

PRESS RELEASE

Samuel T. Bowman Named as New Leader of Baker Donelson's Pro Bono Initiative

July 08, 2019

Baker Donelson has selected Samuel T. Bowman to serve as the Firm's next pro bono shareholder.

A shareholder in the Nashville office of Baker Donelson, [Mr. Bowman](#) has served for more than ten years as the chair of the Nashville office's Pro Bono Committee, where he coordinates pro bono matters, assists with local legal aid organizations and handles individual pro bono cases. Mr. Bowman has a significant pro bono practice that includes assisting entities with obtaining non-profit status and providing pro bono services to several local churches. As the pro bono shareholder, he will be responsible for overseeing the continued development, growth and administration of pro bono programs across the Firm's 21 offices in ten states and Washington, D.C.

Mr. Bowman assumes the role from Lisa W. Borden, who has served as the Firm's pro bono shareholder since 2008, when Baker Donelson first designated the position as part of an expansion of its existing pro bono efforts. Ms. Borden will be leaving the Firm to participate in an LL.M. program in International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law at the Geneva Academy in Geneva, Switzerland.

[Jonathan Cole](#), founder and chair of Baker Donelson's Pro Bono Committee since 2005, said, "Baker Donelson has a long and proud tradition of commitment to pro bono that recognizes our duty to contribute our legal skills to people and communities in need. As our first pro bono shareholder, Lisa built on that tradition and has had a tremendous impact, not only on our Firm's pro bono efforts, but also in the awareness and tangible change she has helped to bring about across our footprint on issues such as prison conditions, court debt and homelessness. Lisa has created a lasting legacy here at Baker Donelson, and her work will continue on. Sam shares Lisa's passion for pro bono and has an outstanding vision for building on the significant strides our Firm has made."

Under Ms. Borden's leadership, Baker Donelson has seen substantial growth in pro bono contributions, from 8,000 hours in 2008 to an average of more than 20,000 hours annually in recent years. The Firm's pro bono work has also expanded in scope, including important civil rights cases, representation of immigrants seeking asylum and refugee status, and helping vital non-profit organizations succeed in their important missions in our communities. Many of the Firm's offices and individual attorneys are routinely recognized for their pro bono efforts, and Baker Donelson has twice been named a Beacon of Justice Award winner by the National Legal Aid & Defender Association.

"Lisa has been a driving force in strengthening Baker Donelson's pro bono efforts. Her leadership in this area has been truly inspirational, and I am honored by the opportunity to expand on what she has built," said Mr. Bowman. "I look forward to working with our many attorneys who give so generously of their time and skills as we strive to further our service to our communities and the impact we can bring through providing pro bono representation to those who otherwise could not afford the services of an attorney."

Through its commitment to [pro bono representation](#), Baker Donelson provides legal services to groups and individuals likely to be marginalized in the legal system due to economic barriers. Over the years, the Firm's attorneys have provided a variety of counsel to many populations including immigrants, refugees, the elderly

and the impoverished. Baker Donelson's efforts include work on a wide range of matters, such as advocating for the homeless and organizations that serve the homeless, death penalty litigation, providing corporate legal services to non-profit organizations, and much more. The Firm has been instrumental in efforts such as expanding the Homeless Experience Legal Protection (HELP) program across the Southeast; creating courts dedicated to handling minor legal matters common among the homeless; reining in modern day debtors' prisons operated by municipalities and the private probation services with which they contract; and spearheading and organizing volunteer lawyer programs across Baker Donelson's footprint.