

OUR FIRM

History

The beliefs that drive Baker Donelson today can be traced back to when James F. Baker hung out his shingle in Huntsville, Tennessee. The year was 1888, a time when professional service meant providing focused, individualized attention to every client. More than 130 years later, our Firm has experienced several mergers, numerous name changes and tremendous growth. It has expanded from James Baker's Courthouse Square office more than 20 offices with a presence in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia as well as Washington, D.C. Through it all, we have remained committed to helping our clients make smarter decisions, and becoming a valuable business partner. Below is a timeline that marks key milestones in Baker Donelson's rich history.

- **1888** – James F. Baker established a law firm in Huntsville, Tennessee. Over time and after several name changes, the firm eventually became known as Baker, Worthington, Crossley & Stansberry.
- **1903** – Stuart S. Janney and Albert C. Ritchie merged their Baltimore, Maryland practices to form a partnership known as Ritchie and Janney. After World War I, Frank B. Ober and Robert W. Williams joined the firm, and the firm became Ritchie, Janney, Ober & Williams. Albert Ritchie left the firm in 1920 when he was elected governor, and returned after a remarkable 16-year term in office.
- **1911** – Walter Chandler, original partner in the Firm later known as Chandler, Shepherd, Heiskell & Williams, began private practice in Memphis, Tennessee.
- **1928** – Abe Berkowitz founded a law firm in Birmingham, Alabama. Over time the firm became known as Berkowitz, Lefkovits, Isom & Kushner.
- **1954** – The law firm of Donelson & Adams was founded in Memphis, Tennessee by Lewis R. Donelson III and Ben C. Adams.
- **1963** – David Gambrell formed the Atlanta firm that would later become Gambrell & Stolz.
- **1964** – Donelson, Adams, O'Hearn, Grogan & Edwards merged with Shepherd Heiskell, Williams, Beal & Wall to become Heiskell, Donelson, Adams, Williams and Wall.
- **1969** – Ober, Williams & Grimes, as the Baltimore, Maryland firm was then known, merged with Cross, Shriver, Bright & Washburne and became Ober, Grimes & Shriver.
- **1980** – The firm of Leo Bearman merged with the Heiskell Donelson firm to become Heiskell, Donelson, Bearman, Adams, Williams & Kirsch.
- **1983** – The Baltimore, Maryland firm of Ober, Grimes & Shriver merged with the well-established Washington, D.C. firm of Kaler, Worsley, Daniel & Hollman, and the firm became Ober, Kaler, Grimes & Shriver.
- **1985** – The Orlando, Florida firm of Litchford & Christopher Professional Association was formed.
- **1990** – The Atlanta firm of Kennedy & Kennedy, later known as Kennedy, Davis & Hodge, was formed.
- **1993** – The Chattanooga firm of Caldwell, Heggie & Helton merged with the Heiskell Donelson firm, changing the name to Heiskell, Donelson, Bearman, Adams, Williams & Caldwell.
- **1994** – The Heiskell Donelson and Baker Worthington firms merged to form Baker, Donelson, Bearman & Caldwell.
- **1995** – The Firm opened its Jackson, Mississippi office with the addition of six leading attorneys.
- **2001** – The Firm merged with the Atlanta firm of Kennedy, Davis & Hodge, which specialized in intellectual property law.
- **2003** – The Firm merged with Berkowitz, Lefkovits, Isom & Kushner of Birmingham, Alabama to form Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz.

- **2004** – Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz opened offices in New Orleans and Mandeville, Louisiana, adding 19 leading attorneys to the Firm.
- **2005** – Hurricane Katrina prompted the opening of Baker Donelson's Baton Rouge, Louisiana office.
- **2007** – The Firm combined with the well-established Atlanta firm of Gambrell & Stolz.
- **2011** – The Firm merged with the Houston firm of Spain Chambers, marking Baker Donelson's entry into Texas.
- **2011** – Baker Donelson merged with Litchford & Christopher Professional Association of Orlando, giving the Firm its first Florida location.
- **2012** – Baker Donelson expanded its Texas presence through a merger with Drucker, Rutledge & Smith.
- **2013** – The Firm expanded its Florida presence with the addition of an office in Fort Lauderdale.
- **2016** – Baker Donelson opened an office in Columbia, South Carolina.
- **2017** – Baker Donelson combined with the Baltimore based firm of Ober, Kaler, Grimes & Shriver, adding offices in Maryland and Virginia.
- **2021** – The Firm's Raleigh/Research Triangle office was launched when a team of respected and recognized health law attorneys joined the Firm.
- **2022** – Baker Donelson's Charleston office opening established the Firm's second location in South Carolina.
- **2024** – Baker Donelson expanded its commitment and growing presence in the Carolinas with the opening of a Charlotte office.
- **2025** – Baker Donelson grows its geographic reach into the Northeast with the launch of two New Jersey locations, Metropark (Iselin) and Princeton, and the addition of 26 attorneys in a significant expansion of the Firm's health law and commercial litigation practices.
- **2025** – Baker Donelson establishes the Winston-Salem office to strengthen the Firm's presence in the Carolinas and enhance its ability to serve clients in the Piedmont Triad and throughout North Carolina.