



Matthew S. Chester

Shareholder

New Orleans | 504.566.5231 | mchester@bakerdonelson.com

Matt Chester brings more than 20 years of practicing law in the private sector and at the Department of Justice to his role as chair of Baker Donelson's Government Enforcement and Investigations Group, and as a member of the Firm's board of directors.

In more than 20 years of practicing law in the private sector and at the Department of Justice, Matt has handled dozens of arguments, hearings, and trials in state and federal court, achieving successful results on behalf of his clients.

In his decade at Baker Donelson, Matt has represented individuals and corporations in connection with a myriad of civil, criminal, and regulatory proceedings, as well as counseled clients on internal investigations. Among many other things, Matt has a wide-ranging criminal practice, representing individuals and corporate entities in matters involving criminal allegations of public corruption, fraud, health care violations, export control violations, environmental violations, immigration violations, and espionage. As an example of one of Matt's criminal matters, he represented a former public official in connection with malfeasance charges; after nearly four years of litigation, the case was recently dismissed for prosecutorial misconduct.

Matt also has a diverse civil practice. He represents individuals and corporations in False Claims Act (FCA)/*Qui Tam* cases against both governmental trial attorneys and a myriad of commercial litigation disputes including tort matters, business disputes, breach of contract litigation, and products liability lawsuits. As an example of his civil work, Matt prosecuted a civil lawsuit, acting as a plaintiff, for fraud against an individual, ultimately obtaining a judgment of nearly \$1 million. Additionally, as part of his civil practice, Matt acts as one of two primary Firm coordinating attorneys for a Fortune 20 company for its civil litigation needs across Baker Donelson's footprint.

During his time at Baker Donelson, Matt has additionally assisted and counseled entities with a wide variety of other legal, investigatory, and litigation needs. For example, Matt has conducted internal investigations for publicly traded, Fortune 500 companies facing allegations of corporate wrongdoing. As another example, Matt was engaged to represent a federal district court's clerk's office in connection with a number of challenges associated with the jury selection processes utilized by that clerk's office. Matt's work resulted in a comprehensive brief and report that was adopted by numerous federal district court judges in connection with those jury selection challenges, who ultimately rejected such challenges – in rulings that were affirmed by the applicable federal appellate court.

Prior to joining Baker Donelson, Matt worked at the Department of Justice as an Assistant U.S. Attorney (AUSA) in New Orleans, Louisiana. As an AUSA, Matt was a member of the Financial Fraud and Public Integrity units in the U.S. Attorney's office and was promoted to the position of Deputy Supervisor of the Public Integrity group. He spent most of his time as a federal prosecutor focusing on white collar crime, fraud, and public/official corruption prosecutions. Matt's experience includes multiple high-profile trials and convictions obtained against former elected and public officials.

During those years as a federal prosecutor, Matt was honored as the recipient of multiple awards, including five Excellence in Law Enforcement Awards from the New Orleans Metropolitan Crime Commission for his work on public corruption prosecutions in and around New Orleans, as well as awards from the Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration Office of

the Inspector General. Most notably, Matt was awarded the Department of Justice's Award for Superior Performance in Litigation in 2015 for his work in connection with a high-profile public corruption prosecution in New Orleans.

Before serving as Assistant U.S. Attorney, Matt practiced at an international law firm based in Dallas, Texas, where he handled numerous matters involving federal securities, financial class actions, complex civil litigation, white collar criminal matters, and corporate compliance.

Representative Matters

Criminal/Enforcement Matters

- Representation of more than a dozen former directors of a failed bank in connection with allegations of breach of fiduciary duty, negligence, and mismanagement brought by governmental regulators.
- Representation of numerous health care practices and individuals, as well as hospital systems, in connection with state and federal investigations concerning allegations of health care fraud, including compounding pharmacy matters, false claims matters, kickbacks, and other business practices.
- Represented a former director of an international company in a price-fixing investigation.
- Represented an international technology company in connection with an Export Control Act investigation.
- Represented an offshore oil and gas producer in a federal criminal investigation regarding an explosion on a company-owned platform.
- Represented multiple public officials in connection with allegations of public corruption and fraud.
- Represented a multi-billion dollar, publicly traded international corporation in connection with an internal investigation relating to potential criminal violations.
- Represented a marine consulting company in a criminal investigation relating to a multi-billion dollar environmental project.
- Represented a corporate food producer in a federal criminal investigation involving the hiring and harboring of undocumented immigrants.
- Represented a former pharmacy owner in a federal criminal health care fraud case involving 36 felony counts. Reached a resolution with the government involving a guilty plea to a single felony count and minimal jail time.

Civil Matters

- Represented numerous health care practices and individuals, including hospital systems and consultants, in connection with DOJ-intervened and private relator False Claims Act investigations and cases.
- Representation of a multi-billion dollar infrastructure company in connection with DOJ-intervened False Claims Act suit; case resolved for less than three percent of DOJ's claimed damages.
- Represented a federally regulated financial institution in connection with claims of negligence and breaches of fiduciary duty concerning loan practices.
- Represented a Fortune 500 insurance company in connection with the prosecution of civil fraud claim, obtaining judgment in excess of \$1 million against culpable individual and entities.

Professional Honors & Activities

- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Criminal Defense: White-Collar (2021 – 2025)
- Listed in *Chambers USA* as a leading Litigation: General Commercial lawyer (2022, 2023); Litigation: White-Collar Crime & Government Investigations (2024, 2025) in Louisiana
- Named to *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Litigators in America (2022 – 2025)
- Listed as a Louisiana Rising Star in Criminal Defense: White Collar (2017 – 2019)
- Recognized as a "Top Lawyer" in Criminal Defense White Collar Law by *New Orleans Magazine* (2017, 2019, 2021 – 2025)

- Board Member – The American Diabetes Association Mississippi/Louisiana Chapter (2016 – 2017)
- Recipient – Department of Justice, Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys: Superior Performance by a Litigative Team Award (2015)
- Five-time Recipient – Metropolitan Crime Commission Excellence in Law Enforcement Award
 - City of New Orleans Corruption Investigation (2015)
 - Jefferson Parish Corruption Investigation and Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office Corruption Investigation (2014)
 - Plaquemines Parish Corruption Investigation (2013)
 - City of New Orleans Corruption Investigation (2012)
- Recipient – DHS/FEMA Certificate of Appreciation (2011)
- Recipient – SSA-OIG Anti-Fraud Award (2010)
- Recipient – Internal Revenue Service Certificate of Appreciation (2014)
- Adjunct Professor – Tulane University Law School (2010 – 2017)



Publications

- "Employers Should Prepare for Immigration Raids," republished December 5, 2024, in SHRM (November 2024)
- "Zafirov Decision: A Turning Point or Just Another Chapter in Qui Tam?" (October 2024)
- "Timing is Everything: The Court's Latest Gift to Defendants in Bribery Prosecutions (*Snyder v. United States*)" (July 2024)
- "Jumping on the Whistleblower Bandwagon: DOJ Announces Department-Wide Pilot Program to Incentivize Individual Reporting," republished April 30, 2024, in *Federal News Network* (March 2024)
- "Reining it in: Supreme Court Again Restricts Honest-Services Fraud" (May 2023)
- "Fifth Circuit Declares SEC's Quasi-Judicial Process Unconstitutional," republished in *Texas Lawyer* (May 2022)
- "DOJ Cracks Down on Alleged Wage Fixing and No Poach Agreements," republished in *Westlaw* (February 2022)
- Co-author – "Two Recent Corporate Pleas Affirm DOJ's Pledge to Crack Down on Criminal Enforcement," republished in *New Orleans CityBusiness* (January 2022)
- Co-author – "Department of Justice, States, SEC Pursue COVID-19 Enforcement Actions," *Daily Business Review* (April 2, 2020)
- Quoted – "Sources: Ex-New Orleans DEA Task Force Officer Suspected of Stealing Drugs, Money Faces Federal Charges," *The New Orleans Advocate* (July 2016)
- Co-author – "What To Do Before Government Agents Come Knocking," *Attorney at Law Magazine Metro Atlanta*, Volume 5, Number 1 (March 2016)



Speaking Engagements

- Panelist – "Direct Examinations: Getting in Critical Evidence," New Orleans Bar Association (December 2023)
- "Recent Trends in Health Care Fraud," CLE sponsored by the Louisiana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (LACDL) (December 2021)
- Speaker – "Internal Investigations: Practices and Pitfalls," E&Y CPE Event for Financial Professionals (November 2019)
- Moderator – "Enforcement and Compliance Developments in Louisiana and Beyond," 29th Annual ABA National Institute on Health Care Fraud (May 2019)
- Panelist/Speaker – "Criminal Enforcement Trends in Louisiana," Last Chance Seminar, Louisiana Criminal Defense Lawyers Association (December 2018)

- Panelist/Speaker – "Official Acts, Quid Pro Quo, and Honest Services: Legal Developments and New Strategies in Corruption Cases," ABA conference Southeastern White Collar Crime Institute (September 2016)



Education

- Tulane University Law School, J.D., 2004, cum laude
- Virginia Wesleyan College, B.A., 2001, magna cum laude



Admissions

- Louisiana
- Texas
- U.S. District Court, Northern, Eastern, and Southern Districts of Texas
- U.S. District Court, Eastern, Middle, and Western Districts of Louisiana
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit