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the **LAW** issue

We've taken the highly respected Chambers and Partners list of South Carolina's Leading Lawyers for Business and pulled out the highest ranking three Greenville attorneys for a close-up. Get to know Kathy McKinney, Wallace Lightsey and Larry Estridge.

[*features*]

33 The List

See all the South Carolina firms who made the Chambers and Partners list. On the local front, attorneys from the ten Greenville firms on the list are highlighted for their legal prowess.

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GREENVILLE'S LEADING LAWYERS

BY KRISTI KEENAN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY NILL SILVER PHOTOGRAPHY

For twenty years, the Chambers and Partners organization has published the leading worldwide directories of the legal profession based on the extensive and objective research of their 100 full time researchers.

According to Chambers, the criteria for selection are set by what clients value most – technical legal ability, professional conduct, client service, commercial astuteness, diligence and commitment. Researchers speak to “a vast range of lawyers and their clients (i.e. commercial users of legal services). Greater weighting is given to the views of the clients, and any biased viewpoints tend to cancel each other out. All interviews are conducted purely for research purposes and are entirely confidential and un-attributed.”

We were so impressed with the Chambers reputation that we opted to use their South Carolina’s Leading Lawyers for Business listing for this issue. Larry Estridge, one of the three original founders of Greenville’s Womble Carlyle office, says Chambers does an excellent job researching their lists. He’s not biased because he’s high on the list – he’s just experienced firsthand the lengths the Chambers researchers go to in order to get the best

information. “I get calls every year from Chambers asking what is going on in South Carolina law,” he says. “They will keep calling until they get to speak with you.” Estridge says Chambers does a thorough job, and he admires the fact that their list is not always settling in on the same people year after year. “They move people out of the listings when they are no longer really practicing and that is a plus,” he says. “If someone uses the list as a resource to find counsel, they expect that person to be available to them when they call – they don’t want to be handed off to a junior associate. An inaccurate list is misleading to the public.”

Chambers ranks law firms and individual lawyers in bands from 1-6, with 1 being the best. We recently interviewed the lawyers on the following three pages – Wallace Lightsey, Kathy McKinney and Larry Estridge. They earned Greenville’s individual Band 1 rankings in their respective specialties. See what we learned about the background of these impressive players.

The complete South Carolina’s Leading Lawyers for Business ranking of firms and individual lawyers, with highlights on those lawyers from Greenville offices, follows on page 33.

BAND I

Litigation: General Commercial

**Wallace Lightsey, Member
WYCHE BURGESS
FREEMAN & PARHAM, P.A.**

You wouldn't initially shake hands with Wallace Lightsey, take in his gentle smile and assume he's a bulldog in court, but his reputation clearly says otherwise. "When I first started practice, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, so I tried both litigation and corporate work," he says. "The first time I was on my feet in a courtroom, I was hooked on litigation and have gone that direction since then. I love making arguments, and I hate to admit it, but I love demolishing the other side." With more than 50 jury trials under his belt, it's safe to say litigation is his forté.

After an undergraduate degree from Duke and a law degree from Harvard, Lightsey was a law clerk for Judge John Minor Wisdom of the United States Court of Appeals. "He was one of the great appellate judges of the last century," says Lightsey. "The next year, I was a law clerk for Chief Justice Warren E. Burger at the United States Supreme Court in Washington, D.C."

Lightsey was then recruited to Greenville by the Wyche Law Firm. "I had never seen any firm anywhere in the country that had such a high caliber group of lawyers and such a sophisticated practice as this firm," says Lightsey.

His tenure with Wyche has been filled with litigation cases concerning everything from intellectual property to First Amendment issues, and with clients such as The New York Times Company, The Associated Press and Forbes.



SOUTH CAROLINA'S LEADING LAWYERS FOR BUSINESS

The following firms and individual attorneys are recognized in the Chambers and Partners list of South Carolina's Leading Lawyers for Business. All text is courtesy of Chambers and Partners and is the result of their research.

SC FIRMS: CORPORATE M&A

BAND 1

Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd PA
McNair Law Firm PA
Nelson Mullins Riley &
Scarborough LLP
Nexsen Pruet, LLC
Wyche, Burgess, Freeman &
Parham, PA

BAND 2

Buist Moore Smythe McGee P.A.
Smith Moore Leatherwood LLP
Womble Carlyle Sandridge &
Rice, PLLC

SC FIRMS: GENERAL COMMERCIAL LITIGATION

BAND 1

Nelson Mullins Riley &
Scarborough LLP
Nexsen Pruet, LLC
Wyche, Burgess, Freeman &
Parham, PA

BAND 2

Buist Moore Smythe McGee P.A.
Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd PA
McNair Law Firm PA
Sowell Gray Stepp & Laffitte LLC

BAND 3

Gallivan, White & Boyd, PA
Pratt-Thomas Walker PA
Smith Moore Leatherwood LLP
Young, Clement & Rivers LLP



AMSTUTZ

**WYCHE,
BURGESS,
FREEMAN &
PARHAM, PA**
Corporate M&A

In its established base in upstate Greenville, Wyche's reputation as corporate counsel is unbeaten. Peers comment that "all its attorneys are well trained and produce first-class work," while loyal clients from

around the country seek the team's expertise. **Eric Amstutz** (Band 3) has been advising a number of distressed companies on the disposal of assets, while the team as a whole is acting for a variety of public and privately held companies. **Cary Hall** (Band 2) is an expert on corporate transactions and "knows everything there is to know about tax."



HALL



LIGHTSEY

**Litigation: General
Commercial**

Heavily involved in a variety of cases, from IP to securities litigation, this team offers a client-focused and highly personalized service during high-profile disputes. The team is made up of a number of well-known litigators whose reputation extends beyond South



PARR

Carolina. Foremost among these is **Wallace Lightsey** (Band 1), who is a phenomenal litigator of general commercial and IP matters. According to commentators, "he has an incredibly effective demeanor with clients, and a tremendous way in the courtroom - persistent but non-confrontational." "Outstanding in every way," **Henry Parr** (Band 2) takes a careful



TESSIER

and diligent approach to complex business litigation on behalf of plaintiffs and defendants, frequently in the chemical and healthcare industries. The team also benefits from the knowledge and enthusiasm of **Troy Tessier**, (Band 3) who has recently been involved in a major arbitration for a textile client. **Carl**



MULLER

Muller (Band 3) has earned a reputation as a sterling litigator, particularly in medical malpractice cases. **GM**

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