



Christopher J. Blain, Esq.
Managing Attorney

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VERDICTS AND DISPOSITIONS

Coburn, Amy v. Davis, Clifford and Vera
Olivares Garcia, Fatima v. Seminole Towing & Recovery
Galusha, Raymond v. Lowe's-Appeal
Felix Jordan and Marcha Louis as Natural Parents of minor v. Lana Kopec Enterprises et al.
Joseph, Jo-Ann v. All Channel Enterprises, Inc., David Mazure, United Water Restoration Group, Inc., Tyler M. Gilman and USAA
Kelley v. Sun Communities
Savvas v. Wawa
Tonya Oliver v. Foxwood at Trinity Community Association
Rodrigues v. WaWa
Plaintiff v Nativity Catholic Church

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Automobile Liability (PIP/PD/BI/UM)
Bad Faith/Extra Contractual Litigation
Civil Litigation
Commercial Ground Transportation Litigation
Condominium and Homeowners' Association Litigation
Construction and Construction Defect Litigation
Coverage & Declaratory Judgment Actions
Cyber Security
Director & Officer Liability (D&O)
Employment Law/Employment Litigation
Errors & Omissions Liability (E&O)
First and Third Party Property and Casualty Claims
General Liability Defense Litigation

Nationally Board Certified Trial Advocate **Florida Bar Board Certified Civil Trial Lawyer** **Florida Supreme Court Certified Circuit Court Mediator**

Christopher Blain is the managing attorney of the Tampa, Florida office. He has worked all aspects of the insurance industry. He is an expert in Civil Trial and is Board Certified by the Florida Bar and Nationally Board Certified by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. He was born in Addison, Illinois which is a suburb outside of Chicago. He attended college at Lake Forest College where he graduated in 1996. He continued his education at Barry University, School of Law where he received his *Juris Doctor* in 2002. While in law school, Chris worked under the Honorable Judge Walter Komanski at the Ninth Judicial Circuit, where he researched complex civil litigation issues.

Chris has tried numerous matters to jury verdicts in both State and Federal Courts. He has litigated general liability defense work ranging from handling lawsuits involving claims of wrongful death, premises liability, insurance coverage, auto negligence, negligent security and property claims. Chris has also represented Homeowner/Condominium Associations and their Board Members before HUD, State and Federal Courts regarding disputes arising over deed restrictions, enforcement of those restrictions and alleged discrimination. In addition, Chris has also lectured extensively in these fields where he has been a featured speaker at continuing education seminars around the United States on a variety of insurance defense and litigation topics.

Chris is admitted to practice law in all State Courts in Florida as well as all Federal Courts which include the Northern, Southern and Middle Districts of Florida. He is admitted to practice in the Eleventh Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals. Further, he is admitted to practice in all courts in the State of Illinois.

In his free time, Chris enjoys being active in the Tampa area. He is an assistant soccer coach for his son's team and can also be found cheering on his daughter at her drama class performances.

Government Law
Liability Defense
Medical Malpractice
Negligent Security
PIP/Personal Injury Protection Litigation
Product Liability
SIU/Suspicious & Fraudulent Claims
Subrogation Claims
Trucking
Uninsured/Underinsured Motorist Liability
Wrongful Death

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U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
U.S. District Court of the Central District of Illinois
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois

EDUCATION

Graduate:

Barry University School of Law, Juris Doctorate, 2002

Undergraduate:

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Government Law

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Medical Malpractice

Negligent Security

PIP/Personal Injury Protection Litigation

Product Liability

William F. (Bill) Smith, II was born in Winfield, Alabama in 1962. Raised in the Birmingham area, he was valedictorian at Shades Valley High School in 1980, where he played basketball and baseball. He received a B.S. in Mineral Engineering, Petroleum specialization, from the University of Alabama in 1984. During college, Bill worked as an engineering intern for Alabama Power Company at the E. C. Gaston Steam Plant. In 1987, he earned a J.D. from the University of Alabama School of Law. Bill has been

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married to Suzann Sherer Smith since 1984. They have two adult children, Kathleen, an ICU nurse, and Parker, an insurance agent.

Bill is admitted to practice in Alabama (1987), U.S. District Court, Northern (1988), Middle (1997) and Southern (2004) Districts of Alabama, and the U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit (1999). Bill is a member of the Birmingham Bar Association and the National Retail & Restaurant Defense Association.

Bill has practiced exclusively in insurance defense litigation for more than 30 years, having successfully tried, as first chair, a diverse range of cases in state and federal courts, including automobile & commercial trucking, insurance & bad faith claims, wrongful death, premises liability, product liability, employment cases (race and pregnancy discrimination, sexual harassment, and workers compensation), and disputes between business entities.

From 2014 - 2020, Bill tried more than 30 cases to verdict.

He has previously served in-house as senior litigation counsel for a major property & casualty insurer.

Bill is a frequent speaker at seminars on a variety of civil litigation topics. He is active in his church and outside interests include gardening, hiking, backpacking basketball and all youth sports.

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Ian Neil Matthes was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. He graduated *magna cum laude* from Georgia State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree Political Science in 1994 and earned his J.D. from The University of Georgia School of Law in 1997. Ian serves as the Regional Managing Attorney and General Counsel for Vernis & Bowling. Ian provides operation management, support and services to all of the firm's offices throughout the Southeast.

Ian was admitted to the Georgia Bar in 1997, and is licensed to practice law before all state courts in Georgia. He is also licensed to practice before the U.S. District Courts for the Middle and Northern Districts of Georgia. For over 20 years, Ian has

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represented defendants in general liability, premises liability, automobile liability, bad faith/extra-contractual liability, commercial vehicle liability, insurance coverage, SIU/fraud (including first party arson/property claims and medical provider fraud), and UM/UIM liability matters. He also provides claims/litigation file audit services, and litigation management operations and process improvement consulting.

Ian previously served in-house with P&C insurance companies as a National Litigation Manager and Director of Litigation Management (AIG), managing litigation staff and procedures, as well as class actions and "Bad Faith" claims nationwide. With over 10,000 litigation matters under management, he was also responsible for final trial approval decisions in hundreds of cases per year. He regularly and proudly wears his "litigation management" and "home office insurance guy" hats while encouraging efficiency, communication, and delivery of timely results at the firm. This experience has also led to Ian serving as a speaker at numerous seminars throughout the nation, including at national insurance, litigation management and SIU conventions on topics including Premises Liability, Good Faith Claims Handling, Ethical Adjusting Practices, Personal Lines Litigation, SIU/Fraud Best Practices, Negotiation and Settlement Strategies, and Legislative and Case Law Updates.

Ian is a Founding Board Member and Past-President of the National Retail & Restaurant Defense Association (NRRDA), was the Charter Board President of the Georgia Chapter of the National Society of Professional Insurance Investigators (NSPII), and is a member of GDLA, DRI, CLM, ACA and numerous other litigation, claims, insurance and bar related organizations.

Ian and his wife, Stephanie, have two wonderful children, Charlotte (Charlie) and Harrison. Ian is an advocate for special needs children, raises money for Autism-related causes, and is a proud #AutismDad. His other interests include gardening, baking the best sourdough bread in the Southeast, cooking, and watching the UGA Bulldogs. He is always ready to share photos of his kids, plants, his 110+ varieties of fig trees, or why his hydroponic lettuce is better than anything you can buy.

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An Asheville, N.C. native, Greg obtained his undergraduate degree from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and his law degree from North Carolina Central University. He is a trial and appellate attorney, and his practice includes tort litigation, insurance law and coverage issues, first party claims, construction defect, professional liability, premises liability, employment and employment related practices, products liability, SIU/fraud, trucking liability and appellate practice. Greg also has extensive experience utilizing methods of alternative dispute resolution, and has been approved by the NC Dispute Resolution Commission as a certified Superior Court Mediator.

Greg has substantial experience in representing individuals, domestic and international corporations, and governmental entities. He has counseled clients, including pre-litigation consultation and claim evaluation, in focused areas including dramshop/alcohol liability, veterinary malpractice, "bad faith" and unfair/deceptive trade practices. Licensed to practice law in 1990, Greg has tried over 200 cases to verdict in the District and Superior Courts of North Carolina, and has appeared multiple times at the appellate level as lead counsel before the Supreme Court of North Carolina, as well as the North Carolina Court of Appeals, where following law school he served as Research Assistant to former Chief Judge R. A. "Fred" Hedrick.

Mr. Lewis is a member in good standing of the North Carolina State Bar and the Mecklenburg County Bar, as well as the North

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Carolina Bar Association and North Carolina Association of Defense Attorneys. Greg is also approved as an instructor by the State of North Carolina Department of Insurance. Greg is frequently a speaker for continuing education courses for attorneys and clients.