. He is my biggest supporter and I could not have accomplished all that I have without him. My daughter, Peyton, is 13 and in eighth grade. She's the nicest person I know, and she makes me a better person. She's very flexible and very supportive. I am very lucky to have them on my team. I have been helped throughout this journey by my mom and other family, and we've had the same nanny since before my daughter was even born. Of course, the Firm has been wonderful, genuine and flexible in its support of my career and my devotion to my family. So, it takes a lot of folks to make all this work! It's sometimes trial and error, but it has been fun figuring it all out.



Jennifer P. Keller
President and COO
423.928.0181
jkeller@bakerdonelson.com

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Q&A with Jennifer Keller, *continued*

Outside of work, Jennifer is heavily involved in her community and currently serves on several boards, including the Southern Appalachian Ronald McDonald House Charities, Coalition for Kids and the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce. Internally, and in recognition of her commitment to the community, she received the Johnson City office's Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award (2012) and Public Service Award (2013) and the Firm's Howard Baker Award (2014).

Ben Adams, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Baker Donelson, believes Jennifer will be successful in her new role in part due to her success and experience as a department head.

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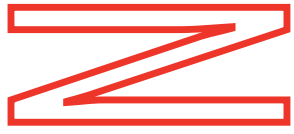
“She has consistently shown a great ability to analyze problems, develop solutions and deftly implement those solutions with her people. She is a very effective leader and communicator, well-trained and well-suited for this new challenge in her career. I look forward to partnering with her as we move the Firm to greater heights.”

In a recent interview in Bloomberg–Big Law Business called [How These Women Took The Reins of Their Firms](#), Jennifer was asked what she thinks has helped her succeed as a lawyer and a leader at the firm:

“One thing sticks out to me and I always tell people who ask me for advice: authenticity. If people see me at various times of the day and evening, I might not always have makeup on. You may come to work on the weekends in sweatpants and with your kid in tow. Things are not always perfect, and you may drop a ball now and again and need to acknowledge ‘Hey, I’ve done this and here’s what I’m going to do to set this straight.’”

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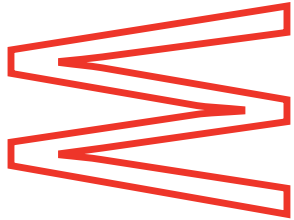
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Time Saver Savvy – Clarity Through Mind Clearing


Mary C. Pankiewicz
Specialist in Chronic Disorganization
423.581.9460
mary@organizedmindcoaching.com



 Do you feel like your plate is too full? Are the things that are important to you being kept on the back burner? Letting the mind relax by capturing on paper a to-do list of all the projects stressing you is the first step toward developing an organized mind. Taking a few minutes to do this mind clearing process will help you reset your priorities so you can focus on important goals.



 Mind clearing is like purging an overstuffed filing cabinet. Finding a secure place to park ideas brings a sense of relief. Suddenly there is clear space and freedom to think. This allows you to decide what is most important and to make a step-by-step plan to get it done. List all the projects on your mind. You may want to separate personal and professional projects in this process.

 If some projects are like tangled webs, making a project action plan will get you moving forward. A white board can be used to untangle the issues. For a sample project action plan go to http://www.clutterfree.biz/bus_office_tips.htm. Relief is almost immediate, because the mind now has space to think and process what is important. Then you can decide how best to proceed and work out a realistic time frame.



As you look at your to-do list, I encourage you to give yourself the freedom to say about some tasks or projects, “This is no longer important,” and scratch them off your list. Yes, you may have already spent considerable time and/or money on this project, but now it has become an albatross hanging around your neck. In reality, it is no longer important or has much less value than the other items on your list. Do you have some of those “albatrosses” hanging around your neck? If so, give yourself permission to let them go. This step alone will free up a lot of energy and mental space.

“Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the nobler art of leaving things undone.”
– Lin Yutang



When I’m coaching business clients, after they do a mind clearing, we go through each item and I ask the question, “Are you the only one who can do this, or can it be delegated?” We then discuss how delegating is not dumping. Delegating is giving another person an opportunity to learn new skills and also to have employment. One client realized half of what was on his desk was work that could be delegated, thus freeing him up to work on growing his business.

We’d love to hear your ideas!

[Click here](#) to comment on our thread. We’ll feature some of your ideas in upcoming issues.

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Time Saver Savvy, *continued*

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By doing a mind clearing you now have clarity on what your priorities are. Put key items on your calendar. Having them on your calendar will give you a visual reminder to keep your goals moving forward. Whenever you are feeling stressed and that your plate is too full, repeat the mind clearing process.

Mary Pankiewicz, CPO-CD®, is the owner of *Exceptional Productivity Now! and Clutter-free & Organized*. She conducts seminars and offers productivity training on-site and by phone to clients nationwide. This article is an excerpt from her recently published e-book *Reduce Mind Clutter – Feel the Freedom*. For more organizing solutions go to www.exceptionalproductivitynow.com and www.clutterfree.biz.

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On My Bookshelf – *The Other Fellow May Be Right: The Civility of Howard Baker*



[Gary Shockley](#)
615.726.5704
gshockley@bakerdonelson.com

It was a beautiful fall afternoon in Knoxville and 100,000 Big Orange fans milled around Neyland Stadium shortly before kickoff. One of them was a then-young partner in a then medium-sized law firm, dressed in jeans and sneakers – me. As I lounged against the side of the stadium near my gate, I saw my senior partner Senator Howard Baker pass by with an august and well-dressed group, obviously headed to a skybox. I was far too casual and too junior to interrupt. Senator Baker walked on a few yards, then stopped, excused himself from his group, and returned to me. “Gary,” he said, sticking out his hand, “Great to see you.” When Senator Baker died earlier this year, I heard dozens of stories like that from people who enjoyed the many kindnesses, large and small, and the essential decency of one of the greatest Tennesseans of our lifetimes. He may have been a hero on the national stage, but he was always Howard from Huntsville with most of us.

In his new biography, *The Other Fellow May Be Right: The Civility of Howard Baker*, Memphis lawyer Bill Haltom attempts to capture the quicksilver qualities that made Howard Baker both extraordinarily successful and extraordinarily beloved during a long and eventful career. In tracing that career from his days as University of Tennessee student body president to Senate Majority Leader, Chief of Staff to President Ronald Reagan, and U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Haltom finds Baker’s use of “strategic civility” to be the key to both his success and his untarnished reputation with the public and on both sides of the aisle. At each step in his rise, Haltom points out the impact of the civility the Senator learned from his father, Representative Howard Baker, Sr., from his maternal grandmother, “Mother” Ladd, who helped to raise him, and from his father-in-law, Senator Everett Dirksen. During each crisis, Senator Baker’s willingness to listen, to understand his opponent’s needs and desires, and to work for compromise carried the day.

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On My Bookshelf, *continued*

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Haltom gives numerous examples of this strategic civility in action. In his first campaign for the U.S. Senate in 1964, Baker met with *Tennessean* publisher John Seigenthaler to pay his respects, even though he had little hope of securing an endorsement. Losing that race, Baker would go on to become the first popularly elected Republican Senator in state history two years later – with the *Tennessean's* endorsement and without any effort to capitalize on the personal problems of his opponent. Once in Washington, he worked with Senator Edward Kennedy, and against his father-in-law, to defeat legislation designed to reverse the one man-one vote rule of *Baker v. Carr*, 369 U.S. 186 (1962) and its progeny.

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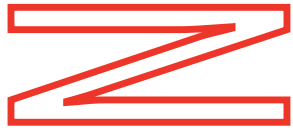
In the '70s, Senator Baker worked with Democrat Ed Muskie of Maine to author the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, two cornerstones of environmental protection. In 1974, he showed his trial lawyer skills as a member of the Senate Watergate Committee and his commitment to his country in pursuing the truth about his friend Richard Nixon. In 1977, he led the way for the Panama Canal Treaty, an initiative of Democratic President Jimmy Carter – and one which may have cost Senator Baker his best shot at the Republican nomination for President in 1980. Once he became Senate Majority Leader in 1981, he continued to demonstrate the benefits of strategic civility, securing a debt ceiling increase needed by his President but opposed by many members of his caucus.



Haltom's stories about Baker's relationship with Democratic Leader Robert Byrd of West Virginia are particularly telling. After an informal agreement that they would try never to surprise one another, Minority Leader Baker met with Byrd every day in the well of the Senate to shake hands. Perhaps most important to the spirit of bipartisan cooperation he nurtured, Senator Baker arranged for Senator Byrd to play his fiddle on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry, with Roy Acuff looking on. Whatever the event may have lacked in musicality, it more than made up for in civility. Rather than move to the Majority Leader's "Taj Mahal" office occupied by Byrd after the 1980 election tipped the balance to the Republicans, Baker chose to stay in his father-in-law's former office (which he preferred in any event).

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On My Bookshelf, *continued*

This is a book that should be of real interest to all Tennessee lawyers. Haltom doesn't ignore Howard Baker's successful career as a trial lawyer before he was elected Senator, including his more than 50 murder trials, none of which resulted in a death sentence. In fact, it's clear that many of the lessons Baker learned in country courthouses in East Tennessee served him well in Washington and beyond. Thoroughly researched, breezily written and timely, *The Other Fellow May Be Right* is an important reminder that relentless partisanship and search-and-destroy tactics are not the only way to conduct the public's business – or our own. One Tennessean chose the opposite path and followed it to his country's highest offices and greatest honors.

The Other Fellow May Be Right: The Civility of Howard Baker, is available for Kindle and in print through Amazon.com.

Reprinted from the January 2015 issue of the *Tennessee Bar Journal*, a publication of the Tennessee Bar Association.

'Howard Baker did the right thing in difficult circumstances'
Another book about Howard Baker was reviewed in the July/August 1998 issue. Roy Herron reviewed *Howard Baker: Conciliator in an Age of Crisis*, by J. Lee Annis Jr. (Madison Books).

"At a time when strident, take-no-prisoners partisanship in Congress seems to have reached record levels, one especially appreciates Howard Baker's bipartisan cooperation," Herron wrote. "The overriding theme of this biography is that Howard Baker was a 'conciliator,' someone who tried to work with persons of different views and values, different perspectives and parties. He tried to build consensus, or at least working majorities, for good legislation to pass and for government to serve people."

"Baker's skills as an attorney helping resolve conflicts are demonstrated repeatedly. One sees why he became the most famous Tennessee attorney of his generation. ... Time and again, Howard Baker did the right thing in difficult circumstances."

Read the review at <http://tinyurl.com/pyaspfu> (scroll to page 40).



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Women's Health Tips

For this issue, we asked our attorneys to give us their top health tips. We received some great ideas.

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Start juicing! – [Anna Powers](#)



I find that I feel best and ward off illness best when I have a green smoothie (kale/spinach or other leafy green vegetable) with any combination of cucumber, beets or carrots added, plus a couple of fruits, and a boost of protein and flax seed and a good probiotic (I use Goodbelly Straight Shot) every morning. Sometimes it is the only good thing I do for myself each day! – [Diana Matson](#)

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Get a flu shot and all the other recommended immunizations. – [Linda Klein](#)



I try to get my kids involved when I workout. I engage my eight-year-old son to help me when I do CrossFit. He and I will throw the medicine ball back and forth 100 times. We make it into a game. When I go for a run/walk I will have my daughters come with me and we will do sprints and turn them into a race. – [Tonya Mitchem Grindon](#)

Take real vacations. Eat actual food, not edible non-food substances. (This is stolen from one of my heroes, Michael Pollan.) – [Mary O'Kelley](#)



If you only have limited time to work out, consider the use of a personal trainer. While there is a bit more cost associated with it, you can be guaranteed that you will make the most of the time and get better results than if you go it alone. I'm convinced that one hour twice a week with a trainer is better than working out twice as much with no direction. – [Jennifer Keller](#)

Having just gotten back from a four-day business trip to New Orleans and feeling the effects, I'd like to offer some tips for eating while traveling. First, car food: the best things to eat while driving are carrot sticks, with apples running a close second. They have a great wake-up crunch, help keep you hydrated, and don't leave crumbs or stains in your car and on your clothes. For meals, it's all about finding good foods and not just avoiding bad ones. Eat fruit whenever it's offered, and order some vegetables without sauce. – [Susan Wagner](#)



Hydrate. It's my biggest issue but every doctor I've seen from my primary care doctor to my dermatologist has harped on the importance of hydration for general health, well-being and beauty. – [Meghan Morgan](#)

Try not to stress, especially about things you cannot currently do anything about. Stress contributes to heart disease (the number one killer of women!). – [Angela Fiorentino](#)



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Women's Health Tips, *continued*

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Take a dog for a walk. Good exercise and stress relief. – [Whitney Harmon](#)



Make regular dates with your spouse (and a trainer). My husband and I signed up for 30-minute sessions with a trainer and have somehow managed to stick with our twice-a-week workout routine for nearly two years now. The combination of trainer and significant other time is ideal because: 1. We both have a financial and personal commitment to show up. 2. Trainers are amazing at cramming more into a 30-minute period and keeping things interesting than you could possibly imagine. 3. The personalized workout sessions are a good value when we are doing the session for the price of one. 4. I know every week that no matter what comes up, I will at least have two seriously challenging workout sessions and get to see my husband without our kids for at least an hour. – [Melanie Walker](#)



Don't underestimate the importance of consistently getting enough sleep. It affects your cognitive abilities, energy level, immunity and life span. – [Sarah Casey](#)



Go Paleo. Weight falls off, it's simple, and you still get to eat plenty of great food. Also, be versatile with workouts so that you can keep exercising in almost any situation. Don't rely on one form of exercise such as running. Your routine will get de-railed too easily if your exercise options are too narrow. Learn various CrossFit workouts, including small-space workouts that can even be done without any equipment in a hotel room. – [Rusty Gray](#)



Tips that help keep me on track:

- Give up diet sodas and anything else with artificial sweeteners.
- Consult with a nutritionist/dietician.

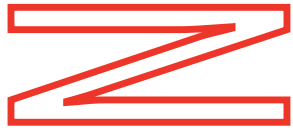
- Schedule exercise into your day just like you do other appointments.
- Keep a food and exercise journal, e.g., the Fitness Pal app.
- Give yourself a break! No need to be perfect – just focus on getting a little healthier each day.
- Walk, walk, walk.
- Dark chocolate, coffee and wine. Enough said.
- Do nothing for at least 30 minutes at least once a week. Nothing. No PDAs, no email, no texting, no worrying, no laundry. Just sit and enjoy the day.
- Consider going on a silent retreat. Seriously hard to do, but worth it.

– [Sheri Fox](#)



Maintaining bone health is very important for women, particularly during and after menopause. The following will help to preserve bone health:

- Engage in weight-bearing activity on a regular basis – preferably three or more days per week – including strength training and weight-bearing cardiovascular exercise (e.g., walking, running, cycling).
- Consume fermented dairy products (yogurt and kefir) and leafy green vegetables to provide adequate calcium – but do not over-consume non-fermented dairy products (milk and cheese), as they are associated with bone brittleness.
- Take 200 mg. to 600 mg. of supplemental magnesium (preferably magnesium citrate) every day, as recent research has shown that magnesium is required to move calcium out of your bloodstream (where it can cause artery-clogging plaque) and into your bones. – [Anne Marie Kempf](#)



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Parental Leave Policy

In the fall of 2014, Baker Donelson rolled out its enhanced parental leave policy, which now allows for 16 weeks of paid leave as well as intermittent leave for male and female attorneys.

The policy expands from 12 weeks to 16 weeks the amount of paid leave that both male and female full-time and regular part-time attorneys are eligible to take as primary caregivers surrounding the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child under the age of six. The new policy also adds intermittent leave, allowing both primary and non-primary caregiver attorneys to continue to work on an intermittent basis during leave and transition back to full-time practice at their own pace.

The new leave policy will allow for easier transitions for our attorneys who are new parents, both men and women, and will help the Firm increase the percentages of women at the shareholder level by removing leaves as an obstacle to their progression and advancement in the Firm.

The effort to enhance Baker Donelson's parental leave policy was spearheaded by Caldwell Collins, an attorney in the Firm's Nashville office, who took on the project after transitioning back from leave in 2013 after the birth of her daughter. "Baker Donelson's leave policy was already very generous, but while going through the process of returning from my leave, I noticed areas where I thought we could improve."

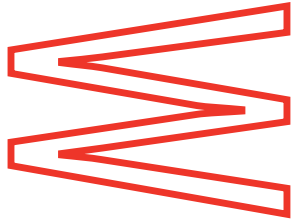
Caldwell conducted extensive research on leave policies offered at other law firms as well as organizations outside the legal industry, then worked with Firm management and the Women's Initiative to develop an industry-leading policy.

Caldwell said, "Our goal was to create a program that allowed new parents to tailor their leaves to their lives and individual practices and that was competitive both within and outside the legal industry. The result is a policy that offers significantly greater flexibility to our attorneys."

As part of the implementation of the new policy, Baker Donelson installed and trained 23 Parental Leave Advisors across the Firm's offices to provide expectant and new parents with a point person for guidance to navigate the transitions before leave and upon their return, as well as a point of connection during the attorney's leave.

Scott Newman, an attorney in the Nashville office, is among those serving as a Parental Leave Advisor, a role he felt important to take on given that he had the opportunity to benefit from Baker Donelson's gender-neutral leave policy after the birth of his second child in 2013. "Being able to take advantage of the Firm's leave policy definitely made the transition much easier for my family and me. Now with this even more generous policy, I wanted to lend my experience to others who are making that same transition."

This is the latest enhancement Baker Donelson has implemented to its parental leave policy in recent years. In 2011, the Firm implemented a gender-neutral parental leave policy that allowed 12 weeks of leave for primary caregiver attorneys at the time of the birth or adoption of a child under the age of six. At that time, the Firm also strengthened its policy to reinforce that taking parental leave would not affect an attorney's progression to partnership and developed telecommuting language that better empowers attorneys to balance their work life and their personal life.



What are some of your favorite health tips?



[Click here](#) to suggest health tips for future issues.

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New Faces at the Firm



Mary Branham
Tallahassee
Business Litigation
850.425.7507
mbranham@bakerdonelson.com



Anthea Daniels
Nashville
Health Law
615.726.5551
adaniels@bakerdonelson.com



Angela Fiorentino
Orlando
Financial Institutions
407.367.5461
afiorentino@bakerdonelson.com



Dorrella Gallaway
Orlando
Financial Institutions
407.367.5460
dgallaway@bakerdonelson.com



Rachel Kelly
Birmingham
Advocacy
205.244.3827
rkelly@bakerdonelson.com



Diana Matson
Fort Lauderdale
Financial Institutions
954.768.1601
dmatson@bakerdonelson.com



Kelly McLeod
Nashville
Real Estate/Finance
615.726.5727
kmcleod@bakerdonelson.com



Devina Mistry
Fort Lauderdale
Financial Institutions
954.768.1618
dmistry@bakerdonelson.com



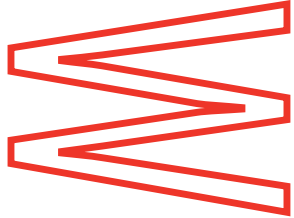
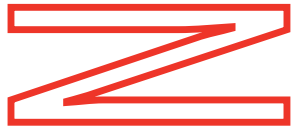
Anne Raymond
New Orleans
Real Estate/Finance
504.566.8647
araymond@bakerdonelson.com



Elizabeth Rutledge
New Orleans
Advocacy
504.566.5250
erutledge@bakerdonelson.com



Jenna Stephens
Birmingham
Real Estate/Finance
205.250.8359
jsstephens@bakerdonelson.com



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Baker Donelson Women In The News



[Meghan Morgan](#) and [Ashley Lowe](#) spoke with the [Knoxville News Sentinel](#) about Baker Donelson's expanded

parental leave policy.



[AL.com article](#) highlighted [Jenna Bedsole's](#) documentary on Nina Miglionico.



[Jennifer Keller](#) spoke with [Bloomberg BNA](#) about women in the legal profession, her career and becoming the first woman elected president and Chief Operating Officer at Baker Donelson.



[Nancy Scott Degan](#) was interviewed by [Legal Talk Network](#) at the ABA 2015 Midyear Meeting.



[Staci Pierce](#) was named among [Birmingham Business Journal's Top 40 Under 40](#).



[Phyllis Cancienne](#) was highlighted in [Greater Baton Rouge Business Report](#) for her status as the only female managing partner of a major law firm in Baton Rouge.



[Linda Klein](#) addressed the House of Delegates at the [ABA midyear meeting](#).



[Lisa Borden](#) commented on a [lawsuit involving private probation companies](#).



[Kacie McRee](#) profiled for the [Knoxville News Sentinel's 40 Under Forty](#).



[Alisa Chestler](#) and [Donna Fraiche](#) provided insight on preparing for 2015 HIPAA Compliance Audits in [HealthCare Info Security](#).



[Layna Cook](#) talked with [Society of Human Resource Management](#) about security of personal data on health insurance exchanges.



[Mimi Koch](#) discussed the Pregnancy Discrimination Act in New Orleans [CityBusiness](#).

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Looking For An "OnRamp" Back Into Legal?

Baker Donelson is among a select group of leading national law firms to participate in the [OnRamp Fellowship](#), an innovative program to provide women lawyers re-entering the legal profession with an opportunity to update their skills and legal contacts through one-year, paid positions with top law firms. The program aims

to replenish the talent pipeline in law firms with diverse, high-performing lawyers who have the potential and the desire to advance into leadership roles. To apply for one of the positions Baker Donelson has with the OnRamp Fellowship, [click here](#).

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The Baker Donelson Women's Initiative Newsletter

Editors:



[Amy W. Mahone](#)
Of Counsel
Chattanooga
amahone@bakerdonelson.com



[Karen D. Smith](#)
Shareholder
Houston
kasmith@bakerdonelson.com

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