Lightfoot

Samuel H. Franklin
Partner

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Sam Franklin relies upon four decades of legal experience in high-profile cases across the country.

During his nearly 50 years of practice, Sam has handled numerous jury trials across a wide range of areas, from personal injury and wrongful death cases to complex business disputes.

Among many high-profile cases over the years, he argued for Auburn University when the state of Alabama prioritized K-12 education over higher education in the proration funding crisis. Sam has also represented R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and other manufacturers in smoking and health litigation, and he defended ExxonMobil when the state of Alabama sought to impose punitive damages in a dispute over the calculation of royalty payments.

Sam co-founded the firm in 1990, when class actions were booming and Alabama had some of the country's toughest anti-defense jurisdictions. He helped lead the firm through this era and beyond, securing numerous early wins and establishing a unique culture. Sam and his co-founders created a structure that shortened the path for younger partners to earn the same as senior lawyers**.** They also established a flexible structure to better accommodate women in the workplace — resulting in the firm's solid track record for gender inclusion.

In recognition of his role in establishing an innovative firm, *The National Law Journal* named Sam a 2017 "Elite Boutique Trailblazer." That culture and growth continues to this day, as Lightfoot has become a renowned litigation firm across the country.

Sam is a Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers (ACTL) and served as its 68th president from 2017-18. He previously served on the ACTL Board of Regents from 2009-13, as secretary from 2014-15, as treasurer from 2015-16 and as president-elect from 2016-17.

He is a former president of the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association (ADLA) and has been active in Alabama State Bar matters, including the following roles:

PRACTICE AREAS

Class Actions
Commercial Litigation
Directors' & Officers' Liability
International Disputes
NCAA Compliance & Investigations
Product Liability
Professional Liability
Securities & Shareholder Disputes

EDUCATION

Harvard Law School (LL.M.)
University of Alabama School of Law (J.D.)
Auburn University (B.S.)

BAR ADMISSIONS

Alabama

- Member of the Board of Bar Commissioners (1991-2000)
- Member of the Board of Disciplinary Appeals of the Alabama State Bar (2000-08)
- Member of the Board of the Birmingham Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program
- President of the Alabama Law Foundation
- Fellow of the American Bar Foundation
- Fellow of the Alabama Law Foundation

Sam received the Peter Perlman Service Award as a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America. In 2006, he received the Commissioners Award from the Alabama State Bar recognizing his service to the profession.

Sam is a proud native of Brewton, Alabama (population: 5,432). He is married and has two daughters, two grandsons and one granddaughter.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Alabama Defense Lawyers Association (ADLA), former member

Alabama Law Foundation, Fellow

American Bar Foundation, Fellow

American College of Trial Lawyers, Fellow

Litigation Counsel of America

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AWARDS

Benchmark Litigation, “Local Litigation Star” — Appellate, General Commercial, Product Liability, Securities (2017-21)

Benchmark Litigation, “Litigation Star” (2012-24)

Benchmark Litigation, “Top 100 Trial Lawyers in America” (2017-19)

The Best Lawyers in America© by BL Rankings — Bet-the-Company Litigation, Commercial Litigation, Antitrust Litigation, Banking and Finance Litigation, Mergers and Acquisitions Litigation, Securities Litigation, Personal Injury Litigation, Product Liability Litigation (1987-2027)

The Best Lawyers in America©, “Lawyer of the Year” for Birmingham by BL Rankings — Banking and Finance Litigation, Bet-the-Company Litigation, Mergers and Acquisitions Litigation, Product Liability Litigation (2010, 2012, 2013, 2014)

Chambers USA, “Leading Lawyer” for Litigation (Alabama)

The International Who’s Who Legal: Litigation

Mid-South Super Lawyers by Thomson Reuters, "Top Lawyer" (2024)

Mid-South Super Lawyers by Thomson Reuters — Business Litigation (2008-26)

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Presenter, “Diversity in the Legal Profession,” Birmingham Bar Future Leaders Program, (September 2018)