



Chelsea N. Hayes

Shareholder

Johnson City (Tri-Cities) | 423.975.7663 | cnhayes@bakerdonelson.com

Chelsea Hayes is a litigation shareholder in Baker Donelson's Johnson City office.

Ms. Hayes regularly represents corporations and employers focusing on the areas of employment law, business litigation, financial services litigation, health care litigation, and insurance defense at both the court and administrative levels in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Maryland. She has an office in both Johnson City, Tennessee and Baltimore, Maryland to better serve clients.

Ms. Hayes counsels employers regarding compliance with state and federal laws as well as contractual covenants and non-disclosure agreements involving employer-employee relations. She regularly defends employers in administrative, state, and federal courts in wide-ranging employment litigation, including, but not limited to, actions brought under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical leave Act, state law, and restrictive covenant agreements. Ms. Hayes also works extensively in the area of complex workers' compensation, both defending claims and advising employers on injuries, compliance with state-specific laws, and the interaction between injuries and leave laws. She successfully manages a multi-state workers' compensation practice for a national client.

Ms. Hayes also concentrates her practice on business and financial services litigation. She has successfully defended businesses in claims alleging breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, misrepresentation, and fraud as well as evictions and foreclosures. Ms. Hayes' personal injury experience includes defending against claims involving negligence, wrongful death, and premises liability. Ms. Hayes uses her knowledge of contractual matters to regularly defend creditors and advise on timely and practical solutions on defaulted loans and business strategy.

Representative Matters

- Obtained dismissal of all claims involving the Federal and Tennessee False Claims Acts against a large corporate client filed by a *qui tam* plaintiff with favorable appellate ruling.
- Obtained order granting preliminary injunction in favor of employer against previous employee subject to restrictive covenants.
- Obtained a renewed temporary restraining order against previous employees enjoining them from breaking restrictive covenants.
- Assisted a global human rights organization in conducting an internal investigation regarding employees' complaints of a hostile work environment. Advised the organization regarding appropriate actions based on the results of the investigation.

Professional Honors & Activities

- Listed in *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America* for Commercial Litigation (2022 – 2025)
- Selected to Mid-South Rising Stars, Employment Litigation: Defense (2022 – 2024)
- Recipient – Baker Donelson's Johnson City Office Pro Bono Award (2022)
- Named a member of *Tri Cities' Business Journals* 2021 Class of 40 Under 40
- Member – Fayette County Bar Association, 2015 – present
- Member – Kentucky Bar Association, 2015 – present
- Member – University of Kentucky Law Alumni, 2015 – present
- Board of Directors – Southern Appalachian Ronald McDonald House Charities, Inc. (2019—)



Publications

- "Employers Should Stop and Take Heed of Misclassifying Workers in 2024 under New DOL Rule," republished by HR.com (January 2024)
- "New OSHA Submission Requirements for Injury and Illness Records for High-Hazard Employers," GM's *Legal Brief* newsletter, Volume 49 (September 2023)
- "Are You a 'High-Hazard' Employer? New OSHA Submission Requirements for Injury and Illness Records," republished in *Construction Executive* (August 2023)
- "More Coverage, More Problems: No Private Remedies for Kentuckians Hurt by HIPAA Violations after Adoption of the Affordable Care Act," *Kentucky Law Journal Online* (August 2015)



Speaking Engagements

- "Part II - New Rules About Your Rules: A Deep Dive into the New NLRB Standard for Handbook and Workplace Policies," Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc. Seminar (January 2025)
- "Listening, Implementing, and Documenting," Client Manager Training (October 2024)
- "Part I - New Rules About Your Rules: A Deep Dive into the New NLRB Standard for Handbook and Workplace Policies," Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc. (August 2024)
- "More Than a Hint or Sniff: Navigating Reasonable Suspicion When Business and the Law Collide," Kingsport Law Seminar (April 2024)
- "Reasonable Suspicion: Drug and Alcohol Testing in the Workplace," Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc. Employment Law Training (Summer 2023)
- "Speak No More? Developments Restricting Employers' Use of Restrictive Covenants," Kingsport Law Seminar (April 2023)
- "Virginia Employment Law Update," Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc. Mid-Year Employment Law Training (August 2022)
- "Discussion on Diversity and Inclusion," Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc. Mid-Year Employment Law Training (August 2022)
- "Virginia Employment Law Update," Southwest Virginia SHRM (July 2022)
- "Calling in Sick: When Employees Don't Show up for Work," Breakfast Briefing (September 2019)
- "Tennessee Workers' Compensation: 2018 and Beyond," 23rd Annual Urgent Issues for Modern Employers Labor & Employment Law Seminar (March 2019)
- "The Top 10 Workers' Compensation Concerns All Employers Should Know," annual seminar (April 2018)
- "Top 10 Workers' Compensation Concerns Employers Should be Aware Of," annual seminar (March 2017)
- "Weed in the Workplace: If An Employee Smokes, Do You Fire?," annual seminar (March 2017)



Webinars

- Helping Businesses Navigate the DOL's 2024 Independent Contractor Rule (February 2024)



Education

- University of Kentucky College of Law, J.D., 2015, cum laude
 - *Kentucky Law Journal* – Online Content Committee Editor
- Duke University, B.A., 2012



Admissions

- Tennessee, 2017

- Kentucky, 2015
- Maryland, 2020
- Virginia, 2022
- United States Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Virginia, 2024
- United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, 2023
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, 2017
- United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, 2015
- United States District Court for the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky, 2015