



## William E. Robinson

Of Counsel

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Bill Robinson concentrates his practice in ERISA, executive compensation, and employee benefits.

Mr. Robinson works in the areas of executive compensation and employee benefits, as well as estate planning and estate administration. He has more than 40 years of experience in all areas of employee benefits, including executive compensation, pension, and welfare benefits. He has provided extensive advice to both tax-exempt and for-profit employers on designing executive compensation plans and with respect to issues related to those types of plans, and he has substantial 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. Mr. Robinson 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. Mr. Robinson also provides advice on all types of benefit plans in connection with mergers and acquisitions. He has represented multiemployer pension and welfare plans and advises corporate clients on multiemployer plan issues, particularly withdrawal liability matters, which can be financially devastating.

Mr. Robinson represents both for-profit and tax-exempt employers with respect to nonqualified deferred compensation and other areas of executive compensation, including designing, drafting, and advising with respect to the tax implications of such plans under Section 409A of the Code and other pertinent law. He represents governmental entities such as towns and cities, counties, governmental hospitals, city departmental pension funds, and other governmental entities in connection with retirement plan matters. 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. Additionally, 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 substantial 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. He understands the emotional issues related to estate administration and guides survivors through the intricacies of probate and estate and trust administration.



### Case Studies

- Baker Donelson Represents BluShark Digital in Herringbone Digital Acquisition - Mergers and Acquisitions



### 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

- "An Employer's Practical Guide to 401(k) Plan Catch-Up Contribution Changes for 2026," republished December 2, 2025, in *BenefitsPRO* (November 2025)
- "Final and Proposed Regulations for Retirement and Health Plans" (February 2025)
- "Multiemployer Withdrawal Liability Can Extend Beyond the Withdrawing Employer," republished December 27, 2024, in *BenefitsPro* (December 2024)
- "Preparing Employers for SECURE 2.0 Compliance in 2025," republished in *BenefitsPRO* (November 2024)
- "Health Plan Compliance Concerns for Year-End 2024," republished in *BenefitsPRO* (September 2024)
- Co-author – "Defective Retirement Plans," *Employee Benefit Plan Review* (January 2012)



## Speaking Engagements

- Panelist – ERISA Expert Panel member on workplace retirement plans, Empower and Henderson Hutcherson & McCullough CPAs luncheon, Chattanooga, Tennessee (December 2024)
- "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)



## Webinars

- The Importance of Controlled and Affiliated Service Group Determinations to Benefits Compliance (April 2025)



## 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