

PRESS RELEASE

Baker Donelson Names Russell W. Gray and Jennifer K. McCarty Co-Chairs of Labor & Employment Group

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The national law firm Baker Donelson has named Russell W. "Rusty" Gray and Jennifer K. "Jenni" McCarty co-chairs of the Firm's Labor & Employment Group.

While serving in these leadership roles, Mr. Gray and Ms. McCarty will maintain their legal practices.

"Rusty and Jenni have long been exceptional leaders within our Labor & Employment Group and across the Firm," said Timothy M. Lupinacci, Baker Donelson chair and chief executive officer. "Rusty's litigation experience and strategic insight, combined with Jenni's practical judgment and knowledge of employment law, position them well to help guide the continued growth and development of the practice."

Mr. Gray is a shareholder based in the Firm's Chattanooga office. He previously served as managing shareholder of the office, as well as on Baker Donelson's board of directors. Mr. Gray has more than 25 years of experience representing local, regional, and national clients in labor and employment and commercial litigation matters in a variety of industries, including food and hospitality, manufacturing, and health care.

He has litigated matters before courts and government agencies in approximately 20 states and regularly defends clients in employment litigation involving class and collective actions, wage and hour disputes, discrimination claims, unfair labor practice allegations, and matters involving non-competition, non-solicitation, and confidentiality agreements. He recently defended a major client in two high-profile, multidefendant antitrust class actions alleging wage and compensation fixing affecting thousands of employees and independent contractors.

Mr. Gray earned his J.D., summa cum laude, from American University Washington College of Law and has been recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Employment Law – Management, Labor Law – Management, and Litigation – Labor and Employment since 2011. He was named the *Best Lawyers*® 2026 Litigation – Labor and Employment "Lawyer of the Year" in Chattanooga and previously received the same distinction for Employment Law – Management (2022) and Labor Law – Management (2019). Mr. Gray has also been selected to Mid-South Super Lawyers since 2011.

Ms. McCarty is a shareholder in Baker Donelson's Charleston office and previously served as vice chair of the Labor & Employment Group. She brings more than 20 years of experience advising employers across a wide range of industries on complex workplace issues and defending them in high-stakes employment disputes.

Ms. McCarty advises employers in the health care, retail, manufacturing, technology, hospitality, and financial services sectors on complex, high-stakes employment matters. She focuses her practice on emerging workplace issues at the intersection of law and technology, including the use of artificial intelligence in hiring, performance management, and workplace decision-making. She counsels employers on employee mobility issues, including the protection of trade secrets and the enforcement of non-competition, non-solicitation, and confidentiality agreements, and she has significant experience defending clients facing claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, and wage and hour violations, such as collective and class actions brought under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Ms. McCarty served as council for the South Carolina Bar, Employment and Labor Law Section, from 2017 – 2024 and as chair-elect (2021 – 2022) and chair (2022 – 2023). She is listed in *Chambers USA* as a leading Labor & Employment lawyer in South Carolina and was named to *South Carolina Lawyers Weekly's* Power List for Employment Law (2023 – 2026) and recognized in *Columbia Business Monthly's* Legal Elite in Labor (2023). Ms. McCarty earned her J.D. from Vanderbilt University School of Law, where she served as a managing editor of the *Vanderbilt Law Review*.