

Ben Adams Honored as CEO of the Year by Memphis Business Quarterly

In naming him CEO of the Year in the "200-1,000 Employees" category, Memphis Business Quarterly notes that Ben Adams has been a natural fit as Chairman and CEO of one of the largest law firms in the country. The son of successful lawyer and co-founder of one of Baker Donelson's predecessor firms, Heiskell Donelson, Mr. Adams says his father's passion definitely affected his decision to enter the field. "I grew up in this world," he says. "I joined the firm [what was then Heiskell Donelson] in 1981, and we probably had around 25 lawyers when I joined. That firm has been the driving firm of our growth that became Baker Donelson which is now 640 lawyers spread all over the Southeast and Washington, D.C."

Mr. Adams has led the firm during years of unusual growth, going from 270 attorneys and public policy advisors in 2003 to more than 640 today and into new or significantly expanded markets in Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Houston, and Orlando. And he has achieved this while helping the firm retain its strong culture even during the recession, as evidenced by Baker Donelson's inclusion in Fortune's "100 Best Companies to Work For" the last four years. "Not only is it very fulfilling that your people like working here so much, they're so proud of it, but also winning that award is great from an internal perspective, and from a recruiting perspective, and probably most importantly, once you're on it, you don't want to not be on it," says Mr. Adams. "So, you're very intentional about how you keep improving your culture so that you can stay there. And I like the pressure that it puts on us to pay attention."