MINUTES

ALABAMA STATE BAR
BOARD OF BAR COMMISSIONERS MEETING

The Grand Hotel
One Grand Boulevard
Point Clear, Alabama 36564
Lagoon Room/Azalea D

Wednesday, July 16, 2025, and Saturday, July 19, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

President Tom Perry convened this meeting of the Alabama State Bar Board of Commissioners at 2:36 p.m. in the Lagoon Room of the Grand Hotel in Point Clear, Alabama. Commissioner David Holt led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The secretary proceeded with the roll call and the following commissioners were present:

Conrad Anderson
Pratt Austin-Trucks
Raymond Bell
Edgar Black
Mark Boardman
Sallie Bowers
Jeff Bowling
Randy Bozeman
Brannon Buck
Clay Carr
Hunter Compton
Joel Connally
Lisa Cooper
Brad Cornett
Mark Debro
Deborah Dunsmore
Jana Garner
Kirk Garrett
Leon Hampton
Josh Hayes
Fred Helmsing
Scott Holmes
David Holt
Ralph Holt
Carmen Howell
Kesa Johnston
Mitch Kemmer
Angela Kennedy
Lee Knowles
Aigner Kolom
Edwin Lamberth
Will Lee
Doug Martinson
Bob McMillan
Tamara Neeley
Steve Nicholas
Andrew Nix
Evan Parrott
Lynn Perry
Tom Perry
Bobby Poundstone
Robert Richardson
Brandy Robertson
Ryan Robichaux
Freddy Rubio
Steven Savarese
Holly Sawyer
Pat Sefton
Sebie Sellers
Julius Shanks
Mitch Shelly
Jeff Sherrer
Elizabeth Smithart
John Stamps
Andrew Stanley (Retiring)
Stephen Still
Ronald Strawbridge
Jimbo Terrell
Jerome Thompson
Jeff Utsey
SuntreaseWilliams-Maynard
Robin Wolfe

The following commissioners were absent:

Will Broome
Kitty Rogers Brown
Kelly Davidson
Lang Floyd
Lisha Graham
Leon Hampton
David Langston
Jorja Loftin
Felicia Long
Wallace Mills
Leslie Moore
Manish Patel
Ashley Peinhardt
Gregory Price
John Rea
Chrissy Riddle
Tyler Sims
Doug Smith
Kyra Sparks
Al Vance
Artie Vaughn
Leila Watson

QUORUM PRESENT

Also in attendance were staff members Roman Shaul, Chad Coker, Merinda Hall, Melissa Warnke, Karen Laneaux, Suzi Huffaker, and Hilaire Armstrong.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

President Perry recognized special guests including Chief Justice Sarah Stewart, Associate Justice Greg Shaw, Associate Justice Brad Mendheim, Associate Justice Greg Cook, Supreme Court Clerk Megan Rhodebeck, U.S. District Judge Austin Huffaker, Dawn Hathcock of the Alabama Law Foundation, and Eileen Harris with the Center for Dispute Resolution.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA FOR JULY 16, 2025, AND CONTINUING TO JULY 19, 2025, MADE BY STEVEN SAVARESE AND SECONDED BY PRATT AUSTIN-TRUCKS, AND APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 2, 2025, BOARD MEETING

President Perry stated that the minutes of the May 2, 2025, Board Meeting had been transcribed and circulated prior to the meeting. He asked if there were any corrections, additions, or deletions. Commissioner Mark Debro noted one correction as to the Alabama Law Foundation appointment of Jim Rebarchak rather than Jana Garner.

COMMISSIONER DAVID HOLT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 2, 2025, BOARD MEETING AS CORRECTED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MARK DEBRO AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING COMMISSIONERS AND NEW COMMISSIONERS

President Perry recognized Andrew Stanley as a retiring commissioner and presented him with his commissioner medallion. President Perry recognized the following new commissioners in attendance:

Kesa Johnston	5th Judicial Circuit
Evan Parrott	13th Judicial Circuit, Place 3
Robert Richardson	14th Judicial Circuit
Sebie Sellers	At Large, Place 5

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Perry began his remarks expressing his gratitude as the 149th president of the Alabama State Bar. He provided an update on his Harvesting Hope Program and recent success of assisting the programs first participant, Asherika Heard, in opening her law practice in Marion, Alabama. Perry indicated two additional individuals are ready to be placed upon successful completion of the July bar exam. Since the last meeting, along with Tom Heflin, Perry attended the Birmingham Bar Foundation Dinner and spoke about the need for rural lawyers. President Perry concluded his remarks by thanking the commission for their service to him as bar president and congratulating Jana Garner as President-Elect.

SECRETARY/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Secretary/Executive Director Terri Lovell informed the commission that new commissioner orientation was held on July 15th. She remarked that since the last commission meeting, the Hall of Fame Ceremony had been held. Lovell stated the work continues by the Board of Bar Examiners and Admissions to implement a state specific component for the bar exam beginning in July 2028. She also discussed the Bar is continuing to work with civil legal aid providers to develop contingency plans in the event civil legal aid funding is reduced on the federal level. On the operations side, Lovell announced staff evaluations had been conducted. She praised the staff for the work completed over the past year and thanked all those in attendance for their service to the commission.

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL REPORT

General Counsel Roman Shaul announced the creation of a probation docket within the OGC that would be handled by Mark Moody of the Office of General Counsel. The OGC will be continuing to monitor the compliance of individuals involved with the disciplinary process. His office is in the process of updating formal opinions for the website and are handling a multitude of unauthorized practice of law cases at the present time.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Director of Finance Merinda Hall shared that the ASB 3rd quarter revenues climb by nearly 3% year-over-year, and FY2025 has been above the average rate of increase seen in past years. License fees and special membership dues had larger increases with the influx of new admittees, in addition to MCLE fees with the increasing number of CLE programs approved this year. Spending decreased by close to 6% overall due to lower personnel costs this year. Investment balances showed an initial gain this year of close to 4% from the beginning of the operating year.

COMMISSIONER PRATT AUSTIN-TRUCKS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT, SECONDED BY MARK DEBRO AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL REPORT

Parliamentarian Mark Boardman provided a synopsis of the last meeting of the Executive Committee in Linden, Alabama. Boardman provided a description of EC duties in the overall structure of the Alabama State Bar.

BAR EXAM REPORT

Admissions Director Karen Laneaux announced the Admissions Department was busy preparing for the bar exam to be held July 29-30th at the BJCC in Birmingham, Alabama. She also announced the Board of Bar Examiners were busy preparing for the implementation of the NextGen bar exam in July 2028 which would also include state law essay questions. Laneaux welcomed assistance from any of those in attendance that were subject matter experts to assist in drafting questions for the state law component. She explained how the Board of Bar Examiners would be divided going forward between those assigned to policy operations and those assigned as graders.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

PRO BONO TASK FORCE REPORT

Eileen Harris, Chair of the Pro Bono Committee, presented Jeff Bowling, Chair of the Pro Bono Celebration Task Force with a signed proclamation of Governor Kay Ivey, recognizing the efforts of the Alabama State Bar during pro bono month.

2025 – 2026 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

Commissioner Mark Debro moved to approve the following officers for the 2025-2026 Executive Council as follows: Jeff Bowling as Vice-President; Terri Lovell as Secretary; Mark Boardman as Parliamentarian; Raymond Bell, Joel Connally, and Will Lee as members. No other nominations were received.

THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY PRATT AUSTIN-TRUCKS AND THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS WERE APPROVED FOR THE 2025-2026 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

Jeff Bowling - Vice-President
Terri Lovell - Secretary
Mark Boardman - Parliamentarian
Raymond Bell – Commission Member
Joel Connally – Commission Member
Will Lee – Commission Member

LICENSING REVIEW TASK FORCE

President Perry discussed the reciprocity task force that was formed to look at the issue regarding the waiver of the residency requirement within Rule III(a)(i), Alabama Rules Governing Admission. The request to review this issue was originally made by Chief Justice Tom Parker. A task force was formed and had met to consider the rule. President Perry shared his concerns for eliminating the "primary practice of law" language from the rule, particularly with solo and small firm and rural lawyers. Perry then called upon President-Elect Fred Helmsing to provide an opposing view. Helmsing stated the current rule served as a barrier to the practice of law, especially in Alabama border counties, and believed a relaxation of the rule could foster more legal representation of individuals in these counties.

Commissioner Tamara Neeley, Jimbo Terrell, Lynn Perry, and Steve Nicholas, all expressed opinions on the issue and their concerns regarding a vote being taken on the issue without further clarification and discussion with members in their respective counties.

ACTION ITEMS

APPROVAL OF THE JESSE EVANS AWARD RECIPIENT

The Jesse Evans Award was approved at the May 2, 2025, meeting of the Board. Following the approval, the Solo and Small Firm Section nominates Sam Irby and Taze Shepard (posthumously) for the inaugural award.

MOTION TO APPROVE SAM IRBY AND TAZE SHEPARD (POSTHUMOUSLY) AS THE JESSE EVANS AWARD RECIPIENT WAS MADE BY MARK DEBRO, SECONDED BY TAMARA NEELEY AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

APPROVAL OF THE ALAP AWARD RECIPIENT

A nomination was received by the Alabama Lawyers Assistance Program Committee to honor Doug Benson as the award recipient for the Jeanne Marie Leslie Award pending commission approval.

MOTION TO NOMINATE DOUG BENSON FOR THE JEANNE MARIE LESLIE AWARD WAS MADE BY PRATT AUSTIN-TRUCKS, SECONDED BY TAMARA NEELEY AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

APPROVAL OF MCLE COMMISSION

Two vacancies exist on the MCLE Commission. Commissioner Mitch Shelly and Commissioner Lisa Darnley Cooper have expressed interest in those positions.

MOTION TO NOMINATE MITCH SHELLY AND LISA DARNLEY COOPER TO THE MCLE COMMISSION WAS MADE BY JANA GARNER, SECONDED BY STEVEN SAVARESE AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

2025 ALABAMA LAWYERS HALL OF FAME CLASS

President Tom Perry reported that the selection committee of the Alabama Lawyers Hall of Fame had recommended four individuals who have been deceased at least two years. They are Bruce Boynton, Robert Cunningham, Sr., Karl Friedman, and Bo Torbert, Jr. The selection committee has also recommended the induction of William Smith who has been deceased more than 100 years.

COMMISSIONER JOEL CONNALLY MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2025 HALL FAME CLASS, SECONDED BY DOUG MARTINSON, AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

CHARACTER AND FITNESS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

President Perry announced the Character and Fitness committee is presented to the board on a recommendation from the Executive Council for appointment by the President.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CHARACTER AND FITNESS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT *(APPENDIX "A" TO MINUTES)* MADE BY PRATT AUSTIN-TRUCKS, SECONDED BY DAVID HOLT, AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS APPROVAL

President Perry announced that the Board of Bar Examiners is presented to the Board of Bar Commissioners on a recommendation from the Executive Council

MOTION TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS (*APPENDIX "B" TO MINUTES)* MADE BY PRATT AUSTIN TRUCKS, SECONDED BY RANDY BOZEMAN, AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

APPROVAL TO HOST THE 2026 SOUTHERN CONFERENCE OF BAR PRESIDENTS

The Alabama State Bar has been designated by the SCBP as the host state for the 2026 Southern Conference of Bar Presidents.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ALABAMA STATE BAR SERVE AS THE HOST ENTITY FOR THE 2026 SOUTHERN CONFERENCE OF BAR PRESIDENTS WAS MADE BY SUNTREASE WILLIAMS-MAYNARD, SECONDED BY PRATT AUSTIN TRUCKS AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

ABA HOUSE OF DELEGATES APPOINTMENT

President Perry announced two appointments are available for the ABA House of Delegates. One appointment is for the Young Lawyer Section designee and one appointment is on behalf of the Alabama State Bar as current delegate, Leslie Barineau is not seeking reappointment. One nomination for Jonathan Jenkins was received for the YLS appointment, and no nominations were received for the ASB appointment.

MOTION TO APPOINT JONATHAN JENKINS AS THE YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION DESIGNEE WAS MADE BY LYNN PERRY, SECONDED BY SALLY BOWERS, AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

ARGA RULE III "PRIMARY PRACTICE OF LAW" REQUIREMENT VOTE

Based upon the concerns voiced in the discussion of this item earlier in the meeting, Steve Nicholas suggested any action of this matter be carried forward to another date. Based upon those discussions, no vote was taken, and the matter was tabled.

ANNUAL LICENSE FEE RENEWAL

President Perry announced that the Finance and Audit Committee and the Executive Council recommended licensing fees continue for a fourth year at the reduced rate of $300 for occupational license and $150 for special license.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED LICENSURE FEES AS $300 FOR OCCUPATIONAL AND $150 FOR SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS WAS MADE BY ROBIN WOLFE, SECONDED BY BRAD CORNETT, AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

RECESS

President Perry declared that the meeting was in recess at 3:36 pm to a time and place certain, specifically Saturday, July 19, 2025, reconvening in Azalea Ballroom D at 11:15 am.

RECONVENED AGENDA
The Grand Hotel
One Grand Boulevard
Point Clear, AL 36564
AZALEA BALLROOM D

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MEETING RECONVENED

Parliamentarian Mark Boardman announced the meeting of the Board of Bar Commissioners reconvened in Azalea Ballroom D.

CALL TO ORDER
President Fred Helmsing called the meeting to order at 11:22 a.m.

MOTION FROM JOEL CONNALLY TO USE THE WRITTEN SIGN-IN SHEET INSTEAD OF A ROLL CALL IN LIGHT OF THE LATE TIME AND THAT THE BOARD MEMBERS MUST CHECK OUT OF HOTEL. (APPENDIX "C" TO MINUTES)

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Helmsing adjourned the meeting at 11:27 a.m.

Taylor T. Perry, Jr.
ASB President, 2024-2025

Frederick G. Helmsing, Jr., President
Alabama State Bar, 2025-2026

ATTEST:

Terri B. Lovell, Secretary
Alabama State Bar

Character & Fitness Committee 2025-2026

ORDER OF APPOINTMENT

Chair:

William Christopher Waller, Jr. (Panel I) 334-387-2883
Ball Ball Matthews & Novak, PA
PO Box 2148
Montgomery, AL 36102-2148
cwaller@ball-ball.com

Shawn Junkins Cole (Panel II) 334-834-7600
Hill Hill Carter Franco Cole & Black PCPO
Box 116
Montgomery, AL 36101-0116
scole@hillhillcarter.com

Patrick Ladd Wheeler Sefton (Panel III) 334-241-8000
Capell & Howard, PC
PO Box 2069
Montgomery, AL 36102-2069
pat.sefton@chlaw.com

Charles James, II (Panel IV) 334-832-1001
Serious Injury Law Group
2901 Zelda Rd
Montgomery, AL 36106-2734
chuck@seriouslawyers.com

Harold Bryan Wallace (Panel V) 256-740-3011
The Law Firm of H. Bryan Wallace, PC
PO Box 1208
Florence, AL 35631-1208
bryan@hbwlegal.com

Glenda Delorse Freeman (Panel VI) 205-744-3545
Legal Aid Society of Birmingham
1801 3rd Ave N Rm 570
Bessemer, AL 35020-4940
freemang@jccal.org

Alternate:

John Evans Bailey 334-206-3170
Rushton Stakely Johnston & Garrett, PA
PO Box 270
Montgomery, AL 36101-0270
ebailey@rushtonstakely.com

Leslie Ramsey Barineau 205-251-9200
Barineau & Barineau
300 Arrington Blvd N Ste 502
Birmingham, AL 35203-3354
barineau@bellsouth.net

John Mark Englehart 334-782-5258
9457 Alysbury Pl
Montgomery, AL 36117-6005
jmenglehart@gmail.com

Kaasha Griffin 334-242-6350
1409 Coliseum Blvd.
Montgomery, AL 36110
griffink@dot.state.al.us

Vania Latitia Hosea 334-279-5399
Shahid & Hosea, LLC
PO Box 231347
Montgomery, AL 36123-1347
Vania@shahidhosea.com

Carmen Francis Howell 334-475-2438
PO Box 312558
Enterprise, AL 36331-2558
cfhowell@gmail.com

Jason Scott Isbell 334-782-1219
Regions Bank
PO Box 2450
Montgomery, AL 36102-2450
jason.isbell@regions.com

Benita Bell Jenkins 205-768-1234
The Law Office of Benita Jenkins, LLC
950 22nd St N Ste 825
Birmingham, AL 35203-5300
benitajenkins2011@gmail.com

Tiffany Mitchelle Jones 205-490-8355
PO Box 416
Leeds, AL 35094-0008
tiffanyjoneslawfirm@gmail.com

Thomas Frank Kelly, Jr. 334-775-8009
PO Box 605
Clayton, AL 36016-0605
tfkelly@bellsouth.net

Peter Allen McInish 334-671-2555
Law Office of Peter A. McInish, LLC
PO Box 610
Dothan, AL 36302-0610
petemcinish@pamcinishlaw.com

Blake Lee Oliver 334-745-3504
Samford & Denson, LLP
PO Box 2345
Opelika, AL 36803-2345
oliver@samfordlaw.com

Lloyd Chandler Peeples, III 205-244-2014
US Attorney's Office - ND of Alabama
1801 4th Ave N
Birmingham, AL 35203-2101
lloyd.peeples@usdoj.gov

Robert Coles Pitman 334-229-0796
Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals
PO Box 301555
Montgomery, AL 36130-1555
robert.pitman@alappeals.gov

Robert Edwin Riddle 334-356-3239
119 1st St
Prattville, AL 36067-3934
rob@riddlelawllc.com

Clay Thomas Rossi 251-574-8400
13th Judicial Circuit, District Attorney's Office
PO Box 2841
Mobile, AL 36652-2841
clayrossi@mobileda.org

Holly Lynn Sawyer 334-305-0290
PO Box 917
Dothan, AL 36302-0917
hsawyer@hollysawyerlaw.com

Members:

Celeste Patton Armstrong 205-578-5521
Law Office of Celeste P. Armstrong
3000 Riverchase Galleria Ste 900
Hoover, AL 35244-2330
armstc4@nationwide.com

Bryan Oxford Balogh 205-226-5726
Holland & Knight, LLP
1901 6th Ave. N, Ste. 1400
Birmingham, AL 35203
bryan.balogh@hklaw.com

Philip Joseph Carroll, III 205-213-3324
407 Cherry St
Mountain Brook, AL 35213-3719
philip.j.carroll@outlook.com

Darron Code Hendley 334-300-5836
323 Adams Ave
Montgomery, AL 36104-4203
dchjd1987@aol.com

Stephanie Houston Mays 205-254-1844
Maynard Nexsen, PC
1901 6th Ave N Ste 1700
Birmingham, AL 35203-2629
smays@maynardnexsen.com

Sherrie Lynn Phillips 334-241-8000
Capell & Howard, PC
PO Box 2069
Montgomery, AL 36102-2069
sherrie.phillips@chlaw.com

Kimberly Kelley Rucker 256-665-9990
4100 Market Street SW, Suite 100
Huntsville, AL 35808
kim@ruckerlegalsolutions.com

Herbert Harold West, Jr. 205-716-5209
Phelps Dunbar LLP
PO Box 830612
Birmingham, AL 35283-0612
hal.west@phelps.com

Staff Liaison:

Karen Lyn Laneaux 334-269-1515
Alabama State Bar
PO Box 671
Montgomery, AL 36101-0671
karen.laneaux@alabar.org

LaDonna Vinson 334-269-1515
415 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104
ladonna.vinson@alabar.org

ALABAMA STATE BAR
BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS

DANIEL JOHNSON, CHAIR **Governance**
Lewis, Brackin, Flowers, Johnson & Sawyer
265 W. Main Street
Dothan, AL 36301-1627
Phone: (334) 792-5157
Email: djohnson@lbfjlaw.com
Term: 12/2024 – 12/2028

DAVID GLENN HYMER **Governance**
Bradley, Arant, Boult Cummings LLP
One Federal Place
1819 Fifth Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35203-2104
Phone: (205) 521-8289
Email : dhymer@ba-boult.com
Term : 12/2024 – 12/2028

CHARLES JAMES**,** II **Governance**
Serious Injury Law Group
418 Scott Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
Phone: (334) 231-5751
Email: chuck@seriouslaywers.com
Term: 12/2024-12/2028

SUSAN ELIZABETH KENNEDY
Governance
1223 32nd Street North
Birmingham, AL 35234
Phone: (334) 546-8123
Email: susankennedybhm@gmail.com
Term: 12/2024-12/2028

FORREST S. LATTA **Governance**
Burr & Forman, LLP
22000 Battle House Tower
11 North Water Street
Mobile, Alabama 36601
Phone: (251) 345-8212
Emails: Forrest.Latta@Burr.com
Term: 12/2024-12/2028

TARA WALLER LOCKETT **Governance**
Carr Allison
6251 Monroe Street, Suite 200
Daphne, AL 36526-7154
Phone: (251) 656-9340
Email: tlockett@carrallison.com
Term: 12/2024 – 12/2028

ROBERT C. LOCKWOOD **Governance**
Lockwood & Associates
527 Fountain Row, SW
Huntsville, AL 35801-4335
Phone: (256) 400-4522
Email: robert@lockwoodlawyers.com
Term: 12/2024 – 12/2028

RODNEY BARGANIER **Grading**
Barganier Law Group
2730 Ensley 5 Points W Ave
Birmingham, AL 35218-2853
(205) 776-1776
(205) 278-8557
rfb@barganierlaw.net
Miles 2001

STANLEY BLACKMON **Grading**
Bradley, Arant, Boult Cummings LLP
One Federal Place
1819 Fifth Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35203-2104
(205) 521-8289 (W) (205) 879-7347(H)
FAX: (205) 488-6289
sblackmon@bradley.com
Alabama 2015
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

JAMES A. BRADFORD **Grading**
Balch & Bingham LLP
P. O. Box 306 (35201-0306)
1901 6th Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35203
(205) 226-3407 FAX: (205) 488-5888
jbradford@balch.com
Alabama 1980

GEORGE BULLS, II **Grading**
Bulls Law Office
2801 Althea St
Tuskegee Institute, AL 36088-2824
(334) 727-1074 (334) 727-1639
g.bullsii@gmail.com
Jones Law School 2009
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

ALABAMA STATE BAR
BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS

EDGAR C. GENTLE **Grading**
Gentle, Turner & Sexton
501 Riverchase Parkway East, Suite 100
Hoover, AL 35244
(205) 716-3000 (W) (205) 960-2533
FAX: (205) 716-3010
Egentle@gtandslaw.com
Alabama 1981
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

NIKA GHOLSTON **Grading**
Nika Gholston Law, LLC
PO Box 231101
Montgomery, AL 36123-1101
(334) 557-7011
law@nikagholston.com
Cumberland 2015
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

MELANIE HOLLIMAN **Grading**
Bradford & Holliman
2491 Pelham Pkwy
Pelham, AL 35124-1318
(205) 663-0281
melanie@bradfordholliman.com
Cumberland 2005
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

PATRICIA KEMP **Grading**
Office of the Federal Public Defender
SD of AL
11 N Water St Ste 11290
Mobile, AL 36602-5011
(251) 433-0910
(251) 433-0686
Patricia_kemp@fd.org
Southern University 2003
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

WARREN C. MATTHEWS **Grading**
Burr & Forman
445 Dexter Avenue, Suite 2040
Montgomery, AL 36104
(334) 241-7000 (W) FAX: (334) 262-0020
wmatthew@burr.com
Vanderbilt 1990
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

RENNIE MOODY **Grading**
Rennie S. Moody, Attorney at Law
215 W. Dr. Hicks Blvd.
Florence, AL 35630
Phone: (256) 710-9245
renniemoody@bellsouth.net
Alabama 1984
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

WILLIAM NICHOLS **Grading**
Lee, Livingston, Lee, Nichols & Barron, PC
PO Box 1665
Dothan, AL 36302-1665
(334) 792-4156
(334) 794-8342
wnichols@llln-law.com
Cumberland 1997
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

LEE MCWORTER POPE **Grading**
3608 Crosshill Road
Birmingham, AL 35223
(205) 914-7827
leempope66@gmail.com
Alabama 1991
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

KEISHA STOKES-HOUGH **Grading**
Deputy Director Legal Management
Southern Poverty Law Center
P. O. Box 2087
Montgomery, AL 36102-2087
(334) 956-8248
keisha.stokeshough@splcenter.org
Harvard Law 2009
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

RILEY WOLFE **Grading**
Wolfe, Jones, Wolfe, Hancock, Daniel & South, LLC
905 Bob Wallace Ave SW
Huntsville, AL 35801-6504
(256) 534-2205
(256) 519-6691
rwolfe@wolfejones.com
Birmingham School of Law 2014
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

ALABAMA STATE BAR
BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS

KIA WOODS **Grading**
Rubin Lublin, LLC
Huntsville, AL 35801
Phone: (770) 246-3300
Email: kwoods@rlselaw.com
Univ. of Washington 2001
Term: 7/2025-7/2029

BOARD OF BAR COMMISSIONERS 2025-2026

Name	July 16, 2025	July 19, 2025
Conrad Anderson		
Pratt Austin-Trucks		
Raymond Bell		
Edgar Black		
Mark Boardman – Parliamentarian		
Sallie Bowers		
Jeff Bowling		
Randy Bozeman		
Will Broome		
Kitty Brown		
Brannon Buck – Past President		
Clay Carr		
Matthew Carter		
Hunter Compton		
Joel Connally		
Lisa Cooper		
Brad Cornett		
Kelly Davidson		
Mark Debro		
Deborah Dunsmore		
Ryan Duplechin-YLS President		
Richard Fikes*		
Lang Floyd		
Jana Garner-EC Member		
Kirk Garrett		
Lisha Graham		
Leon Hampton		
Josh Hayes		
Fred Helmsing – President Elect		

Scott Holmes		
David Holt		
Ralph Holt		
Carmen Howell		
Kesa Johnson		
Mitch Kemmer		
Angela Kennedy	Angela C Kenny	Angela C Kenny
Lee Knowles		
Aigner Kolom – ALA President		
Edwin Lamberth		
Bill Lancaster*		
David Langston		
Will Lee	Will Lee	Will Lee
Jorja Loftin		
Felicia Long		
Doug Martinson		
Bob McMillan		
Wallace Mills		
Leslie Moore		
Tamara Neeley	Tamara Neeley	Tamara Neeley
Steve Nicholas		
Andrew Nix	Andrew Nix	
Manish Patel		
Ashley Peinhardt		
Lynn Perry		
Tom Perry- President	Tom Perry	Tom Perry
Bobby Poundstone		
~~Chuck Price~~		
Gregory Price		

John Rea		
Chrissy Riddle		
Brandy Robertson	Brandy Robertson	Brandy Robertson
Ryan Robichaux		
Freddy Rubio		
Steven Savarese		
Holly Sawyer		
Pat Sefton – EC Member		
Julius Shanks		
Mitch Shelly		
Jeff Sherrer		
Tyler Sims		
Doug Smith		
Elizabeth Smithart	Elizabeth Smithart	Elizabeth Smithart
Kyra Sparks		
John Stamps – Vice President		
Andrew Stanley *		
Stephen Still		
Ronald Strawbridge-EC Member		
Brian Strength *		
Jimbo Terrell		
Jerome Thompson		
Jeff Utsey		
Al Vance		
Artie Vaughn		
Leila Watson		
Suntrease Williams-Maynard		
Robin Wolfe	Robin C. Wolfe	Robin C. Wolfe

*2022-2025 Commissioner

SEBIE SELLERS

Robert F. Richardson

Evan Parrott