

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Baker Donelson Names New Leaders in Advocacy Department

April 13, 2023

**The law firm of Baker Donelson has named new leaders within its Advocacy Department. Steven F. Griffith Jr. has been named chair of the Firm's Advocacy Department, Matt Woolf has been named chair of the Business Litigation Group, Marcus M. Maples has been named vice chair of the Business Litigation Group, and Whitney M. Dowdy has been named chair of the New Litigator Group.**

While serving in these leadership roles, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Woolf, Mr. Maples, and Ms. Dowdy will all maintain their legal practices.

As chair of the Advocacy Department, Mr. Griffith will oversee more than 300 attorneys from seven of Baker Donelson's practice groups across the Firm's 22 offices. Mr. Griffith, who is a shareholder in the New Orleans office and previously served as chair of the Firm's Business Litigation Group, also served on Baker Donelson's board of directors and as a member of the Firm's Audit and Finance Committee. His national practice focuses on advising C-suite executives on continuity of operations, cash liquidity strategies, and portfolio risk management. In that role, Mr. Griffith has represented or advised clients on matters in more than 35 states. His litigation practice also includes representing syndicators and managers of investor limited partner or member interests in Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties in more than 15 states from California to Florida.

A graduate of the Loyola University School of Law, Mr. Griffith served as judicial clerk for Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero Jr. in the Louisiana Supreme Court from 2000 to 2001. He has been listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® since 2012 and in *Chambers USA* since 2010. He has also been selected to the Louisiana Super Lawyers list, which has recognized him among the top 50 attorneys in Louisiana and the top 50 attorneys in New Orleans. He is a member of the American, Louisiana, New Orleans, and Federal Bar Associations and has served as the president and on the board of directors of the New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association.

Mr. Griffith explained, "I am honored to assume the role of Advocacy Department chair after years of wise leadership from Buck Wellford. Our Firm has experienced five consecutive years of record-setting growth, primarily through deeper and more meaningful engagements with our clients throughout the United States, but also through strategic hires within our footprint. I look forward to helping the Firm continue that success as we implement our six-year strategic plan."

In his role as chair of the Business Litigation Group, Mr. Woolf will oversee more than 80 of the Firm's litigation attorneys. Mr. Woolf, who is a shareholder in the New Orleans office and previously chaired the Firm's New Litigator Group, concentrates his practice on commercial disputes and insurance defense. He has considerable experience defending class and mass actions against the insurance industry, as well as administering, managing, and defending large volumes of individual claims and lawsuits over a broad geographic region. Mr. Woolf's experience includes numerous lines of private and commercial property, life, and liability insurance, bad faith, coverage, regulatory, and third-party defense. He also represents clients in a wide variety of commercial litigation matters, with particular experience representing both plaintiffs and defendants in securities fraud litigation, complex corporate class and mass action litigation, and a variety of contractual, fiduciary, and business tort litigation.

Mr. Woolf earned his J.D. from Tulane University, where he served as managing editor of the *Tulane Law Review*. He has been recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® since 2013 and has been selected to the Louisiana Super Lawyers list. He is a member of the American, Louisiana, New Orleans, and Federal Bar Associations and served as co-chair of the Property Subcommittee, ABA Section of Litigation Insurance Coverage Litigation Committee.

Mr. Maples, a shareholder in the Firm's Birmingham office, will work alongside Mr. Woolf in managing the Firm's Business Litigation practice. Mr. Maples, who is the current president of the Birmingham Bar Association, tries cases and leads defense teams in a wide range of high-stakes cases including complex commercial litigation, shareholder disputes, and construction litigation. He has experience litigating in at least a dozen states due to his role as national counsel for an international engineering firm. Mr. Maples is also a member of Baker Donelson's Diversity Committee and serves as chair of the Firm's Diversity and Inclusion Compact Advisory Board.

A graduate of the University of Alabama School of Law, Mr. Maples is recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® and has been selected to the Mid-South Super Lawyers list. He is a member of the Magic City and American Bar Associations and past president of the Alabama Lawyers Association. Mr. Maples previously served as co-chair of the Alabama State Bar Association Diversity Committee and, in recognition of his work in this role, was a recipient of the President's Award in 2020. He is also a member of the International Association of Defense Counsel's (IADC) Diversity Committee and has served as chair of the Diversity Subcommittees for DRI's Young Lawyers Committee and Life Health Disability & Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) Committee.

As chair of Baker Donelson's New Litigator Group, Ms. Dowdy will work with approximately 30 litigation associates across the Firm's footprint in their early years of practice. New Litigators work on a variety of cases, hone their skills through additional training and mentoring, and sharpen their focus on particular fields of practice. At the end of their tenure in the New Litigator Group, these talented associates will join one of Baker Donelson's more than 30 substantive practice groups.

Ms. Dowdy, a shareholder in the Memphis office, focuses her practice on representing employers and management clients regarding all aspects of employment law. She has extensive experience representing clients in employment matters before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Department of Labor, state agencies, and in various state and federal courts. She also advises higher education institutions on matters related to Title IX, specifically serving as a Title IX investigator and providing training on Title IX investigations.

A graduate of the University of Kentucky College of Law, Ms. Dowdy previously served as law clerk to the late Honorable Karl S. Forester, U.S. District Court Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky. She is recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® and has been selected to the Mid-South Super Lawyers list. She is a member of the American, Federal, Tennessee, and Kentucky Bar Associations and the Association for Women Attorneys.