



Jacob O. Malatesta, Esq.
Managing Attorney

Vernis & Bowling of
Mississippi, PLLC
101 West Washington Street
Suite C5
Ridgeland, MS 39157

Phone: (601) 500-5927

Email:

JMalatesta@National-Law.com

Fax: (601) 500-5957

Website:

www.national-law.com

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

Mississippi State Courts
Mississippi Federal Courts
Mississippi Choctaw Tribal Court
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Arkansas State Courts
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Claims and Litigation Management Alliance
Professional Liability Committee
Medical Liability Committee

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Medical Liability and Healthcare Law Committee
Vice Chairman of Publications
Steering Committee, 2019 Medical Liability Seminar

Litigation Counsel of America
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Mississippi Defense Lawyers Association
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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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Noah Uhry was born in Annapolis, Maryland but was raised in Atlanta, Georgia nearly his entire life. Noah attended Kennesaw State University where he received his undergraduate degree in a combined major of Psychology and English. While at Kennesaw State University, Noah was the Co-President of the Club Baseball team.

From there, Noah attended Liberty University School of Law. While there, Noah focused on developing oral advocacy and litigation skills. Noah received his *Juris Doctorate* and decided to move to Florida to begin practicing law.

Since joining Vernis & Bowling, Noah has been handling general insurance defense matters with a specific focus on Bodily Injury Claims.

One of the main reasons Noah wanted to practice law stems from his passion of being a creative thinker. He has always loved thinking outside the box to solve complex issues. Noah has always been a competitive person because of his background in sports. So, Noah enjoys the everyday back and forth that accompanies litigation during the representation of his clients.

Noah is an avid sports fan. In his free time, he enjoys playing sports, watching sports, and training his 2-year-old dog named Buffalo.

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Bryan Ashlock was born in Kansas City, Missouri. He graduated from the University of Missouri's School of Journalism with a Bachelor of Journalism with a focus in Strategic Communications. He then went on to attend the Ohio State University where he obtained a Master of Arts in Sports Management. Bryan went on to attend law school at the University of Miami School of Law, where he received his Juris Doctorate degree. While in law school Bryan served as Writing and Research Editor of the University of Miami International and Comparative Law Review.

Bryan began his law career practicing insurance defense at West Palm Beach law firm, where he handled all varieties of civil litigation, including but not limited to insurance coverage disputes, professional malpractice, extra-contractual liability (bad faith), premises liability, personal injury, and wrongful death. He practiced extensively in first-party property insurance defense relating to coverage disputes throughout the State of Florida.

Bryan's goal as a defense attorney managing his own team is to provide not only the best legal advice he can, but also to go above and beyond to ensure clients feel supported. Bryan prides himself on his ability to effectively communicate the best path forward and to consistently exceed client expectations with inventive solutions. Bryan's years of experience in the first-party property field here in Florida have taught him that being solution-oriented not only gets the best results but ensures that clients' costs are minimized.

Since joining Vernis & Bowling of Palm Beach, Bryan has focused his practice on first-party property insurance defense, commercial property, construction/construction defect and general liability claims. He has set up systems to support client experience and results, ensure communication is as timely as possible, and has specifically trained the staff on their role in creating a seamless process for clients. Clients can know that any case that lands on Bryan's desk will receive world-class service and support to ensure their legal matter is handled in the most efficient and beneficial way possible.

When not practicing law, Bryan can often be found on the golf

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course or spending time with his wife and their menagerie of animals.



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Ali Rahnavard is a civil litigator who joined Vernis & Bowling, seeking new challenges and professional growth.

Prior to joining the firm, Ali's practice focused on general civil litigation, creditors' rights, compliance, and pre and post-judgment collections. In four years, Ali distinguished himself with a litigation-focused approach, initiating several thousand civil suits, advocating for the interest of his clients before courts in all 67 Florida counties on more than 2,000 occasions, and obtaining countless judgments on behalf of his clients. Ali's focus in the last two years of his collections practice was on litigious opposition from Consumer Attorneys and the defense of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and Florida Consumer Collection Practices Act counterclaims.

Ali was sworn into the Florida Bar on his 28th birthday after obtaining his law degree from Stetson University College of Law. While at Stetson, Ali took advantage of their #1 ranked Trial Advocacy program and focused on practical experiences, completing two judicial internships. From his experience with Judge Pamala A.M. Campbell of the 6th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida, he learned the importance of preparation and mastery of the rules of civil procedure and sharpened his research skills. His experience with Judge Catherine Peek McEwen of the United States Bankruptcy Court Middle District of Florida, allowed him to hone his legal writing and analysis and obtain valuable working knowledge of the Bankruptcy Code. Ali was also an active volunteer guardian ad litem advocating on behalf of the interest of children in dependency. In 2025, Ali was appointed by the incoming Florida Bar President to serve as a committee member on the Law Related Education Committee of the Florida Bar.

A lifelong student of history, Ali graduated from the University of Central Florida with his Bachelor of Arts in History with a minor in Political Science. His areas of study included European, Greek, and Roman history, but he particularly enjoyed his study of the classics.

Ali was born in Washington D.C. and has lived in the D.C. Metro, South Carolina, and Central and South Florida before settling in

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Tampa Bay after law school.

Outside the practice of law, Ali enjoys new adventures with his wife Scarlett and their children, connecting with his Persian heritage, staring at a mountain of unread books, and telling himself that one day he really will get around to learning guitar.



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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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