



WOMEN

and the Law

Our annual listing of the top women attorneys in the metro.



Yawanna McDonald



The Talk: Women & The Law

Women attorneys, convened by Campbell Guin's Yawanna McDonald, talk about the job, the culture and the impact of being a woman in court.

The Participants

Yawanna McDonald is a partner at Campbell Guin in the firm's Business Torts, Corporate Litigation, and Trial practice. McDonald's practice focuses on the areas of commercial and business litigation, trust and estate litigation, and other general litigation matters representing both plaintiffs and defendants. In her trust and estate litigation practice, McDonald represents small to multi-million dollar

estates. Her practice also includes probate and estate administration services. McDonald's prior technical background and experiences allow her to quickly grasp her clients' objectives and uniquely approach each client matter. Before attending law school, McDonald worked as an environmental consultant where she focused on aiding her clients in achieving environmental compliance.

Wakisha E. Hazzard, a native of Sa-

vannah, Georgia, is the founder and owner of the Hazzard Law Firm, LLC. She graduated from Georgia Southern University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science and a double minor in English and Fashion Merchandising. She pursued her legal dreams and graduated from Miles Law School in 2009. After working at several law firms, Hazzard went on to lay the foundation for her own firm. She has a boutique law firm in the down-



Wakisha Hazzard



Kimberly Bell

Photos by Beau Gustafson

town Birmingham area where she litigates serious crimes, handles personal injury cases, corporate law matters, and business formation. Hazzard has appeared on Law Call and gives free advice to assist others with legal issues.

Outside of the courtroom, Hazzard is a member of the Junior League of Birmingham and volunteers at the YWCA. Hazzard has a passion for helping children and promoting literacy. Servant leadership sums up her role as an attorney.

Kimberly Bell has a diverse practice at Balch & Bingham, LLP that includes litigation, intellectual property work, contract review, and regulatory compliance. With regard to her litigation practice, Bell has experience with product liability and casualty litigation, health care litigation, real estate and title litigation, and insurance coverage issues. While Bell mostly works on civil litigation matters, she has a background in computer science and computer engineering and enjoys diving into intellectual property issues. Bell graduated

from Vanderbilt University Law School and previously worked as a consultant for IBM. She also attended Spelman College and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

A Birmingham native, **Christen Butler** of Dominick, Feld Hyde, PC is a 2014 graduate of Cumberland School of Law and a 2010 graduate of Mississippi State University. While attending Mississippi State University, she was a Presidential Scholarship recipient and a member of the Alpha Beta Chi Honor Society.

The ABA reports that nationwide, 85% of lawyers are Caucasian, 5% African-American and 5% Hispanic; 64% are male.

In Alabama, out of 18,000+ attorneys, 91.6% are Caucasian and 6.9% African-American; 67.7% are male.

Her practice areas include adoptions, business litigation, custody, divorce, family law and mediation litigation, guardianships and conservatorships, mediation, prenuptial and postnuptial agreements, will contest and estate/trust litigation.

Liz Young is a founding partner of Dummier Young LLC with offices in Birmingham and Gardendale where her firm specializes in criminal defense while also serving individuals in need of estate planning and probate litigation.

Young has a solid foundation in the legal field having started her career in law enforcement over a decade ago. Criminal defense is one of her main practice areas because of her unique insight into the arrest and investigation process. Young is experienced in a broad spectrum of felony and misdemeanor criminal cases in state and municipal courts. She was awarded the Top 10 Under 40 by the National Academy of Criminal Defense Attorneys in 2015.



Christen Butler

The Setup

Yawanna McDonald: “I invited these ladies to talk about these topics because I wanted to get people who I respect that are in the thick of this journey. Some of us have kids, some of us don’t have kids. Some of us are solo practitioners, and some of us are in big firms. We do defense work, plaintiff work, and criminal work. I thought it would be a good blend and a good representation of women here in Birmingham that are doing well and representing clients very well in whatever practice area it may be. Whether in a large firm or small one, there are a lot of women who can go toe-to-toe with anybody.”

Ratio of Women Attorneys

Christen Butler: “In each practice area you see different ratios of women. I’m a litigator at Dominick Feld Hyde and we do estate litigation and corporate litigation, but we also have some family-owned businesses as clients. And that sometimes leads to domestic litigation. When I do domestic work, I see a lot more female attorneys.”

Wakisha Hazzard: “I may be the only one in private practice here. I do a good bit of criminal work. Although women attorneys practice in the field of criminal law, it is still saturated with a lot more men. But I wanted to break into that sector because a lot of women are not litigating, going into the courtroom and having trials. And I wanted to do that.”

The Advantage of Women

Liz Young: “She is totally right. The criminal sector has historically been dominated by men. And even now we have that core group of 50 to 55 year old and older men who make up most of the criminal defense bar. Frankly for us sometimes, I feel like it’s an advantage because you’re coming in as a fresh face; not the normal man that the prosecutor is used to dealing with all the time. We have a different approach with people. We start off a little more non-confrontational, and then if we need to go there, we go there. I definitely think it has challenges, but I love the advantages of being female.”

Wakisha Hazzard: “I think women are more compassionate in the practice of law with great listening skills. We bring great listening skills, multitasking and attention to detail.”

Christen Butler: “And I am going to say we bring glitter. You have to have grit and you have to have gumption. But when you throw that glitter in there, that’s an extra. You can’t quite put a name to it but it changes the culture of a firm. I am the only African-American in my firm, but we have a lot of female shareholders. That racial or gender difference bring a uniqueness to any room that we step into, something that wouldn’t be there without us.”

Kimberly Bell: “We bring different perspectives and life experiences. Our values are different in the way we balance our time. We get it done so that we can do things outside of work. I have two kids and a husband, which is a lot to balance, but that perspective can help.”

Wakisha Hazzard: “On a lighter note, we bring a great sense of fashion.”

Christen Butler: “I once heard a woman judge say, ‘When you show up in court, you need to make sure I don’t see your toes, your tatas, or your thighs.’ I want you to take notice of the argument I’m making, not the way I’m dressed.”

Collaboration and Camaraderie

Kimberly Bell: “I am very involved in the women lawyers section of the bar and I feel like it is very collaborative. Being around this great group of women lawyers is wonderful and we truly support one another. We also work together to do

positive things in the community together. It’s great to be around women who are going through similar experiences and to support each other.”

Liz Young: “I think there is definitely a camaraderie among female lawyers. I remember what it was like when women lawyers came up to me to help. They would say, ‘I’ll show you exactly what to do.’ I’m seeing that more and more and I feel like we’re really coming together and pulling each other through the profession.”

Mentoring

Christen Butler: “My mentors, Denise Pomeroy and Sam Kok, have each practiced for 30 years. If it wasn’t for them, I wouldn’t have grown as fast as I have. There are certain conversations I’ve had with them that I wouldn’t have been comfortable having with a man. For example, if I have a kid going on a field trip I can check in with other women attorneys and ask them what they think. And they say, ‘Go be with your baby.’ It helps to have a woman who’s been practicing a while, who will look at me and say it’s okay. It’s okay to be a mom. It’s okay to be a wife. If your health is at risk, it’s okay to take time for your health.”

Yawanna McDonald: “I’m the only female in our Birmingham office, so I work closely with Andy Campbell, our managing partner. I’ll tell him if I have to be at a ballgame or if my child is sick, and he’s very supportive. I look to Andy for his experience and advice, but I’ve also been able to reach out to women outside the firm to give me some advice.”

Wakisha Hazzard: “I am from Savannah, Georgia, and when I moved here I wanted to purposefully find a mentor. So I called Yawanna, and then a couple of judges took me under their wings. They were very influential and very helpful. So I have different mentors and they include both men and women because everyone brings a different perspective.”

Yawanna McDonald: “I think having so many women at the courthouse has taken us to another level. With the women judges, there’s a certain comfort level when you walk in the room and see a woman there. I’ve been in a courtroom where everybody in there is a male, and

then there's not even any one of color. It matters when you can spot someone and say I've got something in common with somebody in this room. I think having so many women judges in Jefferson County has really helped us."

The Future of Law

Kimberly Bell: "The future of the law is about women, but it's also about the millennials or the younger generation. We are not as hesitant to speak up anymore about things like taking maternity leave. These days women are speaking up and that is what is changing the practice of law. Businesses and clients are pushing law firms to do better, to have more diverse attorneys and to make sure that law firms are respecting the things that businesses care about."

"Change is inevitable. It is more about balancing schedules. As long as you have a computer and the Internet, you can serve your clients. The new age is all about balancing things. I believe women are staying in the practice of law more these days because it is easier to work wherever you are, instead of only in the office, which helps keep our lives balanced."

Yawanna McDonald: "Sometimes you feel like you have to decide between personal life and practicing law. That causes many women to leave the practice of law

because they feel like you can't do both. Thankfully, I have more days when I do feel successful at both than not. But there is a struggle when you're trying to be a lawyer, wife, and mother and meet everyone's demands. That's why it's important to have a support system in place to help bridge those gaps. And equally important to this dynamic is having a work environment that allows you room to be the wife, mother, and attorney. Great leaders can understand and support those different roles."

Liz Young: "Change does not have to be controversial or forced. Women and the things that have happened over the past couple of decades have just been a natural progression. It is just women getting into practice, working hard, setting new standards, and setting new norms. It has occurred naturally. We're not picketing at the courthouse, asking for equal rights, we're going inside and earning them. While we're bringing up issues of women in the workplace, we're not doing it in an overbearing way or controversial way."

Kimberly Bell: "It's The New Normal."

Balance and Technology

Yawanna McDonald: "You can be at home on your laptop and cooking dinner,



Liz Young

or at the soccer field answering emails. That's what we do because we're trying to make it all work out. The new normal plus technology allows us to do this."

Christen Butler: "I think we have to acknowledge all the women who practiced law before us, and did it extremely well. They earned this for us. They didn't have the same technology, and they had to do whatever was required of them to make it from point A to point B. We still have that generation around and it's very important to acknowledge that."

Yawanna McDonald: "They have faced much more adversity than we have ever faced and it wasn't as well hidden. It was more in your face."

Kimberly Bell: "That's why I participate in the Women's Section of the bar because there are so many women still practicing who have been practicing for 30 plus years. It allows me the opportunity to see these women regularly. You just get these little nuggets of wisdom and a little bit of encouragement. I'm trying to be around those people who have figured it out."

"I am concerned about both the low number of women attorneys and the low number of racially diverse attorneys in the legal profession, as seen through the ABA and Alabama State Bar reports. These numbers show more change to the legal profession is necessary to bring more minority and women attorneys into the practice and to include them so they will want to stay in the practice." ●



Roundtable participants from left: Liz Young, Wakisha Hazzard, Yawanna McDonald, Kimberly Bell and Christen Butler.

B-Metro 2018

TOP Women attorneys

Amy Adams

Balch & Bingham

Janell Ahnert

Bressler Amery & Ross, PC

Rosemary Alexander

Alexander Shunnarah
Personal Injury Attorneys

Leslie Garrett Allen

Balch & Bingham

Caroline Harrington Allen

Halbrooks & Allen LLC

Anastasia Allmon

Farris, Riley & Pitt

Labella Alvis

Christian & Small, LLP

Christina Andreen

Southern Environmental Law
Center

Virginia Applebaum

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LLP

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Dumas & O'Neal, LLP

Lisa Karen Atkins

Ogletree Deakins, PC

Annemarie Carney Axon

Wallace, Jordan, Ratliff, and
Brandt

Tammy Baker

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Nancy Ball

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Stephanie Balzli

Alexander Shunnarah Personal
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Carlisle & Carlisle, PC

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Rumberger Kirk & Caldwell

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OUR COMMITMENT IS FOCUSED ON CASES INVOLVING CATASTROPHIC PERSONAL INJURY
AND WRONGFUL DEATH. IN OUR QUEST FOR TRUTH, WE WILL LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED.



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Congratulations to the Rose Law Firm with three winners in this year's best women lawyers list. The Rose Law firm is an all female family law firm that has had multiple winners on the list each year for several years in a row. The winners from the firm this year are, Jennifer G. Rose, Katherine W. Haynes, and Lindsay C. Ronilo.

The firm is also pleased to announce the addition of a fourth attorney to their team, Sandra Koslin Remington. Mrs. Remington is a Birmingham native, a graduate of Cumberland school of law, and the daughter of a prominent local oral surgeon. After law school, she initially moved to West Palm Beach, Florida. In Florida, she spent years honing her craft by working on complex family law cases with custody and multimillion dollar estates at stake under the tutelage of one of the area's most well-known and respected family law specialists. She and her husband had a child in 2017 which prompted their move back to Birmingham so that she could practice law closer to her family. The firm is thrilled to have acquired her talents as she is an experienced and valuable addition to their team.

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JUDITH E. DOLAN AND LESLIE M. KLASING

Waldrep Stewart & Kendrick congratulates Leslie M. Klasing and Judith E. Dolan on being recognized as two of Birmingham's Top Women Attorneys! Ms. Klasing represents a wide variety of public entities including various municipalities, school boards, universities and civic center authorities and is significantly experienced in real estate law, employment law and complex contract drafting. Ms. Dolan is an experienced litigator, with expertise in insurance defense, employment, trucking and auto matters. Ms. Dolan is a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America, an invitation-only trial lawyer honorary society.



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JENNIFER K. WALES

Beddow, Erben & Bowen, PA proudly congratulates Jennifer K. Wales for being selected as one of *B-Metro's* "Top Women Attorneys". In addition to this great honor, Jennifer was made a partner and shareholder in 2017 and is the first female partner in our firm's more than one hundred year history.

Jennifer has an LL.M. in international law, which she acquired from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. Although our firm is one of general practice, her main areas of practice focus on family law issues including: pre-nuptial agreements, divorce, child custody; as well as estate planning and probate matters. Senior Partner, Frederick A. Erben, has been in practice for more than fifty years, with a focus on family law, including divorce and child custody; civil matters such as personal injury; and criminal defense. Though we are located in Jefferson County, we routinely handle cases in the surrounding counties, and throughout the state.

Our firm is committed to guiding our clients through the difficult times in their lives through preparation and fierce advocacy.



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Back Row: Holly Harkins,
Tia Kennedy, Stephanie Balzli,
Alyssa Daniels, Leia Leonard,
Heidi DiLorenzo, Victoria Charles



“The women lawyers of Alexander Shunnarah Personal Injury Attorneys passionately and diligently serve our clients. Their combined efforts have tried over 80 jury trials and recovered over \$50 million in verdicts and settlements. In addition to their tireless efforts on behalf of our clients, in 2016 our women attorneys formed the Alexander Shunnarah Women’s Initiative to provide support and fellowship not only to each other, but to other women in our community. Throughout each year the Alexander Shunnarah Women’s Initiative hosts networking functions and engages in community service projects which further strengthen the firm’s ties to both the legal community and the citizens of Alabama.” –*Alexander Shunnarah, President & CEO*

Alexander Shunnarah Personal Injury Attorneys, P.C. is a premier personal injury law firm that provides outstanding legal advice and excellent representation for their clients. With 85 attorneys and a presence in five states, the firm consistently recovers substantial settlements in lawsuits involving personal injury, auto accidents, truck accidents, motorcycle accidents, wrongful death, social security disability, pharmaceutical litigation, drug recalls, medical devices and mass torts throughout the region.



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Farris, Riley & Pitt LLP's, Jessica Zorn, Anastasia Allmon and Meredith Maitrejean represent injured clients collectively across Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia. They specialize in both negotiation and litigation, earning their clients fair and just settlements but also diligently arguing for them in both federal and state courts. All three associates channel their skills into their community as well, participating in organizations such as the Rotaract Club, Junior League of Birmingham, and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Farris, Riley & Pitt LLP is proud to congratulate Ms. Zorn, Ms. Allmon and Ms. Maitrejean on being recognized as 2018 Top Women Attorneys.

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A trial attorney, with over 25 years experience, Elizabeth Shaw specializes in Plaintiff's Personal Injury Litigation. A graduate of The University of Alabama School of Law, Elizabeth has been recognized as one of the top Plaintiff's attorneys by *Birmingham Magazine*. Elizabeth works closely with each client to develop a specific plan of action so that the best possible result may be achieved. Elizabeth understands what her clients have been through and how seriously an injury impacts their lives. Her approach makes the legal process for her clients as easy and effective as possible.

Elizabeth Shaw

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The Five Points Law Group recognizes that women's rights are human rights, and the firm's growing team is proud to celebrate its female members and to support all women.



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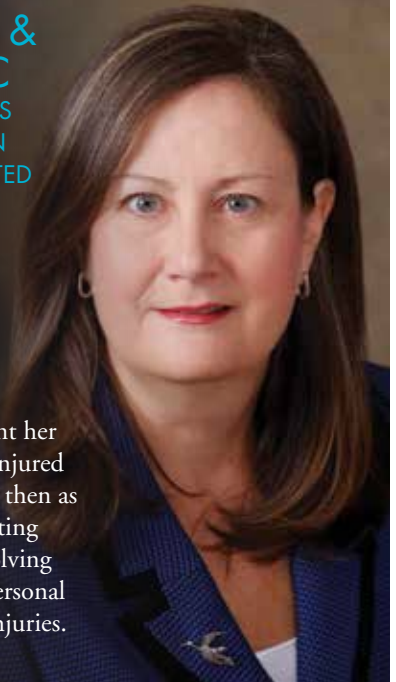
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Julia Cochrun has spent her life as an advocate for injured persons. First as a nurse, then as an attorney representing plaintiffs in cases involving medical malpractice, personal injury and workplace injuries.



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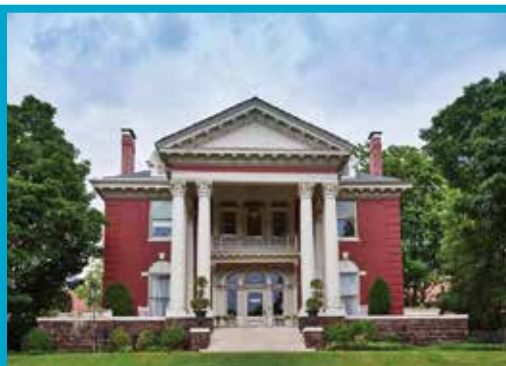
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Candi Peeples formed PEEPLES & DAVIS as a boutique-styled practice, limited to Matrimonial and Family Law, because helping families with these difficult issues is what she loves. “We could be practicing other types of law, but we do this because we love it. With us, it’s not a slogan—it’s just the truth,” Candi tells us.

A core belief within the firm is that every case has the potential to settle out of court. “We make it a priority to exhaust all reasonable options for settlement, but we are both absolutely ready for trial when that is what is best for our clients,” Candi says. “While a trial may be difficult for a client, we love to try cases—for us, it is one of the most fulfilling parts of our job; we see all the pieces of our team’s hard work come together.” Candi receives high praise from clients for her commitment to Matrimonial and Family Law and she is proud to be of service to the community. Candi says, “We feel that by keeping in mind that we are here to be of service to our clients, we can deliver our very best for them.” The AV-rated firm is proud to boast that they have been featured in distinguished publications, such as *Vanity Fair*, for their excellence in Family Law.

Candi is a graduate of The University of Georgia and the Cumberland School of Law, with honors. She is a certified domestic and appellate mediator, and is the publisher of the *Birmingham Matrimonial and Family Law Newsletter*. She has been named in the 2016 “Best of Birmingham” list by *Birmingham Magazine*, and named by the *Birmingham Business Journal* as one of the “Top 40 Under 40.” She has consistently been named a Top Lawyer by *B-Metro* magazine. She is also a fellow in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML) and a Certified Family Law Trial Advocate by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. Candi is married to Lloyd Peeples and lives in Vestavia with their two children, Lily and Chandler.



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Maridi is honored to be included in *B-Metro's* 2018 Top Women Attorneys. Maridi believes the presence of women attorneys is vital and, because of this, is very involved in the Birmingham Bar Association's Women Lawyers Section, which is dedicated to the advancement of women in the legal profession. Maridi understands the many benefits women bring to the legal profession and workplace in general. She congratulates her fellow list mates on this great honor.

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Parnell Thompson congratulates Mary Thompson for being recognized in *B-Metro's* 2018 Top Women Attorneys. Mary Thompson is the Managing Member of the Firm. Her areas of practice include municipal, public sector and governmental law; employment law; environmental law; regulatory compliance; and corporate law.

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Recognized by Super Lawyers as Rising Star 2017 and 2018, Pooja Chawla is a solo general practitioner with a passion for Family, Criminal, Civil and Probate matters. As a busy mother of two, Pooja appreciates your time and is willing to meet her clients after work, weekends and holidays. Pooja received her J.D. from Birmingham School of Law in 2009. Pooja is a native of India and has resided in Birmingham, Alabama for more than 16 years.



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Benita Jenkins is an advocate for equal rights and for representing her clients to the fullest extent of the law. She will strive to help her clients to resolve their concerns. She takes pride in helping those who wouldn't have a voice without representation. Attorney Jenkins wants her legacy to be one of compassion for all people in the pursuit to make a difference in her clients' lives. Practicing in the areas of Family Law, Criminal Defense, and Personal Injury.



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With over 33 years experience in the legal profession, Wendy has been in solo practice since 2009. She is experienced in divorce, criminal and bankruptcy.

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