PRESS RELEASE

Baker Donelson Recognizes 2025 Pro Bono Attorneys of the Year

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Baker Donelson has announced its annual Pro Bono Attorneys of the Year Awards, recognizing twelve attorneys throughout the Firm for their pro bono work.

Baker Donelson's Firmwide Pro Bono Award is presented each year to an attorney who has made a significant pro bono commitment either in their respective community or globally. Gerald E. Bradner, a Memphis-based associate and former United States Army officer, was named the Firmwide 2025 Baker Donelson Pro Bono Attorney of the Year for his contributions across a range of family law and guardianship matters. His first pro bono case at Baker Donelson, referred through the Memphis Veterans Administration Legal Clinic, involved defending a homeless veteran struggling with behavioral health challenges and a contentious custody battle. Since then, he has continued to take on pro bono cases, including one referred by an attorney at the Tennessee Innocence Project, advocating for vulnerable clients facing domestic violence, addiction recovery, and financial inequities. Most recently, Mr. Bradner represented a young woman whose guardian had inappropriately depleted her trust funds and refused to terminate the guardianship voluntarily. Mr. Bradner secured the termination of that guardianship, ensuring his client received the remaining assets belonging to her.

Jonathan Cole, who chairs Baker Donelson's pro bono program, said, "Gerald's advocacy highlights the critical role attorneys play in ensuring access to justice. His work across family law, guardianship, and veterans' matters reflects the breadth of challenges faced by underserved communities and the meaningful difference skilled representation can make. Gerald and all of our honorees exemplify the Firm's long-standing commitment to pro bono service and its impact in advancing fairness under the law."

Baker Donelson also recognized attorneys in many of its individual offices for their pro bono efforts.

- Audrone V. "Audra" Durham, Atlanta Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Ms. Durham, alongside colleagues Rodney Dillard and Nedom Haley, successfully represented Trees Atlanta, a non-profit dedicated to protecting Atlanta's forests and expanding the city's tree canopy, in a property tax dispute with Fulton County. Ms. Durham guided the non-profit through tax-exempt filings, hearings, and meetings with county officials, and with Mr. Dillard's assistance, secured a favorable ruling in Fulton County Superior Court. She was also part of the Baker Donelson team assisting with the National Homelessness Law Center's (NHLC) State Index on Youth Homelessness updates, which resulted in significant state-level legislative changes regarding the treatment of homeless youth.

- Caroline Dean, Birmingham Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Ms. Dean played a pivotal role in defending local residents in a complex property ownership dispute. The clients, a couple who moved into a house after entering into a lease-to-own agreement, had significantly invested in renovations and home improvements. They were later sued by an individual who claimed that he was the rightful property owner after gaining ownership through a tax deed. With the couple facing ejection, Ms. Dean researched Alabama's complex and rarely litigated tax deed laws, performing party background analyses and drafting key motions during a weeks-long briefing process. Her contributions helped the litigation team secure dismissal of the ejectment claim, protecting the clients' right to remain in their

home.

- David Blue, Charlotte Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Mr. Blue was honored for his substantial pro bono service over the past year to clients in the Charlotte area. He assisted a childcare provider by drafting an indemnity and release of liability agreement and represented Goodwill in resolving a customer dispute over return policies, achieving a pre-answer settlement. Mr. Blue also volunteered with the Legal Aid of North Carolina's "Lawyer on the Line" clinic, where he prepared an advice letter for a tenant facing asbestos concerns in her apartment. Additionally, he represented a tenant in an appeal of an eviction in North Carolina State District Court, filing counterclaims for breach of implied warranty of habitability and unfair trade practices due to unaddressed air conditioning issues. Following trial, the court dismissed the landlord's summary ejectment claim and ruled that the tenant owed no back rent.

- Melanie C. Walker, Chattanooga Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Over the past year, Ms. Walker has demonstrated a strong commitment to pro bono service, offering critical support for those navigating the immigration system. She has represented battered spouses seeking permanent residency under the Violence Against Women Act, assisted a minor in reopening a wrongly denied residency application, and supported three children of a U.S. citizen mother to complete their immigration processes through the consular post in Serbia. Ms. Walker also collaborated with La Paz Chattanooga, associates in the Chattanooga office, and other local attorneys to secure Special Immigrant Juvenile status for children in Hamilton County. She has supported many local students through this process, which can provide a path to permanent residency.

- Brianna Riguera, Fort Lauderdale Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Ms. Riguera was recognized for her pro bono efforts assisting children in the child welfare system. Working with Citrus Family Care Network, Inc., the lead agency for child welfare services in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, Ms. Riguera handled estate matters for a child who passed away while in the agency's care. She also collaborated with colleagues Justin Montoto and Naomi Migoya on a research project with the Cuban American Bar Association. Their memorandum examined the asylum process for Cuban immigrants and assessed whether the system has been exploited by regime leaders to the detriment of genuine asylum seekers. Through these efforts, Ms. Riguera has provided critical support to organizations working to protect vulnerable children and advance fair immigration practices.

- Michael T. Dawkins, Jackson Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Mr. Dawkins has made a significant impact with his pro bono efforts through both litigation and community service. He is currently conducting ongoing representation of a client in a criminal sentencing appeal, where a Mississippi man was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole as a minor. Following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Miller v. Alabama* stipulating that a minor cannot be sentenced to life without parole in the absence of an evidentiary hearing, Mr. Dawkins advocated for his client's right to parole eligibility, and the appeal is still ongoing. Beyond his appellate work, Mr. Dawkins regularly volunteers in local pro bono initiatives and leads the Jackson office's Arise2Read program aimed at assisting second graders in achieving reading proficiency.

- Ronald S. Range Jr., Johnson City Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Mr. Range has played a key role in a shareholder dispute involving widows of former attorneys seeking to preserve their rights in a local company. Mr. Range has been integral to two pending actions: one seeking declaratory relief over the company's board composition and leadership, and another seeking injunctive relief and damages against a former executive for forming a competing business. Mr. Range's contributions have earned strong praise from clients and co-counsel alike, with one co-counsel noting that even though the matter was pro bono, Mr. Range treated it "like a paying case," delivering extraordinary

results. His work not only advanced his clients' interests but also built trust that extended to billable collaborations.

- Nathan Kibler, Knoxville Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Mr. Kibler was instrumental in launching Knoxville's first Homeless Persons Court, a diversionary program that connects individuals experiencing homelessness with service providers rather than subjecting them to traditional criminal penalties for minor infractions. Building on Baker Donelson's success with similar courts in Nashville and New Orleans, Mr. Kibler worked with the KBA Access to Justice Subcommittee and collaborated for more than two years with local stakeholders, including the judiciary, prosecutors, and service providers, to bring the initiative to fruition. The court now serves approximately 20 individuals each month. In addition, Mr. Kibler continues to support vulnerable clients through immigration matters, including guardianship proceedings for an undocumented minor from El Salvador, clinics preparing powers of attorney for families facing potential deportation, and assisting persons who have obtained relief under the Convention Against Torture.

- Jonathan C. Hancock, Memphis Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Mr. Hancock dedicates substantial pro bono service to multiple charitable organizations. He has long supported Hope House, advising on employment, lease, and building matters. He also began advising Arts Memphis, which distributes National Endowment for the Arts funding and plays a central role in supporting the city's cultural life. His work included resolving contract and employment issues and assisting a local artist in negotiating disputes over a public art project, ultimately securing compensation. Much of Mr. Hancock's pro bono work remains focused on Friends for Life d/b/a Friends for All. He has represented the organization in land use disputes, lawsuits against service providers, and compliance-related housing matters, and has also supported the non-profit's governance, employment, and strategic planning needs.

- Claire Cowart Haltom, Nashville Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Ms. Haltom's pro bono contributions in Nashville have been highlighted by her leadership with Alive Hospice, the only non-profit hospice provider in Middle Tennessee. Ms. Haltom joined the board of directors in 2023 during a pivotal point in the organization's history and helped guide the organization through a critical decision to remain independent and non-profit. She played a central role in revising Alive's Charter and Bylaws, rebuilding trust with community stakeholders, and recruiting new board members, including leaders in the health care industry. In recognition of her efforts, Ms. Haltom rose to vice chair and now serves as chair of the board of directors. In her first six months as chair, she has overseen a CEO transition and led the successful recruitment of a new executive leader.

- Kenneth M. Klemm, New Orleans Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Mr. Klemm dedicated significant pro bono time to the Scouting America Council, which serves nine parishes in southeastern Louisiana. As Vice President for Properties, Mr. Klemm oversees a 1,400-acre Scout camp and working forest in Hancock County, Mississippi, as well as the Council's office in Metairie. In this role, he reviews contracts and advises on projects ranging from construction and conservation easements to carbon offset opportunities and land management strategies. He also provides guidance on the National Camp Accreditation Program, ensuring compliance with safety and program standards designed to protect youth and visitors. Additionally, Mr. Klemm has supported the Council in navigating complex issues tied to Scouting America's national bankruptcy proceedings.

Through its commitment to pro bono representation, Baker Donelson provides legal services to groups and individuals whose resources are limited. The Firm's efforts include work on a wide range of matters, such as advocating for the homeless and organizations that serve the homeless, providing corporate legal services to non-profit organizations, and collaborating with our clients to address particular community needs. Baker Donelson has been instrumental in endeavors such as expanding the Homeless Experience Legal Protection

(H.E.L.P.) program across the Southeast; creating courts dedicated to handling minor legal matters common among the homeless; assisting persons of limited means with obtaining driver's licenses, an essential need when reintegrating into society; and spearheading and organizing volunteer lawyer programs across Baker Donelson's footprint.

Baker Donelson has helped reshape the legal industry by being one of the first law firms in the Southeast to create a Pro Bono Committee and designate a Pro Bono Shareholder. Additionally, Baker Donelson designates Pro Bono Committee office chairs in most of its more than 20 offices. These chairs are best suited to address local needs while coordinating with the Firm's Pro Bono Shareholder for global pro bono initiatives. This structure ensures Baker Donelson is well-suited to further its goal of addressing broad spectrum needs across the Firm's markets and beyond.