

TOP YOUNG LAWYERS

2026

Young Lawyers Division

The Top Young Lawyer Award is given to Louisiana's young lawyers who have made exceptional contributions to the legal profession.

Lauren Brink Adams • New Orleans

Lauren Brink Adams is a shareholder at Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she advises and represents a number of national and international companies in complex matters. Her practice includes high exposure litigation at the district court and appellate levels involving environmental contamination, subsidence, coastal erosion, and other alleged property damages, including legacy lawsuits, Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) lawsuits, Ground Water Act claims, and citizen suits; torts related to property, including trespass, nuisance, premise liability, and abuse of right claims; and contract disputes, including adjudication of clients' rights and obligations under operating agreements, assignments/PSAs, leases, and personal and predial servitudes. Based on her successful representation of clients in bet-the-company litigation, Lauren has been listed in *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch in America* for Commercial Litigation (2021–2026), Environmental Law and Energy Law (2022–2026), and Litigation-Environmental (2026), along with recognition as *New Orleans CityBusiness* 2025 Leadership in Law Honoree.



Lauren Brink Adams

positive and *Daubert* motions, as well as pre- and post-trial briefs in both state and federal court, and regularly manages e-discovery for cases, including the development of tailored ESI protocols.

Karly Kyzar Dorr • Lafayette

Karly Kyzar Dorr is an associate attorney at NeunerPate law firm in Lafayette, Louisiana. Karly completed her undergraduate studies at Louisiana State University with degrees in Political Science, Criminology, and History and graduated Order of the Coif from Louisiana State University's Paul M. Hebert Law Center in May of 2022. Her primary practice areas include commercial and business transactions; corporate advice; mergers & acquisitions; successions and probate; estate planning; and commercial litigation.



Karly Kyzar Dorr

Chelsea Gomez Caswell • Baton Rouge

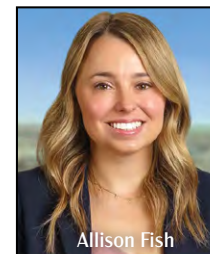
Chelsea is a Partner in the Baton Rouge office of Kean Miller and her practice includes helping employers navigate complex labor and employment laws, challenging workforce issues, day-to-day disputes, and employment litigation and regulatory proceedings. She represents employers in a variety of labor and employment matters in state and federal courts and before the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights, and other state and federal agencies. Recognized for her impactful advocacy and practical counsel, Chelsea has earned professional recognition for her ability to solve complex problems and deliver results for employers across industries.



Chelsea Caswell

Allison Fish • New Orleans

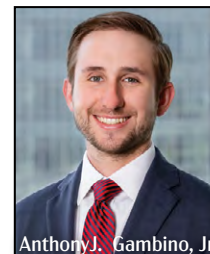
Allison Fish is a shareholder at The Kullman Firm where she represents employers nationwide in a range of labor and employment law matters. She vigorously defends clients against allegations of workplace misconduct in courts and governmental agencies across the country and is also well versed in traditional labor law, regularly representing clients in union grievance arbitrations and collective bargaining agreement negotiations. Before entering private practice, Allison served as a law clerk to Judge Tu M. Pham of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee.



Allison Fish

Anthony J. Gambino, Jr. • Baton Rouge

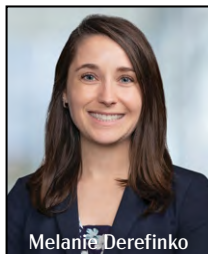
Anthony J. Gambino, Jr. is a partner at Phelps, where he practices commercial litigation with an emphasis on resolving construction disputes for owners, engineers and contractors. He earned his JD from LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center in 2016 and is licensed to practice law in Louisiana and Colorado. He has held various leadership roles with the Baton Rouge Bar Association, including as a director at large, Bench Bar Committee co-chair and Law Day Committee co-chair, and he has coached the Baton Rouge Magnet High School mock trial team and presented CLEs on construction law. He is a diversity fellow with the American Bar Association Forum on Construction Law.



Anthony J. Gambino, Jr.

Melanie Derefinko • New Orleans

Melanie Derefinko is a member of the Commercial Litigation practice group in the New Orleans office of Liskow & Lewis, APLC. Her practice focuses on complex business disputes, including intellectual property disputes, construction litigation, contract disputes between businesses, labor and employment matters, and collection actions. She has extensive experience drafting dis-



Melanie Derefinko

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Ellen D. George • New Orleans

Ellen D. (Ellie) George is an associate in Liskow's New Orleans office and advocates for employers in a wide range of labor, employment, and commercial matters. Her practice focuses on guiding employers through contentious human resources issues; all phases of litigation, particularly in discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and noncompetes cases; and EEOC and NLRB proceedings. A New Orleans native, George graduated first in her class from Tulane Law School and clerked for the Honorable Kurt D. Engelhardt on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit and the Honorable Barry W. Ashe for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.



Ellen D. George

Philip J. Giorlando • New Orleans

Philip J. Giorlando is a partner in the New Orleans office of Breazeale Sachse and a member of the firm's Labor and Employment Law section. He advises and represents employers across industries on compliance, discrimination, and wage-and-hour matters, including litigation and agency investigations before the Department of Labor and EEOC. Giorlando is a graduate of LSU and the Paul M. Hebert Law Center and serves as a contributing editor to *The Developing Labor Law* published by the American Bar Association.



Philip J. Giorlando

Parker Marie Harrell • Lafayette

Parker Marie Harrell is an associate at Davidson, Meaux, Sonnier, McElligott, Fontenot, Gideon & Edwards, LLP, in Lafayette, Louisiana and has a litigation defense practice focused on premises liability, products liability, general insurance defense, and is actively engaged in representation of athletes helping them navigate endorsement deals. She graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's in Marketing and a master's in Sports Management while playing four years of Division I volleyball for the Jaguars. Harrell then went on to earn her JD from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, where she received certificates in Business, Entrepreneurship, & Technology as well as in Taxation. Parker is an active member of the Lafayette legal community, participating in the Lafayette Bar Association and its Young Lawyers Section, as well as the Acadiana Inns of Court.



Parker M. Harrell

Michael S. Harrison, Jr. • New Orleans

Michael S. Harrison, Jr. currently serves as Senior Counsel for Kuchler Polk Weiner LLC, where his practice focuses on asbestos, commercial, and employment litigation. He is the current President of the Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society and serves as a hearing officer for the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board. He is also an active member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club. Michael is a proud resident of New Orleans East, where he lives with his wife and daughter.



Michael S. Harrison, Jr.

Nicholas J. Hite • Dallas, TX

Following a decade in private practice as a statewide leader in LGBTQ+ representation and serving thousands of clients as an advocate for adult and child survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, Nicholas J. Hite joined Lambda Legal, the nation's oldest and largest legal non-profit working to protect and expand the rights of LGBTQ+ people and everyone living with HIV. At Lambda Legal, his nationwide impact litigation work has allowed him to represent parents, students, military service members, medical professionals and everyday Americans trying to live full lives free from governmental violations of their rights.



Nicholas J. Hite

Hayley M. Landry • New Orleans

Hayley M. Landry is a member of Liskow's Energy Litigation practice group in the New Orleans office. She is committed to being involved in professional organizations, such as the New Orleans Bar Association Young Lawyers Section and the Women's Energy Network, while also dedicating time to various pro bono opportunities and giving back to the community. In her free time, Hayley's adventures include strolling bookstore aisles, enjoying coffee, trying new recipes, reading, and spending time with her pets.



Hayley M. Landry

John Fitzgerald Lee • Metairie

John Fitzgerald Lee has served as a law clerk under three judges in the 34th JDC, is an associate at Mollere, Flanagan & Landry and maintains a small private practice. He is the Treasurer for the Jefferson Parish Bar Association, the Region 4 coordinator for the Richard N. Ware IV State High School Mock Trial Competition and serves as the chair of the one of the longest running legal study groups in Louisiana. John lives in Metairie with his wife Allie and their three dogs, a greyhound named Huey Z. Long, a miniature dachshund named Clark and a shepherd mix named Sable.



John Fitzgerald Lee

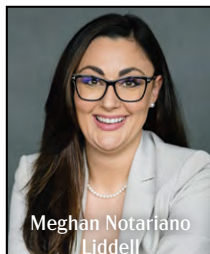
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Meghan Notariano Liddell • Ponchatoula

Meghan Notariano Liddell, a Hammond native, is an attorney at Parker Layrisson Injury Attorneys whose number one focus is helping people injured in wrecks recover the compensation they deserve. She was named as a member of the multi-million dollar advocate forum for being central in obtaining compensation for a single injured client of 2 million dollars or more and has been selected to *Super Lawyers* as a Rising Star for the last four consecutive years. Liddell's favorite thing to do in her free time is spend time with her husband Eric and their son, Beau, at their home in Livingston.



Meghan Notariano Liddell

Hailey E. Manint • Baton Rouge

Hailey E. Manint is an associate attorney at Legacy Estate and Elder Law of Louisiana in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Hailey practices in the areas of estate planning, estate administration, elder law, trust law and special needs planning. Hailey graduated from Louisiana State University's Paul M. Hebert Law Center in the top 5% of her class and received her license to practice law in October 2021.



Hailey E. Manint

Justin J. Marocco • Baton Rouge

Since earning his JD and comparative law degrees from LSU's Paul M. Hebert Law Center at the top of his class, Justin J. Marocco has built a distinguished career as a litigation attorney focused on complex commercial litigation across the energy, maritime, construction, and environmental sectors. His knowledge in carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) and energy infrastructure regulation, combined with his litigation success and legislative work, has placed him in pivotal roles in numerous high-profile legal matters across the region. Justin is a partner in Jones Walker LLP's Litigation Practice Group, a member of the firms Hiring and Recruiting committee, co-leader of the firm's commercial disputes team, and a co-leader of the clean and energy transition team.



Justin Marocco

Aspen Steib Murphy • LaPlace

Aspen Steib Murphy received her JD with Social Justice Certificate from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law where she graduated cum laude. She was also honored to be an Ignatian Law Scholar and be inducted into the Order of the Barristers. She is currently a

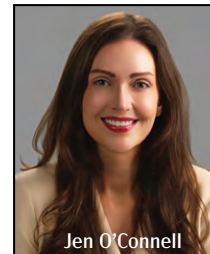


Aspen Steib Murphy

board member for the Jefferson Parish Bar Association's Young Lawyer Division.

Jen O'Connell • Baton Rouge

Jen O'Connell is an equity partner of Taylor Porter and licensed in Louisiana and Texas. She is an appointed member of the Louisiana Law Institute's Committee for Torts and Insurance and the chair of LABI's Emerging Leaders Council. She is an experienced trial lawyer and business attorney.



Jen O'Connell

Adam C. Patrick • Baton Rouge

Adam C. Patrick serves as the Deputy Commissioner of Policy, Innovation, and Research at the LA Department of Insurance and an adjunct professor at the Southern University Law Center, where he primarily teaches legal ethics. During his tenure at the LDI and SULC, Patrick played a critical role in bringing forth reforms to tackle the high cost of insurance in Louisiana, while also preparing the next generation of attorneys to lead successful and ethical practices. In his spare time, Patrick has served as a councilmember of the Young Lawyers Section of the Baton Rouge Bar Association and is currently a member of the Young Professionals Committee at the City Club of Baton Rouge.



Adam C. Patrick

Clarke I. Perkins • New Orleans

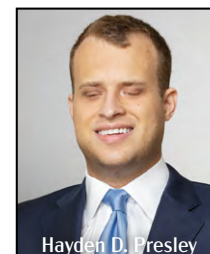
Clarke I. Perkins is a New Orleans-based commercial litigator at Gordon Arata, where she represents businesses in employment, contractual, and commercial disputes across Louisiana. A Tulane Law graduate and community advocate, she is deeply committed to expanding access to opportunity through mentorship, civic engagement, and service within the legal profession. Perkins is passionate about building institutions, supporting the next generation of leaders, and strengthening the communities that shaped her.



Clarke I. Perkins

Hayden D. Presley • Lafayette

Hayden D. Presley is a dedicated litigator who combines thorough legal research and articulate advocacy with clear, responsive client communication. Before returning home to Louisiana, he practiced commercial litigation and federal law in Houston, representing major real estate clients and corporations, and now focuses on workers' compensation, corporate defense, and general civil litigation. Known for his personable and honest approach, Presley is committed to guiding clients through complex litigation with clarity and care.



Hayden D. Presley

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Meagan J. Raines • Lake Charles

Meagan J. Raines is an associate at Baggett McCall LLC in Lake Charles, where her practice focuses on personal injury litigation including motor-vehicle accidents, premises liability, workers' compensation and property damage matters. She earned her JD and DCL from LSU's Paul M. Hebert Law Center in 2019.

She remains active in her community serving on the Board of Directors for the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana and as the Community Director for the Junior League of Lake Charles. When she is not helping clients, Raines enjoys attending LSU football games, and exploring new restaurants with her husband and friends.



Meagan J. Raines

Kelicia Davis Raya • Covington

Kelicia Davis Raya practices in Kean Miller's energy and environmental litigation group, defending major energy companies in high-stakes legacy litigation, land loss disputes, pipeline matters, and environmental contamination cases in state and federal courts. She is known for her precision, organization, and ability to distill complex discovery into clear, strategic talking points that shape effective case strategy. Raya supports all phases of complex litigation and brings a valuable perspective from her prior service as a federal judicial law clerk and as a diversity summer associate with ExxonMobil.



Kelicia Davis Raya

Margo R. Richard • New Orleans

Margo R. Richard is an associate in Proskauer's Labor & Employment Law Department and a member of the Employment Litigation & Counseling Group. She defends nationwide employers in single-plaintiff discrimination, harassment, and retaliation matters in arbitration and state court, including serving on trial teams for healthcare and technology clients in California state court. Margo is an active member of Proskauer's Black Lawyer Affinity Group (BLAG), which is open to all, contributing to the firm's community engagement and inclusion initiatives through her work on the Black History Month Committee. Richard attended Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, where she graduated cum laude with a Law, Technology, and Entrepreneurship Certificate.



Margo R. Richard

Taylor M. Robinson • Lafayette

Taylor M. Robinson is the managing attorney of the Housing Unit at Acadiana Legal Service Corporation, where she represents tenants in eviction defense and subsidized housing matters. She is an active leader in the Louisiana State Bar Association and Lafayette Bar Association Young Lawyers Divisions. Robinson is committed to access to justice, mentorship, and public-interest advocacy.



Taylor M. Robinson

Tim Robinson • Baton Rouge

Tim Robinson is a senior associate in the corporate transactions practice group at Kean Miller in Baton Rouge, where his practice focuses on mergers and acquisitions, commercial transactions, and general corporate governance. He serves as outside counsel to privately held and publicly traded companies across a wide range of industries, representing clients in connection with acquisitions, capital financing transactions, corporate governance matters, and other strategic business transactions. Outside of his practice, Robinson enjoys spending time with his wife and three sons, coaching little league, and referring living room wrestling matches between his five- and three-year old.



Tim Robinson

Lauren Rucinski • Baton Rouge

Lauren Rucinski is a partner at Kean Miller in Baton Rouge and earned her JD / D.C.L., magna cum laude, from the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. She provides strategic counsel in environmental regulatory law, helping clients navigate complex compliance, permitting, and transactional matters. She is a registered patent attorney with BS degrees in Aerospace and Ocean Engineering from Virginia Tech, bringing a combined engineering and legal perspective to technical and regulatory challenges.



Lauren Rucinski

Kansas Guidry Schneider • New Orleans

Kansas Guidry Schneider is an associate at Flanagan Partners LLP concentrating in civil appeals and commercial litigation. She had the privilege of clerking for the Hon. Jacques L. Wiener, Jr. on the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals and the Hon. Barry W. Ashe on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana. She graduated summa cum laude from Tulane Law School in 2020 where she served as Editor in Chief of the Tulane Law Review.



Kansas Guidry Schneider

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Emma Kingsdorf Schwab • New Orleans

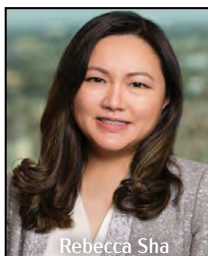
Emma Kingsdorf Schwab is an attorney at Irpino Avin & Hawkins in New Orleans, where her practice focuses on mass torts, class actions, and products liability. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Southern Mississippi and her JD from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. Before entering private practice, she served as a law clerk to Judge Sandra Cabrina Jenkins of the Louisiana 4th Circuit Court of Appeal. She has been recognized as a Louisiana Super Lawyers Rising Star from 2022 to 2026 and currently serves as Vice Chair of the Pro Bono/Philanthropy Committee of the New Orleans Federal Bar Association Younger Lawyers Division.



Emma Kingsdorf Schwab

Rebecca Sha • New Orleans

Rebecca Sha is a partner at Phelps Dunbar specializing in labor and employment law as well as educational litigation for schools and universities. She holds degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and Tulane Law School, representing a diverse range of clients in matters spanning workplace discrimination to Title IX. Beyond her legal practice, she holds several leadership roles, including serving as President of the Louisiana Asian Pacific American Bar Association and contributing to various civic boards.



Rebecca Sha

Karina Shareen • New Orleans

Karina Shareen is an associate at Deutsch Kerrigan who represents insurance companies and their insureds in complex matters involving auto and trucking accidents, premises liability, professional liability, toxic torts, and employment and education law. She is known for her practical, detail-oriented approach and her commitment to providing responsive, strategic counsel throughout all stages of litigation. Shareen earned her JD from LSU's Paul M. Hebert Law Center and is admitted to practice in Louisiana and multiple federal courts.



Karina Shareen

Amber Sheppard • Mandeville

Amber Sheppard, associate with Pugh Accardo LLC, serves Louisiana and Mississippi clients with her service dog Tubbs, blending compassion and advocacy through her Be Fierce and Kind® philosophy. A national speaker and recognized leader in intellectual property law and workers' compensation, she promotes inclusion and access to justice throughout the legal community.



Amber Sheppard

Russell J. Stutes III • Lake Charles

Russell J. (Russ) Stutes III is a Lake Charles attorney with Stutes & Lavergne, LLC. His practice is primarily devoted to tax, commercial, and estate litigation, but he also assists clients with successions, estate planning, general business counsel, and public sector counsel. Away from the office, Russ and his wife spend their time traveling and cheering on the Tigers with their daughter.



Russell J. Stutes III

Kimberly D. Svetlick • Lafayette

Kimberly D. Svetlick is an associate at Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith in the Lafayette office. She grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina and enjoys reading, baking, fitness and spending time with her cat, Daphne, and two dogs, Sadie and Wrigley, outside of work.



Kimberly D. Svetlick

Christine Wells • Baton Rouge

Christine Wells is an associate attorney with Tanner & Justice, serving as in-house counsel for Bluefire Insurance Services, where her practice focuses primarily on motor vehicle accident litigation including Special Investigative Unit matters. Known for her diligence, analytical approach, and steady professionalism, she plays a key role in evaluating and resolving complex and fraud-related claims. Wells lives in Livingston, Louisiana with her husband, John Blanchard, their two dogs, Feeny and Max, and their cat, Wednesday.



Christine Wells

William E. Wildman III • New Orleans

William E. Wildman III is an Associate in Baker Donelson's New Orleans office. He counsels clients across the health care, telecommunications, governmental, and energy sectors, advising companies and individuals on high-stakes issues involving fraud, regulatory compliance, and high-exposure commercial disputes. Wildman is a 2023 graduate of Loyola University New Orleans College of Law.



William E. Wildman III

Ava Maria Wolf • New Orleans

Ava Maria Wolf is an associate at Mouldoux, Bland, Legrand & Brackett, LLC. Her area of practice focuses on the defense of employers and insurance carriers for claims arising under the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act, Defense Base Act, and War Hazards Compensation Act. Wolf enjoys giving back to her community through speaking at her alma mater, Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, and participating in multiple charitable events hosted by the New Orleans Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section.



Ava Maria Wolf