

NEWS & INSIGHTS

ASHBY PATE DELIVERS KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO 240 ALABAMA JUDGES AT JUDICIAL COLLEGE ANNUAL MEETING

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Lightfoot Franklin & White LLC partner **Ashby Pate** delivered a keynote address to 240 Alabama judges at the Alabama Judicial College annual meeting on July 28 in Gulf Shores, by special invitation from Chief Justice Sarah Stewart.

Pate presented his renowned "Be the Light" speech to open the conference and inspire Alabama's newest judicial officers. He first gave the presentation, which emphasizes human connection and judicial responsibility, to the Alabama Judicial College in 2017. With roughly 70% of the current judiciary in their first term, the timing of Pate's return was particularly meaningful.

Chief Justice Stewart, who first encountered the presentation while serving as Education Chair for the Alabama Circuit Judges Association, personally requested Pate to reprise the keynote as a foundation for her first judicial conference as Chief Justice.

"In 2017, Ashby's message of connection and the responsibility to 'be the light' deeply resonated with me as a trial judge," said Stewart. "Our purpose as the judicial branch is to deliver justice to the people we serve. Ashby's 'Be the Light' presentation underscores why it's so important that we work hard to get this right."

Stewart chose Pate's presentation as the opening keynote to establish the foundation for both the conference and her tenure as Chief Justice.

"I wanted my first judge's conference as Chief Justice to feature Ashby as the first speaker," Stewart explained. "I'm grateful for his willingness to step up every time I've called."

Pate's "Be the Light" presentation focuses on the power of storytelling in the courtroom, the need for lawyers to truly understand the human issues behind the cases they handle, and the ethical duty to build genuine connections. Known for its emotional impact and unique musical introduction, the talk has made Pate a sought-after speaker at legal organizations nationwide.

Beyond his speaking engagements, Pate brings distinctive experience to his practice at Lightfoot Franklin & White LLC. He served as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Palau, where he helped design the island nation's first-ever jury trial system. Pate focuses his practice on international disputes, appellate work and commercial and medical device litigation, routinely handling the firm's most complex matters. He has delivered keynote addresses alongside U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy and presented to the American College of Trial Lawyers and Defense Research Institute annual meetings.