



Christopher E. Thorsen

Shareholder

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Chris Thorsen is a shareholder in Baker Donelson's Nashville office and a member of the Firm's Business Litigation Group.

Chris represents businesses and individual directors and officers in bet-the-company litigation involving corporations, individuals, the SEC, the Department of Justice, FINRA and state securities law enforcement agencies across the country.

In addition to these matters, Chris represents and advises businesses in all manner of commercial disputes, including matters involving enforcement of contracts, fraud, misappropriation of trade secrets, breach of non-compete and non-solicitation agreements, and the many types of disputes that are unique to the particular industries in which his clients operate. Chris also litigates disputes over large trust and estate matters, including disputes involving fiduciaries, will contests, trust litigation and conservatorship actions. Finally, Chris is a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE). As a CFE, Chris helps businesses assess and manage their fraud risks. He also performs fraud examinations and internal investigations for companies.

Securities Litigation: Chris represents public and private companies and their officers and directors in securities class actions, SEC and Department of Justice investigations, derivative suits, mergers and acquisitions litigation, and internal investigations. Chris also represents registered investment advisors, broker-dealers, hedge funds, private equity funds, public and private issuers, and their directors and officers in investigations and enforcement actions brought by FINRA and state securities agencies.

Business Litigation: Chris's practice also includes advising businesses in all manners of business disputes, including matters involving enforcement of contracts, breach of representations and warranties, fraud, misappropriation of trade secrets, breach of non-compete and non-solicitation agreements, and the many types of disputes that are unique to the particular lines of business in which each client operates. For example, Chris represented America's largest homebuilder and its financing arm in complex commercial disputes arising out of nine figure mortgage-backed securities transactions. He also represents individual and corporate clients in matters involving alleged privacy laws violations brought by both private litigants as well as federal and state regulators. Chris has tried business disputes in state and federal courts and has arbitrated an array of business disputes in both the AAA and JAMS, as well as in ad hoc arbitrations.

Trust and Estate Litigation: Chris litigates disputes over large trust and estate matters, including disputes involving fiduciaries, will contests, trust litigation, probate matters and conservatorship actions. His trust and estate litigation matters vary widely from representing large, institutional trustees in administration disputes to representing individuals in probate and trust disputes between fiduciaries, beneficiaries, creditors, debtors and third parties. Often the individuals in this latter group have no particular experience serving as trustee or estate administrator prior to serving in this capacity at the request of a loved one who has recently passed. Assisting these individuals through the legal process during a difficult time in their lives is particularly rewarding, both personally and professionally.

Certified Fraud Examiner: As a CFE, Chris is an active member of the ACFE and assists businesses with all aspects of fraud prevention and investigation. On the prevention side, he works with management to perform fraud risk assessments and implementation of processes designed to prevent or deter the occurrence of occupational fraud. Chris also works with businesses to assist in fraud detection and internal investigation.

Finally, if there are any regulatory or self-reporting requirements with government agencies, Chris helps guide businesses through that process as well.

Chris has also served as interim in-house counsel for one of the largest insurance brokerage firms in the world, where he managed litigation throughout the United States. Through that experience, Chris gained valuable insight on litigation project management as well the internal challenges faced by businesses in their litigation matters.

Representative Matters

- Served as lead counsel for Ruby Tuesday, Inc., a publicly traded company, and its directors in multiple federal class action shareholder "strike" suits seeking to enjoin the company's merger. All suits were resolved on acceptable terms and the transaction closed on schedule.
- Obtained a defense verdict on behalf of the client at this federal jury trial in defense of multiple claims and causes of action asserted by the plaintiff.
- Obtained a judgment for the client at a bench trial in the Eastern District of Tennessee on its claims for unjust enrichment arising out of a rebate promised by the defendant. The judgment was affirmed on appeal by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Represented a death row inmate in state post-conviction proceedings and in a federal habeas corpus action.
- Successfully defended a private equity/investment advisor firm in cases all across the country brought by exchange fund investors alleging common law securities fraud and mismanagement claims and seeking hundreds of millions of dollars in compensatory damages.
- Obtained a multi-million-dollar settlement for client investors against the officers and directors of a defunct technology company.
- Represented multiple clients in FINRA investigations and enforcement actions.
- Represented clients in securities enforcement and licensing actions before the Tennessee Secretary of State, Securities Division.
- Successfully represented successor officers and directors in connection with securities investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Securities and Exchange Commission and the U.S. Postal Service, and related litigation filed by private plaintiffs.
- Obtained a multimillion dollar settlement on behalf of investor clients in connection with Ponzi scheme litigation.
- Successfully represented a group of benefits brokers in non-compete litigation and related Tennessee Secretary of State, Insurance Division investigation.
- Performed an internal fraud investigation for a multi-state company in connection with state and federal whistleblower claims.
- Represented an armored security firm in an employee embezzlement scheme investigation and obtained a multimillion dollar judgment at trial.
- Represented dozens of clients in connection with estate and wills and trusts disputes and litigation.
- Obtained an arbitration award in favor of a beneficiary against co-trustees on breach of fiduciary duty and breach of trust claims.
- Successfully defended arbitration involving claims of attorney malpractice filed against the client.
- Obtained a \$7 million judgment in favor of a Tennessee financial services company in mortgage repurchase litigation.
- Successfully handled more than 100 financial services matters for mortgage servicers during the height of the financial crisis, most of which were resolved through dispositive motions in state and federal courts.
- Obtained summary judgment dismissal of 30 asbestos claims in Tennessee state court on statute of repose grounds, which led to the voluntary dismissal of more than 500 asbestos claims against our client.

- Obtained the dismissal of plaintiff's antitrust claims through motions to dismiss and summary judgment.
- Obtained summary judgment dismissing an injured motorists' dram shop claims against a restaurant owner.
- Obtained dismissal in Delaware Chancery Court of two suits involving two separate exchange funds and more than 60 plaintiffs on statute of limitations grounds.
- An assignment of stock made in conjunction with a "duress" and "reservation of rights" letter was not an absolute assignment of stock as required by the parties' guarantee agreement.
- Represented an international health and beauty company in connection with a shareholder dispute and the separation of its chief executive officer.



Professional Honors & Activities

- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Commercial Litigation (2016 – 2025); Banking and Finance Law (2020 – 2025); Financial Services Regulation Law, Litigation - Securities, and Litigation - Trusts and Estates (2024 – 2025)
- Fellow – Nashville Bar Foundation
- Three-time Tennessee Attorney for Justice
- Member – American Bar Association
- Member – Tennessee Bar Association
- Member – Association of Certified Fraud Examiners
- Member – SIFMA Compliance & Legal Society
- Adjunct Professor of Law, Vanderbilt Law School
- Recipient – Baker Donelson's 2021 Work-Life Warrior Award



Publications

- Quoted – "Class Actions Will Test Labor Department's New Fiduciary Rule," *Forbes Magazine* (April 2016)
- "What Does the Department of Labor's New Fiduciary Rule Mean?," *InsideCounsel* (April 2016)



Speaking Engagements

- "Choosing Your Career Path with Intention," Vanderbilt Law School Women's Association (April 2022)



Education

- Vanderbilt University School of Law, J.D., 2000
- Northwestern University, B.S.SP, 1997



Admissions

- Tennessee, 2000
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee