

NEWS & INSIGHTS

LIGHTFOOT NAMES WES GILCHRIST MANAGING PARTNER

January 14, 2026

Lightfoot, Franklin & White LLC announced the appointment of **Wes Gilchrist** as managing partner, effective Jan. 1, 2026.

Gilchrist's appointment reflects a planned leadership transition designed to support the firm's long-term strategy and client-first focus. He succeeds **Melody Eagan**, who is returning to her full-time law practice after serving as managing partner for eight years, the term limit under the firm's leadership rules.

During **her tenure**, Eagan strengthened Lightfoot's leadership and operational structures to add talented non-lawyer professionals and reinforce the firm's commitment to client service and thoughtful innovation. This included establishing a standalone chief technology officer role to direct Lightfoot's use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, and to oversee benchmarking and critical systems to **meet or exceed** industry standards.

"Melody guided the firm through significant changes and challenges," Gilchrist said. "Thanks in large part to her leadership, Lightfoot is stronger than it has ever been in its 35-year history. As managing partner, my focus is to carry that legacy forward, continue strengthening our trial-ready bench of talented lawyers and grow our client base regionally and nationally. This includes our Houston office, which provides a strong platform for serving clients in Texas and beyond. As always, our priority remains delivering excellent results in all types of litigation."

In his litigation practice, Gilchrist represents clients in complex commercial disputes, class actions and appellate matters, including before the 11th Circuit and the Alabama Supreme Court. He draws on his background in finance to advise investors, financial institutions and businesses across a range of high-stakes litigation.

Looking ahead, Lightfoot will continue to emphasize depth across its litigation teams through strategic hiring and the active development of associates. The firm's approach provides clients with consistent teams, thoughtful staffing and experienced oversight at every stage of a matter. This leadership transition ensures continuity across the firm's core litigation practices and positions Lightfoot for sustained, purposeful growth.