

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Baker Donelson Announces 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Awards Honorees

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### **Baker Donelson has recognized three of its own with the Firm's 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Awards.**

Each year, Baker Donelson honors one attorney and one staff member with the Barry W. Ford Diversity and Inclusion Award in recognition of an ongoing commitment to strengthening the atmosphere of inclusion at Baker Donelson and in his or her community.

The attorney recipient of the 2020 Barry W. Ford Diversity and Inclusion Award is Bruce A. McMullen. A shareholder in the Firm's Memphis office, [Mr. McMullen](#) was recognized for his leadership in the Firm and in the community in advancing human rights, equality and justice. In addition to relentlessly advocating for the growth and success of diversity and inclusion at Baker Donelson, Mr. McMullen brought that same advocacy and leadership to his service as the Chief Legal Officer for the City of Memphis from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2019. While simultaneously maintaining his practice at Baker Donelson, he made a significant impact through his work for the City of Memphis, which included matters involving government contracts requirements involving Minority & Women Business Enterprises (MWBE). Among his most notable achievements during that time was the oversight of the legal and logistical strategy for removal of Confederate monuments from Memphis parks in 2017. In 2020, Mr. McMullen was honored with the MLK Luminary Award, which recognizes attorneys who champion civil rights in Memphis.

The staff recipient of the 2020 Barry W. Ford Diversity and Inclusion Award is Comer Martin. Mr. Martin, who is office operations administrator in the Firm's Nashville office, serves on Baker Donelson's Diversity Committee and its LGBTQ+ affinity group, BakerPride. He has been a long-standing champion and a strong leader for diversity and inclusion at the Firm. He has been actively involved in Baker Donelson events promoting diversity and helps promote the message of diversity and inclusion on a frequent basis throughout the Firm.

In addition to the Barry W. Ford Diversity and Inclusion Awards, this year the Firm introduced the Champion Award, a new annual award recognizing a member of management who has exhibited qualities of leadership that not only support but enhance the mission of diversity and inclusion at Baker Donelson. Recipients of this award will have demonstrated their contributions through the recruitment, retention, pathway to success and leadership development for diverse lawyers.

The inaugural recipient of the Champion Award is former Baker Donelson Chairman and CEO Ben C. Adams. In his two terms over 21 years as the Firm's leader, [Mr. Adams](#) accomplished many milestones for diversity and inclusion at Baker Donelson. Among the milestones the Firm achieved under his leadership are:

- forming the Baker Donelson Diversity and Inclusion Committee in 2002;
- launching the Baker Donelson's Women's Initiative in 2005;
- achieving a 100% on the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index;
- elevating the Chair of Diversity and Inclusion and the Chair of the Women's Initiative to management-level positions at a time when very few firms had done so;
- providing same-sex benefits to all employees and the implementation of a revised bereavement policy to provide bereavement leave for same-sex couples before marriage equality became the law of the land;

- instituting a Diversity Scholarship that awards scholarships annually to minority law school students;
- being certified by the Women in Law Empowerment Forum (WILEF) as a Gold Standard Firm for four consecutive years;
- launching an enhanced parental leave policy for male and female attorneys; and
- earning inclusion on FORTUNE magazine's prestigious "100 Best Companies to Work For" list for nine consecutive years.

Baker Donelson's Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chair [Mark A. Baugh](#) said, "Each of these honorees exemplifies the essence of strengthening diversity and inclusion in our Firm and our communities. Bruce has long been an inspiration to all who have witnessed his calm, thoughtful, passionate and focused efforts in doing the right thing. Comer is a passionate advocate and supporter of the cause of justice and equality, and he continually makes a difference through his hard work and efforts. And I can think of no more worthy honoree for our inaugural Champion Award than Ben Adams. We would not be where we are today without his leadership and tireless efforts to ensure we were building not only a diverse but inclusive place to work."