



Michael T. Dawkins

Of Counsel

Jackson | 601.351.2428 | mdawkins@bakerdonelson.com

Michael T. Dawkins concentrates his practice in the areas of white collar criminal defense, environmental law, conducting internal investigations and defending investigations of all types conducted by state and federal government departments and agencies.

Mr. Dawkins' white collar practice involves his defense of individuals and companies investigated or charged with various white collar crimes, including financial and tax fraud, economic espionage, theft of trade secrets, crimes against the environment and charges of mail fraud and wire fraud. With regard to investigations and lawsuits under the civil Federal False Claims Act he has decades of experience defending individuals and companies, including government contractors.

Due in large part to his experience in accounting, auditing and the performance of internal investigations, Mr. Dawkins conducts systems reviews for the purpose of monitoring compliance with requirements of federal and state statutes and regulations, as well as compliance with best practices procedures implemented for the purpose of systematizing and maintaining that compliance. He advises clients on changes to practices, policies and procedures in order to improve compliance and avoid violations of statute and regulation. He regularly works as an Independent Review Organization conducting Arrangements Systems and Transactions Reviews for health care providers following the imposition of a Corporate Integrity Agreement.

Mr. Dawkins' environmental practice includes conducting confidential compliance reviews and audits, encompassing all areas of state and federal environmental law and regulation. He advises clients in situations where environmental violations have been self-detected in these reviews and audits and advises clients on questions of self-reporting and the employment of best practices to reduce the future risk of noncompliance. He advises with regard to Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments and other aspects of due diligence in the sale and acquisition of property and the development of contaminated property, including Brownfields.

He also advises clients with regard to compliance with the Endangered Species Act, particularly in the context of due diligence in land development and in defending enforcement actions arising from the disturbance of protected habitats.

He has nearly 30 years of experience in the defense of clients in administrative, civil and criminal investigations and enforcement matters involving environmental permitting, regulatory and statutory noncompliance. He frequently works with consulting engineers, toxicologists and other experts, including experts in the fields of the fate and transport of hazardous and toxic substances into the environment.

In the area of internal investigations, most recently, he has conducted internal investigations of allegations of financial statement misstatements and insurance fraud. He often works on investigations with forensic accountants and financial statement auditors in the testing and investigation of fraud. He has several years of experience defending criminal federal income tax and state sales tax investigations and prosecutions.

Mr. Dawkins worked in public accounting for four years, principally in the areas of auditing and tax, and he has maintained his license as a certified public accountant since 1984. He has represented CPAs in professional liability cases, disciplinary proceedings and in civil and criminal matters involving allegations of violations of tax law.



Representative Matters

- Obtained a Brownfield designation from the Mississippi Commission on Environmental Quality on behalf of a regional biofuel company.
- Defended an engineer in an environmental crimes investigation involving wastewater violations of the Clean Water Act, resulting in no indictment.
- Defended a CPA sued for marketing of tax shelters.
- Represented a recycler in an environmental crimes investigation, resulting in no indictment.
- Defended a NASA contractor accused of submitting false claims for reimbursement of labor charges incurred under cost reimbursement contract, three-month trial in federal district court, resulting in a verdict for less than three percent of amount sought by the government.
- Represented a hospital management company in a lawsuit filed by the hospital, establishing the negligence of the independent CPA's performance of annual audits and failure to comply with generally accepted auditing standards.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of a government contractor, who was engaged to expand a commuter railway servicing a major New England municipality, accused of making false claims in an environmental impact statement.
- Represented the defendant in a federal perjury investigation, resulting in no indictment.
- Defended taxpayers and CPAs investigated or prosecuted for tax evasion.
- Conducted a timecard internal investigation for an Eastern seaboard civil engineering company/government contractor.
- Obtained summary judgment dismissing the action against a property manager in False Claims Act litigation regarding HUD rental assistance payments.
- Represented CPAs facing licensure inquiries by state boards of accountancy.
- Advised a major medical center in matters related to its yearly environmental compliance audits, including improving compliance with state and federal law and self-reporting violations to the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Successfully defended an individual indicted in federal court on charges of bid rigging contracts with a state government. Obtained a voluntary dismissal of the defendant.
- Assisted a lumber company with environmental matters related to the potential sale of a tract of land. Reviewed environmental site assessments and advised on the reporting requirements for site contamination.
- Represented the chief financial officer of a school district in a federal price-fixing investigation into vendors who submitted bids for school equipment.



Professional Honors & Activities

- **AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated** by Martindale-Hubbell
- Listed in *Best Lawyers in America®* for Environmental Law since 2008; Litigation - Environmental since 2011; White-Collar Criminal Defense since 2015; Qui Tam Law (2024, 2025)
- Named the Best Lawyers® 2025 Qui Tam Law "Lawyer of the Year" in Jackson-MS
- Named the Best Lawyers® 2024 Environmental Litigation "Lawyer of the Year" in Jackson-MS
- Named the Best Lawyers® 2021 Environmental Litigation "Lawyer of the Year" in Jackson-MS
- Named the Best Lawyers® 2019 Environmental Litigation "Lawyer of the Year" in Jackson-MS
- Listed in *Chambers USA* as a leading Environment lawyer in Mississippi since 2010
- Listed in *Mid-South Super Lawyers* (2007 – 2008, 2010 – 2018)
- Selected by *American Lawyer Media* as a "2013 Top Rated Lawyer in White Collar – Criminal Defense"
- Member – ABA Section of Litigation, Criminal Litigation Committee; Chair, Ethics Subcommittee (2012 – 2013)

- Mississippi Bar Association (Member – Task Force on the Attorney-Client Privilege, 2006 – 2007; Chair – Environmental Seminar Committee of Section on Natural Resources, Energy & Environmental Law (SONREEL), 1997 – 1998; Chair – SONREEL Environmental Crimes Subcommittee, 1996 – 1997)
- Fellow – American Bar Foundation
- Named the 2013 Volunteer of the Year by Mission First Legal Aid Office
- Certified Public Accountant since 1984*
- North Jackson Rotary Club – Secretary (2011 – 2012); Treasurer (2010 – 2011); Director of Club Administration (2007 – 2008); Programs Committee (2006 – 2007); Sergeant at Arms (2005 – 2006)
- Jackson Public Schools – Partners in Education (Adopt-a-School program; mentoring, Book Buddy program); Advisory Board Member (2000 – 2008); President of Advisory Board (2006 – 2007)
- Mentor – Baker Elementary School (1990 – 2000)



Publications

- "The U.S. Supreme Court Narrows Federal Agency Regulation of Wetlands" (June 2023)
- "Environmental Prosecutions Increased in Pandemic Year" (February 2021)
- "DOJ's Offshore Compliance Initiative Will Reach Outside Switzerland," *American Bar Association Section of Litigation Criminal Litigation News* (June 2015)
- "Conviction Stands Despite Defendant Not Having Sent Fraudulent Emails," *American Bar Association Section of Litigation Criminal Litigation News* (June 2015)
- "Pro Bono Lawyers Obtain Reversal of Sabotage Act Conviction of Catholic Nun," *American Bar Association Section of Litigation Criminal Litigation News* (June 2015)
- "Former Hughes, Hubbard & Reed Partner Enters Plea of Guilty to Tax Fraud," *American Bar Association Section of Litigation Criminal Litigation News* (June 2015)
- "Ethical Issues for Corporate Counsel in an Internal Investigation," *American Bar Association Section of Litigation Criminal Litigation News* (December 2014)
- "'Privacy Comes at a Cost': Cellphones and the Fourth Amendment," *American Bar Association Section of Litigation Criminal Litigation News* (June 2014)
- "Federal Grand Jury in SDNY Investigates GM Ignition-Switch Defect," *American Bar Association Section of Litigation Criminal Litigation News* (June 2014)
- "Attorney Sentenced to 15 Years for Marketing of Abusive Tax Shelters," *American Bar Association Section of Litigation Criminal Litigation News* (June 2014)
- "Supreme Court Denies Cert Supported by the NACDL," *American Bar Association Section of Litigation Criminal Litigation News* (May 2012)
- "South Carolina Businessman Charged With Illegally Exporting to Iran," *American Bar Association Section of Litigation Criminal Litigation News* (May 2012)
- Co-author – "When Criminal Defense Fees Come From Insurers ...," *Law360* (September 2011)
- Co-author – "The Pitfalls of Multiple Representations," *Law360* (August 2011)
- "The Necessity for Environmental Auditing of Hospitals," *Bloomberg Law Reports* (February 2010)



Speaking Engagements

- "Environmental Audits," Annual Meeting of the MHA Society for Healthcare Engineers & Facility Managers (March 2024)
- "CRIMINAL LAW: What do you do if Your Client is Served with a Search Warrant?," Mississippi Legal Professionals Association's Last Chance CLE (July 2023)
- "Best Practices for Conducting Internal Investigations," ACFE Houston Fraud Conference (October 2022)

- "Self-Auditing Hospital Environmental Compliance: Knowing What is Wrong is Better than Hoping for the Best," Annual Meeting of the MHA Society for Healthcare Engineers & Facility Managers (October 2022)
- "Corrected COVID-Era Vision for Certified Fraud Examiners: How Enforcement Under the Biden Administration is Changing Forensic Accounting and Investigations," Central Mississippi Chapter of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (October 2021)
- "Achieving 2020 Vision for Certified Fraud Examiners: What to Expect During the New Year in Government Enforcement, Forensic Accounting and Internal Investigations," Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, Central Mississippi Chapter (March 2020)
- "Eggshell Tax Audits," Mississippi Tax Institute (Mississippi Society of CPAs) (December 2019)
- "Environmental Audits for Hospitals," webinar (December 2019)
- "Health Care Fraud: Recent Government Enforcement Initiatives and Investigation Issues," presentation for the Mississippi Health Care Working Group (January 2019)
- "What's New in the New Year – Government Enforcement Initiatives and Investigation Issues," Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, Central Mississippi Chapter (January 2019)



Webinars

- Best Practices for Conducting Internal Investigations (June 2022)
- Keeping a Civil Tax Audit Civil: Avoiding a Criminal Investigation (November 2021)



Education

- University of Alabama, J.D., 1988
- University of Mississippi, Bachelor of Accountancy, 1981
- Meridian Junior College, A.A., 1979



Admissions

- Mississippi, 1988
- Alabama, 1990
- Tennessee, 2008

*Baker Donelson is not a CPA firm