



Jacob O. Malatesta, Esq.
Managing Attorney

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Also Serving: Memphis, TN



Jacob O. Malatesta is the Managing Attorney of the Jackson, MS and Memphis, TN offices. He is a native of the Mississippi Delta where he began his legal career practicing in Clarksdale, then Greenville, and settling with his family in Jackson.

After obtaining an undergraduate degree in Spanish and English at the University of Mississippi, Jacob graduated *cum laude* from the University of Mississippi Law School. While in law school, Jacob was a member of *Phi Delta Phi*, an honorary legal fraternity. He was selected by his peers as a member of the Moot Court Board and later elected as a member of the Executive Board where he served as Appellate Advocacy Chairman. Jacob was also selected by his professors to participate in the Duberstein National Bankruptcy Moot Court Competition. He was later named Moot Court Member of the Year by the Moot Court Executive Board and inducted into the Order of Barristers.

Jacob has successfully litigated general liability claims (including property damage, automobile liability, dram shop, and premises liability), professional liability (including medical malpractice and employment discrimination), and extra-contractual liability claims. Jacob's appellate practice includes numerous victories based on both procedural and substantive law.

Jacob has experience litigating cases in both state and federal courts in Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas and Alabama, at both the trial and appellate levels and holds the AV Preeminent® Peer Review Rating from Martindale-Hubbell, its highest rating for ethical standards and legal ability. Jacob has also twice been named a Rising Star by the SuperLawyers publication, making him only one of three Rising Star SuperLawyers in medical malpractice litigation in Mississippi. In 2018, he was selected as an official member of the Lawyers of Distinction, a national organization that recognizes excellence in the legal field, and as one of the top 40 legal professionals in the state when named a Leadership in Law honoree by the Mississippi Business Journal.

Jacob went to law school because he loved language and rhetoric. While there, he grew to love trial and appellate advocacy and the

VERDICTS AND DISPOSITIONS

Medical Malpractice Negligent Care Dismissal

AREAS OF PRACTICE

American with Disability Act Claims (A.D.A)
Appellate Practice
Automobile Liability (PIP/PD/BI/UM)
Bad Faith/Extra Contractual Litigation
Civil Litigation
Contract Law (Drafting and Defense)
Coverage & Declaratory Judgment Actions
Employment Law/Employment Litigation
First and Third Party Property and Casualty Claims
General Liability Defense Litigation
Government Law
Labor and Employment Law
Liability Defense
Liquor Liability
Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution
Medical Malpractice
Premises Liability
Professional Liability/E & O
Trucking
Wrongful Death

BAR & COURT ADMISSION

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Medical Liability Committee

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Vice Chairman of Publications
Steering Committee, 2019 Medical Liability Seminar

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ability to solve problems by presenting compelling stories.

Jacob lives in Jackson, Mississippi, with his wife, Christy, their sons, Peter and Andrew, and their dog, Yazoo. He is a member of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. In his free time, Jacob enjoys hunting, fishing, and serving as a beleaguered Ole Miss fan by spending warm fall Saturdays in The Grove.



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Richard Morrow was born in Keene, New Hampshire but was raised and has lived in Florida nearly his entire life. Rick attended the University of South Florida where he graduated *magna cum laude* with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. Rick received his *Juris Doctorate*, graduating *cum laude* from Stetson University College of Law. While at Stetson, he served as a Legislative Representative as well as Vice President of the Student Bar Association and served as a member of a faculty and student Advisory Council to improve the operations and policies at Stetson.

Rick spent his early career as an entrepreneur, owning various business entities including an independent auto dealership here in Florida. He has owned and managed apartment complexes as well as other varied real estate holdings. After finding success in these endeavors, Rick followed a lifelong dream and began his “second career” in the practice of law.

Rick is a member of the Florida Bar as well as being admitted to practice in the U.S. District Court in and for the Middle District of Florida. Rick utilizes his previous business experience when representing and advising clients on legal issues. His focus of practice includes all aspects of automotive negligence, business and commercial law, general civil litigation, premises liability, employment law, and litigation, as well as contract drafting.

Rick is a dedicated family man who married his high school sweetheart. Together, they have three sons and numerous grandchildren. He enjoys the “Florida” lifestyle as well as being an avid motorcyclist and Jeep enthusiast. You can find him in his spare time traveling, visiting beaches, theme parks, and Florida’s natural wonders.

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Mark Erdman is a South Florida native and graduated from Florida State University with a dual-major BA in History and English Literature. He attended law school at the Florida International University College of Law, and obtained his *Juris Doctorate* with a certification in Intellectual Property studies. Mark began working immediately out of law school in civil litigation, intellectual property, and commercial real estate transactions. He later transitioned into workers' compensation law and insurance defense. Since joining Vernis and Bowling, Mark applies his wide experiences in litigation and transactional work to represent condominium and homeowners' associations.

Mr. Erdman has a wide range of legal experience that he brings as an asset to Vernis & Bowling. He is experienced practicing in Administrative, State, and Federal Courts. His practice has involved both appellate and pre-appellate work. His work has allowed him to succeed in both general trial-court litigation practice, and larger more operational state-wide litigation strategy across various offices.

Mark has a business-first mindset that he applies to every case. His focus is on providing the best possible service for his clients in any function they may need. He has a passion for legal research and writing. His goal is to ensure businesses succeed and protect them as they achieve their goals.

In his personal life, Mr. Erdman is involved in a number of charity organizations. Most notably, he is a Chapman Partnership member, helping serve homeless and indigent families in the Miami-Dade community. As a young man, Mark achieved the Eagle Scout Award. He is an avid outdoorsman. He is happy spending his weekends enjoying Florida's natural beauty whenever the weather, sufficient sunscreen, and his wife permit him to do so.

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Mr. Baer graduated *Cum Laude* from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. He went on to earn his *Juris Doctor* from Nova Southeastern University's Shepard Broad Law Center. He began his career as an Assistant Public Defender for Broward County, Florida.

Mr. Baer's goal is to provide innovative legal advice to bring cases to prompt and cost-effective resolution. His three and half years as Plaintiff's counsel gives him unique insight into the Plaintiff's mindset. With his extensive experience, including hundreds of depositions, hearings, mediations, and arbitrations, Mr. Baer is able to use his ongoing relationships to with Plaintiffs' counsel to identify the issues in the case from the onset and then determine the best and most effective resolution with the client.

Mr. Baer is an active member of the National Society of Professional Insurance Investigators and the Broward County Bar Association.

When not practicing law, Mr. Baer also finds time to service his community, working with children with autism and breast cancer awareness.

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Waynice Green-Musgrove is an attorney at Vernis & Bowling. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree, *cum laude*, at Rutgers College in New Jersey where she majored in political science and received a certificate in criminology. She then obtained her *Juris Doctor* degree from Fordham University School of Law in New York. Before leaving the frigid northeast for sunny and tropical south Florida, Waynice practiced criminal defense, domestic violence and family law in both New York and New Jersey.

Upon her admission to the Florida Bar, Waynice began practicing labor and employment law. As a labor and employment attorney, Waynice represents clients in administrative hearings before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and in state and federal courts for matters involving unpaid wages, discrimination, retaliation, sexual harassment, wrongful termination and whistleblower claims. She also counsels clients on topics such as wage and hour regulations, the Family and Medical Leave Act, workplace equality, reasonable accommodations, drug abuse policies and employee discipline.

Waynice loves being a lawyer, and has always enjoyed utilizing her knowledge to advocate for people. She has never suffered from a boring day on the job. Her areas of practice are always evolving and that makes for intellectually stimulating workdays.

Waynice is licensed to practice in the Federal District of New Jersey, the Southern District of Florida and Middle District Of Florida. She's a member of the Florida Association of Women Lawyers and the Caribbean American Bar Association. She is also a Board Secretary of Generation Ascend, a new 501© organization that provides low-income and disadvantaged youth with programs, including tutoring, counseling, scholarship assistance, high school, college, and job application preparation; and vocational training resources to foster their transition out of poverty.

Waynice resides in Broward County with her husband, three sons and Maltepom Zahra. She and her family enjoy traveling, brunching and spending time with family and friends.

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