

## NEWS & INSIGHTS

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### COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS AFFIRMS SETTING ASIDE OF CAPITAL MURDER CONVICTION AND DEATH SENTENCE FOR ALABAMA MAN REPRESENTED BY ASHBY PATE AND RACHELLE SANCHEZ

October 7, 2020

The Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals **recently affirmed** a Jefferson Circuit Court decision in *State of Alabama v. Steven Petric*, setting aside a capital murder conviction and death sentence.

Lightfoot, Franklin & White LLC partner **R. Ashby Pate** and associate **Rachelle E. Sanchez** assisted, pro bono, with the petitioner's Rule 32 petition that led to the circuit court's original ruling. The petition argued that the defendant had been deprived of adequate legal representation. The circuit court agreed with the arguments, set aside the conviction and ordered a new trial. The State of Alabama appealed that decision, which led to the recent ruling by the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals.

Pate and Sanchez did not assist with the appeal. That was handled by Sidley Austin LLP.

Pate focuses his practice on international disputes, appellate work, and commercial and medical device litigation. He routinely takes on some of the firm's most controversial matters, including prosecuting a high-profile case that led to the suspension of a former chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court. As an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Palau, he helped design the island nation's first-ever jury trial system.

Before joining Lightfoot, Sanchez was a criminal prosecutor, where she first-chaired numerous trials and spent the majority of her time in the courtroom. Now, she applies that trial and courtroom experience to her civil practice, where she focuses on medical malpractice and product liability litigation defense.