

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Baker Donelson Recognizes Attorneys for Pro Bono Work

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**Baker Donelson has announced its annual Pro Bono Attorneys of the Year Awards, recognizing attorneys throughout the Firm for their pro bono work.**

Baker Donelson's Pro Bono Shareholder [Samuel T. Bowman](#) said, "Every year, I am amazed by the dedication our attorneys show to serving their communities through pro bono work. Since 2020, there has been even more need than usual, and our attorneys once again stepped up to the challenge, offering their time and talent to meet those needs. I am in awe of the spirit of service that our attorneys consistently demonstrate, and I am especially grateful to these attorneys for their exceptional efforts during a very difficult time."

Hannah McSween Cole was named the firm-wide 2021 Baker Donelson Pro Bono Attorney of the Year. As an associate in the Firm's Nashville office, Ms. Cole helped establish a homeless court in Nashville. The court's goal is to remove legal barriers to employment and housing and connect individuals to service providers. Ms. Cole was instrumental in this court's establishment through her tireless efforts of coordinating and bringing together numerous local entities to launch the court's pilot program.

Baker Donelson also recognized attorneys in many of its individual offices for their pro bono efforts.

- **Steven R. Press, Atlanta Pro Bono Attorney of the Year:** [Mr. Press](#) was recognized for his work with the Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta (PBPA). He assisted the PBPA with numerous projects during 2020 and continues to work on many new pro bono matters for PBPA. He was honored by the PBPA as one of its Volunteers of the Year for 2020.
- **R. Culver Schmid, Knoxville Pro Bono Attorney of the Year:** In 2020 [Mr. Schmid](#), who is managing shareholder of the Firm's Knoxville office, began advising individuals convicted of a felony crime to restore their voting rights. He has handled more than a dozen cases since last summer, with many of them resulting in successful restoration of voting rights for his clients.
- **Jennie Silk, Memphis Pro Bono Attorney of the Year:** [Ms. Silk](#) was recognized for her work as part of a team that filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of the National Association for Public Defense in support of a writ of certiorari petition of a death row inmate. Her additional work includes representing a female federal inmate who was a victim of sex trafficking as a child in a petition for compassionate release.
- **Steven J. Eisen, Nashville Pro Bono Attorney of the Year:** Mr. Eisen has been advising the State of Tennessee on how it can work with minority depository institutions (MDI's) to further community development in minority and low-income areas in Tennessee. He also has worked directly with Tennessee's seven MDIs to assist them in raising capital, connecting them with larger institutions for managerial and operational assistance, and accessing federal government programs available to them.

Through its commitment to [pro bono representation](#), Baker Donelson provides legal services to groups and individuals whose resources are limited. For decades, the Firm's attorneys have provided a variety of counsel

to many underserved populations that have had no options for legal representation. Baker Donelson's efforts include work on a wide range of matters, such as advocating for the homeless and organizations that serve the homeless, providing corporate legal services to non-profit organizations, collaborating with our clients to address particular community needs, and much more. The Firm has been instrumental in efforts such as expanding the Homeless Experience Legal Protection (HELP) program across the Southeast; creating courts dedicated to handling minor legal matters common among the homeless; assisting persons of limited means with obtaining driver's licenses, an essential need in helping these individuals reintegrate into society; and spearheading and organizing volunteer lawyer programs across Baker Donelson's footprint.

Baker Donelson has led the way in the legal industry by being one of the first law firms in the Southeast to create a Pro Bono Committee and designate a Pro Bono Shareholder. To further its commitment to pro bono, Baker Donelson also designates Pro Bono Committee Office Chairs in most of its 22 offices. These chairs are best suited to address local needs while coordinating with the Firm's Pro Bono Shareholder for global pro bono initiatives. This structure ensures Baker Donelson is well-suited to further its goal of addressing broad spectrum needs across the Firm's footprint and beyond.