

NEWS & INSIGHTS

FIVE LIGHTFOOT TRIAL LAWYERS NAMED TO 2026 LAWDRAGON 500 LEADING LAWYERS GUIDE

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Lawdragon has named five Lightfoot, Franklin & White LLC lawyers in the 2026 edition of its flagship **500 Leading Lawyers Guide**. They are **J. Chandler Bailey**, **Haley A. Cox**, **Brandon K. Essig**, **Rachel M. Lary** and **Jared I. Levinthal**.

Now in its 21st year, the annual Lawdragon 500 recognizes attorneys from across the country “who lead the way for their clients, their communities, their firms.” The Guide describes honorees as “brilliant, impassioned and dedicated to the law and its practice.”

“This recognition reflects what we see every day from these lawyers—unmatched dedication, sharp strategic instincts and a deep commitment to achieving the best outcomes for our clients,” said managing partner **Wes Gilchrist**. “We’re proud to see their work acknowledged on a national stage.”

Bailey has more than 25 years of experience representing product manufacturers and suppliers around the country in high-stakes cases involving catastrophic injuries and wrongful death. He has served as national and regional trial counsel for several of the largest companies in the U.S. and is a member of the Product Liability Advisory Council.

A seasoned trial lawyer, Cox tries cases and leads defense teams in a wide range of high-stakes cases, including claims of product defect, medical malpractice and serious personal injuries. She also oversees Lightfoot’s summer associate program and serves on the firm’s Executive Committee.

Essig is a partner in Lightfoot’s White-Collar Criminal Defense and Corporate Investigations practice. He represents clients in high-stakes regulatory and enforcement matters, including those involving complex financial disclosures and securities law.

Lary leads Lightfoot’s product liability team for one of the largest automotive manufacturers, defending it against claims in 10 Southeastern states and beyond. Her product liability work includes defending a Fortune 500 company in high-stakes litigation across the country. She is a member of the Product Liability Advisory Council and also serves as chair of the firm’s Associate Committee.

Levinthal is board-certified in civil trial law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, an honor obtained by an average of fewer than five attorneys per year. He represents plaintiffs and defendants in a wide variety of matters, including commercial and business disputes, product liability, professional malpractice, intellectual property, insurance coverage, bad faith, wrongful death and serious personal injury.