



Michael L. Bell
Partner
Birmingham
Phone: 205-581-0721
Fax: 205-581-0799
mbell@lightfootlaw.com

Lightfoot DNA.

In 1990, I was just another fresh-faced lawyer at a large firm eager to learn the litigation craft. Little did I (or anyone) know of the convergence of events that would start over 30 years ago that would form Lightfoot and create a Lightfoot DNA that exists today.

On Tuesday, January 9, 1990, these two message slips were on my desk.



The return of these calls would lead to an invitation to join 11 other lawyers in the creation of something called a litigation boutique in Birmingham, Alabama. A dozen young lawyers led by three southern litigation giants — Warren Lightfoot, Sam Franklin and Jere White — started a litigation boutique at the beginning of the time where Alabama later would be deemed number one on the list of “Tort Hell.”

For the next several years, the Lightfoot DNA was formed in an atmosphere of high-stakes litigation in the worst venues with the worst legal underpinnings that civil litigation defendants could possibly find themselves. This meant that young Lightfoot lawyers were honing their craft with mentoring from giants, with unmatched opportunities and breathtaking legal battles that would shape the legal landscape in Alabama, form a Lightfoot DNA that still exists, today, and lead to a demand for the Lightfoot approach well beyond Alabama.

As a result of the events starting in 1990, Lightfoot lawyers were recognized as lawyers who could morph and shape shift into the forces necessary to attack problems described by the common litigation phrase "bad cases, bad places." I've handled wrongful death cases of all types, class actions, commercial disputes, general products liability, consumer fraud cases, automotive litigation, professional negligence cases and

PRACTICE AREAS

Automotive
Catastrophic Injury
Class Actions
Commercial Litigation
Consumer Fraud & Bad Faith
Fire & Explosion
Medical Malpractice
Product Liability
Professional Liability
Consumer Claims Defense

EDUCATION

Samford University, Cumberland School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*)
Birmingham-Southern College (B.A., *cum laude*)

BAR ADMISSIONS

Alabama
Oklahoma

just about everything in between. I've had juries come back in minutes. I've had juries deadlocked for days. I've won cases and lost them (by the way, my jury win rate exceeds 90%). My biggest professional calling is to fight for Lightfoot clients in the litigation arena.

I and the other Lightfoot lawyers with whom I work have the battle scars that come from being a Lightfoot lawyer where we are ready for the litigation knowns, unknowns and the inevitable unknowables. This is what we call the Lightfoot DNA.

Lightfoot handles cases all around the country. Most of my work is in the southern United States, what we call the "y'all" states. We handle bad cases in bad places. It's in our DNA. It's what we do.

By the way, in addition to serving on Lightfoot's Executive Committee and Innovation Committee, I am a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, a Fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, received the Thomson Reuters' *Super Lawyers* designation from 2008-2025, was named the 2018 "Birmingham Lawyer of the Year" for personal injury litigation and 2025 "Birmingham Lawyer of the Year" for Product Liability Litigation – Defendants by BL Rankings' *The Best Lawyers in America*®, and received *Benchmark Litigation*'s "Local Litigation Star" award for commercial litigation, insurance, medical malpractice and product liability.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American College of Trial Lawyers, Fellow

American Bar Foundation, Fellow

International Academy of Trial Lawyers, Fellow



AME
OF T

AWARDS

Benchmark Litigation, "Local Litigation Star" — General Commercial, Insurance, Product Liability (2018-21), Medical Malpractice (2020-21)

Benchmark Litigation, "Litigation Star" (2022-24)

The Best Lawyers in America© by BL Rankings — Personal Injury Litigation, Product Liability Litigation, Professional Malpractice Law, Legal Malpractice Law, Medical Malpractice Law (2006-26)

The Best Lawyers in America© by BL Rankings, "Lawyer of the Year" for Birmingham — Personal Injury Litigation, Product Liability Litigation (2018, 2025)

Chambers USA, "Leading Lawyer" for Litigation (Alabama)

Martindale-Hubbell, AV Rating

Mid-South Super Lawyers by Thomson Reuters — Business Litigation (2008-24)