

## Baron & Budd's Practice and Accomplishments

### FIRM OVERVIEW

Baron & Budd, P.C. is among the largest and most accomplished plaintiffs' law firms in the country. With more than forty five years of experience, Baron & Budd has the expertise and resources to handle complex litigation throughout the United States. As a law firm that takes pride in remaining at the forefront of litigation, Baron & Budd has spearheaded many significant cases for entities and individuals.

Since the firm was founded in 1977, Baron & Budd has achieved substantial national acclaim for its work on cutting-edge litigation:

- Shareholders Russell Budd, Scott Summy and Roland Tellis have frequently been selected to the *Best Lawyers in America*. Budd and Tellis have been selected to *Best Lawyers* every year since 2014 and Summy has been selected to *Best Lawyers* every year since 2006.
- Baron & Budd attorneys serve in prominent leadership roles in MDL 2804, *In re National Prescription Opiate Litigation*. Baron & Budd attorneys and their co-counsel represent more than 750 local governments and nine state attorneys general across the nation in litigation against prescription opioid manufacturers and distributors. Baron & Budd shareholder Roland Tellis has been appointed to the Plaintiffs' Executive Committee. The firm's co-founder, Russell Budd, was appointed to the Settlement Committee, and shareholder Burton LeBlanc serves as liaison between the States' Attorneys General and the Plaintiffs Executive Committee.
- Baron & Budd attorneys hold key leadership roles in MDL 2873, *In re Aqueous Film Forming Foams ("AFFF") Products Liability Litigation*. Shareholder Scott Summy was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Executive Committee and is one of the court-appointed settlement attorneys.
- In 2023, Baron & Budd recovered more than \$600,000,000 to settle claims against Monsanto Company by over 2,400 public entities whose stormwater and waterbodies are contaminated with PCBs made by Monsanto.
- Baron & Budd has been retained by hundreds of individuals and businesses who have sustained significant losses due to wildfires and related mudslides in California. The wildfire team recovered \$1 billion from Pacific Gas & Electric Co. on behalf of 14 public entities for taxpayer losses caused by the 2015 Butte Fire, 2017 North Bay Fires, and 2018 Camp Fire, and \$360 million from Southern California Edison for the 2017 Thomas Fire. Baron & Budd Shareholder, Scott Summy, served as Lead Counsel for Public Entity Plaintiffs in the California North Bay Fire

Cases, Judicial Council Coordination Proceeding No. 4955. Mr. Summy along with fellow Shareholder, John Fiske, have been appointed as Lead Counsel for Public Entity Plaintiffs in Southern California Fire Cases, Judicial Council Coordination Proceeding No. 4965.

- In 2020, Shareholder Carla Burke Pickrel was named to the National Trial Lawyers Top 10 Environmental Trial Lawyers, Top 25 Products Liability Trial Lawyers, and Top 25 Women Trial Lawyers
- Shareholder Burton LeBlanc was a 2017 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Honor from America's Top 100 Attorneys for his career dedicated to the protection of America's civil justice system. LeBlanc has also been selected for inclusion in the *Louisiana Super Lawyers* list from 2012 to the present (Thompson Reuters). Together with co-counsel, LeBlanc and Baron & Budd represent more than 700 public entities and eight Attorneys General across the nation in litigation against prescription opioid manufacturers, distributors and dispensers.
- Shareholders Scott Summy, Carla Burke Pickrel and John Fiske were honored to receive a 2017 Burton Award, which recognizes the finest law firm writers in the country. Summy, Pickrel, and Fiske were selected for their article, "Poison in the Well," which appeared in the August 2016 issue of Trial Magazine. The Baron & Budd team is one of only 25 winners selected from nominations submitted by the nation's top 1,000 most prestigious and largest law firms.
- In 2016, shareholders Russell Budd and Thomas Sims were appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in litigation involving health issues linked to Fluoroquinolone use; Russell Budd was also appointed Plaintiffs' Co-lead Counsel in this litigation.
- Shareholder Carla Burke Pickrel has been named to the National Trial Lawyers Top 100 Trial Lawyers List every year from 2016 to present for her tireless work representing hundreds of public entities over more than a decade in a wide variety of cases involving drinking water contamination from dangerous chemicals such as atrazine, PCE, MTBE and PCBs.
- In 2016, shareholder J. Todd Kale was named to the National Trial Lawyers Top 100 Trial Lawyers List for his work fighting against companies that knowingly exposed people to asbestos. Kale has spent more than two decades helping victims of asbestos exposure and their families.
- In 2016, shareholder Roland Tellis was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in litigation involving the marketing and sales practices of Volkswagen's "clean diesel" vehicles. Volkswagen is in the process of settling these claims, with settlement values and fines totaling in the billions of dollars.

- In 2015, shareholder Russell Budd was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in litigation involving health issues linked to the drug Zofran.
- In 2015, shareholder Russell Budd was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committees in litigation involving health issues linked to Inferior Vena Cava Filters (IVCs).
- Every year since 2012, Baron & Budd has achieved a "Tier 1" ranking from *BestLawyers.com* for mass tort litigation/class action/plaintiffs firms in the Dallas/Fort Worth region.
- In 2014 Baron & Budd was named to the list of America's Elite Trial Lawyers by *The National Law Journal* in partnership with Law.com. This illustrious list is comprised of 50 law firms that have achieved significant results on behalf of plaintiffs within the previous year and have an established track record of delivering impressive results.
- In 2013, Baron & Budd was a finalist for the Public Justice Trial Lawyers of the Year Award for the firm's work on a \$105 million settlement on behalf of hundreds of public water providers across the Midwest who are struggling with atrazine contamination in their source water,
- In 2013, shareholder Burton LeBlanc was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in litigation involving health issues linked to dialysis product GranuFlo and its sister product, NaturaLyte. Additionally, he served as president of the American Association of Justice (AAJ) in 2013. AAJ is the largest trial lawyer non-profit group in the United States.
- In 2002-2006, 2008, 2011-2012, Baron & Budd was named to the *National Law Journal's* "Plaintiffs' Hot List" of exemplary plaintiffs' firms in the United States.
- In September 2010, Baron & Budd was one of only four firms chosen to serve on both the Plaintiffs' Executive Committee and the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee of the Multi-District Litigation in the Gulf Oil Spill litigation.
- In 2009, Baron & Budd was a finalist for the Public Justice Trial Lawyer of the Year Award for its recovery of more than \$400 million on behalf of more than 150 municipalities from 17 states regarding contamination of groundwater by the gasoline additive MTBE.
- In 2007, shareholders Russell Budd and Burton LeBlanc were among 14 attorneys nationwide to be honored with the Wiedemann Wysocki National Finance Council Award from the American Association for Justice in recognition of their commitment to the legal profession and their

efforts to improve the civil justice system. LeBlanc was recognized for a second time with the award in 2010.

- In 2006, a team of Baron & Budd attorneys received the esteemed Trial Lawyer of the Year Award by the legal non-profit organization, Public Justice, for its work on Arizona groundwater contamination litigation that spanned 21 years, involved over 1,600 plaintiffs, and resulted in a total recovery of more than \$150 million.
- In 2004, *American Lawyer* named Baron & Budd one of the sixteen most successful plaintiffs' firms in the country.
- Baron & Budd has been repeatedly selected by *The Legal 500* as one of the country's premier law firms in mass tort claims and class action litigation.
- Baron & Budd attorneys are serving, or has served, on the Plaintiffs' Steering Committees for the following: Fluoroquinolones, GranuFlo, IVC Filters, Ethicon Power Morcellator, Transvaginal Mesh, Zofran, AFFF, BP Oil Spill, MTBE, Chinese Drywall, Takata Air Bags and Volkswagen Clean Diesel.

Additional information about Baron & Budd is available on the firm's website, [www.baronandbudd.com](http://www.baronandbudd.com).

## **SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT AREAS OF LITIGATION**

### ***ENVIRONMENTAL LITIGATION***

#### Lead Role in the AFFF Multi-District Litigation

Baron & Budd Shareholder Scott Summy was appointed as Co-Lead Counsel by the court in AFFF MDL No. 2873 pending in federal district court in South Carolina. He also serves as Co-Chair of the General Liability Discovery Committee and the Science Committee and was appointed by the Court to participate in settlement discussions. Baron & Budd Shareholder Carla Burke Pikrel serves as Chair of the Law and Briefing Committee. This litigation focuses on PFAS contamination of the environment from its use in fire-fighting foam. The litigation focuses on the manufacturers of AFFF and PFAS and seeks damages for the extensive contamination of water supplies. Baron & Budd represents numerous public entities in the AFFF MDL. Additional information about these cases is available on the firm's [Environmental Litigation Group](#) website.

#### Other PFAS Litigation

Baron & Budd's Environmental Litigation Group represents public water providers and individuals against E. I. du Pont de Nemours and The Chemours Company for decades-long contamination of the Cape Fear River, along with the air and groundwater near the Fayetteville, North Carolina, plant, from Gen-X

compounds and dozens of other per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in the PFAS chemical family. For 35 years DuPont and Chemours have contaminated the river and over a hundred private wells around the plant. Baron & Budd represents Brunswick County, the Town of Wrightsville Beach, and the Lower Cape Fear Water & Sewer Authority as they seek to recover the costs of removing all PFAS chemicals before the water is distributed to the public. Baron & Budd also represents the owners of most of the private wells around the plant that have been contaminated and is seeking damages for well filtration, all costs associated with filtration and property damage. This case is of national significance as focus has shifted to the prevalence of PFAS chemicals around the country. Additional information about these cases is available on the firm's [Environmental Litigation Group](#) website.

### California Wildfires

Baron & Budd, along with co-counsel Dixon Diab & Chambers LLP, has represented individuals and public entities in some of the most destructive wildfires in California history and obtained historic settlements. These fires were caused by the failure of electrical utilities to recognize the new normal caused by climate change. The utilities failed to maintain their equipment and secure and maintain the foliage that surrounds their equipment. In 2019, Baron & Budd recovered a \$1 billion settlement from California utility PG&E on behalf of 18 public entities, including the devastated town of Paradise and Butte County, to recover taxpayer losses caused by the 2015 Butte Fire, the 2017 North Bay Fires, and the 2018 Camp Fire.

In addition, Baron & Budd, along with co-counsel, obtained a \$360 million settlement from Southern California Edison on behalf of 23 public entities for taxpayer losses caused by the 2017 Thomas Fire, the 2018 Montecito Debris Flows, and the 2018 Woolsey Fire. In addition to several public entities, Baron & Budd represents thousands of families and businesses who lost everything due to the negligent maintenance, inspection, and operations of these investor-owned utilities. Additional information about these cases is available on the firm's [Wildfire Recovery](#) website.

### Litigation Against JUUL Labs for Creating the E-Cigarette Epidemic

Baron & Budd attorneys have filed lawsuits on behalf of some of the largest school districts in California against JUUL for negligence and nuisance claims related to their role in creating the e-cigarette epidemic. Studies show that the 2018 spike in nicotine vaping was the largest for any substance recorded in 44 years. The lawsuits seek injunctions and abatement to stop the e-cigarette epidemic, which has severely impacted school districts by interfering with normal school operations. The Districts also seek compensatory damages to provide relief from the financial losses as a result of students being absent from school, coordinating outreach and education programs regarding the health risks of vaping, and enforcement actions – such as vape detectors, video surveillance, and staff to monitor the schools' property in an effort to combat the e-cigarette crisis.

Additional information about Baron & Budd is available on the firm's [School Vaping Crisis](#) website.

#### TCP Litigation

The Environmental Litigation Group at Baron & Budd has represented numerous public water providers whose water supplies are contaminated with 1,2,3-Trichloropropane ("TCP"). TCP is a manmade chemical that has contaminated groundwater that many communities rely upon for drinking water. While there have been some industrial uses for TCP as a cleaning and degreasing solvent, the majority of TCP groundwater contamination is a result of the use of certain soil fumigants. Baron & Budd has recovered hundreds of millions of dollars on behalf of water providers in litigation against the Dow Chemical Company and Shell Oil Company for TCP contamination. Most recently, Baron & Budd recovered the largest settlement to date in TCP litigation on behalf of the City of Bakersfield and California Water Service Company. Such recoveries have provided water providers with the funds needed to install the expensive treatment required to remove TCP from drinking water and avoid passing such costs to ratepayers.

#### \$105 Million Atrazine Settlement

Baron & Budd served as Class Counsel in litigation regarding the contamination of approximately 1,200 public drinking water systems by the chemical atrazine. Atrazine is a widely used agricultural chemical that is commonly applied to crops throughout the United States to control weeds. Despite the threat of water contamination and industry knowledge of the environmental risks, approximately 77 million pounds of atrazine are sprayed on U.S. crops each year.

The firm represented over thirty water providers primarily throughout the Midwest, including Missouri, Kansas, Ohio and Illinois. In 2012, the Court approved a \$105 million settlement for water systems that have detected atrazine in their water supplies to reimburse the costs of removing the chemical from finished water.

In 2013, the attorneys who worked on the atrazine contamination litigation were recognized as finalists for the Trial Lawyer of the Year Award by legal non-profit organization Public Justice.

#### PCBs in Stormwater

In 2014, Baron & Budd shareholder Scott Summy filed a lawsuit against the Monsanto Company and its corporate successors on behalf of the Town of Westport and Westport Community Schools in Massachusetts regarding the use of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in schools. The sole manufacturer of PCBs in the United States, Monsanto allegedly knew about the dangers of PCBs for decades, but failed to warn people of these dangers. Additional cases were filed across a number of states, and after many years of tedious discovery and legal motions, a \$635.5 million settlement was reached with Monsanto on the eve of trial. The class settlement provides a range of monetary benefits to 2,447 public



entities to manage PCBs in stormwater and waterbodies, including cash payments to monitor PCBs in stormwater and assist in the removal of PCBs from sediments. Additionally, Baron & Budd recovered \$170.6 million on behalf of three attorney general clients in Washington, New Mexico, and the District of Columbia. When Baron & Budd filed these cases, there was no precedent for imposing liability on a product manufacturer for contamination of stormwater. This case established precedent that extends environmental tort law to benefit communities and natural resources harmed by contaminants carried through stormwater.

#### Lead Role in the BP Gulf Oil Spill Litigation

Immediately after the explosion that caused the massive BP Gulf Oil Spill in 2010, Baron & Budd got to work, helping individuals and businesses that had sustained economic and/or physical damages. Scott Summy, shareholder and head of Baron & Budd's environmental litigation group, was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Executive Committee and the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in the oil spill litigation. In 2012, a \$1 billion dollar settlement was reached between BP and attorneys on the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in the litigation. The agreement was expected to pay an estimated \$8 billion to resolve economic, property and medical claims by more than 100,000 Gulf-area businesses and individuals, making it one of the largest class action settlements in U.S. history as of that date. \$2.3 billion was earmarked for commercial fishermen, seafood boat captains and others. Another \$57 million was set aside to promote the Gulf coast in hopes of bolstering tourism and the seafood industry.

#### \$423 Million National MTBE Settlement

In May 2008, Baron & Budd helped negotiate a \$423 million settlement on behalf of more than 150 water providers in 17 states regarding Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE) contamination in groundwater. The settlement, reached with many of the country's leading gas companies, requires gasoline refiners to pay water providers' costs to remove MTBE from public drinking water wells and for refiners to pay for treatment of qualifying wells that may become contaminated within the next 30 years.

Plaintiffs' cases were initially filed in their respective state courts before they were later transferred to a Multi-District Litigation (MDL) court in New York. Baron & Budd shareholder Scott Summy, who filed the first-ever MTBE case in the United States, served as national co-lead counsel. Baron & Budd shareholders Celeste Evangelisti, Cary McDougal, Carla Burke Pickrel, Stephen Johnston also represented the plaintiffs.

In 2009, the attorneys who were involved in the MTBE litigation were recognized as finalists for the Trial Lawyer of the Year Award, an annual award given by Public Justice, a non-profit legal organization, for outstanding contributions to the public interest.

### Clean Air for Schoolchildren

In 2008, Baron & Budd attorneys represented three San Francisco Bay-area environmental organizations in negotiating a settlement with Laidlaw Transit, Inc. In the settlement, Laidlaw agreed to invest a minimum of \$4.7 million dollars over five years to retrofit older buses in its California fleet with air pollution control devices to reduce harmful diesel exhaust. Laidlaw also agreed to invest \$23.6 million in its fleet over seven years to either retrofit additional buses or purchase new buses that meet the most stringent air pollution standards in the country, which would ultimately protect young children from being exposed to harmful diesel exhaust. The following year, Baron & Budd settled with two additional bus companies, which helped ensure that even more polluting buses would be replaced with newer, cleaner models or retrofitted with pollution control devices.

### Clean Groundwater in California

In 2004, Baron & Budd shareholder Scott Summy negotiated a string of settlements on behalf of California non-profit Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) that required several major oil companies to upgrade gas station storage tanks, clean up groundwater contamination and take steps to prevent gasoline leakage from thousands of underground storage tanks in California. Monetary and injunctive relief granted in this case was valued at \$107 million.

### MTBE Settlement on Behalf of the City of Santa Monica

In 2003, Baron & Budd represented the City of Santa Monica in a MTBE contamination settlement with several major oil companies. MTBE had contaminated five of Santa Monica's 11 wells, forcing the City to import water for \$3 million a year.

In total, the oil companies paid \$250 million, which provided funds for Santa Monica to build a water treatment system to clean MTBE from its supply, to continue buying water until the supply was deemed clean and to monitor groundwater quality during and after the cleanup.

### The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

In 1993, Baron & Budd was awarded the Public Justice Award for "outstanding contribution to environmental protection and public interest" for its work on the rehabilitation of the damage caused by the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska's Prince William Sound.

The Exxon Valdez oil spill occurred in remote Prince William Sound, Alaska, on March 24, 1989 when the Exxon Valdez, an oil tanker bound for Long Beach, California, struck Prince William Sound's Bligh Reef, ran aground and spilled nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil.



Similar to the 2010 BP Gulf Oil Spill, the cause of Exxon Valdez spill can be pointed primarily at the oil company for neglecting to properly adhere to safety regulations. Exxon failed to repair the tanker's Raycas radar system, which would have warned the crew of an impending collision with the Bligh reef, because it was just too expensive to fix and operate. The tanker had been operating for more than a year without a functioning Raycas radar.

As a result of the Valdez spill, the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA) was passed, allowing those who lost income or profits because of an oil spill to recover compensation from those responsible for the spill.

#### Groundbreaking Water Contamination Case in Tucson, Arizona

In 1985, Baron & Budd filed a lawsuit on behalf of more than 1,600 Tucson-area residents against an aircraft manufacturer, the City of Tucson and the Tucson Airport Authority over TCE contamination of the community's groundwater. Since Tucson is the largest city in the United States that receives all of its drinking water from underground sources, the industrial solvents used at the airport and aircraft company were of particular concern. Spilled on the ground and seeping through the sandy soil into the groundwater, the invisible yet harmful contaminants caused several unusual forms of cancer and other diseases at almost epidemic levels, particularly among children in the area.

The firm's cutting-edge work on this case not only brought compensation to individuals to help them deal with the consequences of their injuries, it also helped define Arizona law on pollution coverage issues. The litigation spanned 21 years, involved more than 1,600 plaintiffs and resulted in a more than \$150 million total recovery for the people of Tucson.

As a result, the public interest legal organization Public Justice presented the Baron & Budd legal team with its Trial Lawyer of the Year Award in 2006. The award recognizes the trial attorney or attorneys who have made the greatest contribution to the public interest each year by trying or settling a precedent-setting case or group of cases.

#### ***OPIOID LITIGATION***

Baron & Budd has been leading the opioid litigation against distributors, manufacturers, and retailers. Our firm filed the first lawsuit against a distributor and started the opioid multidistrict litigation (MDL). We now represent more than 750 local governments and nine state attorneys general.

Baron & Budd attorneys were instrumental in obtaining the landmark \$26 billion national opioid settlement designed to resolve opioid claims brought by states, counties, cities, and other local governments against the "Big Three" drug distributors, AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health, and McKesson, along with the drug manufacturer Johnson & Johnson.

The firm's co-founder, Russell Budd, was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Settlement Negotiation Team for In re National Prescription Opiate Litigation, MDL 2804. Baron & Budd shareholder shareholder Burton LeBlanc served as a liaison between the States' Attorneys General and the Plaintiffs Executive Committee, and and Roland Tellis served on the Plaintiffs' Executive Committee.

## ***PHARMACEUTICAL AND MEDICAL DEVICE LITIGATION***

### 3M CAEv2 Combat Arms Earplugs

Baron & Budd attorneys currently represent more than 1,400 United States military soldiers and veterans who have developed hearing loss and tinnitus as a result of defective combat earplugs manufactured by 3M, which knowingly sold and distributed the defective earplugs to the United States Military. Baron & Budd attorneys have prepared several veterans' cases for trial and await a remand order from the Court presiding over the Multi District Litigation *In Re: 3M Combat Arms Earplug Products Liability Litigation* to proceed to trial on behalf of its clients.

### Actos

Baron & Budd attorneys represented hundreds of individuals who were harmed by diabetes drug Actos. In April 2014, a landmark settlement was reached in this litigation, requiring Takeda Pharmaceuticals and Eli Lilly & Co. to pay a combined \$9 billion in punitive damages after a jury found that the companies hid the cancer risks associated with Actos use.

### Avandia

Baron & Budd represented over 7,000 victims harmed by use of the diabetes drug Avandia. Shareholder Steve Baron was one of the lead negotiators of a nationwide settlement of Avandia cases favorable to victims.

### \$177 Million Settlement for Seven States Against Manufacturer GlaxoSmithKline

Baron & Budd represented the states of Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New Mexico, South Carolina, Utah and West Virginia in litigation regarding the fraudulent marketing of the diabetes drug Avandia by manufacturer GlaxoSmithKline. This result is the largest settlement of a pharmaceutical case ever recorded for several of the involved states. These seven states courageously chose to opt out of the 2012 multistate settlement and, as a result, each state received a much higher settlement than they otherwise would have received.

The lawsuit alleged that GlaxoSmithKline had misrepresented the safety and efficacy of the drug Avandia, stating that Avandia reduced adverse cardiac events, when actually it increases them.

Baron & Budd shareholders Russell Budd and Burton LeBlanc served as co-lead counsel in the litigation, alongside co-counsel and each state's Office of the Attorney General.

#### Essure

Baron & Budd represented and litigated claims on behalf of more than 2,000 individuals who were injured by the Essure birth control device. Former Baron & Budd shareholder Sindhu Daniel was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee for *Essure Product Cases*, JCCP 4887, coordinated in the Superior Court of California for the County of Alameda, and worked on discovery and other issues affecting Plaintiffs nationwide. Baron & Budd attorneys negotiated a favorable settlement for its clients injured by the Essure device.

#### Fen-Phen

Baron & Budd played a leading role in representing people harmed by the diet drug Fen-Phen. The firm was instrumental in negotiating the Seventh Amendment to the AHP Settlement Agreement, which required the defendants to place an additional \$1.275 billion into a trust for those affected. In addition, Baron & Budd settled Fen-Phen personal injury claims for approximately 3,300 individuals.

#### Fluoroquinolone Antibiotics

Baron & Budd represented many men and women who developed peripheral neuropathy as a result of Fluoroquinolone use. Baron & Budd and co-counsel filed the first lawsuits in the country against Johnson & Johnson and Janssen Pharmaceuticals and Baron & Budd shareholders Russell Budd and Thomas Sims were appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee for *In Re: Fluoroquinolone Products Liability Litigation*, MDL 2642, and Russell Budd served as Co-Lead counsel for Plaintiffs. Russell Budd and Thomas Sims were among the lead negotiators of a favorable settlement for plaintiffs.

#### GranuFlo

Baron & Budd shareholder Burton LeBlanc was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in the litigation surrounding dialysis product GranuFlo and its sister product NaturaLyte. Baron & Budd represented hundreds of individuals who were harmed by the use of GranuFlo in their dialysis treatments, whose claims were settled with the products' manufacturer.

#### Hernia Mesh

Baron & Budd attorneys currently represent and have filed lawsuits on behalf of more than 400 clients who have been injured by hernia mesh devices. Cases have been filed on behalf of Baron & Budd's clients in jurisdictions around the country including the United States District Courts for the Northern District of Georgia, the District of New Hampshire, and the District of New Jersey, and state courts in

Massachusetts and New Jersey. Settlements have been reached on behalf of more than 100 clients and litigation is continuing against several defendants.

#### Inferior Vena Cava Filter (IVC)

Baron & Budd attorneys currently represent individuals with health issues related to faulty IVC filters. Baron & Budd shareholder Russell Budd was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee for *In re: Cook Medical, Inc., IVC Filters Marketing, Sales Practices and Products Liability Litigation*, MDL 2570; and *In Re: Bard IVC Filters Products Liability Litigation*, MDL 2641. Baron & Budd attorneys worked closely with other members of the PSC on many aspects of these two multi-district cases, including discovery assessments, document review, depositions, experts, and trials. The firm's attorneys investigated and settled claims on behalf of hundreds of clients for IVC filter injuries.

#### Risperdal

Baron & Budd represented hundreds of clients who developed abnormal breast growth after taking Risperdal, a medication that was frequently marketed for "off-label" uses. Baron & Budd has filed lawsuits for more than 200 clients adversely affected by Risperdal use in the 22nd Circuit Court in St. Louis, Missouri. In the months leading up to trial, the firm's attorneys negotiated a favorable settlement on behalf of hundreds of individuals harmed by Risperdal.

#### Roundup

Baron & Budd shareholders Steve Baron and Holly Werkema negotiated a favorable settlement on behalf of hundreds of clients with claims against the manufacturer of Roundup.

#### Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (TDF)

Baron & Budd has investigated and filed cases on behalf of more than 700 plaintiffs who developed bone and kidney injuries after taking HIV drugs containing tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF), including Truvada, Viread, Stribild, Complera, and Atripla. The lawsuits have been coordinated in *Gilead Tenofovir Cases*, JCCP 5043, in the Superior Court of California for the County of San Francisco, and the litigation is continuing.

#### Transvaginal Mesh

Baron & Budd managing shareholder and co-founder Russell Budd served on the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in litigation regarding transvaginal mesh. Baron & Budd attorneys represented hundreds of individuals who were harmed by the use of transvaginal mesh. The firm's attorneys investigated and settled claims on behalf of hundreds of individuals.

### Xarelto

Baron & Budd represented individuals who suffered severe internal bleeding as a result of ingesting the blood thinner Xarelto. Baron & Budd and their co-counsel investigated, filed, and settled cases for hundreds of clients. Former Baron & Budd shareholder Sindhu Daniel worked with the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee for *In Re: Xarelto (Rivaroxaban) Products Liability Litigation*, MDL 2592, on discovery and other issues affecting Plaintiffs nationwide.

### Other Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices

Baron & Budd is at the forefront of pharmaceutical and medical device litigation and is continually adding new case areas to its litigation practice. Other areas of litigation and cases settled by Baron & Budd attorneys include (but are not limited to): Metal on Metal Hip Replacements, Invokana, Low Testosterone, Power Morcellator, Proton Pump Inhibitors, Talcum Powder and Taxotere.

## ***TOXIC EXPOSURE LITIGATION***

### Closing Down the West Dallas Lead Smelter

In the West Dallas Lead Smelter case, Baron & Budd took on local environmental contamination to protect future generations of children from exposure to lead. One of Dallas' largest public housing projects sat in a low-income neighborhood directly across the street from a secondary lead smelter. For many years, the smelter converted used automotive batteries into lead components for resale. Particulate emissions from the factory smokestacks literally blanketed the surrounding community with lead-bearing soot.

Baron & Budd represented more than 200 families in a lawsuit that ultimately closed the lead smelter and paid sizable confidential settlements to court-supervised trusts for 445 children affected by lead poisoning. Although the neurological damage to these children was irreversible, the funds recovered in the settlement have enabled the children to move into adulthood with medical, rehabilitative and vocational assistance. Closing the lead smelter and requiring the company to fund a community soil clean-up project helped prevent future damage to other neighborhood children.

### Settlement for Central Texas Residents Harmed by Lead Exposure

Baron & Budd represented more than 130 people who were exposed to high levels of lead and other toxic substances while growing up in a small town in Central Texas. Baron & Budd obtained a sizeable confidential settlement for the firm's clients, providing them with the resources to help pay for rehabilitative, psychological and other medical expenses.

Settlement for Harms Caused by Chemical Leaks

Baron & Budd successfully represented more than 850 workers injured by exposure to ethylene dichloride (EDC) in Lake Charles, Louisiana as a result of the negligent and reckless conduct of Conoco, Inc., Condea Vista Chemical Company, and a number of contractors that caused one of the largest chemical spills in U.S. history. In addition to its status as a probable human carcinogen, EDC can cause serious damage to the heart, central nervous system, liver, kidneys, lungs, gastrointestinal system and commonly results in depression, memory loss and personality changes.

***FINANCIAL LITIGATION***

\$423 Million Wells Fargo Settlement for Forced-Placed Automobile Insurance

Baron & Budd attorneys were appointed co-lead counsel in an MDL class action involving forced-placed automobile collateral protection insurance. In less than 2 years, Baron & Budd attorneys successfully negotiated a \$423 million non-reversionary common fund settlement, which provided payments to consumers without the need for claim forms or documentary proof.

\$250 Million Bank of America Settlement for Inflated Appraisals

Baron & Budd attorneys led the prosecution of a nationwide class action against Bank of America and LandSafe Appraisals over inflated home appraisals. Baron & Budd attorneys secured class certification of a nationwide claim for violations of the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act as well as fraud. Baron & Budd attorneys successfully negotiated a \$250 million non-reversionary common fund settlement, which provided full refunds for appraisal fees paid by consumers.

\$50 Million Wells Fargo Settlement Regarding Improper Markup for Broker Price Opinions

Baron & Budd attorneys reached a \$50 million settlement with Wells Fargo Bank, resolving a case alleging improper markups of fees for broker price opinions (BPOs). A BPO is an informal type of home appraisal prepared by a real estate broker that a lender will typically demand once a borrower defaults on a residential loan. Baron & Budd attorneys secured class certification of a nationwide claim for violations of the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act and common law fraud. Under the terms of the settlement, Wells Fargo was required to automatically mail checks to more than 250,000 mortgage holders, and class members without the need for documentation proof.

\$410 Million Bank of America Settlement Over Excessive Bank Overdraft Fees

Baron & Budd attorneys worked closely with other law firms in a class action lawsuit asserting manipulation of data by banks to increase revenue from overdraft



fees. The firm helped achieve a \$410 million settlement with Bank of America, the largest bank involved in the bank overdraft fee litigation. The case alleged that Bank of America, along with many other major banks, intentionally reordered debit card transactions to promote overdraft fees. Not only did the case result in repayment of most of these charges, but it also led to widespread changes in the banking system. Because of this lawsuit, many large banks changed their overdraft fee policies, no longer “reordering debits” and not offering “courtesy” overdraft services without customer consent.

\$110 Million Settlement with JP Morgan Chase Over Overdraft Fees Plus \$150 Million in Business Practice Changes

Baron & Budd lawyers served on the Plaintiffs’ Steering Committee in a class action lawsuit asserting manipulation of data by numerous national banks in order to increase overdraft fee revenue. The firm led the negotiations in a \$110 million settlement with JP Morgan Chase regarding the bank’s manipulative overdraft fee policies. The case alleged that JP Morgan Chase, along with a number of other banks, intentionally reordered debit card transactions to promote overdraft fees. Not only did the case result in repayment of many of these charges to consumers, it also led to widespread changes in the banking system, affecting virtually every American with a bank account. Because of the lawsuit, many large banks have changed their overdraft fee policies, no longer reordering debits and not offering “courtesy” overdraft services without customer consent. Also, as part of the negotiations, Chase agreed to not charge overdraft fees on debits of \$5 or less. In 2012, Baron & Budd lawyers were selected as finalists for the 2012 Trial Lawyer of the Year Award by the legal non-profit organization Public Justice for their groundbreaking work on the bank overdraft fee litigation.

Predatory Credit Card Practices

Baron & Budd represented the states of West Virginia, Mississippi and Hawaii in litigation against national banks and other financial institutions regarding their unfair and deceptive marketing practices related to their credit card service plans, including payment protection plans. These defendants have preyed upon unsuspecting consumers, including the elderly and the disabled, by charging them for products ancillary to their credit cards when the consumers either did not authorize such charges or could never qualify to benefit from them. The firm settled the state of West Virginia’s claims in this litigation in 2013 for more than \$12.5 million. In 2014, the firm settled the claims of the state of Mississippi for more than \$15 million. The firm also settled the claims of the state of Hawaii in 2014 for more than \$15.5 million.

Stock Option Back-Dating

Baron & Budd achieved a \$20 million settlement on behalf of individuals who purchased Semtech stock. Firm shareholder Burton LeBlanc served as co-lead counsel in the case. Plaintiffs in the case alleged that Semtech manipulated grant dates for stock options, which resulted in understatement of Semtech’s compensation expenses and overstatement of its reported income.

### Protecting Shareholders' Interest in Corporate Transition

As co-lead counsel in *In Re: 7-Eleven, Inc. Shareholders Litigation*, Baron & Budd represented shareholders in negotiations to increase the amount of an offer in a transaction turning a publicly-traded company into a privately-held entity. Baron & Budd achieved a \$5 per share increase in the offer that provided an additional \$145 million to 7-Eleven shareholders.

### Settlement of Mutual Fund Advisors' Breaches of Fiduciary Duties

Baron & Budd represented shareholders in recovering funds in various mutual fund families against the fund advisors for their breach of fiduciary duties for failing to file proof of claim forms in settled securities cases for which the funds were eligible. Baron & Budd reached a series of confidential settlements that resulted in money being returned from the fund advisor to the mutual fund.

### Protecting Public Investors from Corporate Self-Dealing

In 2010, Baron & Budd successfully protected the interests of public investors in Affiliated Computer Services, Inc. (ACS). While ACS was being sold to Xerox, ACS's management and largest shareholder negotiated a better price for their own shares as well as remarkable future employment compensation packages. The insiders at the same time voted to sell ACS at a price well below its fair market value, which would have forced public shareholders to sell their shares for less. Working with other national law firms, the lawyers at Baron & Budd were able to obtain \$69 million in additional compensation for ACS public shareholders.

## **CONSUMER RIGHTS**

### Asbestos

Years ago, Baron & Budd led the fight for victims' rights in two landmark Supreme Court victories, *Amchem Products v. Windsor* and *Ortiz v. Fibreboard Corp.*, which are still widely recognized as among the most significant appellate decisions for consumer rights.

*Ortiz v. Fibreboard Corp.*, 526 U.S. 815, 119 S. Ct. 2295 (1999) was one of the last decisions handed down by the United States Supreme Court in 1999. The Court's 7-2 decision was reached after months of fierce debate over whether future claims by victims of asbestos exposure should be handled as a class action.

Baron & Budd led the charge to dismiss the Fibreboard mandatory class action settlement that would have severely limited the rights of people to pursue individual claims based on the severity of their specific illness and specific circumstances of their exposure.

Writing on behalf of the Court, Justice Souter questioned the fairness of the settlement because, if allowed to go forward, Fibreboard would essentially have had a "get out of jail free card." Fibreboard would have been able to settle all

asbestos claims, including all future claims, with only \$500,000 of the company’s own money, thus retaining virtually all of its net worth at the expense of the victims of its asbestos-containing products. The *Ortiz* decision corroborated another significant Supreme Court decision in which Baron & Budd also fought for victims’ rights: *Amchem Products v. Windsor*, 521 U.S. 591, 117 S. Ct. 2231, 138 L.Ed2d 689 (1997).

Baron & Budd continues to lead the fight for asbestos victims’ rights, as the firm obtained the largest asbestos-related judgment to date in Louisiana in 2022 when a jury found Level 3 Holdings, Inc. (formerly known as Peter Kiewit Sons’ Co.) and twenty other Louisiana-based companies liable for giving a pipefitter-welder mesothelioma and awarded the victim an extraordinary \$36.7 million in damages.

Food Product Litigation – Deceptive Advertising

Baron & Budd represents consumers in several cases concerning deceptive and misleading advertising practices committed by food and beverage companies. These cases include an action against a popular protein drink company, which asserted that its meal replacement drinks and bars were unlawfully labeled “healthy” when, in fact, they contained levels of fat and saturated fat deemed to be excessive by the FDA for products labeled as “healthy”, an action against a frozen potato company for allegedly misrepresenting that certain products were “all natural”, although they contained a synthetic chemical preservative; and an action against Abbott Laboratories, which asserts that its “Ensure Muscle Health” drink misleads consumers about the products’ promise that it contains an ingredient that will help the elderly rebuild strength.

Lancôme and Avon Anti-Aging Cream Multi-District Litigation – Deceptive Advertising

Baron & Budd attorneys are co-lead counsel for plaintiffs in class action lawsuits currently pending against Lancôme and Avon concerning certain anti-aging and wrinkle cream skincare products. According to the lawsuits, the companies market and advertise the purported unique age-defying benefits of the products to consumers using deceptive and misleading references to clinical studies, trials, tests, patents and other indicia of scientific credibility. But, as alleged in the complaints, the products do not, and cannot, provide the specific age-negating effects they promise to provide.

***DEFECTIVE VEHICLE LITIGATION***

Attorneys at Baron & Budd have been at the forefront of automotive defect litigation and have filed suit, on behalf of millions of owners and lessees of defective vehicles, against every major automobile manufacturer for misrepresentations and failures to disclose material safety information. A representative sample of the Firm’s automotive cases includes the following matters:

ARC Airbags

Baron & Budd attorneys are co-lead counsel in a Multidistrict Litigation (MDL) class action case concerning tens of millions of defective airbag hybrid inflators manufactured by ARC Automotive Inc. The inflators pose a grave safety risk to drivers and passengers because the affected inflators can explode and rupture in a crash and expel metal shrapnel at vehicle occupants. The litigation is ongoing.

#### ZF-TRW Airbags

Baron & Budd attorneys are co-lead counsel in a Multidistrict Litigation (MDL) class action case concerning a dangerous safety defect in airbag control units (ACUs) and application-specific integrated circuits (ASICs) manufactured by ZF-TRW that are supposed to control the passenger safety systems in more than 15 million vehicles. The defect has caused the airbags and/or seatbelts to malfunction in dozens of crashes and crash tests resulting in nine deaths. The litigation is ongoing.

#### Hyundai and Kia engine immobilizer Litigation

Millions of certain Kia (2011-2021) and Hyundai (2015-2021) vehicles equipped with the traditional insert-and-turn type key-based ignition systems were not fitted with an engine immobilizer that prevents the vehicle from being started without the vehicle's specific smart key, resulting in vehicles being easily stolen by opening the steering column and using any metal object, typically a USB, to start the engine. In September 2022, Baron & Budd filed a class action lawsuit alleging that the failure of Hyundai and Kia to install this common safety component resulted in an increase in thefts of the affected vehicles. Other class actions followed and the cases were ultimately consolidated in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. In February 2023, Baron & Budd shareholder Roland Tellis was appointed co-lead counsel in the Multi-District Litigation class action lawsuit, which seeks damages for numerous vehicle thefts, a drop in the vehicles' value and higher insurance premiums for those who own them.

#### 3-Wheeled Vehicle Litigation

Baron & Budd attorneys represent several plaintiffs who have suffered devastating injuries or lost loved ones who were involved while riding in 3-wheel motorcycle vehicles. These accidents typically involve a seemingly unexplained loss of control immediately before the crash. Baron & Budd is investigating potential defects in the vehicle manufacturer's design that may be contributing to this loss of control and the resulting crashes. Based on ongoing investigations, 3-wheeled vehicles may have design defects that compromise the stability of the vehicles, particularly when braking, including the lack of electronic stability control, an anti-lock brake system designed for a 4-wheeled vehicle that's been defectively deployed in the 3-wheeled motorcycles, and poorly designed seat belt, seatback, and rollover safety systems. Baron & Budd's investigation indicates these vehicles are unreasonably dangerous and vulnerable to instability and loss of control during foreseeable operator use, which may cause the vehicles to veer or pull unexpectedly to the right when the brakes are applied.

### \$1.5 Billion Settlement Involving Defective Takata Airbags

Baron & Budd filed the nation's first lawsuit regarding the recall of tens of millions of Takata-brand air bags. The defect caused the airbag's metal housing to explode and propel metal shrapnel into the vehicle occupants. Baron & Budd shareholder Roland Tellis was one of three lawyers appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in a multi-state class action lawsuit against Takata involving vehicles equipped with a defective airbag inflator, the largest automotive recall in U.S. history. In 2017, Tellis helped to negotiate \$1.5 billion in settlements from seven automaker defendants.

### \$14.5 Billion Settlement Involving Volkswagen "Clean Diesel" Scam

Baron & Budd attorneys were appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee and represented millions of owners of Volkswagen "Clean Diesel" vehicles in cases concerning allegations that Volkswagen installed software in these cars that allowed the vehicles to "cheat" emissions tests. Baron & Budd shareholder Roland Tellis and the team of attorneys representing plaintiffs secured settlements in excess of \$14.5 billion and helped consumers obtain repairs for more than 50,000 vehicles impacted by the scheme. The settlement required Volkswagen to buy back certain class vehicles at pre-scandal values, provide restitution payments of approximately \$6,000 per class member, pay an additional \$225 million to mitigate the environmental effects of excess NOx emissions and also pay \$25 million to support the use of zero-emissions vehicles in California.

### \$500 Million Settlement In Chrysler-Dodge-Jeep "EcoDiesel" Litigation

Baron & Budd attorneys were appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee and represented millions of owners of Chrysler-Dodge-Jeep "EcoDiesel" vehicles. The case alleged that the Defendants secretly installed software in these vehicles that allowed them to improperly evade emissions regulations. Baron & Budd helped a achieve a settlement valued at more than \$500 million.

### Trucking Accident Litigation

Baron & Budd continues to investigate and represent clients who have been harmed in serious truck wrecks and collisions involving commercial vehicles. These cases are often complex in nature and can involve multiple entities in the transportation cycle. For instance, Baron & Budd has experience pursuing cases against motor carriers, shippers, brokers, and other transportation companies involved and responsible for putting dangerous trucks or truck drivers on the road.

At trial, Baron & Budd shareholder Bryan Green has successfully obtained multiple multi-million dollar verdicts and settlements, including verdicts recognized as top 10 trucking verdicts in Texas in 2018 and 2019 by Top Verdict. Baron & Budd's trucking attorneys team represents individuals who have lost loved ones or suffered a wide range of catastrophic injuries, including traumatic brain injuries, amputations, spinal cord injuries, and various fractures and surgeries. Having represented a number of families of victims who were killed in

truck crashes involving underride events, Mr. Green now serves on the American Association of Justice (AAJ) Trucking Litigation Group's Underride Committee.

## THE FIRMS' SHAREHOLDERS

**Russell W. Budd**, a mainstay of the plaintiff's bar with more than forty-five years' experience representing victims of corporate wrongdoing, has been a trailblazer for the entirety of his career. Serving as a Baron & Budd shareholder since 1985 and president and managing shareholder since 2002, Mr. Budd presides over one of the nation's largest plaintiffs' firms. Founded in 1977, Baron & Budd has nearly 200 full-time employees and is headquartered in Dallas, Texas, with offices in Los Angeles, California; San Diego, California; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Washington, D.C.

Baron & Budd has achieved substantial national acclaim for its work on cutting-edge litigation, trying hundreds of cases to verdict and settling tens of thousands of cases for hundreds of billions of dollars in areas of litigation as diverse as pharmaceuticals and defective medical devices, asbestos and mesothelioma, water contamination, fraudulent banking practices, motor vehicles, employment, and other consumer fraud issues. Mr. Budd's leadership among plaintiff's attorneys is unrivaled. Over the past four and a half decades, he has played a major role in many of the largest cases ever to be litigated in the United States court system.

Since the 1980s, Russell Budd has successfully protected the interests of asbestos victims across the country. He was appointed by United States Trustees in the early 2000s to serve on the creditors' committees of numerous asbestos manufacturer bankruptcies where he represented and advocated on behalf of individuals harmed by the debtors' asbestos-containing products. Working in that role, Mr. Budd was instrumental in reaching settlements to fund and establish asbestos trust funds to protect present and future asbestos victims. Mr. Budd's efforts as a chief negotiator in the Halliburton bankruptcy resulted in a \$4 billion national settlement and created the largest asbestos trust fund of its kind anywhere in the world. Additionally, Mr. Budd helped negotiate a \$3.9 billion settlement with United States Gypsum to benefit asbestos claimants and a nearly \$3 billion cash and stock equity settlement with W.R. Grace to fund an asbestos trust for asbestos claimants. Mr. Budd's invaluable knowledge, expertise, and guidance at the inception of those bankruptcies established the foundation for the long-term successful administration of asbestos trusts.

Today, Mr. Budd sits on the Trust Advisory Committee (TAC) of the following asbestos trusts where he continues to protect the interests of injured individuals: ABB Lummus Global Inc 524(g) Asbestos PI Trust, Armstrong World Industries, Inc. Asbestos PI Settlement Trust, Babcock & Wilcox Company Asbestos PI Settlement Trust, Celotex Asbestos Settlement Trust, Combustion Engineering 524(g) Asbestos PI Trust, Federal-Mogul Asbestos Personal Injury Trust, Fuller Austin Asbestos Settlement Trust, JT Thorpe Successor Trust, NGC Bodily Injury Trust, Owens Corning/Fibreboard Asbestos Personal Injury Trust, Swan Asbestos and Silica Settlement Trust, United States Gypsum Asbestos Personal Injury



Settlement Trust, and WRG Asbestos PI Trust. Additionally, Baron & Budd shareholders also sit on the following TACs where they too advocate for asbestos victims' interests: ASARCO, DII Industries, LLC Asbestos PI Trust, Flintkote Asbestos Trust, G-I Holdings Inc. Asbestos Personal Injury Settlement Trust, M.H. Detrick Co. Asbestos Trust, Manville Personal Injury Settlement Trust, NARCO Asbestos Trust, Pittsburgh Corning Corporation, Quigley Company, Inc. Asbestos PI Trust, Rapid American Asbestos Personal Injury Liquidating Trust, Rock Wool Mfg. Co. Asbestos Trust, Rutland Fire Clay Co. Asbestos Trust, and TH Agriculture & Nutrition LLC Asbestos Personal Injury Trust. In total, Mr. Budd and other members of his firm currently serve as advisors to trustees who are responsible for more than \$30 billion in asbestos trust assets. In addition to his legal work, Mr. Budd has been a tireless leader in the political arena, fighting tort reform, including proposed state and federal legislation that would harm the rights of tort victims.

Russell Budd's landmark settlement work, however, is not limited to asbestos cases. His efforts have been instrumental in numerous other cases, spanning from the banking industry to the BP oil spill, along with his more recent work on the national opioid litigation. Mr. Budd was appointed by the Honorable Dan Aaron Polster (N.D. Ohio) to the Plaintiffs' Settlement Negotiation Team for In re National Prescription Opiate Litigation, MDL 2804. Together with co-counsel, Russell Budd and his firm represent more than 700 public entities and eight Attorneys General across the nation in litigation against prescription opioid manufacturers, distributors and dispensers. The Settlement Negotiation Team, comprised of seven elite trial lawyers from top plaintiffs' firms around the country, have been responsible for negotiating more than \$46 billion in settlements with the nation's largest and most prominent drug distributors, manufacturers and dispensers. The settlement funds, which began flowing to communities across America in 2022, are providing abatement and relief to states, counties, cities, and native American tribes to combat the opioid crisis.

Mr. Budd also represents the state of New Mexico in its opioid litigation. He has successfully negotiated settlements from pharmacies, distributors and manufacturers in New Mexico valued at a combined \$538 million. He also supervised a seven week trial for the state in Santa Fe resulting in a confidential settlement with the last remaining pharmacy defendant, Walgreens. That settlement cannot be publicly disclosed until May 2023. "These settlements represent a significant step toward holding opioid sellers responsible for their role in creating a public health crisis that continues to plague our country," said Mr. Budd. Nationally, Russell Budd and his colleagues on the Settlement Negotiation Team, along with state Attorneys General, continue to negotiate and mediate with remaining opioid defendants in MDL 2804.

Settlement negotiations of this scale are nothing new to Russell Budd. He was a chief negotiator for the 2012 settlement with JPMorgan Chase in In Re Checking Account Overdraft Litigation, which resulted in \$110 million in cash and more than \$100 million in business practice changes benefiting Chase customers. Mr. Budd was a leader in the Overdraft litigation which, in 2011, led to a \$410 million settlement of with Bank of America. He was also one of the negotiators of a \$177

million settlement for litigation brought on behalf of seven states' attorneys general against GlaxoSmithKline regarding its fraudulent marketing of the diabetes drug Avandia.

Under Mr. Budd's leadership, Baron & Budd has garnered significant national recognition for cutting-edge litigation and settlements. The firm's Environmental Litigation group was named one of Law360's 2020 Practice Groups of the Year for more than \$1 billion in settlements with Pacific Gas & Electric for municipalities and individuals concerning wildfire damage in California, and \$648 million in settlements with Bayer AG over water pollution caused by polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). In addition, in December of 2022, Baron & Budd's Environmental Group received final approval in a \$575.5 million class action for cities and counties against Monsanto concerning water pollution.

Mr. Budd and his wife, Dorothy, are deeply committed to their community. The Budds were instrumental in establishing the Dallas Faith Communities Coalition (DFCC) with the Dallas Mayor's office in the early 2000s with the long term goal of working with community partners toward eradicating systemic causes of poverty in low-income communities with greater access to affordable housing and community safety. The partnership led the Budds to personally contribute funds to build 100 affordable single-family homes as part of the "Building on Faith" project, a collaborative initiative between the Dallas Faith Communities Coalition (DFCC), the City of Dallas, and Habitat for Humanity. In 2010, the DFCC partnered with the Center on Communities and Education (CCE) at Southern Methodist University in Dallas to create meaningful education collaboration with local public and charter schools located in the West Dallas area. In 2014, Mr. and Mrs. Budd donated \$2.5 million to Southern Methodist University to endow The Budd Center for Involving Communities in Education, uniting the work of the DFCC and CCE in collective partnership to provide Dallas-area children the education, social and emotional tools they need to break the cycle of poverty. The Center leads a partnership of more than 30 nonprofits and 15 public, private and charter schools in Dallas. Mr. Budd continues to monitor the progress of The Budd Center as a member of the Advisory Board of the Simmons School of Education and Human Development at Southern Methodist University.

In 2017, Mr. and Mrs. Budd endowed \$3 million to the University of Texas School of Law to create The Budd Innocence Center, with the goal of improving the criminal justice system by helping prevent injustice and protecting the innocent. The Center sponsors events to highlight issues related to wrongful convictions, and as its main project, supports the education of law school students through the Actual Innocence Clinic. Clinic students and experienced faculty work together to provide legal assistance to prisoners with claims that they are innocent of the crimes for which they were convicted. Clinic students typically screen and investigate claims, interview witnesses, review transcripts, prepare motions and pleadings, and conduct factual and legal research.

**Steve Baron**, Baron & Budd shareholder, is an accomplished litigator known for his tenacity in pursuing justice for victims of corporate misconduct. He currently heads Baron & Budd's [mesothelioma and asbestos practice](#).

As lead of one of the nation's most aggressive litigation teams, Mr. Baron represents clients in cases that have resulted in some of the largest verdicts and settlements for people with mesothelioma and asbestos diseases, as well as clients who have been harmed by unsafe pharmaceuticals. He was the lead negotiator on 17,000 Avandia cases.

Over the past decade, Mr. Baron has been the lead negotiator on many of the firm's mesothelioma settlements and has also been the clients' representative on all major bankruptcy creditor committees. He has represented the firm's clients in major [bankruptcy trust negotiations](#) with asbestos companies including W.R. Grace, [Owens Corning](#), Pittsburgh Corning, [Babcock & Wilcox Co.](#), and Halliburton.

Mr. Baron served as a lead negotiator in a landmark case against Halliburton that resulted in a \$4 billion settlement, helping to bring financial compensation to tens of thousands of asbestos cancer victims. The Halliburton settlement is still one of the largest asbestos settlements on record.

As the head of Baron & Budd's asbestos and [pharmaceutical litigation](#) teams, Mr. Baron has helped build the firm's reputation as a watchdog for consumer protection.

Mr. Baron earned a business degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1986. He earned his JD from the University of Texas School of Law in 1988.

**Scott Summy** is the leader of the Environmental Litigation Group (ELG) and a shareholder at Baron & Budd. ELG was started by Mr. Summy in 2002 and is comprised of 30 attorneys and support professionals who concentrate on large environmental litigation across the country. In 2020, Law360 recognized ELG with its highly prestigious *Practice Group of the Year* awards for the United States in the category of Environmental Law.

Mr. Summy has served both in court-appointed leadership positions and directly represented clients in some of the country's largest environmental cases with national significance. It all began with a single phone call in August 1995 when Mr. Summy was a new lawyer. He received a call from a prospective client in North Carolina who had learned that he and his neighbors had been ingesting the chemical MTBE in their drinking water wells for years. Mr. Summy took the case, and after years of fighting for the residents' rights and going to trial, the case resulted in a record settlement.

Mr. Summy soon learned that MTBE was contaminating drinking water wells all over America. That case proved to be only the first of many to come. Mr. Summy was hired by public water providers all over the country whose residents had contaminated wells. He became the "go to" lawyer for public entities facing

environmental contamination which impacted their public resources. Mr. Summy has represented public entities from the east coast to the west coast and all across middle America. He and his ELG Team have recovered billions of dollars on behalf of their clients in environmental litigation.

## **SIGNIFICANT CASES**

### **PCBs**

These cases focus on the importance of stormwater and the waterbodies that stormwater drains into. ELG represents multiple public entities that have sued Monsanto for the effects of legacy contamination from PCBs. Municipal public entities are being required to expend monies to lower the levels of PCBs from their stormwater systems. States are dealing with the effects of PCBs to precious natural resources including all forms of sea life, including fish and whales. These natural resources are being impacted by PCBs in part due to contaminated stormwater being released into some of the country's most precious waterbodies and impacting the sea life that lives there. Monsanto knew about the toxic effects of PCBs decades ago. It also acknowledged that its product had reached the status of "global contaminant". These lawsuits are based in tort in multiple jurisdictions and are the first product liability tort cases in America dealing with stormwater.

Mr. Summy helped negotiate a landmark \$648M nationwide class settlement with Monsanto on behalf of permitted stormwater operators who discharge into PCB impaired waterbodies. The settlement was approved by Judge Olguin in the Central District of California. This is believed to be the first case in U.S. history to hold the manufacturer of a product responsible for stormwater contamination. The Court overseeing the settlement has appointed Scott Summy, John Fiske and Carla Pickrel, all of ELG, as Lead Class Counsel. Separate settlements totaling \$167.6M have also been reached on behalf of the States of Washington, the District of Columbia and New Mexico.

Many of ELG's clients filed the individual lawsuits that resulted in the class settlement and these clients are serving as proposed Named Class Representatives. They include the Cities of Baltimore, Berkeley, Chula Vista, Long Beach, Oakland, Portland, San Diego, San Jose, Seattle, Spokane and Tacoma; the Port of Portland; Counties of Baltimore and Los Angeles; District of Columbia and the States of Washington and New Mexico due to PCB contamination.

### **MTBE**

Mr. Summy represented more than 200 public water providers (e.g., municipalities, water districts, utilities, and school districts) and private well owners whose water was contaminated by MTBE and/or TBA. Many of these cases were consolidated in an MDL where Mr. Summy was appointed Co-Lead Counsel and a member of the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee. On behalf of these clients, Mr. Summy sought cost recovery for treatment facilities, operation and maintenance costs, out-of-pocket expenses, and administrative costs. Settlements in these cases totaled over \$1 billion dollars. A settlement of particular note was

for the City of Santa Monica, which was valued by the Court at \$315.5 million. Mr. Summy currently represents the State of Rhode Island in MTBE litigation.

### **Atrazine**

Mr. Summy also represented all public water providers in the United States whose water was contaminated with atrazine, a common agricultural chemical used on corn and other crops. On behalf of these water providers, the Group brought claims against Syngenta, the company that makes atrazine and was aware that its normal use caused drinking water contamination. Mr. Summy negotiated a settlement awarding \$105 million to more than 2,000 water providers. Mr. Summy served as Co-Lead/Class Counsel appointed by the Court on behalf of all class members.

### **California Wildfires**

Mr. Summy and ELG currently represent more than 50 public entities in litigation resulting from the devastating 2015, 2017 and 2018 California wildfires. The firm also represents hundreds of individuals and businesses. These fires were caused by the electrical utilities' failure to recognize permanent alterations in weather patterns caused by climate change. The utilities also failed to maintain their equipment and to adequately trim foliage surrounding their equipment. The cases are pending in four consolidated pieces of litigation - two in the North: Northern California Fires, JCCP 4955 and Camp Fire Cases, JCCP 4995; and two others in the South: Southern California Fires, JCCP 4965 and Woolsey Fires, JCCP 5000. Mr. Summy currently serves, along with Baron & Budd shareholder John Fiske, as Co-Lead Counsel for the public entities in Southern California and Woolsey Fire JCCPs. He was also appointed as Co-Lead Counsel for the public entities in the Northern California JCCP prior to PG&E filing bankruptcy. Those cases are now pending in the bankruptcy court.

Mr. Summy reached a settlement for the Northern California Public Entities for \$1 billion. The clients include Butte County, Butte-Glenn Community College District, City of Chico, City of Clearlake, City of Cloverdale, Lake County, Mendocino County, City of Napa, Napa County, Nevada County, City of Santa Rosa, Paradise Recreation & Park District, Sonoma County, Thermalito Water and Sewer District, Town of Paradise, Town of Windsor and Yuba County.

He previously settled cases on behalf of several public entities for damages suffered as a result of the Butte Fire. Those entities include Calaveras County, Calaveras County Water District, Ebbetts Pass Fire District, San Andreas Fire District and West Point Fire District.

Mr. Summy also secured a \$360 million settlement from Southern California Edison on behalf of 23 public entities for taxpayer losses caused by the 2017 Thomas Fire, the 2018 Montecito Debris Flows, and the 2018 Woolsey Fire. These clients include Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District, City of Agoura Hills, City of Calabasas, City of Hidden Hills, City of Malibu, City of Santa Barbara, City of Thousand Oaks, City of Ventura, City of Westlake Village, Conejo Valley Recreation and Park District, Conejo Open Space Conservation

Agency, Los Angeles County, Los Angeles County Consolidated Fire Protection District, Los Angeles County Flood Control District, Montecito Water Protection District, Montecito Fire Protection District, Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, Santa Barbara County and several related agencies and Ventura County and several related agencies.

In addition to public entities, Mr. Summy represents thousands of families and businesses who lost everything due to the negligent maintenance, inspection, and operations of these investor-owned utilities.

### **PFAS/AFFF**

#### **AFFF MDL**

Mr. Summy was recently appointed as Co-Lead Counsel by the court in AFFF MDL No. 2873 pending in federal district court in South Carolina. This litigation focuses on PFAS contamination to the environment by its use in fire foam. The litigation focuses on the manufacturers of AFFF and PFAS and seeks damages for extensive contamination. This is the hottest environmental issue in the United States presently. Mr. Summy represents numerous public entities in the MDL including the State of Alaska, the State of Mississippi and several other public water providers. Some of those public water providers are: Bakman Water Company, California Water Service Company, City of Lauderhill, City of Pensacola, City of San Jose, City of Sioux Falls, Coraopolis Water & Sewer Authority, Emerald Coast Utilities Authority, England Economic and Industrial Development, Lakefront Management Authority, Sioux Falls Airport Authority, South Adams County Water and Sanitation District, Town of Ayer, Town of Barnstable, Town of Danvers and Town of Maysville.

Mr. Summy is also serving as Co-Chair of the General Liability Discovery Committee and the Science Committee and was appointed by the Court to participate in settlement discussions. Baron & Budd Shareholder Carla Burke is also serving as Co-Chair of the Law and Briefing Committee.

#### **GEN-X**

Mr. Summy and the Group are currently seeking relief on behalf of public water providers and individuals against E. I. du Pont de Nemours and The Chemours Company for decades-long contamination of the Cape Fear River, along with the air and groundwater near the Fayetteville, North Carolina plant from Gen-X compounds and dozens of other per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in the PFAS chemical family. For 35 years, DuPont and Chemours have contaminated the river and more than a hundred private wells around their plant. Mr. Summy and the Group represent Brunswick County, the Town of Wrightsville Beach, and the Lower Cape Fear Water & Sewer Authority as they seek to recover the costs of removing all PFAS chemicals before the water is distributed to the public. The Group also represents the owners of most of the private wells around the plant that have been contaminated, and is seeking damages for well filtration, all costs associated with filtration, and property damage. This case is of national



significance as focus has shifted to the prevalence of PFAS chemicals across the country.

**Gulf Oil Spill**

Mr. Summy’s experience with environmental litigation led to a leadership role in the litigation arising from the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. In 2010, he was appointed to the Plaintiffs’ Executive Committee and Plaintiffs’ Steering Committee in the Gulf Oil Spill Multi-District Litigation in the Eastern District of Louisiana. In that capacity, he played a critical role in negotiating a settlement and claim procedure for the tens of thousands of individuals, businesses, and governmental entities injured by the oil spill. To date, the value of this settlement is estimated to exceed \$14 billion. Mr. Summy and the Group also represented hundreds of businesses with claims against BP and have recovered in excess of \$100 million on behalf of these clients.

Mr. Summy also represented a number of public entities who sustained loss of tax revenue due to the oil spill and assisted in the recovery of their significant damages. These entities include City of Anna Maria, City of Bristol, City of Holmes Beach, City of Marathon, City of Monticello, City of Niceville, City of Palmetto, City of Pensacola, City of St. Marks, City of Tallahassee, Collier County, Escambia County, Jackson County, Jefferson County, Lee County, Leon County, Manatee County, Monroe County, Okaloosa Gas District, Pensacola Downtown Improvement Board, Santa Rosa County, School Board of Calhoun County, School Board of Escambia County, School Board of Jefferson County, School Board of Leon County, School Board of Martin County, School Board of Miami-Dade County, School Board of Monroe County, School Board of Palm Beach County, School Board of Polk County, School Board of Santa Rosa County, School Board of Volusia County, School Board of Wakulla County, Town of White Springs, Village of Islamorada, and Wakulla County.

**TCP**

Mr. Summy and the Group were involved in developing successful product liability theories against the makers of nematicides applied to crops in California. These nematicides contained the scavenger chemical 1,2,3TCP. Over the last decade, Mr. Summy and the Group have represented many California public entities whose public drinking water wells were impacted by TCP. The public entities represented include California Water Services, City of Bakersfield, City of Delano, City of Livingston, City of Oceanside, City of Shafter, City of Wasco, Lamont Public Utility District and Montara Water & Sanitary District. Results to date exceed \$200 million. The group currently represents San Joaquin County in their litigation.

**Santa Barbara Oil Spill**

Mr. Summy represented the City of Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara County against Plains All-American Pipeline. The company’s pipeline ruptured, spilling oil in the vicinity of Santa Barbara residents and the Pacific Ocean. These cases were successfully resolved.

**Coal Ash – Duke Energy**

Mr. Summy and the Group were part of the team that successfully resolved litigation for residents living nearby Duke Energy Coal Ash ponds. Chemicals have leaked from these ponds and contaminated drinking water wells with hexavalent chromium and other dangerous chemicals.

Mr. Summy has published several articles regarding the legal aspects of handling cases involving chemicals that impact his clients. In 2003, Mr. Summy's MTBE water clients were placed at tremendous risk when the "MTBE Liability Waiver" provision was added to the proposed Energy Bill coming out of the Legislature's Conference Committee. The MTBE Liability Waiver would have stripped Mr. Summy's MTBE water clients of their rights to pursue the major oil companies under a products liability cause of action. Mr. Summy attempted to assist his clients by criticizing the controversial provision.

Mr. Summy regularly presents at both legal and environmental seminars. Of note, in 2003, Mr. Summy was invited to present at a seminar to discuss American Indian Tribal Concerns regarding Perchlorate contamination in the Colorado River. He also testified before the Texas House Civil Practice and Remedies Subcommittee in opposition to HB 1927, a bill designed to provide immunity to manufacturers of gasoline additives.

Mr. Summy is actively involved in organizations that are important to his clients, public and private well owners. He was selected in 2003 to become a member of the Board of Directors for the nationally acclaimed Western Environmental Law Center.

Scott Summy is the founder and President of Supreme Court Youth Organization (SC). SC is an organization which supports youth basketball teams as they compete nationally. It provides assistance to underprivileged kids who could not otherwise afford to participate. It also established and supports SASO (Scholars and Athletes Serving Others), a service organization of young men and their mothers who devote substantial service time to charitable events.

Mr. Summy was recently elected to the Board of Trustees of the Texas Tech Law School Foundation. His term began on August 1, 2020. He has endowed a Pre-Law Scholarship in his namesake at his alma mater, Tarleton State University. Mr. Summy is AV Preeminent rated by Martindale-Hubbe.

**Dan Alberstone** co-manages Baron & Budd's Los Angeles law office. He has more than 30 years of broad experience prosecuting complex litigation matters, including extensive jury trial experience. He specializes in consumer class action litigation in the areas of consumer protection and financial fraud.

Mr. Alberstone's reputation for tenacious representation and zealous advocacy, as well as his proven track record, has led to his selection as lead trial counsel in

numerous complex, high-stakes litigation cases, as well as his appointment as lead class counsel in a number of high-profile class action cases, including cases against large national banks and multinational corporations. Some of Mr. Alberstone's notable consumer class action cases include *Payne v. Bank of America, N.A., et al.*, involving manipulation of the LIBOR U.S. Dollar rate, *Bias et al. v. Wells Fargo & Company, et al.*, concerning illegal mark-ups of default related fees, *Ellis v. JP Morgan Chase* and *Stitt v. Citibank*, concerning unlawful charging of unnecessary default fees, *Waldrup v. Countrywide Financial Corporation*, concerning illegal charging for fraudulent appraisals, *Weiner v. Ocwen Financial Corporation*, involving illegal assessment of default-related service fees that contained undisclosed mark-ups, and *Ono v. Head Racquet Sports USA*, concerning false advertising of Head tennis racquets.

Mr. Alberstone also represents governmental entities in enforcement of their consumer protection laws. He is currently representing the states of Hawai'i and New Mexico against Bristol-Myers Squibb and Sanofi for unfair and deceptive business practices in the marketing of the antiplatelet drug Plavix. According to the allegations in the complaints filed, these pharmaceutical companies failed to disclose to prescribing physicians and patients that Plavix has diminished or no effect on a significant portion of the patient population in these states and that those patients for whom Plavix would not work could have been identified through a simple genetic test.

The Los Angeles Daily Journal has recognized Mr. Alberstone for obtaining one of the top plaintiff's verdicts in 2009. He has been consistently selected for inclusion on the Southern California Super Lawyers list since 2005 (Thomson Reuters) and served several years on the Board of Governors of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers.

**Carla Burke Pickrel** joined Baron & Budd in 2000, and as a shareholder helped pioneer the Environmental Litigation Group in 2004. In that role, she develops innovative legal strategies for cases arising from chemical contamination of drinking water supplies and natural resources. Ms. Pickrel shines as a writer who is able to distill complex scientific and legal concepts into simple and powerful words. "I take difficult, technical-sounding concepts and tell a simple story --- how pollution prevents a neighborhood from using its favorite fishing spot or how pesticides that run off from a crop can increase drinking water costs in a town a mile away."

Ms. Pickrel works on all of the ELG's many cases, including those arising from methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE), atrazine, perchloroethylene (PCE), polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) contamination of drinking water supplies. In her time with the Group, she has represented hundreds of public entities — villages, towns, cities, utilities, school districts, and states.

She is currently on the front lines of litigation against the manufacturers of firefighting foams that release toxic perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and

perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) whenever used. Recent testing has detected these chemicals in drinking water supplies nationwide. “The manufacturers of these foams knew about the potential for contamination, yet sold the products for use at military and civilian airports all across America without warning users of the potential harm caused to communities”, she says.

Baron & Budd represents water providers dealing with firefighting foam contamination now. These and all similar cases pending in federal courts across the United States were recently consolidated in multidistrict litigation (MDL) 2873 before Judge Richard Gergel in Charleston, South Carolina. Litigating in MDL 2873 allows Ms. Pickrel to contribute her experience in environmental contamination cases to the complex issues that arise. She brings a nuanced understanding of the legal, scientific, and practical problems that water providers and individuals face on a nationwide scale.

Ms. Pickrel also represents cities and states along both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts including Baltimore, San Diego, Long Beach, San Jose, Oakland, Berkeley, Chula Vista, Portland, Port of Portland and Spokane in actions against Monsanto Company for polluting America’s waterways with PCBs. After reaching a momentous settlement with Monsanto, the parties moved to certify a nationwide class of similarly-situated public entities, and Ms. Pickrel was named Class Counsel alongside Baron & Budd ELG’s Scott Summy and John Fiske. The case, pending before Judge Olguin in the Central District of California, is *City of Long Beach v. Monsanto Co.*, 2:16-cv-03493-FMO-AS. The settlement has begun to distribute approximately \$530,000,000 to a class of more than 2,500 public entities affected by Monsanto’s PCBs.

Ms. Pickrel’s current work rests on her long experience with nationwide environmental litigation. For more than 20 years, she has been a leader in nationwide litigation arising from MTBE contamination on behalf of more than 200 water providers in more than 20 states. She also played a major role in a nationwide class action settlement for providers whose water supplies are contaminated with atrazine, an agricultural chemical.

Putting her experience to work in new areas is an energizing part of Ms. Pickrel’s job, and she is motivated by the prospect of restoring natural resources for future generations. “In some areas, people are advised not to swim in contaminated water or eat fish from certain areas. We are working to restore those resources so that they can be used again.” And she is driven by the results she sees at Baron & Budd. “The work we do helps entire communities. Baron & Budd makes people’s everyday lives better,” she says.

Her work has earned her recognition by professional organizations. Ms. Pickrel has been named to the National Trial Lawyers’ Top 100 Civil Plaintiff Trial Lawyers every year since 2016, the Top 10 Environmental Trial Lawyers every year since 2020, the Top 25 Products Liability Trial Lawyers every year since 2020, and the Top 25 National Women Trial Lawyers every year since 2020. She was also selected as a Super Lawyers “Rising Star of Texas Law” (Thomson Reuters) in 2006 and,

with her colleagues, was twice-nominated for Public Justice's Trial Lawyer of the Year Award in 2009 and in 2013.

While in law school at Southern Methodist University, Ms. Pickrel was on a team from the school's Civil Clinic that successfully represented a disabled man whose lack of medical treatment while in the custody of the Dallas county jail amounted to cruel and unusual punishment. After graduation, she returned to SMU as an adjunct clinical instructor of law to brief and argue the appeal of *Lawson v. Dallas County*, 112 F.3d 257 (5th Cir. 2002) before the United States Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit.

**David Cannella** is a shareholder in the Louisiana offices of Baron & Budd. As a member of the Mesothelioma Litigation Group, he serves asbestos victims across the gulf state. After graduating from Louisiana State University's Paul M. Hebert Law Center in 1999, Mr. Cannella served as a law clerk to the Honorable Pascal F. Calogero, Jr., Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court. Following his service to Chief Justice Calogero, Mr. Cannella served as Assistant District Attorney for Orleans Parish. While working in Harry Connick's office, Mr. Cannella was assigned to the Narcotics Screening Division and the Felony Trial Division. In addition, he served as an advisor to the Orleans Parish Grand Jury.

Since 2001, Mr. Cannella has focused on litigation pertaining to toxic torts, product liability, serious personal injury, and wrongful death, successfully handling multi-million dollar cases and numerous jury and bench trials, both in state and federal court. He continues to focus on mesothelioma and other product liability cases for Baron & Budd throughout the State of Louisiana.

In one such case, Mr. Cannella obtained a \$6.4 million verdict against an asbestos product manufacturer for a 60-year-old nurse who was diagnosed with mesothelioma. David Cannella speaks passionately about how small a sum such verdicts bring when weighed against the horrors of suffering a slow, suffocating death from mesothelioma cancer. "Twelve million, fifteen million...twenty-five million dollars cannot fill the terrible hole created in the lives of hard-working families whose loved ones have suffered and died as a direct result of the callous disregard that asbestos corporations held for workers. No one would exchange his or her health or the health of a loved one for twenty million dollars, knowing he, she or a family member will suffer the type of painful death caused by asbestos cancer."

**Christopher Colley** is a shareholder in the Dallas offices of Baron & Budd. He began helping asbestos victims and their families in 2001, primarily along the Texas coast. He participated in hundreds of asbestos cases representing various trades of construction along with chemical and oil refinery workers, including pipefitters, boilermakers, carpenters, electricians and certainly those involved with insulation materials.

Starting in 2006 Mr. Colley began to work almost exclusively in the state of Louisiana. He utilized his extensive experience from having worked with

individuals in the industrial settings of Beaumont, Houston, Galveston and Freeport and put that to work representing asbestos victims who live and work along the lower Mississippi River. Since 2006 Mr. Colley has successfully litigated or settled hundreds of asbestos cases in Louisiana representing victims and their families from Baton Rouge all the way down the river to New Orleans.

Christopher Colley handles an active docket in Louisiana and appears in courts across the state. He has managed cases in East and West Baton Rouge, Ascension, St. James, New Orleans, Calcasieu, Morehouse, Ouachita, Caddo, Iberville, Point Coupee, and St. Bernard parishes. Mr. Colley strives to help his clients make sense of what has happened to them and their families through his experience and keen understanding of toxic tort law. “The best thing I can do as a lawyer,” he says, “is help people in the most difficult time of their lives to find answers and seek justice.”

**Catherine Hancock Dorsey** is a senior appellate attorney and shareholder in the Washington D.C. offices of Baron & Budd and a member of the Opioid Litigation Group. She brings almost 17 years of experience at the Department of Justice to Baron & Budd’s robust opioid practice and has briefed and argued an array of complex cases in her lengthy career. At Baron & Budd, Ms. Dorsey handles, advises, and strategizes on appellate and other issues. “I am excited to bring my appellate expertise to Baron & Budd to help strategize and be forward-thinking in our trial and appellate briefing. It is especially exhilarating to dig into an emerging area of the law with respect to opioid litigation.”

As an undergraduate at Harvard University, Ms. Dorsey majored in Russian Studies, which happened to coincide with the collapse of the Soviet Union. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree Magna Cum Laude in 1996, she worked for the Academy of Educational Development and the International Research & Exchanges Board, two nonprofit organizations which, at the time, were both engaged in educational and technical training programs for students and professionals from the former Soviet bloc countries, including on topics such as development of the rule of law. From her interest in watching Russia begin to rebuild its legal system from the vestiges of the old Soviet legal structure, Ms. Dorsey became keenly interested in our own rule of law. She headed off to law school, graduating Magna Cum Laude from Georgetown University Law Center in 2001 with her Juris Doctor and a concurrent Master of Science degree in Foreign Service.

During her time at Georgetown, Ms. Dorsey worked as a summer associate at the U.S. Department of Defense in the office of General Counsel, International Affairs, sparking her initial interest in what would eventually become an almost two-decade relationship with the Department of Justice. She also served as Articles Editor on the Georgetown Law Journal and as research assistant to Professor Viet Dinh, whose distinguished expertise lay in law and economics and constitutional law.

After graduating from law school, Ms. Dorsey spent a year clerking for the Honorable Juan R. Torruella on the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in San Juan, Puerto Rico. During her time in Puerto Rico, Ms. Dorsey delighted in her close proximity to the beach and savored Puerto Rican food



(mofongo is still a favorite), as well as the warm and welcoming culture. She was fascinated by local politics, which revolved around Puerto Rico's status as a United States territory and the issue of whether Puerto Rico should seek to become a state.

In 2002, Catherine Dorsey joined the U.S. Department of Justice through the Attorney General's Honors Program, where she spent almost seventeen years arguing complex and significant statutory, administrative, immigration, tort, and employment discrimination cases before the federal courts of appeals. As part of the Civil Division's Appellate Staff, she argued cases which dealt with matters such as the Freedom of Information Act, national security, and Bivens actions, which are special 'implied causes of action' created by the Supreme Court to allow private individuals to sue federal employees for constitutional violations. Ms. Dorsey presented more than forty oral arguments on behalf of the Government, including arguments before every United States Circuit Court of Appeal.

As an attorney on the Appellate Staff, Ms. Dorsey served as lead counsel for the government in scores of cases, representing a diverse array of federal agencies. In addition to consulting and coordinating with client agencies and trial attorneys to develop the Government's legal strategy and defenses, she drafted numerous Supreme Court merits briefs, and she also served for a term on the Appellate hiring committee.

Ms. Dorsey joined the Justice Department right after the 9-11 terrorist attacks. As a result, she spent a number of years embroiled in litigation to assist the United States in its defense against terrorism, including litigation involving the detention of enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Ms. Dorsey found this litigation a captivating mix of law and history, as many of the legal issues were ones that had not been addressed by courts since World War II, and needed to be re-examined in light of novel concerns about modern-day warfare and terrorism. One of her most interesting and important cases was defending the Government against a First Amendment challenge seeking disclosure of classified government videos depicting a Guantanamo detainee.

In 2017, Ms. Dorsey took advantage of opportunities within the Department of Justice to broaden her experience by serving as Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General, where she managed and coordinated some of the Civil Division's high-profile litigation. In addition to drafting filings and arguing motions in District Court, she developed litigation strategy and coordinated closely with DOJ leadership, the Office of the Solicitor General, and White House Counsel. She saw the Counsel position as an opportunity to work closely with incoming DOJ leadership at a time when the administration was short-staffed and needed help from long-term employees who "knew the ropes."

Moving to the private sector in 2019 was a decision Catherine Dorsey embraced as a prime opportunity to use her significant skills to make a worthy impact and serve the public in a new way. "Joining Baron & Budd is a great fit for me, where I can apply my legal writing and reasoning skills to the opioid epidemic and its associated litigation."

When Catherine Dorsey is not immersed in legal tomes or reading novels in their native languages, such as Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two sons. She likes to run, finding the rhythmic pounding on the pavement and solitary outside time to be a soothing counterpoint to the frenetic pace of a busy law practice. She is also a certified scuba diver who relishes the contemplative tranquility of life at ten fathoms in places like Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Puerto Rico and Hawaii.

**Celeste Evangelisti** has devoted almost two decades of her career to representing individuals, municipalities and public water suppliers who seek to recover costs to clean up contamination from the companies responsible – those who put dangerous products into the stream of commerce without ensuring they will not cause extensive environmental contamination. A shareholder with Baron & Budd's Environmental Litigation Group, Ms. Evangelisti currently represents plaintiffs in several states across the country who face a variety of contamination issues.

Ms. Evangelisti is a well-known figure in national litigation arising from contamination caused by the gasoline additive Methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE), having been among the first lawyers to litigate cases against oil refiners who blended MTBE into gasoline.

Ms. Evangelisti started her career at a large defense firm, representing some of the biggest corporations in the world in product liability cases. In 1999, Ms. Evangelisti used the knowledge she gained representing defendants in those cases and began working with Scott Summy, who represented corporate *victims* of wrongdoing. Mr. Summy was then expanding his groundwater contamination practice to California and other states. Mr. Summy brought his team to Baron & Budd in 2002, ultimately forming and expanding what is now the Environmental Law Group. Through the years, Ms. Evangelisti has assisted in the representation of over 150 water providers in MTBE cases.

Celeste Evangelisti's knowledge and skill have been put to work in many other water contamination cases as well, including those involving perchloroethylene (PCE), Trichloropropane (TCP) and Atrazine. She recently began working on the firm's PCBs-in-schools cases, which inspire her every day. "I can't imagine a more important cause than to protect the nation's children," she says.

Hard-driving and tenacious, Ms. Evangelisti's legal prowess has earned her many professional honors and awards. Ms. Evangelisti is AV-rated by Martindale-Hubbell, its top rating. She was a member of the legal team representing Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) which was named "Attorneys of the Year" for Environmental Law in 2001 by California Lawyer (Daily Journal Corp.) for the resolution of a precedent-setting case requiring major oil companies to clean up more than a thousand sites contaminated by the gasoline additive MTBE. Ms. Evangelisti has been nominated twice for Public Justice's prestigious "Trial Lawyer of the Year" award (2009, 2013) for her work on MTBE and Atrazine respectively,

and she was named a “Texas Super Lawyer” for three straight years (Thompson Reuters, 2003-2005).

Ms. Evangelisti has been a frequent speaker and presenter on legal topics concerning the prosecution of water contamination cases involving the gasoline additive MTBE and other contaminants of concern. “The lengths to which some polluters will go to increase their profits at the expense of the well-being of entire communities never ceases to amaze me,” she says. “It is ultimately very satisfying to bring these companies to justice and protect the environmental integrity of our water supplies.”

**John Fiske** is California’s leading public entity-as-plaintiff lawyer and a shareholder in the San Diego offices of Baron & Budd. Mr. Fiske has obtained significant settlements on behalf of communities, having resolved more than \$2.15 billion dollars for his public entity clients since December 2018 alone. John Fiske was the 2020 California Lawyer Attorney of the Year in Environmental Litigation and is a nine-time consecutive Super Lawyer.

John Fiske has been instrumental in the wildfire litigation in California. He has resolved approximately \$1.5 billion for more than 50 public entities statewide against investor-owned utilities Pacific Gas & Electric Company and Southern California Edison. Mr. Fiske led the lobbying efforts in the California State Legislature in 2018 and 2019 to preserve California’s inverse condemnation rights for public entities and wildfire victims. He has been court-appointed Co-Lead Counsel for Public Entities multiple times in multiple cases. Mr. Fiske has been featured on CNN and HBO’s Vice News for wildfire policy, litigation, and legislation.

Mr. Fiske’s public entity wildfire settlements include \$582 million in the Camp Fire, \$415 million in the North Bay Fires, \$230 million in the Woolsey Fire, \$150 million in the Thomas Fire, \$31 million in the Kincade Fire, \$25.4 million in the Butte Fire, and \$12.36 million in the Zogg Fire, among other settlements.

Against PG&E, Mr. Fiske is lead counsel for the Town of Paradise, Butte County, Paradise Recreation and Park District, Sonoma County, City of Santa Rosa, Napa County, City of Napa, Lake County, City of Clearlake, Mendocino County, Yuba County, Nevada County, Calaveras County, Calaveras County Water District, West Point Fire District, Ebbetts Pass Fire District, San Andreas Fire District, City of Chico, Thermalito Water and Sewer District, Butte-Glenn Community College District, City of Cloverdale, Town of Windsor, Shasta County, Tehama County, Plumas County, Lassen County, City of Susanville, and other special districts. His representation covers the Camp, North Bay, Kincade, Zogg, and Dixie Fires.

Against Southern California Edison, Mr. Fiske is lead counsel for Los Angeles County, Los Angeles County Flood Control District, Los Angeles County Consolidated Fire Protection District, City of Malibu, Santa Barbara County and several related agencies, City of Santa Barbara, Ventura County and several related agencies, City of Ventura, City of Thousand Oaks, City of Westlake

Village, City of Agoura Hills, City of Hidden Hills, City of Calabasas, Montecito Water Protection District, Montecito Fire Protection District, Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District, and Conejo Valley Recreation and Park District. His representation covers the Thomas, Woolsey, Saddleridge, and Bobcat Fires.

Against Liberty Utilities in the Mountain View Fire cases, he represents Mono County, Antelope Valley Fire Protection District, Toiyabe Indian Health Project, Inc., Lone Pine Shoshone Tribe, and Bridgeport Indian Colony.

Against Pacific Power in the Slater and McKinney Fires, Mr. Fiske represents Siskiyou County.

In December 2019, Mr. Fiske announced a historic agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services that reimburses federal and state disaster relief funds. This is the first accord of its kind in the nation.

Mr. Fiske also strives to protect public education. He is court-appointed Co-Lead Counsel for public entities and school districts in the California JUUL litigation. He represents more than 350 school districts and public entities across the nation, including some of the nation's largest districts like Los Angeles Unified and Chicago Public Schools.

Mr. Fiske represents the largest group of California's litigating public entities in the case against opioid manufacturers, distributors, and national retailers. Mr. Fiske created the California Opioid Consortium, consisting of 37 California counties and cities, which collectively serve more than 11 million Californians. He represents San Diego County, Sacramento County, Contra Costa County, City of San Jose, City of Chula Vista, Mendocino County, Calaveras County, Nevada County, Yuba County, Butte County, Imperial County, Shasta County, Placer County, El Dorado County, Sutter County, San Benito County, Trinity County, Lassen County, Tuolumne County, Fresno County, Inyo County, Glenn County, Modoc County, Amador County, Del Norte County, Siskiyou County, Merced County, Mariposa County, Monterey County, Plumas County, Mono County, Madera County, Tehama County, Yolo County, City of Lakeport, City of Clearlake, City of Chico, and also the City of Portland in Oregon.

In June 2020, Mr. Fiske announced an \$818 million settlement package with Monsanto for more than 2,400 public entities for PCB water contamination. Mr. Fiske represents states, counties, cities, and port districts in cases against Monsanto Company for manufacturing, selling, and promoting PCB chemicals, which are some of the largest water contaminants in the nation. Mr. Fiske represents Los Angeles County, Baltimore County, City of Baltimore, City of San Diego, City of Chula Vista, City of Long Beach, City of San Jose, City of Oakland, City of Berkeley, City of Portland, Port of Portland, City of Tacoma, City of Spokane, the District of Columbia, the State of New Mexico, and the State of Washington as a special assistant attorney general.

Mr. Fiske has been named a Super Lawyer in 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, and 2015. In 2013, San Diego Metro Magazine named John Fiske to its list of “40 Under 40.” He was named a “Top Influential” by The Daily Transcript in 2012, a “Top Young Attorney” by the Daily Transcript in 2009, and one of “50 People to Watch” by San Diego Magazine in 2007. Recently, he has authored two legal articles, including “Unnatural Disasters” and “Poison in the Well,” which won a Burton Award for Legal Writing. Mr. Fiske appears regularly on national television and radio programs discussing legal and legislative matters affecting national and state policy.

Mr. Fiske has a long history of charitable work. The Fiske Family Foundation actively supports educational and recreational opportunities for all. In 2016, he founded the San Diego Farm Animal Rescue, a 501(c)3 corporation that has rescued, housed, and/or re-homed approximately 100 horses, pigs, and chickens at his family farm in Elfin Forest, California. He is a past-president of the San Diego Brain Injury Foundation, a former advisory board member of UC San Diego’s Bannister Family House, a former board member of Solutions: Exploring Success Post-High School, a Red Coat of the San Diego Bowl Game Association (Holiday and Poinsettia Bowls), and a former Big Brother.

**Bryan Green**, a Baron & Budd shareholder, heads the firm’s Trucking & Catastrophic Injury Section. He represents individuals and families who have lost loved ones or suffered devastating life-altering injuries. His litigation team has built a reputation for aggressively pursuing justice for their clients and holding those at fault accountable.

Mr. Green is an experienced trial attorney who has tried cases in courts across Texas, including obtaining multi-million-dollar verdicts in 2018 and 2019 that were recognized as Top 10 Trucking Verdicts in Texas (#2 in 2018 and #8 in 2019) by *Top Verdict*. He’s been selected to the national List of 500 Leading Plaintiff Consumer Lawyers (by *LawDragon* in 2023), the “Top 40 Under 40” plaintiff lawyers in Texas (by *National Trial Lawyers*) and designated a Texas Rising Star (by *Super Lawyers*).

Mr. Green brings an in-depth knowledge of the trucking industry to his cases, which he uses to take on some of the largest motor carriers and insurance companies in the country. He is a member of the renowned Trucking Litigation Group of the American Association for Justice (and is active on its Underride Committee) and the Academy of Truck Accident Attorneys, two of the leading collaborative networks of plaintiff trucking lawyers. He also handles product liability cases stemming from defects in vehicle safety and design. In many ways, the hard work and dedication of his team at Baron & Budd in their steadfast pursuit of justice for clients also promotes safety on America’s roadways.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Green represented commercial truck drivers and trucking companies on the defense side. This experience gives him a unique perspective and understanding of both sides and all angles when investigating and evaluating a case. In addition to trucking litigation, Mr. Green has experience with

a wide variety of catastrophic injuries, including traumatic brain injuries, amputations, spinal injuries, and wrongful deaths. He has handled cases involving product defects and failures, drunk driving crashes, fights and assaults, as well as violations of civil rights.

Mr. Green graduated from Texas Tech School of Law in 2009 and obtained his Texas law license that same year. He is admitted to practice law in every state court and federal district court in Texas. Prior to law school, he received his bachelor's degree in International Studies from the University of Denver where he was a 2003 Academic All-Conference selection for the university's NCAA Division I Men's Soccer team.

When not practicing law, Mr. Green enjoys spending time with his family. He loves to travel and is an avid fan of the Dallas Mavericks.

**Ann Harper** has spent her career representing workers who have developed mesothelioma and other serious illnesses caused by exposure to asbestos. She is a shareholder in Baron & Budd's settlement department, where she works through the issues necessary to get the firm's clients compensation in their lawsuits and to pursue their claims through bankruptcy trust funds.

Ms. Harper says, "In my job, I am sometimes able to get people compensation that offers some security for their families and brings them some peace of mind. It's wonderful when I can do something like that for a client." When Ms. Harper is not working for her clients, she enjoys reading and traveling to new destinations.

**Stephen C. Johnston** puts his degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences to good use as a shareholder with the firm's Environmental Litigation Group, representing individuals and communities seeking clean-up costs for contaminated water supplies.

Mr. Johnston began his career with Baron & Budd in 1997 as part of the firm's asbestos litigation group. Mr. Johnston's time in the asbestos group was marked by his respect for the individual client and a reputation for thoughtful attention to their cases and their lives. His advocacy resulted in the recovery of millions of dollars for those injured by asbestos exposure.

Mr. Johnston brought his hard work and determined advocacy to the Environmental Litigation Group in 2004. Since that time he has represented hundreds of public entities seeking clean-up costs for water supplies contaminated by MTBE, Atrazine and TCP. He has also represented hundreds of individuals and businesses along the Gulf Coast impacted by the BP oil spill which resulted from the sinking of the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig.

For the past several years Mr. Johnston has led the firm's litigation arising from TCP contamination of drinking water supplies. Under his leadership the firm has successfully resolved numerous TCP contamination cases.



For Stephen Johnston, Baron & Budd was a good match for his goals to bring about justice to those who have been wronged through no fault of their own: “I saw in Baron & Budd a law firm committed to helping those injured by corporate indifference and greed. I wanted to help those who could not otherwise help themselves.” His dedication to this mission and his legal talent earned him recognition as a Super Lawyers “Rising Star” (Thomson Reuters, 2006).

**J. Todd Kale**, a shareholder at Baron & Budd, has dedicated his career to fighting the companies that knowingly exposed people to the deadly carcinogen known as asbestos. Mr Kale enjoys partnering with patients and families and helping them navigate the legal process during the most difficult time in their lives. He works on the front lines with the firm’s Asbestos Litigation Team. He meets with mesothelioma patients and their families across the country to gather the information necessary to successfully pursue their cases. More than any other aspect of his job, Mr. Kale enjoys meeting with these patients and families. Through these meetings, he becomes part of each of these families and becomes involved in the family’s specific struggles, needs and hopes. He is honored to be trusted by so many patients and families as they deal with the diagnosis and prognosis of mesothelioma. His 20 years of experience in this field make him a valuable resource for any information the family may need — both legal and medical.

For more than two decades, Todd Kale has worked on numerous asbestos lawsuits, managing thousands of cases from start to finish. Through his many years as an asbestos lawyer, he has developed an in-depth understanding of the legal system and how to best navigate that system on behalf of clients. Since 1993, he has helped clients recover hundreds of millions of dollars in settlements. Mr. Kale has experience pursuing not only asbestos manufacturers, but also equipment manufacturers and employers who are responsible for a client’s exposure to asbestos. Never one to back down from a fight, he is proud to have fought on behalf of mesothelioma and asbestos clients for his entire career.

Todd Kale earned his J.D. from the University of Tulsa College of Law in 1990 and his B.B.A. from the University of Texas.

**Brett Land** is a shareholder in Baron & Budd’s Environmental Litigation Group. Since joining the Environmental Litigation Group in 2014, he has represented individuals and public entities harmed by toxic contaminants, including per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE), and trichloroethylene (TCE).

Mr. Land is actively litigating cases involving the contamination of drinking water and other properties by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Mr. Land represents more than 1,200 private well owners and multiple public water providers in lawsuits against DuPont and Chemours to address those companies’ pollution of the Cape Fear River and North Carolina drinking wells with numerous toxic PFAS compounds.



Brett Land is also leading Baron & Budd's effort to seek justice for veterans and their family members who were exposed to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune. For decades the water supply at the base was contaminated by dangerously high levels of chemicals known as volatile organic compounds.

Mr. Land has also been member of the team seeking to hold Monsanto Company responsible for pollution of American schools and waterbodies caused by their polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a group of hazardous chemicals used in a number of products, including caulk, paint, and electrical equipment. Mr. Land represents more than a dozen public entities in PCB cases, and over the past seven years he has assembled an elite team of PCB experts to assist his clients.

**J. Burton LeBlanc**, a Baron & Budd shareholder, is a powerhouse advocate for individuals who have been harmed by corporate wrongdoing, having begun his legal career representing victims of toxic exposure and workplace hazards. His lifelong commitment to service through the legal system was fostered by family as a child in his home state of Louisiana, a state where danger in the workplace was commonplace and expectations for most workers were of a life shortened by the necessity of making a living. Seeing this, Mr. LeBlanc knew that his life mission would be to seek justice for the downtrodden.

Burton LeBlanc's passion for championing the rights of individuals extends to the national stage where he has served as president of the American Association for Justice (AAJ). As president of AAJ, the largest trial lawyer non-profit group in the United States, Mr. LeBlanc advocated for protection of America's civil justice system and rallied resources when corporate interests attempted to infringe on individual rights. He is an adamant crusader for the abolition of forced arbitration and a supporter of the fundamental right to a trial by jury.

Mr. LeBlanc's 2013 appointment as AAJ president followed a long history of involvement on both the local and national levels of AAJ and its affiliate organizations. He previously served as president-elect, vice president, treasurer and parliamentarian of AAJ. In addition, Mr. LeBlanc has been a member of AAJ's Executive Committee and the Board of Governors, where he was awarded the Wiedemann Wysocki National Finance Council Award two separate times. Mr. LeBlanc has been a member of the Board of Trustees of the AAJ Political Action Committee (PAC), chairman of the AAJ National Finance Council, a sustaining member of the AAJ and a member of the Leaders Forum. He is also a member of the AAJ's Section on Toxic Torts and Business Torts.

Burton LeBlanc has also served the Louisiana Association for Justice (LAJ) as past president, member of the Council of Directors, Board of Governors and the Committee for the Environmental Law/Toxic Tort Section. He currently serves on the Executive Committee of the LAJ.

Mr. LeBlanc's extensive accomplishments are equally renowned in the courtroom, paving the way for his designation as one of the top 75 plaintiff's attorneys in the United States by *The American Lawyer* (ALM Media, 2010), and his inclusion on

the Louisiana Super Lawyers list (Thomson Reuters, 2008, 2012-2019). Today Mr. LeBlanc concentrates his practice in the areas of pharmaceutical, environmental law, securities and asbestos litigation. In addition to his work representing individuals, Mr. LeBlanc has successfully represented many governmental entities, including the States of Hawaii, Mississippi, Louisiana, and West Virginia in complex consumer fraud litigation.

He was part of the Baron & Budd team that pursued litigation on behalf of eight states' attorneys general against GlaxoSmithKline regarding its fraudulent marketing of the diabetes drug Avandia, litigation which settled in 2013 for \$229 million. In July 2013, Mr. LeBlanc was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee for *In re: Fresenius Granuflo/Naturalyte Dialysate Products Liability Litigation*, MDL 1:13-md-2428 (U.S.D.C. D. Mass.). Also, Mr. LeBlanc, together with co-counsel and Baron & Budd represent more than 700 public entities and eight Attorneys General across the nation in litigation against prescription opioid manufacturers, distributors and dispensers. The Settlement Negotiation Team, comprised of seven elite trial lawyers from top plaintiffs' firms around the country, have been responsible for negotiating more than \$46 billion in settlements with the nation's largest and most prominent drug distributors, manufacturers and dispensers. The settlement funds, which began flowing to communities across America in 2022, are providing abatement and relief to states, counties, cities, and native American tribes to combat the opioid crisis.

Burton LeBlanc is a member of the American Bar Association's (ABA) State Attorney General and State Department of Justice Issues Committee as well as a committee member of the ABA's Section on Toxic Torts. He is also a member of the National Association of Public Pension Attorneys (NAPPA), the National Association of Shareholder and Consumer Attorneys (NASCAT), the Texas Trial Lawyers Association, Louisiana State Bar Association, Baton Rouge Bar Association, Texas State Bar Association, American Bar Association, College of the State Bar of Texas, the Louisiana Bar Foundation and a supporting member of the Trial Lawyers for Public Justice Foundation.

Mr. LeBlanc is a frequent lecturer and interviewee on the issues of environmental law, asbestos litigation, chemical exposure cases and the importance of access to the civil justice system. In November 2013, he testified before the Judicial Conference Advisory Committee on Civil Rules regarding proposed amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

In addition to numerous radio and television appearances covering such diverse topics as racism, the environment and opioids, including WNDC Radio in Baton Rouge in 1997 ("*Environment and Race*"), and Money 101 on KFWB Radio Los Angeles in 2014 ("*General Mill's decision to impose forced arbitration on its customers*"), Mr. LeBlanc was featured in a December 2018 production of CBS's 60 Minutes, where he was interviewed by Bill Whitaker for the segment "*Opioid Crisis: the Lawsuits that Could Bankrupt Manufacturers and Distributors*".

Burton LeBlanc and his wife are active in the Baton Rouge community and serve on multiple boards, including Cancer Services of Greater Baton Rouge, where Mr. LeBlanc served as president.

**Cary L. McDougal**, a shareholder with Baron & Budd, has served as lead attorney in more than 75 jury trials in state and federal court. Over the more than two decades that he has practiced law, Mr. McDougal has proven to be a formidable trial lawyer with unflinching resolve to serve his clients. He has tried cases involving such diverse areas of the law as premises liability, product liability, general personal injury, medical malpractice, insurance litigation and environmental litigation.

For the first 14 years of his legal career, Mr. McDougal handled the defense of matters involving complex litigation throughout Texas and Oklahoma as a partner at two Dallas firms. He focused his practice on civil litigation, and he managed and tried all litigation for several North Texas health care agencies. He co-founded the law firm Aldous and McDougal, which gained recognition for its trial successes on behalf of plaintiffs in medical malpractice, contractual disputes and other matters. Mr. McDougal joined Baron & Budd in 2005.

A shareholder and manager of Baron & Budd's Environmental Litigation Group, Mr. McDougal currently represents more than 200 municipalities and water providers across the country that are seeking clean-up costs for the contamination of their water supplies. His practice includes management of Baron & Budd's cases in the Multi-District Litigation (MDL) MTBE water contamination litigation, which is considered one of the most complex pieces of litigation in the country. He also manages other environmental contamination cases involving chemicals such as TCP, TCE and dioxin.

Mr. McDougal oversees Baron & Budd's representation of public entities and individuals harmed by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE), and trichloroethylene (TCE), including GenX. He manages the firm's lawsuits against DuPont and Chemours for poisoning North Carolina drinking wells and the Cape Fear River with numerous toxic PFAS compounds. In addition, he oversees the firm's cases involving firefighting foams that release toxic perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) into drinking water supplies nationwide. Most recently, he has directed Baron & Budd's effort to seek justice for veterans and their family members who were exposed to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune.

Mr. McDougal completed his law degree at the University of Texas School of Law and attained a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs. He continues to serve as a consultant to the LBJ school on issues concerning public policy. He has authored numerous legal papers on civil litigation and trial practice and has spoken at seminars before health care professionals, consumer groups, the insurance industry and attorneys on issues relative to civil litigation.

Mr. McDougal has been inducted into the prestigious American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), a recognition by his peers for his jury trial experience, commitment to the jury process, and ethics. He also holds the top rating from the Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory and was named a Texas Super Lawyer (Thomson Reuters 2005-2006).

**Andrew Miller** joined Baron & Budd's Washington, D.C. office in 2018, where he focuses on bringing fraud and abuse litigation throughout the United States under such statutes as the federal False Claims Act, state False Claims Acts, the Anti-Kickback Statute and the Stark Law. A shareholder in our Washington D.C. office, Mr. Miller also represents clients with claims filed with the Whistleblower Offices of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Internal Revenue Service.

Before Mr. Miller joined Baron & Budd, he was a partner at the Simmer Law Group in Washington D.C. He has significant experience representing whistleblowers in qui tam cases against drug manufacturers, healthcare providers, defense and other government contractors.

Prior to the Simmer Law Group, Mr. Miller defended government contractors against liability under the federal False Claims Act (FCA). He also represented government officials in Congressional investigations and participated in numerous internal investigations involving complex civil and criminal issues. Mr. Miller's long experience at both ends of the FCA litigation spectrum makes him an invaluable member of the Baron & Budd team.

During law school Mr. Miller served as editor-in-chief of the Houston Law Review, in addition to being one of only four students who received the Distinguished Service Award for extraordinary contribution to the University of Houston Law Center. He also received the American Jurisprudence Award for Legal Research and Writing.

After interning for the Honorable David Hittner at the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas in 2002, Mr. Miller clerked for the Honorable Harold R. DeMoss, Jr. at the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit from 2003 through 2005. During that time, he also worked as an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Houston Law Center.

Growing up in West Texas, Mr. Miller knew from an early age that he wanted to dedicate himself to a career that would allow him to advocate for those who might not otherwise have a voice, whether they are individuals who bravely blow the whistle on fraud or are people being accused of misdeeds. Joining the legal profession gave Mr. Miller an ideal platform for ensuring that the rights of individuals are protected, no matter how powerful their opponents. "Knowing that I can help others stand up for what's right is its own reward and serves as my motivation to come to work each day", he says. This dedication is further reflected in Mr. Miller's extensive pro bono work in child custody matters, where he has represented low income families and vulnerable children living with abuse, neglect and other difficult circumstances.

Mr. Miller resides in Northern Virginia, with his family. They enjoy traveling to the beach and cooking together. He also enjoys golfing. Mr. Miller serves on the Board of Directors of the child development center where his children are enrolled.

**Charles G. “Chip” Orr** is a trial and appellate strategist and brief-writing specialist in Baron & Budd’s Opioid Litigation Group. Before joining Baron & Budd as a shareholder in 2019, he spent the past decade at a boutique pharmaceutical and medical device law firm, successfully litigating mass tort cases for plaintiffs from across the country.

Mr. Orr has 25 years of experience working on complex cases, both for clients of large international firms and for the Texas Supreme Court and appellate courts as a staff attorney. Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Orr was the lead attorney in several lines of pharmaceutical litigation that resulted in settlements totaling around \$100 million. For example, in Avandia litigation, in which GlaxoSmithKline set aside \$3.4 billion in 2011 to settle lawsuits over not disclosing that its Type-2 diabetes drug increased the risk of heart attack and cardiac death, Mr. Orr authored dozens of trial court briefs and was the primary brief writer for a California state court bellwether trial team (the case settled while the parties were picking a jury). And in Reglan litigation, in which product liability, negligence, and misrepresentation claims were brought against numerous drug manufacturers for serious neurological side effects resulting from prolonged use of an anti-nausea drug, Mr. Orr spearheaded all litigation matters for hundreds of clients, including managing a complex Plaintiff Fact Sheet process and navigating complex issues regarding federal preemption and personal jurisdiction. Mr. Orr also served in leadership roles in the California Judicial Council Coordinated Proceeding (JCCP) pertaining to the injectable diabetes medicine Byetta, settling the firm’s cases on very favorable terms following extensive litigation, including working up a bellwether case which was set for trial just weeks before the cases settled.

Mr. Orr currently serves on the Plaintiffs’ Executive Committee and as Co-Lead Counsel for thousands of plaintiffs in the California Lipitor JCCP, in which plaintiffs allege that the cholesterol drug causes Type-2 diabetes. As the primary brief writer for this case, he has successfully secured remand twice for the plaintiffs, including defeating appeals by the defendant to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals following both remand orders and to the U.S. Supreme Court following the second remand order. Mr. Orr also wrote and argued the JCCP plaintiffs’ opposition to the defendants’ motion to dismiss the case on personal jurisdiction grounds and successfully defended the trial court’s order denying that motion in the California Court of Appeals, the California Supreme Court, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Before focusing his practice on mass torts, Mr. Orr handled a broad appellate practice encompassing a wide variety of disputes. Mr. Orr spent nearly six years as an appellate attorney working for Texas appellate judges, including two stints at the Texas Supreme Court (first for Justice Lloyd Doggett, then for Justice Craig Enoch) as well as serving as a staff attorney for Chief Justice John Cayce at the Fort Worth Court of Appeals and for Justice Rebecca Simmons of the San Antonio Court of Appeals. Mr. Orr also worked for more than five years in the appellate section of an

international law firm, where he served as both primary author of hundreds of trial and appellate briefs and motions and also as a member of appellate teams on several notable cases.

In the mid-2000s, Mr. Orr provided a full range of legal services as general counsel to an intercountry adoption agency. In addition to lending his expertise to licensing and federal accreditation matters, Mr. Orr was responsible for lobbying the United States and Guatemalan governments and various private sector actors on how Guatemala should reform its adoption laws to be in compliance with the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption. Mr. Orr also provided consulting services to other intercountry adoption agencies on Hague accreditation, implementation, and compliance.

Mr. Orr earned his law degree from the University of Texas School of Law, graduating in 1993 with High Honors. He was a Chancellor at UT (top 16 students in graduating class, or top 3%) and was a member of the Law Review. Mr. Orr obtained undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of Delaware before attending law school, with an emphasis in political science and philosophy.

Mr. Orr has served on the boards of several nonprofits, including Preservation Dallas, a group dedicated to the preservation and revitalization of the city's historic buildings, neighborhoods and places, and Focus on Adoption, whose mission was to improve relations between intercountry adoption agencies, adopting families, and governmental entities overseeing the intercountry adoption process. When he is not practicing law, Mr. Orr enjoys spending time with his wife and teenage daughters. He is a music buff, an avid reader, and an enthusiastic traveler.

**Mark Pifko**, a Shareholder at Baron & Budd, specializes in the prosecution of high-profile class action cases against multi-national corporations. Mr. Pifko's cases have addressed corporate fraud and wrongdoing across a broad array of business areas, including in the financial services, pharmaceutical, and automotive industries. Since joining the Los Angeles office of Baron & Budd in 2011, Mr. Pifko's efforts have led to the return of significant sums of money to victims and have affected changes in corporate behavior.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Pifko spent nearly a decade representing some of the world's largest companies in high-stakes litigation. In connection with that corporate defense work, Mr. Pifko worked with advertising agencies who helped sell his clients' products and services, and Mr. Pifko recalls that the tag line for one such agency was, "while life is busy happening, we get people to do stuff!" Corporations spend billions of dollars a year to get people to buy their offerings. But when things go wrong, where can injured parties go to get corporations to "do stuff," like refund money and stop unlawful practices from continuing? In 2010, Mr. Pifko left his position at a top-ranked D.C.-based international law firm so that he could devote his entire practice to his passion — representing the interests of plaintiffs. Mr. Pifko is a resource to get recalcitrant companies to make things right.

Mr. Pifko believes class action and mass-tort lawsuits provide an important way for people to protect themselves from powerful corporations. Instead of one person



taking on a billion-dollar company, complex litigation allows groups of people to fight back with a collective voice. In addition to his litigation work, Pifko has been called upon to be a speaker on class action topics at legal industry conferences. Mr. Pifko is also a talented writer whose articles on class action law and consumer advocacy have been published in California Lawyer magazine and the Daily Journal newspaper.

Since 2017, Mr. Pifko has devoted a substantial amount of time working on litigation related to the opioid crisis. Mr. Pifko is part of a team of lawyers who represent approximately 700 cities and counties and nine states in cases brought against manufacturers, distributors, and dispensers of opioid products. A September 13, 2019 article published in the Washington Post, titled Inside the Drug Industry's Plan to Defeat the DEA, discussed evidence uncovered by Mr. Pifko in connection with his deposition of the pharmaceutical distribution industry trade association known as the Healthcare Distribution Alliance. Additionally, Mr. Pifko was part of a team who, in March 2019, successfully obtained an order disqualifying an international law firm and a former U.S. Attorney from the bellwether cases brought by Cuyahoga County, Ohio, and the City of Cleveland.

**William G. Powers** joined Baron & Budd's Washington, D.C. office in 2018, where he represents clients in a broad range of legal issues at all stages of litigation in state and federal courts across the country. He brings a substantial breadth and depth of experience to the firm.

As a shareholder at Baron & Budd, Mr. Powers is a member of our robust qui tam practice, specializing in litigation to combat civil fraud under the federal False Claims Act, state False Claims Acts, the Anti-Kickback Statute and the Stark Law. Mr. Powers also represents clients with claims filed with the Whistleblower Offices of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Internal Revenue Service. Mr. Powers has experience representing whistleblowers in qui tam cases against a variety of healthcare companies, as well as defense and other government contractors.

In addition to his qui tam practice, Mr. Powers has extensive experience with complex civil litigation. He is an integral part of the Baron & Budd team representing hundreds of cities and counties and numerous state Attorneys General in cases brought against manufacturers, distributors, and dispensers of opioids. He has worked on all aspects of the firm's opioid cases including formulating case theory, briefing and arguing numerous issues, deposing key witnesses, and helping as a member of multiple trial teams.

Before Mr. Powers joined Baron & Budd, he was a trial attorney for the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) in Washington D.C. At DOJ, he defended the United States in high-stakes mass tort and toxic tort litigation in federal courts nationwide. Mr. Powers has researched, drafted, and argued motions to dismiss in multiple federal district courts, including successfully arguing before the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation. Mr. Powers was awarded DOJ Civil Division Rookie of the Year for his exceptional performance and notable contributions toward the Division's mission.

In addition to his case duties, Mr. Powers trained other DOJ attorneys on issues such as governmental privileges, authentication of evidence, and Federal Tort Claims Act legal issues. Mr. Powers also was a member of the Civil Division E-Discovery Committee where he provided input and drafted guidance on e-discovery issues. In addition, he was recognized as an outstanding mentor and managed his office's summer law intern program.

Prior to DOJ, Mr. Powers worked in the City of Philadelphia's Law Department. Mr. Powers also has worked as an intern for the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the Honorable Sandra Mozer Moss in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, and a private law firm.

During law school, Mr. Powers served as a staff editor for the Temple Journal of Science, Technology, & Environmental Law. He also received the Albert H. Friedman Writing Award and was a Rubin Public Interest Law Honor Society Fellow. In addition to his J.D., Mr. Powers earned a Certificate of Trial Advocacy and was recognized for his trial advocacy abilities as the Outstanding Oral Advocate in Trial Advocacy I and with the Barrister's Award in Trial Advocacy II.

Mr. Powers resides in Washington, DC. In his spare time, he can be found watching Georgetown basketball and New York Yankees baseball. He also enjoys cooking and skiing.

**Scott Simmer** founded the Simmer Law Group in Washington D.C., in 2014, but he's been practicing law for decades and is a seasoned expert at routing out deceit and fraud in hidden corners of government programs, education and healthcare industries. Joining with Baron & Budd in 2018 to form our Washington D.C. office, Mr. Simmer continues to represent whistleblowers bringing qui tam cases of fraud under federal and state False Claims Acts as well as IRS, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) whistleblowers. Mr. Simmer also continues to represent private health insurance plans in large-scale recovery actions under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act, federal anti-trust laws and state consumer fraud/deceptive trade practices statutes.

For more than thirty years, Scott Simmer has led the investigation and prosecution of numerous precedent-setting fraud and abuse cases on behalf of whistleblowers and private insurance payors. He has written and spoken widely on legal issues related to the federal False Claims Act (FCA), the Anti-Kickback statute, Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) and Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA); as well as on healthcare fraud and abuse, antitrust violations and issues related to Pharmacy Benefit Managing (PBM) contracting.

The son of a Methodist minister, Mr. Simmer grew up in Nebraska with a strong sense of social justice and respect for the underdog. He was teaching English in college academia when the desire to attend law school struck him. After considering a legal career in publishing, Mr. Simmer found his legal calling while managing health care fraud investigations as head of litigation for a major health insurer. When

he learned that the federal government was investigating for-profit healthcare companies for submitting fraudulent Medicare and Medicaid claims, Mr. Simmer convinced his insurance colleagues that similar fraud was adding burdensome costs to private health plans. He subsequently designed legal approaches to combat such healthcare fraud, including building a consortium of health insurers to investigate and pursue recovery actions.

Mr. Simmer eventually left the insurance business to take on the representation of qui tam whistleblowers bringing claims on behalf of the government. At the same time, he began representing groups of health plans in large-scale recovery litigation. His zeal for doing what's right drives every case he takes on behalf of whistleblowers and every recovery action he undertakes for health insurers. "Scott Simmer is an outstanding attorney and I am pleased to welcome him to Baron & Budd," said President and Managing Shareholder, Russell Budd. "Scott and his team bring a strong record of success pursuing complex litigation which closely aligns with the breadth and scope of Baron & Budd's existing practice areas."

Scott Simmer serves as a trustee for his undergraduate alma mater, Cornell College, in Mount Vernon, Iowa. Whenever he returns to Cornell for meetings in the fall, he makes sure to attend Iowa Hawkeye football games with his sons, their wives, and his granddaughter. Scott and his wife frequently plan family vacations to include a round of golf, a game of tennis or a Boston Red Sox game, another passion Scott shares with both his brothers and his sons.

**Roland Tellis** is the Chair of Baron & Budd's Los Angeles-based Class Action Practice Group and co-manages the firm's Los Angeles office. His practice focuses on complex, high-profile litigation, including consumer class actions, financial fraud, business torts, corporate misconduct, automobile defects, securities fraud and environmental contamination. He has held leadership roles in numerous multi-district, complex class action cases, including:

- Appointed Co-Lead Counsel in In re: ZF-TRW Airbag Control Units Products Liability Litigation, a multi-state class action involving millions of defective airbag control units.
- Appointed to the Plaintiffs' Executive Committee in In re: National Prescription Opiate Litigation, a multi-state mass tort action filed by governmental entities against the manufacturers and distributors of opioids widely believed to be the largest MDL case in U.S. history. Achieved a \$26 billion settlement against three opioid distributors and an opioid manufacturer.
- Appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in In re: Social Media Adolescent Addiction/Personal Injury Products Liability Litigation, a multi-state mass tort action filed against Meta Platforms, Instagram, TikTok, ByteDance, YouTube, Google and Alphabet alleging that defendants' social media platforms are defective because they are designed to encourage addictive behavior in adolescents.

- Appointed Co-Lead Counsel for the Class Action Track in Southern California Gas Leak Cases, a coordinated class action filed by property owners against a gas utility for causing the largest natural gas leak in U.S. history. Achieved a \$40 million non-reversionary common fund settlement for area residents.

- Appointed Co-Lead Counsel in In re: Wells Fargo Collateral Protection Insurance Litigation, a nationwide class action case involving forced-placed automobile collateral protection insurance. Achieved a \$423 million non-reversionary common fund settlement which provided payments to consumers without the need for claim forms or documentary proof.

- Appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in In re: Volkswagen "Clean Diesel" Marketing, Sales Practices, and Products Liability Litigation, a multi-state class action involving hundreds of thousands of vehicles equipped with "defeat devices" designed to evade emissions laws. Achieved a settlement worth more than \$14.5 billion.

- Appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in In re: Takata Airbag Products Liability Litigation, a multi-state class action involving millions of vehicles equipped with a defective airbag inflator resulting in the largest automotive recall in U.S. history. Achieved a \$1.5 billion settlement against seven automaker defendants.

- Appointed to the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in In re: Chrysler-Dodge-Jeep EcoDiesel Marketing, Sales Practices and Products Liability Litigation, a multi-state class action involving vehicles equipped with "defeat devices" designed to evade emissions laws. Achieved a settlement worth more than \$500 million.

Mr. Tellis has also represented clients in numerous jury trials, including several involving hundreds of millions of dollars. In 2005, Mr. Tellis received commendation from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for his assistance in a successful parallel prosecution of a \$120 million securities Ponzi scheme perpetrated by foreign currency traders. Mr. Tellis also represented the owner of a multi-billion-dollar commercial real estate portfolio in a lengthy jury trial over claims of an alleged oral partnership and the Screen Actors' Guild and members of its national board in a leadership battle.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Tellis practiced with the international law firms of Bingham McCutchen LLP and Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP. There, he litigated complex cases on behalf of corporate defendants and tried multi-million-dollar cases to verdict.

In 2018, Mr. Tellis was honored with the Daily Journal's 2018 "California Lawyer Attorneys of the Year" award for his role in the Volkswagen "Clean Diesel" MDL. Mr. Tellis has also been named among the Best Lawyers in America every year since 2014, a Super Lawyer every year since 2009 and was a faculty member of the Practising Law Institute and Chair of its annual program entitled "Taking and Defending Depositions."

He was elected to serve on the Board of Governors of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers and was appointed to serve as a Lawyer Representative to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference. He was the Chair of the United States District Court for the Central District of California's Attorney Settlement Officer Panel Committee and was appointed by the Chief Judge of the Central District of California to the Board of Trustees for the Central District's Attorney Admission Fund. Additionally, Mr. Tellis serves on the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. Along the way, Mr. Tellis has devoted time to the pro bono representations of indigent clients and has mentored young lawyers and law students in association with the South Asian Bar Association.

**Michael von Klemperer** is a shareholder in Baron & Budd's Opioid Litigation Group in Washington, D.C. Since joining the firm in 2020, Mr. von Klemperer's practice has focused on representing state attorneys general in litigation across the country. He currently represents nine states in their cases against opioids manufacturers, distributors and dispensers, and has taken a significant role at both the trial and appellate levels.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. von Klemperer worked for a boutique firm litigating a wide range of complex matters, including antitrust, intellectual property, False Claims Act, and employment discrimination cases. Following law school, he clerked for District Judge Barbara Rothstein of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Mr. von Klemperer attended Vanderbilt University Law School where he was a member of the Moot Court Board and participated in Vanderbilt's Advanced Trial Advocacy program. During law school, he also interned for the Department of Justice and several U.S. Attorneys' Offices. He received his undergraduate degree from Tulane University, graduating with honors.

Mr. von Klemperer resides in Washington, D.C. In his spare time, he enjoys travel, backpacking, and spending time with family.

**Holly Werkema** is a shareholder in our Dallas office who manages Baron & Budd's Pharmaceutical Litigation Group, where she represents clients and their families adversely affected by dangerous prescription drugs and defective medical devices. She joined Baron & Budd in 2012 in the firm's general litigation group, representing homeowners throughout the southeast affected by toxic Chinese drywall installations in their homes. Following the successful resolution of the Chinese drywall cases, Ms. Werkema has represented Baron & Budd's clients in complex multi-district and consolidated litigations involving Fresenius' GranuFlo/NaturaLyte dialysis products, DePuy Orthopedics' ASR and Pinnacle hip implants, Stryker V-40 hip implants, Biomet Magnum hip implants, Janssen Pharmaceuticals' Risperdal, Johnson & Johnson's Power Morcellator, Gilead Science's tenofovir drugs, and Bayer's Essure birth control device, to name a few.

Ms. Werkema has always had a passion for bringing justice to people harmed by pharmaceutical companies that market their products as safe when they are not or when they have misrepresented the efficacy and toxicity of their medical

commodities. Over the course of her career, Ms. Werkema has worked tirelessly representing clients in complex multi-district litigation involving a number of high-profile pharmaceutical defendants. She is dedicated to obtaining just compensation for the firm's clients from pharmaceutical corporations that put dangerous drugs and/or devices on the market.

In 2016, Ms. Werkema and the Baron & Budd pharmaceutical litigation team significantly contributed to obtaining a \$250 million settlement In Re: Fresenius Granuflo/Naturalyte Dialysis Products Liability Litig. (D. Mass., MDL No. 2428), which involved sudden, fatal heart attacks caused by drugs used to neutralize the buildup of acid in the body during kidney dialysis. Plaintiffs alleged that Fresenius knew the risks to their patients but failed to warn or protect them from heart attacks, sudden cardiac arrests and other serious cardiovascular problems. That same year, she participated in negotiations leading to a successful settlement in In Re: Ethicon, Inc., Power Morcellator Products Liability Litigation (D. Kansas, MDL No. 2652), involving the manufacture of power morcellators, a device used during surgery to remove fibroids or the entire uterus during a hysterectomy which was found to increase the risk of spreading undiagnosed uterine cancer throughout the abdominal cavity.

Since 2016, Holly Werkema has managed the litigation of individual lawsuits and was an instrumental player in bellwether trial preparation against Bayer AG, manufacturer of the Essure permanent birth control device, which has been linked to several serious health complications in women, including device migration, fallopian tube perforation and vaginal bleeding. In 2020, Bayer announced it would pay \$1.6 billion to settle 90 percent of the nearly 39,000 U.S. claims.

Ms. Werkema was also deeply involved in complex litigation against Janssen Pharmaceuticals, the manufacturers of the antipsychotic drug Risperdal, which was found to cause breast enlargement in adolescent males. Ms. Werkema and the Baron & Budd team successfully settled hundreds of lawsuits in this matter.

Since 2015, Ms. Werkema has also managed the firm's cases against DePuy Orthopaedics, Wright Medical, Biomet/Zimmer, Stryker, and Smith & Nephew, which involve injuries caused by design flaws in hip implants. These implants have been linked to serious health problems, including nervous system damage, metal poisoning and infections in thousands of patients. Ms. Werkema has successfully resolved defective hip implant cases on behalf of Baron & Budd clients totaling several million dollars.

Ms. Werkema also manages the firm's lawsuits against Gilead Sciences, Inc. for failing to warn thousands of HIV/AIDS patients about life-threatening physical harm, kidney problems and bone loss caused by emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, the active ingredients in Truvada, a pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, drug.

She likewise manages ongoing litigation against Bayer-AG for Monsanto's manipulation of studies on glyphosate, the active ingredient in its RoundUp weed killer. Plaintiffs allege that Monsanto doctored its research in order to make it seem



that the chemical is safe to use, when the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research determined in 2015 that glyphosate was probably cancerous to humans. Litigation is ongoing in this complex action in which plaintiffs assert that Monsanto and Bayer-AG failed to warn consumers of the cancer risks associated with use of its weed killer. Recently Bayer-AG has announced its intention to settle RoundUp claims in the range of ten billion dollars.

Ms. Werkema also manages litigation on behalf of a large group of plaintiffs in cases involving severe and permanent injuries caused by hernia mesh implants. Ms. Werkema routinely navigates the intricate issues which frequently present themselves in complex mass torts. She works closely with other plaintiffs' attorneys to build consensus and bring a coordinated approach to litigation.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Ms. Werkema served the State of Florida Department of Financial Services as an attorney in the Prosecution and Enforcement Litigation Group. There she developed significant litigation skills representing the Department in enforcement proceedings, rule challenge proceedings, property claim denial proceedings and garnishment proceedings.

## SENIOR COUNSEL ATTORNEYS

**Brian L. Williams** joined Baron & Budd's Opioid Litigation Group as Senior Counsel in 2020, bringing with him nearly three decades of diverse legal and investigative experience. Dedicated to justice and finding the truth, he now works to help cities, counties and states hold the pharmaceutical industry accountable for the national opioid crisis. Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Williams served as an Assistant Colorado Attorney General in the Department of Law's first-in-the-nation Opioid Unit, where he investigated the marketing, distribution and sales practices of the nation's leading opioid manufacturers and distributors.

Early in his career, Mr. Williams served as a prosecutor and commercial litigator in Central Minnesota, where he gained invaluable trial experience litigating both civil and criminal matters. Later, while a partner of two Minneapolis class action law firms, he investigated the malfeasance of countless domestic and international corporations, ultimately helping plaintiffs recover billions of dollars in some of the world's largest and most complex antitrust, securities, and consumer fraud class action cases, including *In re Broadcom Corp. Sec. Litig.* (C.D. Cal.), *In re Pharmaceutical Industry Average Wholesale Price Litig.* (D. Mass.), and *In re TFT-LCD Antitrust Litig.* (N.D. Cal.).

Prior to relocating to Colorado in 2017, Mr. Williams supervised and mentored a highly qualified team of investigators and attorneys as Manager of the Occupational Licensing Division of the Minnesota Attorney General's Office. In that capacity, he also served as general counsel to the Minnesota Board of Medical Practice.

When not working remotely from his office in the Colorado foothills, Mr. Williams enjoys traveling with family, hiking, skiing, attending outdoor concerts and festivals (Red Rocks, anyone?), developing board games, and rooting for his favorite Colorado, Minnesota, and Texas sports teams.

## FIRM ASSOCIATES

**Chris Campbell** joined Baron & Budd's Dallas Environmental Litigation Group in August of 2016. He works with our west coast environmental team representing municipalities harmed by hazardous chemicals, such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and Trichloroethylene (TCEs), which have been allowed to leach into the soil and community drinking water systems by unscrupulous corporations.

Chris Campbell's affinity for the environment began at an early age, as he explored the riverbanks near his childhood home in Wichita, Kansas and later the wooded expanses near his Fort Worth area backyard, developing a love of the outdoors. After graduating from the University of North Texas in 2007 with a B.S. in Criminal Justice, Mr. Campbell enrolled in the Texas Wesleyan School of Law (now Texas A & M University School of Law), where he became vice president of the Sports and Entertainment Law Society and did pro bono work for Legal Aid of Northwest Texas.

After obtaining his law degree, Mr. Campbell honed his litigating skills by working in probate and estate planning, elder law, breach of contract, and employment law. He worked for a time at a firm in Corpus Christi representing vehicular accident clients whose cases had been turned down by other firms. Through his diligent and thoughtful investigation (talking to witnesses and police officers, carefully examining the opposing party's reckless driving and cell phone records), Mr. Campbell was able to establish solid cases and secure recoveries for many of those clients. "It felt good to know that I had obtained sizeable compensation for the suffering my clients had undergone through months of physical therapy and the stress of not knowing how they would pay their medical bills" he says. Mr. Campbell also gained experience in antitrust law, working on a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) probe into a major oil and gas company executive who was being investigated for possible fraudulent business activities.

It was while Chris Campbell was working in Corpus Christi that he first experienced what it was like to live in an area where the municipal water was not fit to drink – or bathe or wash clothes in. Over the course of two years, from 2015 to 2016, the City of Corpus Christi was forced to issue multiple "water advisories" warning its citizens to boil their drinking water because it was contaminated with bacteria, including on one occasion E. coli, and on another by an asphalt emulsifier called indulin AA86, which no amount of boiling, freezing, filtering or treating could eradicate.

It was this exposure to the hardships a community suffers when a resource as vital and elemental as drinking water becomes contaminated that led Mr. Campbell to seek employment with Baron & Budd's Environmental Litigation Group. Now he coordinates discovery and e-discovery projects for our west coast environmental litigation team, helping the Group represent municipalities harmed by PCBs, TCE, TCB, MTBE and atrazine in groundwater and municipal water systems. He also leads document review teams hired by Baron & Budd on a contract basis.

When he is not fighting to clean up the water, air and soil, Chris Campbell still enjoys being outdoors more than anything else. As a youth he organized neighborhood sports leagues in football, baseball and basketball. He is a rabid Texas Rangers baseball fan, traveling throughout the country to attend games whenever possible. But protecting the environment is never far from his mind. "As a boy I played in the woods near my home, exploring the wilderness and building forts. Now, I work to undermine the fortresses built by big corporations to shield themselves from liability for contaminating our precious resources."

**Kenneth D. Capesius** first joined Baron & Budd's Washington, D.C. office in 2018 as a paralegal. After earning his law degree from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), he returned to Baron & Budd as an Associate in 2022. Mr. Capesius is a member of the firm's robust Qui Tam practice, focusing on litigation to combat civil fraud under the False Claims Act, the California Insurance Frauds Prevention Act (IFPA), and other federal and state laws.

Mr. Capesius earned his bachelor's degree in politics from Cornell College, graduating *magna cum laude*. While at UCLA School of Law, Mr. Capesius fought for voting rights as a volunteer with the UCLA Voting Rights Project. He was also active in the mock trial and moot court programs, winning multiple national competitions. For his accomplishments, Mr. Capesius was inducted into the Order of Barristers, a national organization that recognizes excellence in advocacy and service. Prior to joining Baron & Budd, he worked as a paralegal at the Simmer Law Group in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Capesius was drawn to a legal career by its potential for creating change. "The law shapes so many aspects of our lives, even if we never stop to think about the impact it has." He recognizes that change can be elusive – a result of the law's propensity to protect those with power and resources. "But every case presents an opportunity to move the needle and make a difference for those who may feel they have no voice in challenging the status quo." For Kenny Capesius, the practice of law is about "seizing opportunities to stand up for what is right and pursuing justice."

Mr. Capesius resides in Southern California with his spouse. They enjoy taking walks with their dog, trying new cuisines, and exploring the southwest's natural beauty. Mr. Capesius also enjoys cooking, playing softball, and cheering on the Chicago Cubs.

**Delia Castro** joined Baron & Budd's Trucking & Catastrophic Injury Group as an associate in 2023. Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Ms. Castro worked for a personal injury firm in Dallas, Texas, where she represented individuals in a variety of personal injury cases including motor vehicle and trucking wrecks and gained significant experience conducting depositions and arguing motions, among other litigation matters.

Ms. Castro brings a unique comprehension of catastrophic injury crashes to Baron & Budd, having spent eighteen years of service as a police officer prior to

becoming an attorney. Her extensive law enforcement experience, notably as a detective uncovering crucial facts and hidden details in criminal cases and as a first responder to car wrecks, allows Ms. Castro to bring an invaluable perspective and skill set to cases in which victims have been injured or killed in catastrophic vehicular accidents. Following law school, Ms. Castro worked for two years as a county prosecutor and district attorney, during which time she helped resolve hundreds of cases and gained substantial trial experience.

Delia Castro graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington with a B.A. in English before receiving her J.D. *cum laude* from the University of North Texas at Dallas College of Law in 2019. While in law school, she was appointed the publications editor of the school's *On the Cusp* Law Review and was a member of the Board of Advocates (Moot Court). She was also inducted into the Royal Furgerson Inn of Phi Delta Phi, the school's academic honor society. As a law student, Ms. Castro received several accolades, including the Louis A. Bedford Jr. Award for outstanding performance in law school, and the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI) Excellence Award for attaining the highest grade in Legal Writing and Research. Additionally, Ms. Castro was selected as a Dallas Bar Foundation's *Sarah T. Hughes Scholar* in 2016.

**Saheli Chakrabarty** joined the Pharmaceutical Litigation Group at Baron & Budd's Dallas office in 2018, in pursuit of her longstanding goal of working to positively impact the healthcare industry. At Baron & Budd she is thrilled to be having the influence she envisioned.

Ms. Chakrabarty was born in India and spent the majority of her grade-school years in Africa and Canada before moving to the United States. Her global upbringing clearly illuminated for Ms. Chakrabarty the effect of healthcare systems on personal well-being, the importance of high-quality medical treatment, and how medicine is a unifying thread across the world. With that clarity of concept in mind, she entered New York University with the intention of becoming a physician. It was during her time as a pre-medicine student at NYU that Ms. Chakrabarty realized she could have a more profound and lasting impact on protecting individuals by correcting deficiencies in our healthcare system rather than focusing on individual patients. Ms. Chakrabarty knew that finding a way to ameliorate the healthcare industry as a whole would ultimately benefit the entire population.

With the aforementioned goal in mind, Saheli Chakrabarty pursued a legal education at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in Pennsylvania. She took healthcare law courses and interned in-house at a large health insurance corporation and at a high-end boutique healthcare law firm, thereby gaining a significant understanding of the healthcare industry. She received the Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI) Excellence for the Future Award in Bioethics and Law, which is given each semester to the student with the highest grade in that course.

During her tenure in law school, Ms. Chakrabarty served as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Pittsburgh Tax Review* and participated in its Taxpayer Clinic, during which she represented low-income clients before the United States Tax Court. She also served

as Associate editor at the *JURIST*, a web-based legal news and real-time research service powered by law students and staff at the University.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Ms. Chakrabarty clerked for the Honorable Dan Pellegrini, who was, at the time, the President Judge of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. During her clerkship, Ms. Chakrabarty researched and analyzed complex appellate issues and drafted countless opinions in response.

After the end of her clerkship and a decade in the Northeast, Saheli Chakrabarty relocated to Dallas, Texas, for new adventures with her husband and their puppy. In her free time, she escapes into thriller fiction, continues exploring the world and her heritage through cooking, and is always planning her next big getaway.

**Sterling Cluff** joined Baron & Budd after eight years of defending complex commercial, consumer and real estate cases, including multiple high-profile class actions and real estate cases. Sterling Cluff was excited to join Baron & Budd's mission to "protect what's right" as a part of the Firm's class action practice in our Los Angeles Office.

Sterling Cluff works in Baron & Budd's Los Angeles office, where he takes on large-scale litigation as a member of the Firm's class action practice. He brings an astute knowledge of complex California commercial, consumer and real estate law to our expert team.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Sterling Cluff worked in the Class Action and Commercial Litigation practice groups of a Los Angeles boutique law firm. There, he was exposed to complex commercial and real estate litigation, consumer claims and high-profile class action lawsuits involving millions of plaintiffs. In the process of defending large national class actions, Sterling Cluff saw firsthand how defendants can take advantage of individual consumers and the benefit that individuals gain in their fight against formidable corporations by banding together to form classes with the force of "what's right" behind them. Mr. Cluff's experience re-ignited his desire to help people who have suffered at the hands of unscrupulous corporations obtain just reparation for their distress.

During his undergraduate studies, Sterling Cluff was a witness to the overreach of authorities imposing their will on an individual, despite a presumption of innocence until proven guilty, by pressing exaggerated and superfluous charges, issuing arrest warrants and conducting redundant and harassing searches. The overbearing actions of the prosecuting agency, which caused anguish and hardship for the individual and his family, brought home to Mr. Cluff the importance of having skilled and aggressive advocacy to protect individuals' rights. This formative experience instilled in Mr. Cluff a keen desire to ensure that the rights of all individuals are protected.

During law school, Sterling Cluff was fortunate to work on the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals for Judge Arthur L. Alarcon, Sen., prior to his retirement. Judge Alarcon instilled in all of his clerks and externs strong ethics and a high regard for professionalism, with the goal of ensuring that every person coming before the court

receive proper justice. Mr. Cluff heeded Judge Alcaron's mandate to use his legal training to ensure that individuals were not taken advantage of by powerful entities and were justly compensated when entities overstepped the boundary of legal business conduct. Throughout his career, these life events have intensified Sterling Cluff's drive to protect his clients from unprincipled individuals and ruthless corporations and to aggressively and efficiently pursue compensation for the harm they inflict.

After a full day at work, Sterling Cluff enjoys surfing in summer and snowboarding in winter. When he is at home, he likes to spend time in his garden growing vegetables and native California plants.

**Rebecca Currier** is an associate in the Legacy Case Management Group at Baron & Budd, where she advocates for our clients with mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases. Ms. Currier fights for compensation on their behalf from bankrupt asbestos companies. She strives to ensure that the victims of unscrupulous asbestos manufacturers receive compensation that brings a level of financial security to their families.

Ms. Currier obtained her bachelor's degree from Cornell University in Industrial and Labor Relations. Her studies at the university provided insight into the unsafe working conditions faced by so many throughout history. She became passionate about workers who suffered catastrophic workplace injuries and illnesses while laboring to provide for their families.

Ms. Currier graduated with the intent to pursue a career devoted to improving the lives of everyday workers. She obtained a job in the human resources department of a multinational corporation where she worked with executive leadership to influence and implement workplace policies. In the evenings, she began pursuit of her law degree. In 2010, Ms. Currier graduated with her Juris Doctor from Texas Wesleyan School of Law (now Texas A&M School of Law). With law degree in hand, Ms. Currier relocated to her hometown in Upstate New York where she established a profitable practice.

In 2014, after obtaining several favorable trial verdicts as a solo practitioner, Ms. Currier joined the law firm of Baron & Budd with the intention of continuing her pursuit of improving the lives of working families. Her position with the Legacy Case Management Group is an ideal platform from which to leverage her well-rounded experience in law and her industrial and labor relations background.

**Nick Custred** joined Baron & Budd in 2019 as an associate briefing and appellate attorney in the firm's Asbestos Litigation Group and Catastrophic Injury Group, where he advocates on behalf of clients with mesothelioma and other egregious injuries by utilizing research and writing skills to draft motions and court pleadings on issues specific to each client's case. Mr. Custred is dedicated to providing optimal legal representation to his clients, and he believes this level of representation begins with a thorough understanding of the law and facts pertaining to each individual case.



A native Texan, Mr. Custred attended college at the University of North Texas where he graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science in 2013. Upon graduating from UNT, Mr. Custred attended law school at the Texas Tech School of Law in Lubbock, Texas, where he served as an editor on the Texas Tech Business & Bankruptcy Law Journal. During his time at Tech Law, Mr. Custred received awards for his outstanding editing and writing skills, while also excelling in the school's trial advocacy program.

Mr. Custred was inducted into the National Order of Barristers in 2016 for his skill as a trial advocate. He also served as a coach and mentor for young law students interested in learning the art of trial advocacy. While studying at Tech Law, Mr. Custred worked as a law clerk at a personal injury firm in Lubbock, Texas, where he was able to sharpen his legal research and writing skills to represent plaintiffs in various personal injury lawsuits across west Texas.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Custred worked as an associate attorney at a plaintiff personal injury firm in Dallas, Texas, where he gained valuable experience representing hundreds of clients injured as a result of major corporations and medical providers valuing profits over the well-being of their customers, patients, and employees. During this time, Mr. Custred was able to refine his legal writing skills by providing legal representation to clients in various fields of law, including complex commercial litigation, personal injury, probate litigation, insurance litigation, products liability, medical malpractice, consumer/deceptive trade practice, and defamation.

In his position at Baron & Budd, Mr. Custred utilizes his legal writing skills to ensure that victims of catastrophic injuries and irresponsible manufacturers receive the legal representation they deserve. Through his understanding of complex motion practice and legal writing, Mr. Custred strives to produce the highest quality work product that will advance his clients' cases and enhance the value of their claims.

**Chris Edwards** joined Baron & Budd's Environmental Litigation Group as an associate in 2016. He specializes in Electronic Discovery, which has been especially meaningful for advising numerous public entity clients in complex mass tort matters relating to environmental contamination and wildfires.

In addition to overseeing every phase of document management, Mr. Edwards works closely with his clients to craft damages models and analyze market share. Mr. Edwards also has years of experience in project management which he utilizes in the supervision of attorneys on his discovery teams. He leverages all his experience to provide sound advice for defensible best practices on corporate governance, policy, compliance, data management, process and technology.

Mr. Edwards is particularly proud of his role in helping to obtain historic \$1 billion and \$360 million settlements in 2019 from Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison, respectively, for damages resulting from the North Bay Wine Country Fires, 2018 Camp Fire, 2018 Woolsey Fire, the 2017 Thomas Fire, and the subsequent Montecito Debris Flow. He worked closely with our public entity clients in Northern and Southern California to determine and quantify the shared challenges

facing those communities as they try to rebuild following the state's devastating conflagrations. In Northern California, these entities included the counties of Napa, Lake, Sonoma, Mendocino, Yuba, Nevada, Butte and Calaveras, the cities of Chico, Napa, Clearlake, Paradise, Santa Rosa, and several related agencies including fire and water districts. In Southern California, these entities included the counties of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura, the cities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Malibu, Thousand Oaks, Santa Barbara, Ventura and Westlake Village, as well as a number of flood control and fire protection districts in the vicinity.

Mr. Edwards is honored to have worked with many public entity clients on their lawsuits against the Monsanto Corporation for contaminating stormwater and waterbodies across America with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). PCB contamination presents a devastating problem as it escapes into the environment during rain events, reaches stormwater systems owned by public entities, and is then discharged into larger waterbodies where it damages precious ecosystems.

Chris Edwards worked on a case in San Luis Obispo and El Cajon, California, to represent families who sued Ametek, Inc., an aerospace manufacturing company which operated in the area for several decades, for contaminating the area's air and drinking water with trichloroethylene, or TCE, a toxic, cancer-causing chemical. He also worked with drinking water suppliers in several states for successful resolution of price-fixing litigation against companies that make liquid aluminum sulfate ("alum"), a chemical that removes impurities and other substances from water before it is delivered for public consumption.

Chris Edwards is currently working with our clients in nationwide litigation pertaining to aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF). In addition, he is involved in the firm's lawsuits against Chemours and DuPont for contaminating communities and waters with perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs) including GenX, a group of potent fluorochemicals. He has also taken an active role in litigation in New Jersey involving Sherwin-Williams Superfund Sites and cases in California where water supply wells were contaminated by the toxic chemical trichloropropane (TCP).

Mr. Edwards also works with numerous school districts in their lawsuits against leading e-cigarette manufacturer JUUL Labs, Inc., for obstructing learning environments in schools across California by creating a youth e-cigarette epidemic. His clients in that action currently include Los Angeles Unified School District, San Diego Unified School District, Glendale Unified School District, Anaheim Elementary School District and the Compton Unified School District, among others.

Chris Edwards enjoys giving back to the communities in which he lives and works by advocating for clients through the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program. He has represented clients pro bono in family law and probate matters and derives much satisfaction from helping people in need and positively impacting the lives of others.

**David Fernandes** joined Baron & Budd's California office as an associate in August 2014. He represents clients across the United States in class action litigation

involving automobile safety, fraudulent banking practices, and deceptive advertising.

Mr. Fernandes was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. He earned his J.D. from Pepperdine University School of Law and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Southern California. During law school, he clerked at the Children's Law Center of California, which serves as appointed counsel for all abused and neglected children who come under protection of the Los Angeles county juvenile dependency court systems.

Since joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Fernandes has worked on a number of significant class action cases handled by the firm's Los Angeles office. These cases have yielded more than \$16 billion for class members across the country.

Mr. Fernandes worked closely with Baron & Budd shareholder Roland Tellis and co-counsel in various automotive defect class action lawsuits which have secured billions of dollars for consumers across the country, including: (1) the Takata Airbag multidistrict litigation, a multi-state class action involving tens of millions of vehicles equipped with defective airbags; (2) the Volkswagen Diesel Emissions multidistrict litigation, a multi-state class action involving vehicles equipped with software designed to surreptitiously evade emissions regulations; and (3) the Chrysler-Dodge-Jeep EcoDiesel multidistrict litigation, a multi-state class action involving vehicles equipped with software designed to surreptitiously evade emissions regulations.

Mr. Fernandes was also instrumental in litigating and successfully negotiating, in less than two years, a \$423 million non-reversionary common fund settlement on behalf of millions of Wells Fargo customers affected by Wells Fargo's force-placed automobile collateral protection insurance fraud in *In Re Wells Fargo Collateral Protection Insurance Litigation*, C.D. Cal. Case No. 8:17-ml-02797-AG-KES. More recently, Mr. Fernandes has been a key member of the Plaintiffs' leadership team *In Re: ZF-TRW Airbag Control Units Products Liability Litigation*, C.D. Cal. Case No. 2:19-ml-02905-JAK-PLA, a multi-state class action involving millions of defective airbag control units.

Despite being well-beyond his law school years and fully involved in a rewarding career with Baron & Budd, Mr. Fernandes finds time to mentor first-year law students at his alma mater. As a preceptor at Pepperdine Law School, Mr. Fernandes works with a group of first-year law students to provide mentorship regarding a variety of student decisions, from résumé preparation to interviewing techniques. By giving his time to these students, Mr. Fernandes uses his experience to prepare future colleagues for successful entry into the legal field. "Providing substantive feedback and support to these promising law students is very rewarding and allows me to give back to the school which shaped my world view about the legal field and what is possible."

David Fernandes has committed himself to a life of purpose, service, and leadership. His passion for public service and social responsibility drew him to Baron & Budd's

mission, and his desire to make a difference in the lives of people harmed by corporate fraud and wrongdoing continues to motivate him every day.

**LaKenya Franklin-Robinson** joined Baron & Budd as an attorney in 2023. She reviews documents for our Class Action Group in Dallas, Texas.

Ms. Franklin-Robinson earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and History from Howard University in Washington, D.C., where she graduated with magna cum laude distinction in 2019. Afterward, she attended Paul M. Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, graduating in 2022.

While in law school, Ms. Franklin-Robinson served as Director of Internal Trial Competitions for the Board of Advocates and Executive Senior Editor for the Journal of Social Justice and Policy at LSU Law. During her last year of law school Ms. Franklin-Robinson was inducted in the *Order of the Barristers*, a national honorary organization whose purpose is the encouragement of oral advocacy and brief-writing skills through effective law school oral advocacy programs. A select number of students who have excelled in moot court, mock trial, brief writing, oral advocacy, and other advocacy programs throughout their time at the LSU Law Center are invited to join the Order. Also, while at LSU Law, Ms. Franklin-Robinson represented incarcerated clients at the *Wrongful Conviction Clinic*, where she was able to expand her passion for advocacy even more.

Ms. Franklin-Robinson is admitted to practice law in the state of Texas. In her spare time, she enjoys reading novels, traveling, and art.

**Andrew K. Gardner** is an attorney in the Pharmaceutical Litigation Group at Baron & Budd. He joined the firm in 2021 after spending several years seeking justice for individuals harmed by the negligence of pharmaceutical conglomerates, defective product manufacturers, reckless motorists and irresponsible big-rig trucking companies.

Mr. Gardner is originally from a small town near Flint, Michigan. He attended Michigan State University and received a degree in political science with a minor in computer science and engineering. After college, Mr. Gardner pursued his dream of becoming a lawyer by attending Michigan State University College of Law. While in law school, he interned in the Office of the Solicitor General, assisting in research on a U.S. Supreme Court case, *Schuetz v. BAMN*, 572 U.S. 291 (2014), and a petition for certiorari in *People v. Davis*, case no. 146819, July 8, 2014 (Mich.) (certiorari denied October 23, 2014). He also interned with a personal injury firm, which provided him with his first real world experience fighting for the rights of those injured by negligent actors. A first-generation attorney, Mr. Gardner graduated *magna cum laude* from law school in 2015 and promptly moved to Houston to escape the snowy winters up north.

Since receiving his license to practice law in Texas, Mr. Gardner has litigated on behalf of injured people around the country. Much of his career has been spent fighting for the rights of people injured by defective medical devices and dangerous pharmaceutical drugs, including Risperdal, metal-on-metal hip implants, Xarelto blood thinners, transvaginal mesh devices, hernia mesh patches, and others.

In 2017, Mr. Gardner assisted a colleague in drafting a successful appeal on behalf of a man who was brutally beaten by nightclub bouncers. Attacking a novel legal argument, Mr. Gardner's assistance resulted in the creation of new law, and the decision was published in *LFMC Enters., LLC v. Baker*, 546 S.W.3d 893 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.], 2018). In 2019, Mr. Gardner was appointed second chair in a trial team that obtained a \$5.5 million settlement on behalf of a citizen who was gravely injured in a rear-end crash by a driver for one of the nation's largest 18-wheeler freight brokers.

In addition to his work for Baron & Budd, Mr. Gardner is vice-president of the Houston Spartans, Michigan State University's Alumni chapter in Houston. He works with the group to coordinate community outreach and service projects, including cleaning up Galveston beaches and working with animal shelters to spay and neuter dogs and cats for the community. Mr. Gardner also enjoys salsa dancing, lifting weights, rock climbing, travel, video games, and spending time with family, friends, and his rescue puppy, Marcus.

**Jessica Catherine Gooding** joined Baron & Budd's Environmental Litigation Group as an eDiscovery associate in January 2020, where she manages electronic information vital to the firm's large-scale complex environmental tort cases, including the nationwide multi-district litigation against 3M, DuPont, and other corporations related to PFOA/PFOS contamination of groundwater and soil through the use of aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF). In addition, Ms. Gooding has been instrumental in the management of data for the ongoing litigation against DuPont and Chemours for their roles in the contamination of North Carolina's Cape Fear River with GenX.

Prior to joining the Environmental Litigation Group, Ms. Gooding spent a year working with Baron & Budd's Pharmaceutical Litigation Group, helping in the fight against the opioid epidemic. Ms. Gooding has always had a passion for client advocacy and loves the opportunity Baron & Budd has given her to truly change people's lives.

In 2012, Ms. Gooding graduated with honors from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Honors Program with a bachelor's degree in Political Science, minoring in Human Rights & Diversity and Philosophy, with an eye toward her future as an attorney. In 2015, Ms. Gooding received her Juris Doctor from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law in Dallas, Texas. While in law school, Ms. Gooding honed her legal skills within the SMU Criminal Defense Clinic and later as an intern with the Collin County District Attorney's Office Crimes Against

Children Division. Ms. Gooding was recognized for her volunteer service with these organizations through SMU's Pro-Bono Honor Roll Award.

As a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Ms. Gooding received invaluable support throughout her academic career from the Tribe's Higher Education and Career Development programs. Ms. Gooding was also the recipient of numerous other academic scholarships and awards, including being named a National Hispanic Merit Scholar finalist and receiving the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship while at UNL, and was a recipient of the Law Dean's Scholarship Award program while at SMU.

When not practicing law, Ms. Gooding enjoys spending time with her husband, Daniel, playing golf, watching movies, and spoiling their many pets

**Molly Goza** joined Baron & Budd's Opioid Litigation Group as an attorney in 2019. She works with the opioid team representing municipalities harmed by the opioid epidemic.

A Texas native, Ms. Goza played softball for University of Mississippi and Louisiana Tech University. During her time as a student-athlete, she earned Southeastern Conference (SEC) and Western Athletic Conference (WAC) Academic All-Conference Awards for each year of athletic participation. In 2011, Ms. Goza earned a bachelor's degree in business finance from Louisiana Tech University. After graduation, she worked in the commercial construction industry for five years.

Ms. Goza received her law degree from Marquette University in 2019. During law school, she earned a sports law certificate from the National Sports Law Institute and was a member of the Marquette Sports Law Review. Additionally, she was involved in many different pro bono opportunities, including the Domestic Violence Injunction Hearings Project, Estate Planning Clinic, and Guardianship Clinic. Additionally, through the Sports Law Program, she interned with the legal team for the Milwaukee Brewers baseball club. In her free time, Ms. Goza enjoys attending Texas Rangers baseball games, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.

**Julia Handt** is an attorney in the Opioid Litigation Group at the Dallas offices of Baron & Budd. She works with the firm's opioid team to make a difference in the fight against the opioid crisis.

Ms. Handt earned undergraduate degrees in Psychology and Criminology from the University of Texas at Dallas in Richardson, Texas, before deciding to attend law school at Texas Tech University School of Law in Lubbock. While in law school, she served as a judicial intern for the Honorable Judge Mark Rusch of the 401st District Court in Collin County, Texas. The experience left her with a clearer understanding of all areas of law and helped clarify for her the type of law she would ultimately choose to practice.



Ms. Handt went on to represent indigent clients at the Texas Tech Family Law and Housing Clinic, where she was able to expand her legal expertise even more. As a result of her strong commitment to helping the legal community, Ms. Handt was recognized with the Pro-Bono Honor Roll Award upon graduation from Texas Tech in May 2018.

Following receipt of her Juris Doctor, Ms. Handt returned to her hometown of Wylie, Texas, where she sought to join a law firm whose principles of helping people aligned with her own. She joined Baron & Budd in 2019, which she considers an ideal fit.

**Joe Heilman** joined the Los Angeles offices of Baron & Budd in 2023 as an attorney in our Class Action Litigation Group. There, he works as part of the firm's document review team to make sure our clients receive the best possible representation.

Before joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Heilman worked as a legislative aide for the State of Ohio, where learned the value of public service and saw firsthand how rewarding interacting with community members for positive change can be. He had the opportunity to work on several different bills, including legislation that updated Ohio laws to protect military spouses and their families from financial hardship during active deployment. Mr. Heilman also worked directly with constituents to assist them in obtaining unemployment benefits, promote environmental advocacy, and conduct general outreach.

Joe Heilman graduated from Ohio State University with an undergraduate degree in Political Science. He attended law school at the University of Alabama School of Law. While in law school, he served as senior editor for the Law and Psychology Journal and was a member of the Intellectual Property moot court team. He also served as a Federal Judicial Extern for the Honorable John E. Ott in the Northern District of Alabama.

In addition, Mr. Heilman clerked with the U.S. House of Representatives Oversight and Government Reform Committee in 2013, focusing on fraud, waste, and corruption in government. More recently, he clerked with the Alabama Attorney General's Office in their White-Collar Crime Division. During his time at the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Mr. Heilman investigated the IRS for unscrupulous targeting of certain nonprofit organizations, in violation of the First Amendment. While with the Alabama Attorney General's Office, he helped secure several convictions, including a conviction for murder.

Mr. Heilman moved to California in 2015 so he could be closer to his family and continue to pursue his legal career. After working several years in documentary filmmaking, he began working with Baron & Budd in 2018 as a contract attorney, helping with the national opioid litigation, and joined the firm's class action group in 2023.

In his free time, Mr. Heilman enjoys Southern California weather and being outdoors as much as possible. He also continues to pursue social and human-interest projects in the documentary film industry.

**Aaron Howard** is an attorney in the Pharmaceutical Litigation Group at the Dallas office of Baron & Budd. There, he represents clients harmed by dangerous prescription drugs and medical devices.

Mr. Howard received his Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, where he was active on the mock trial team and had an opportunity to study abroad in Seville, Spain. Thereafter, Mr. Howard moved to Houston, Texas, and received his law degree from the University of Houston Law Center. During his law school career, Mr. Howard gained experience by serving as a judicial intern to the Honorable Andrew S. Hanen of the United States District Court in the Southern District of Texas. He also worked as a law clerk at a boutique personal injury law firm in Houston.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Howard was employed as a plaintiff's personal injury attorney in Houston, where he tried cases in Harris County District Courts. While in Houston, Mr. Howard also practiced insurance defense, with an emphasis in commercial automobile accidents, construction defects, real estate transactions, and Deceptive Trade Practices Act (DTPA) violations, before returning to his passion of representing injured plaintiffs.

When he is not working, Mr. Howard enjoys playing basketball. He also enjoys traveling and spending time with his family and his dog, Simba.

**Jason Irish** is an attorney in the Dallas Offices of Baron & Budd. He joined Baron & Budd's Opioid Litigation Group in 2019 after moving to the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex from Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Mr. Irish graduated from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, with a degree in International Relations, focusing on China and East Asian security. Afterward, he attended Louisiana State University Law School in Baton Rouge Louisiana, graduating in 2014.

During law school, Mr. Irish focused his attention on environmental, energy, and international policy. He interned for Louisiana state agencies in the practice of environmental law and criminal law, and gained valuable experience working with criminal investigators and district attorneys to protect both the environment and the people of his state. After graduating, Mr. Irish worked for the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of disaster assistance, where he provided assistance and advice to families and businesses impacted by the devastating effects of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, along with multiple other natural disasters.

Mr. Irish enjoys traveling to foreign countries, reading any book he can get his hands on, and trying out new and interesting recipes. He is also always cheering for the New Orleans Saints and LSU Tigers

**Jason Julius**, a shareholder with Baron & Budd, joined the firm's Environmental Litigation Group in 2017. Bringing those who pollute our precious natural spaces to justice is what drives Mr. Julius' passion every day.

Mr. Julius played an extensive role in the firm's PCB litigation, seeking to hold Monsanto Company responsible for polluting America's waterways and other public resources with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a group of hazardous chemicals used in a number of products, including caulk, paint, and electrical equipment. There, he led the litigation on behalf of several large public entities - including the State of Washington, City of San Diego, City of Chula Vista, City of San Jose, City of Berkeley, City of Oakland, City of Portland, and Port of Portland. This work was integral in recovering more than a half billion dollars in resolutions to date for the firm's public entity clients, necessary to test, restore, and protect the nation's precious waterbodies and natural resources.

Mr. Julius has also performed an integral role in the firm's wildfire litigation, seeking to hold electrical utilities responsible for the devastation resulting from utility-caused wildfires throughout the western United States. This representation included both public entities, including the Town of Paradise, Butte County and Mono County, as well as hundreds of individual victims of the Camp Fire, Woolsey Fire and Dixie Fire. Mr. Julius has also led litigation on behalf of public entities in the Mountain View Fire and Holiday Farm Fire, among others.

Mr. Julius was appointed Class Counsel in the Southern District of California for a class of residents and school children impacted by TCE contamination of indoor air resulting from improper disposal practices at an adjacent factory. As a result of the Class resolution, impacted residents and students have been able to obtain necessary medical consultation to ensure their health has not been affected. Additional sampling in their homes is also being performed to identify any ongoing contamination.

Mr. Julius has also led litigation on behalf of dozens of school districts, cities, and counties against JUUL Labs, Inc., its individual management team, and cigarette industry giant, Altria, for their role in the manufacture, marketing and distribution of the JUUL e-cigarette device to children, resulting in the national youth vaping epidemic. Baron & Budd served in the leadership role on behalf of all public entity plaintiffs in the JUUL Judicial Council Coordinated Proceeding (JCCP) in Los Angeles Superior Court. Mr. Julius served as the day-to-day litigation lead for this JCCP on behalf of the public entities. The litigation sought to recover costs expended by schools, cities and counties in dealing with underage vaping on their properties, as well as abatement of the nuisance created by the youth vaping epidemic for which JLI and Altria were directly responsible.

In 2002, Mr. Julius completed his undergraduate education at California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo, where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration with a dual concentration in management and marketing. He was an active member of the Cal Poly chapter of the American Marketing Association and served on the board as a chapter representative to the

AMA national conference. Following graduation, Mr. Julius worked in the private sector for several years before attending law school.

Mr. Julius obtained his Juris Doctor, cum laude, from California Western School of Law in 2007. While enrolled, he was named to the Dean's List, was a board member of the Entertainment & Sports Law Society, and participated in international law programs in Prague, Czech Republic, and London, England. Mr. Julius is an active member of the San Diego County Bar Association, Consumer Attorneys of San Diego, and Consumer Attorneys of California. He is licensed to practice law in both California and Texas.

**Peter Klausner** joined the Class Action Group as an associate at the Los Angeles offices of Baron & Budd in 2016. He has spent the entirety of his career representing victims of fraud, malpractice and negligence. He has advocated on behalf of numerous injured clients and state agencies at all phases of litigation, including multiple jury trials that have gone to verdict. The breadth of his work has spanned cases involving big pharma, banking fraud, auto-defects, surgical implantation devices, hazardous materials (PCBs, lead, ethylene/propylene glycol ethers, industrial solvents), and birth injuries.

Most recently, Mr. Klausner played a significant role in several of the large-scale opioid cases being litigated around the country on behalf of states and municipalities, including *State of New Mexico ex rel. Hector Balderas, Attorney General, v. Purdue Pharma LP, et al.*, during which Mr. Klausner participated in a two-month trial against defendant pharmacies Walmart, Walgreens, and Kroger, resulting in eight and nine-figure settlements before closing arguments.

Mr. Klausner was also instrumental in securing a \$834,012,000 judgment on behalf of the State of Hawai'i (the largest judgment in Hawai'i history), following a five-week trial against the manufacturers of the anti-platelet drug, Plavix, in *State of Hawai'i ex rel. Clare E. Connors, v. Bristol-Myers Squibb, et al.*, during which Mr. Klausner prepared, examined, and defended the state's medical and scientific experts, and made numerous important decisions regarding trial strategy. Mr. Klausner was equally instrumental in securing a \$72 million settlement for the State of New Mexico in a case concerning similar allegations in *State of New Mexico, ex rel. Hector Balderas, Attorney General, v. Bristol-Myers Squibb, et al.* For his work on the Hawai'i Plavix case, Mr. Klausner was a finalist for Public Justice's "Trial Lawyer of the Year" award in 2022.

Mr. Klausner has also participated in several nationwide class action lawsuits involving banking fraud, including *Bias v. Wells Fargo & Company et al.*, which resulted in a \$50 million settlement, as well as *Weiner v. Ocwen Financial Corporation, et al.*, in which Mr. Klausner serves as class counsel in a nationwide fraud case against the country's one-time largest mortgage servicer.

Mr. Klausner obtained his undergraduate degree from the University of Southern California and earned his J.D. from Loyola Law School of Los Angeles. In his second year at Loyola, he competed on behalf of the school's prestigious mock trial team, winning the 2009 AAJ regional tournament, while also serving as a chair of

his school's Public Interest Law Forum, where he helped disadvantaged Los Angeles residents obtain their public assistance benefits. In his final year, Mr. Klausner interned at the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (hardcore gang division), while simultaneously competing on Loyola's Moot Court team, where he ranked among the top three oralists in the nation at the ABA's 2010 National Moot Court Competition.

Following law school, Mr. Klausner worked as an associate at Waters, Kraus & Paul, LLP, where he represented numerous victims of toxic exposures and faulty surgical devices. While there, he obtained several multi-million-dollar verdicts at trial on behalf of clients who had been exposed to asbestos while serving in the United States Navy. In addition, he obtained several multi-million-dollar settlements in cases involving birth defects that resulted from exposure to industrial solvents, while also litigating on behalf of cancer survivors whose illnesses could be linked to PCBs manufactured by the Monsanto Company.

When not practicing law, Mr. Klausner enjoys running marathons and exploring the cosmos with his two daughters.

**Sangeeta Kuruppillai** first worked for Baron & Budd in 2010 as an attorney in the firm's Environmental Litigation group, reviewing discovery documents for cases involving atrazine, an herbicide used for weed control in farm crops which has been linked to prostate and breast cancer and is thought to be causing declines of endangered amphibians. In 2012, Ms. Kuruppillai worked on pharmaceutical cases related to the drug Avandia, thought to increase the risk of serious heart problems in diabetes patients for whom the drug was prescribed. She specializes in the electronic review (eDiscovery) of documents in mass tort litigation.

Before coming to Baron & Budd, Ms. Kuruppillai spent twelve years as an Assistant City Attorney at the Dallas City Attorney's Office in Texas, defending city management in race and other employment discrimination cases. She also worked as a Claims Attorney for Great American Insurance Group and as Manager of the Civil Division and Chief Deputy in the Dallas County Clerk's Office. At Baron & Budd, she also worked for a year and a half in our Employment group, preparing motions and performing pre-trial and trial work relating to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), using the skills she honed as an assistant city attorney to represent clients at Baron & Budd who have been hurt by large companies.

In late 2014, Ms. Kuruppillai re-joined Baron & Budd's Environmental Litigation Group, where she currently reviews discovery documents for the MyFord Touch litigation, an in-car communication system thought to put drivers at risk of an accident, and Trichloropropane (TCP) cases, representing victims of groundwater and soil contamination in several California cities. "I enjoy helping put the pieces of a puzzle together to establish a case against offenders of mass tort, like water contamination or defective products".

Sangeeta Kuruppillai chose a career in law because she wanted to make a constructive difference in people's lives. Her work in our Environmental Litigation

Group allows her to make a significant impact in the lives of our clients and to positively affect our fragile environment at the same time.

**Emily LaCerte** joined the Louisiana offices of Baron & Budd as an associate in 2022. She represents our clients who have developed mesothelioma and other diseases as a result of their exposure to the toxic mineral asbestos by manufacturers who chose to put profit over safety.

Ms. LaCerte was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She attended college at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, where she graduated with a degree in government and was awarded the Herbert Lee Connelly Prize for ability in nonfiction writing. After college, Ms. LaCerte worked in the United States Senate for Senator Charles E. Schumer and collaborated with a political journalist on a book about the House of Representatives. Ms. LaCerte then moved abroad to Beijing, China, where she worked for several years as a freelance copywriter and editor in the tech sector.

Ms. LaCerte attended law school at the Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center, graduating cum laude in 2018. For the next four years, Ms. LaCerte served as a Term Law Clerk to Chief Judge Shelly D. Dick in the Middle District of Louisiana. Federal clerkship provided Ms. LaCerte an opportunity to be involved in a wide variety of civil matters, to hone her expertise in briefing and motions practice, and to observe firsthand how a favorable jury verdict can restore justice for a wronged individual.

Ms. LaCerte is passionate about standing up for what is right. From a young age, she was inspired to be an advocate by her father, a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter, and her mother, the CEO of an agency providing mental health services and support to families facing adversity in Milwaukee. After several years focusing on writing as a career, Ms. LaCerte was motivated to pursue law because of the meaningful and tangible ways lawyers can impact the lives of their clients. “The law is a powerful tool that, in the right hands, can transform lives. I am proud to be part of the Baron & Budd team helping individuals and their families seek justice for the harm they suffered by exposure to asbestos.”

Outside of the office, Ms. LaCerte is an avid hiker and traveler, having previously worked as a wilderness trip leader in Tanzania, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Utah, and Colorado. Closer to home, she enjoys running, cooking, and spending time with her husband and children in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**Jay Lichter** joined Baron & Budd’s Los Angeles office in 2018 as a member of the Firm’s Class Action Litigation Group. He knew his strong drive to fight for victim’s rights would be well-suited to Baron & Budd’s aggressive “fight for what’s right” approach to seeking justice for those harmed by financial fraud, automobile defects, deceptive food labeling, false advertising, securities fraud and environmental contamination.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Lichter worked as a litigator in a boutique Los Angeles law firm where he divided his time equally among the firm’s various



practices, representing businesses and entrepreneurs in a wide array of industries throughout southern California. There, Mr. Lichter handled all phases of litigation in actions involving real estate, financial services, entertainment and technology. Mr. Lichter successfully brought hundreds of breach of contract actions on behalf of multiple local businesses from initiation to dispositive motion practice and settlement, and successfully defended suits involving new and changing business marketing technologies and strategies.

Mr. Lichter began his career and received his training as an associate at a class action law firm in Beverly Hills. While there, he helped bring nationwide, multi-million dollar litigation to settlement. Mr. Lichter also worked as a law clerk for the District Attorney's Offices of San Diego County and Ventura County, where he gained valuable experience in criminal prosecution and developed his passion for victim advocacy.

Mr. Lichter received his J.D. from the University of California, Davis, School of Law in 2009. As a law student, he served as a staff editor for the U.C. Davis Business Law Journal and the U.C. Davis Journal of International Law and Policy. During the course of his studies, Mr. Lichter clerked for both the Office of the Attorney General of California and Legal Services of Northern California, receiving awards for his pro bono and public service work. He received his B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2004, graduating *cum laude*.

In his free time, Mr. Lichter enjoys international travel, hiking, caring for animals, and cooking with his wife. His favorite travel destination is the Cambodian temple complex of Angkor Wat, which he visited for the first time in 2016.

**Jeffrey Lipinski** began working as an attorney with Baron & Budd's Class Action Litigation Group in 2016, joining the firm in a full-time capacity in 2018. During his time with the firm, he has worked on issues involving expert analysis of evidence, drafting pleadings and motions, investigating and proving up arguments against multiple kinds of defendant entities, and large-scale document management and review projects. Additionally, he represents individuals injured by dangerous or defective products, and individuals whose intellectual property interests have been commercially misappropriated. Mr. Lipinski currently leads a team of attorneys who work with the Opioid Litigation Group. Mr. Lipinski's specific focus as part of the Opioid Litigation Group is to investigate, prove, and marshal evidence for a trial of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) claims currently pending in the national Opiate Multi-District Litigation (MDL). Mr. Lipinski's interest in litigation and advocacy began during high school as he excelled on his school's Mock Trial, Speech and Debate teams.

Mr. Lipinski earned his Juris Doctor and Specialization Certificate in Intellectual Property from Golden Gate University School of Law, where he served as Vice President of the Student Bar Association from 2013 to 2014 and as First Year Class Representative from 2011 to 2012. His academic diligence earned him achievement awards related to his research and writing skills, his induction into the Jessie Carter Honors Society, and his participation on the Golden Gate University Law Review as a Staff Editor.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, PC, Mr. Lipinski served as a judicial intern for the Honorable Socrates Peter Manoukian, Superior Court Judge for the California Superior Court of Santa Clara. He also spent one year as a solo practitioner, advising and assisting clients on a variety of copyright, trademark, general litigation and business matters.

**Christine Mansour** has spent the better part of her career advocating for justice and working to protect the rights of the less fortunate. In 2017 she joined Baron & Budd's Pharmaceutical Litigation Group to bring her appellate advocacy and briefing experience to Baron & Budd's work on behalf of clients who have been harmed by the rampant opioid epidemic that has wreaked havoc on so many communities in the United States. She is now a shareholder in our Opioid Litigation Group.

As part of Baron & Budd's Opioid Litigation Group, Ms. Mansour represents states, cities and counties in their quest to hold the drug industry responsible for its malfeasance in causing our nation's opioid epidemic. Ms. Mansour is one of the co-chairs of the Law & Briefing Committee for the Plaintiffs' Executive Committee in the federal multi-district litigation. In both the firm's federal and state court cases, Ms. Mansour researches complex legal issues, responds to motions to dismiss and motions for summary judgment, drafts complaints and discovery motions, and works collaboratively to develop litigation strategies. Ms. Mansour's briefing has prevented the defendants from having these cases dismissed in both federal and state court.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Chris Mansour worked for almost ten years at a Dallas non-profit representing immigrants who had been victims of violence. These included survivors of domestic violence, violent crime and child abuse, as well as those who had suffered human rights abuses in their home countries. Her accomplishments included numerous successful trials and appeals that led to hundreds of immigrants obtaining legal status in the United States. Before that, she spent seven years at major law firms in Wisconsin and Ohio practicing commercial civil litigation. During this time, she cultivated her appellate and trial advocacy skills, obtaining significant experience authoring appellate briefs on a variety of topics and handling all aspects of litigation including drafting pleadings, conducting discovery, motion practice and preparing for trial.

Chris Mansour grew up in Rochester, Minnesota. She received her Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from the University of Notre Dame. After working as a journalist, she entered law school with the goal of using her skills to give a voice to those in need and achieve positive change in national policies that impact a wide range of people, especially those lacking economic or political power. Ms. Mansour graduated from the University of Michigan in 1998 after serving on the Law Review and representing neglected children in the Child Advocacy Clinic.

In her free time, Ms. Mansour enjoys spending time with her family, running, cooking and traveling. She loves returning to the beautiful lakes of Minnesota every summer where she can water-ski and escape the Texas heat.

**Chad Morgan** joined Baron & Budd’s Class Action Group as an attorney in 2023. He reviews documents and provides analysis for the major class actions in which the firm is involved.

Mr. Morgan received his Master of Business Administration from Wheeling University in Wheeling, West Virginia in 2015. He received his Juris Doctor from the Charleston School of Law in Charleston, South Carolina in 2019, where he was active in the *Entertainment, Art and Sports Law Society*. While in law school, Mr. Morgan interned at *South Carolina Legal Services*, a nonprofit partially funded by the South Carolina Bar Foundation which provides free legal assistance in a wide variety of civil legal matters to eligible low-income residents of South Carolina. He is licensed to practice law in Alabama and New Mexico.

Chad Morgan was born and raised in West Virginia, where he enjoyed a childhood spent participating in sports and outdoor activities. He relishes an opportunity to work on significant class action matters at Baron & Budd that seek to protect the safety of consumers and the public at large.

**Marty A. Morris** was an attorney with a well-known commercial litigation firm for several years before joining Baron & Budd in 1999. He now works with the firm’s asbestos litigation group, representing people with mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases and assisting with the oversight of the firm’s intake department and other firm-wide special projects.

As a Baron & Budd attorney, Mr. Morris values our teamwork approach to the practice and the opportunity to make a difference in society. “The firm is passionate about helping people and places that as the highest priority,” he says. “The clients I meet and the positive impact we can make on their lives is the best part of the practice of law for me.”

Mr. Morris was honored with the distinguished Order of the Coif for his outstanding academic record in law school, where he was also a member of the South Texas Law Review and the Advocacy Program. He also provides pro bono legal assistance through the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program. He is an avid Texas Rangers fan who also enjoys golf, tennis, and Batman trivia.

**Catherine Niebergall** is an attorney in the Opioid Litigation Group at the Dallas offices of Baron & Budd, where she represents municipalities in the fight against opioids. Ms. Niebergall is a San Diego, California, native who moved to Texas in 2011.

Ms. Niebergall attended the University of California, San Diego, where she earned a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science with a minor in Urban Studies & Planning in 2009. She received her Juris Doctor from Southern Methodist University School of Law in 2014. While in law school, Ms. Niebergall was an Articles Editor for the SMU Science and Technology Law Review, where she earned Best Comment Finalist, and participated in the Civil Clinic, where she represented low-income clients in civil cases. She also worked as a law clerk at a family law firm and a boutique whistleblower law firm in Dallas.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd in 2019, Ms. Niebergall practiced family law in Dallas and surrounding counties. Ms. Niebergall has always had an aspiration to help people, whether through a tough child custody dispute or as a victim of the national opioid crisis. At Baron & Budd, she is excited to help provide relief to the communities that have been devastated by the national opioid crisis.

**Jessica Wagner Oeffner** is an associate with Baron & Budd’s Opioid Litigation Group where she serves as electronic discovery counsel. She coordinates large-scale discovery projects, applying project management strategies and strong consultative support to efficiently and effectively navigate the intricacies of mass litigation.

Ms. Oeffner has accrued extensive experience managing litigation, having served in every role from quality-control and advanced witness preparation to project head. She focuses on integrating interdisciplinary teams of attorneys, paralegals, and information technology professionals to facilitate data management before litigation arises and to control E-Discovery throughout the life of litigation. Currently, Ms. Oeffner focuses primarily on the nationwide litigation against prescription opioid manufacturers and distributors that have caused an ever-worsening opioid epidemic in the United States. Ms. Oeffner is proud to put to use her unique perspective and mastery of litigation technology in the areas of data collection, management, review, production and trial presentation in fighting for victims of the opioid crisis and “protecting what’s right”.

Ms. Oeffner graduated with her Juris Doctor from the Paul M. Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. She earned her Diploma in Civil Law from Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3 in Lyon, France, with a focus on Intellectual Property and Trade.

When she is not helping to shape dialogue on the multi-disciplinary approach to E-discovery and managed discovery at work, Ms. Oeffner can be found caring for her two retired racing greyhounds and supporting the Greyhound Adoption League of Texas. She has also been acting as a mentor to students of the Texas Bar Exam for the past eight years as part of her lifelong pursuit of excellence in testing and scholarship. She is active in her community by serving on the executive boards of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas and Downtown Dallas Democrats.

**Staci J. Olsen** is Senior Counsel of Electronic Discovery in Baron & Budd’s Environmental Litigation Group, where she specializes in the management of electronic information and people in mass litigation. This skill makes her a critical part of the Group, which focuses on large-scale complex environmental torts. She leads an internal team of four designated eDiscovery attorneys and oversees all contract reviewers. She particularly enjoys putting her talents to work for public entity clients facing contamination issues. “Organizing all the evidence to support a client’s case is rewarding because I know that my work provides a tangible result for the client.”

Ms. Olsen has more than a decade of experience at Baron & Budd overseeing the compilation of evidence necessary to prepare a solid environmental case. Her extensive eDiscovery experience includes management of electronic information,

document management, corporate governance, document review, and training of staff and attorneys to make best use of electronic resources. In addition, Ms. Olsen oversees every phase of document management from intake of documents, scanning, coding, searching, bates-stamping, substantive review, production, creation of privilege logs, and identification/development of trial exhibits.

Ms. Olsen also conducts substantive review of client, defendant and third-party subpoena documents for creation of damages models, including all records of expenses and costs associated with contamination, assessments of impacts to natural resources, and any other evidence necessary for damages calculations. She manages in-house electronic discovery and document review teams and works with client and litigation teams to develop keyword searches, issue tags, redact privileged information and sleuth out interesting case facts for use in litigation.

In addition, Ms. Olsen assists public entities with document identification, preservation and tracking, data mapping, document location and storage, custodian interviews, document production, and compliance with public records requests and subpoenas. She also assists in negotiation of electronically stored information (ESI) protocols to be used in litigation, and specifically structures tasks to relieve the litigation burden placed on clients of all sizes, including public entities, agencies, and public employees.

Staci Olsen has worked on atrazine, perchloroethylene (PCE), trichloropropane (TCP) and MyFord Touch cases, and worked closely with clients who were harmed by the 2010 Gulf Oil Spill. In addition, she led the eDiscovery team that resulted in a \$360 million settlement-in-principle on behalf of 23 cities, counties and special districts against Southern California Edison for taxpayer losses caused by the 2017 Thomas and Koenigstein fires, the 2018 Montecito debris flows, and the 2018 Woolsey fire.

One of the most challenging document-coordination cases Ms. Olsen has had the pleasure of coordinating resulted in a \$648 million settlement-in-principle in June 2020 for public entity plaintiffs in a nationwide class action against Monsanto related to polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination of stormwater systems. Monsanto also agreed to a settlement-in-principle on behalf of the state of Washington in the amount of \$95 million and to pending settlements of \$75.6 million with the Attorneys General of New Mexico and the District of Columbia, all clients of Baron & Budd. In addition to the historical significance of a case that is perhaps first in the U.S. to hold a chemical manufacturer liable for stormwater contamination, the entire action was fought by lawyers and staff at Baron & Budd without the characteristic aid of big litigation partners to help shoulder the burden. When attempts at consolidation failed, Ms. Olsen coordinated all the discovery as Baron & Budd lawyers fought Monsanto singlehandedly over the course of six years in four different states and seven different courtrooms.

Ms. Olsen is currently serving on a three-person committee that leads the document review for the nationwide aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) litigation and she oversees the eDiscovery for the firm's own AFFF clients. She is also the firm's designated eDiscovery lead for the firm's lawsuits against Chemours and DuPont for their role in contaminating North Carolina's Cape Fear River with perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs) and GenX, a group of potent fluorochemicals. Ms. Olsen also manages eDiscovery for the firm's JUUL e-cigarette litigation.

Since 2021, Staci Olsen has been recognized as a member of the Nation's Top One Percent by the National Association of Distinguished Counsel. NADC is an organization dedicated to promoting the highest standards of legal excellence. Its mission is to objectively recognize attorneys who elevate the standards of the Bar and provide a benchmark for other lawyers to emulate.

Staci Olsen wanted to be an attorney ever since she was a young girl growing up on a ranch in rural Colorado, where the quality of the water and the environment impacted her life every day. Ms. Olsen loves the outdoors and spends her summers fishing in Alaska. She also devotes her spare time to charity work, in particular a local organization dedicated to saving exotic large cats.

**Taylor O'Neal** joined the San Diego, California, offices of Baron & Budd's Environmental Litigation Group as an associate in 2021. Ms. O'Neal knew she wanted to become an attorney by the time she was eight years old. A desire to make a difference in people's lives compelled her to embark on her legal journey. A deep and abiding respect for the environment and keeping people safe from harm eventually led her to Baron & Budd.

Ms. O'Neal represents various California counties in their wildfire claims against utility companies. She is part of a team of dedicated that has resolved nearly \$1.5 billion for their public entity clients since 2018. Additionally, Ms. O'Neal represents individual plaintiffs in their claims against negligent utility companies for their roles in some of California's most devastating wildfires. She is passionate about holding utility companies responsible and working to help her clients rebuild what the wildfires have destroyed.

Also, Ms. O'Neal represents many school districts in litigation against JUUL Labs, Inc., the e-cigarette manufacturer notorious for creating an epidemic of youth vaping that has pervaded schools across the nation. She believes it is important to ensure that future generations have a safe and healthy environment in which to thrive.

Ms. O'Neal received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, where she graduated magna cum laude in 2016. She was a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Honors Psychology Program, and Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity. She lives by her alma mater's motto, "A Choice to Change the World."

Ms. O'Neal graduated from the University of San Diego School of Law in 2019. As a law student, she was President of the Black Law Students Association and a



member of the Mock Trial team. While in law school, she worked at an international corporate and securities litigation firm, where she was a participant in the San Diego Diversity Fellowship Program. Ms. O’Neal also worked as a law clerk doing plaintiff-side workers’ compensation and civil litigation. It was during this time that she realized just how meaningful her interactions could be with clients who needed fair and just representation against irresponsible employers and behemoth corporations.

*National Black Lawyers* and *National Trial Lawyers* have named Taylor O’Neal to their list of “40 Under 40” attorneys in California every year since 2022. She has also received awards for her performance and participation in the San Diego chapter of the prestigious *Louis M. Welsh Inn of Court*.

In her spare time, Ms. O’Neal enjoys trying new restaurants and traveling. She also loves spending time with her family, especially her younger brother and sister.

**Dori Persky Tesser** joined the Washington D.C. offices of Baron & Budd in 2021 as an associate with the Opioid Litigation Group. Before joining Baron & Budd, Ms. Persky Tesser worked at The Gori Law Firm for five years, where she represented hundreds of individuals who have developed serious illness from exposure to asbestos. Ms. Persky Tesser is excited to continue working on the plaintiff side.

Ms. Persky Tesser graduated in 2009 from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, where she majored in European studies, corporate management, and art history. She moved to Washington D.C. that same year and took a job as a due diligence researcher for Westlaw Court Express, a court document retrieval service, and worked there several years before starting law school. In 2012, Ms. Persky Tesser enrolled at American University, Washington College of Law, in the District of Columbia.

During law school, Ms. Persky Tesser interned for the U.S. Department of Justice, working with their Environmental Torts Litigation Division. She also interned for a plaintiff’s personal injury firm in Maryland and for the Honorable Ketanji Brown Jackson at the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Additionally, while in law school, Ms. Persky Tesser participated in her school’s Civil Advocacy Clinic, where she represented low-income clients as a student attorney in a variety of claims in D.C. Superior Court.

When not in the office, Ms. Persky Tesser enjoys cooking, traveling internationally, and exploring the many restaurants of Washington D.C. At the top of her travel bucket list are Greece, Peru, and Thailand.

**Lauren Pryde** joined the pharmaceutical litigation group at the Dallas office of Baron & Budd in 2019 where she actively works to represent counties across the country that have been devastated by the opioid crisis. Ms. Pryde is no stranger to advocating for the voiceless. She has volunteered throughout her life with the

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation to help raise awareness and find a cure for this disease.

Ms. Pryde received her Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Boston College in 2013 and graduated cum laude from SMU Dedman School of Law in the top 15% of her class. While attending SMU Dedman School of Law, Ms. Pryde interned at the Dallas County Public Defender's Office, Family Division. She assisted public defenders in providing legal assistance in child custody and child support cases to parents who could not afford legal counsel to defend their Fourteenth Amendment substantive due process rights. This experience provided Ms. Pryde with substantial courtroom experience and a keen appreciation for advocating on behalf of clients of all different backgrounds.

Subsequent to her graduation, Ms. Pryde moved back to her hometown of Seattle, Washington, and worked as real estate counsel on residential real estate transactional matters at Pryde Corporation, a real estate development company. She received her Washington State Real Estate Broker's License in 2018.

Ms. Pryde is licensed to practice law in Washington State and in the District of Columbia. She enjoys running, listening to biographical audiobooks, and contributing her efforts to help save the endangered Southern Resident Orca Whales of the Northwest San Juan Islands.

**Natalie Rabenhorst** joined the Dallas office of Baron & Budd in 2008. While working for a plaintiff's firm during her undergraduate studies, Ms. Rabenhorst became intrigued with the litigation process. She quickly realized she had a passion for the practice of law and for helping injured workers who might not always have the resources or means to help themselves.

Ms. Rabenhorst works in Baron & Budd's Settlement Department, helping asbestos victims and their families navigate the sometimes complicated lawsuit settlement process. Every day, in ways big and small, Ms. Rabenhorst is part of the difference Baron & Budd makes for its clients.

Ms. Rabenhorst was a dean's scholarship recipient at Southern Methodist University's Dedman School of Law. While at SMU, she was selected to the Oxford Summer Program, which allowed her to spend a semester studying international law at University College of Oxford in the United Kingdom. After graduating from law school, Ms. Rabenhorst was certain Baron & Budd was the place she wanted to be. "I knew Baron & Budd was a reputable firm with the resources and expertise to truly make a difference and protect those who have been wronged," she says. "If I can play even a small role in helping rebuild the families affected by a corporation's misconduct, I know my work has been a success."

**Daniel Rakes** is an attorney in Baron & Budd's Opioid Litigation Group. He joined the firm in 2019.

After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics, cum laude, from Texas Tech University in 2012, Mr. Rakes attended the University of Houston Law Center.

During law school, Mr. Rakes was a Dean's Scholarship recipient who received the Lex Award for the highest grade of his class in Torts. He spent time interning at a firm specializing in family law, where he propounded and responded to discovery requests, researched issues pertaining to parental and third-party rights, conducted client interviews, and attended hearings and trials in juvenile and family court. He found the work fulfilling, but it was during his internship at a plaintiffs' firm representing clients who had been harmed by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill that Mr. Rakes developed an abiding concern for the plights of people and communities egregiously harmed by the negligence of major corporations through no fault of their own.

Following receipt of his Juris Doctor in 2015, Mr. Rakes worked as a solo practitioner in wills and estate planning, yet the desire to make a tangible difference in the lives of individuals facing life-altering challenges continued to beckon. He went to work as a case manager at the Texas Civil Commitment office in Littlefield, providing supervision and case management to individuals released from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Following his promotion to Unit Supervisor, Mr. Rakes' responsibilities included supervising the administrative staff, providing guidance on agency policy, and conducting internal investigations, all while maintaining a caseload of clients remanded to the criminal justice system.

The desire to affect good for more than one individual at a time continued to nag at Daniel Rakes, eventually leading him to seek employment in the private sector, where he found his legal skills could be better utilized as a contract attorney working in pharmaceutical litigation. Here, Mr. Rakes saw clearly how bringing justice to bear against negligent manufacturers, for causing significant and sometimes irreparable harm to patients who had innocently trusted their products, would benefit both individuals and society at large by reining in the ability of unscrupulous corporations to continue to cause injury. His subsequent move to Baron & Budd's Opioid Litigation Group in 2019 was an easy and enthusiastic one, a move he has not regretted.

**Noah M. Rich** joined the Washington, D.C. office of Baron & Budd in 2018, where he represents clients on a broad range of legal issues at all stages of litigation in state and federal courts across the country. His experience includes civil rights litigation, class actions, regulatory challenges, False Claims Act litigation, and indigent criminal defense. At Baron & Budd, Mr. Rich is a member of our robust Qui Tam practice, specializing in litigation to combat civil fraud under the False Claims Act, Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), and other federal and state laws.

Mr. Rich earned his bachelor's degree in sociology from Drew University, graduating *summa cum laude*. He earned his law degree from Georgetown University, where he served as Editor in Chief of the Georgetown Journal of Law & Modern Critical Race Perspectives and graduated *cum laude*. During law school, Mr. Rich represented low-income criminal defendants at the office of the Public Defender for Arlington County and the City of Falls Church, as well as low-income tenants at risk of eviction with the D.C. Law Students in Court Clinic. Prior to

joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Rich served as a law clerk to the Honorable Alfred S. Irving, Jr. of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and worked in private practice at a boutique law firm, where his practice focused on constitutional law and complex civil litigation.

Mr. Rich's scholarly work has appeared in the Georgetown Journal of Law & Modern Critical Race Perspectives, as well as The Drew Review. He has also been published in the American Bar Association's GPSolo magazine.

Mr. Rich says that becoming a lawyer never felt like a choice to him. "There's an awful lot of injustice and wrongdoing in the world, and from a young age, I knew I wanted to do something about it." Recognizing that attorneys have the great privilege of being able to decipher, wield, and transform the law, he knew early on that this career was his calling. He notes that many people use that privilege to preserve and take advantage of existing power structures, and they're frequently rewarded handsomely for it. But Mr. Rich says he chooses "to disrupt those power structures in order to help people who have been harmed by those more powerful than themselves." For Noah Rich, it's a matter of "doing what's right."

Outside of his legal practice, Mr. Rich regularly volunteers as a judge in mock trial and moot court competitions. Mr. Rich can sometimes be found on stage, having performed with the Drew University Dramatic Society, the Georgetown Gilbert & Sullivan Society, and Silver Spring Stage. He also loves to cook, to travel, to play tennis and baseball, and to watch a Red Sox or Celtics game whenever he gets a chance.

**Ryan Robelot** joined Baron & Budd as an attorney in 2023. He reviews documents for our Class Action Litigation Group.

Mr. Robelot earned his Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Arkansas, where he was also a 3-year letterman in football. Afterward, he attended St. Thomas University College of Law in Miami, Florida, graduating in 2010.

After graduating, Mr. Robelot spent several years in the oil and gas industry purchasing subsurface rights in the Permian Basin. In 2021, Mr. Robelot decided it was time to make a career change and found his future by looking to his past. He pivoted back to law to utilize his strengths and talents to make a positive impact on society at large. Joining the fight to represent plaintiffs against unscrupulous manufactures was a clear and excellent fit for this desire.

**Anna Rol** joined Baron & Budd's Pharmaceutical Litigation Group in 2016. She represents individuals who have suffered serious injuries after taking a dangerous prescription drug or having a defective medical device implanted.

Since the start of her legal career, Ms. Rol has been dedicated to giving a voice to those not in a position to speak for themselves. During law school, Ms. Rol was awarded the 2012 Squire Patton Boggs Public Policy Fellowship for her work with The Nature Conservancy's policy department, where she researched best practices

to mitigate habitat damage caused by energy development. Since relocating to Texas, Ms. Rol has volunteered with the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program and Clemency Project 2014, a working group of lawyers and advocates providing pro bono assistance to federal prisoners who would likely have received a significantly shorter sentence had they been sentenced today. She was also selected to serve as an Associate of the Patrick E. Higginbotham American Inn of Court for the 2018-2019 term and was listed in the National Trial Lawyers' Top 40 under 40 for 2018. At Baron & Budd, Ms. Rol continues to speak out for those in need by representing people who have been gravely harmed by drugs and devices manufactured by large corporations.

Anna Rol is dedicated to holding pharmaceutical corporations accountable for putting dangerous drugs and/or devices on the market. Her first encounter with a prescription drug company that put profits over patients was long before she decided to earn a law degree. In the early 2000s, Ms. Rol's mother was prescribed Vioxx, a drug that was the subject of major litigation and global recall due to severe cardiovascular side effects that caused thousands of deaths. Fortunately, Ms. Rol's mother was not among those harmed by the drug. Nevertheless, this early experience fueled Ms. Rol's drive to represent those individuals who have suffered at the hands of pharmaceutical products – and continues to motivate her to give a powerful voice to medical consumers. Since joining Baron & Budd, Ms. Rol has worked on a variety of pharmaceutical cases, including Transvaginal Mesh, Xarelto, Essure, and Talcum litigation.

Outside the office, Ms. Rol enjoys spending time with her family in Virginia and Texas and living a sustainable, vegan lifestyle.

**Shannon E. Royster** joined the Los Angeles offices of Baron & Budd in 2022. She is a member of the firm's Class Action Litigation Group and works on product liability litigation, automotive defect class actions and other complex litigation matters.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Ms. Royster spent several years focusing her litigation talents on advocating for consumers under California's Proposition 65, ensuring that toxic chemicals are removed from the foods people eat and the products people use. "I feel strongly that my place in the law is to check corporate abuses of power. Company revenue should not come at the expense of human health and safety." To that end, Ms. Royster oversaw a plethora of active consumer protection and toxic litigation cases, including complex civil actions concerning private enforcements of Proposition 65, in her work as a senior associate at a Beverly Hills law firm.

A Michigan native, Ms. Royster moved to Texas to attend Trinity University in San Antonio, where she received a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in political science and history. She then relocated to California to obtain her Juris Doctor from Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles. While in law school, Ms. Royster was on the Dean's List, won a Witkin award for academic excellence, received a Blue Book award for her work on Southwestern's Law Journal, and was awarded a public service distinction for having been an exemplary advocate who gave selflessly of

her time and abilities to provide assistance to the Office of the Los Angeles County Counsel. She also served as an extern in the United States Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California and worked as both a research and teaching assistant for her Constitutional Law and Torts professors. Not long after her graduation from law school, Ms. Royster’s paper, Contracting for Blue Gold: An Examination of the Legal Designs Surrounding Private Water Delivery, was published by the Southwestern Journal of International Law (2017).

Ms. Royster’s love of the law began in high school, when she participated in the “We the People” competition sponsored by the Center for Civic Education, where she competed in the national finals and returned the following year as a student coach. It was then that Ms. Royster discovered she had a flare for government, civics and history, and an affinity for championing the rights of common citizens that continues to inspire her. She is a firm believer that Baron & Budd’s class action work levels the playing field against corporations that have no legal incentive to be mindful of the public interest. “Companies need to be held accountable for the unbridled harms they cause in the name of shareholder profits.”

When she is not pursuing corporations for their egregious disregard of public safety, Ms. Royster enjoys cooking, exploring southern California restaurants and caring for her rescue pup. She also takes great delight in her affection for niche perfumery.

**Ori Shaffin** is an attorney with Baron & Budd’s Class Action Group in Los Angeles, California, where he works as part of the firm’s document review team. Throughout his career, Mr. Shaffin has exclusively represented only those clients whose cases he genuinely and personally supports. Having joined the firm in 2023, he is ecstatic to be part of the Baron & Budd team because the firm’s values align perfectly with his own personal philosophy regarding law and justice.

Mr. Shaffin graduated from University of California, Davis, with a degree in International Relations, focusing on peace and security in the Middle East. He later attended Whittier Law School in Costa Mesa, California, graduating in 2013. During law school, he was awarded membership on the Trial Advocacy Honors Board and passionately served as a children’s rights fellow, as well as a special education advocate. Upon passing the California bar exam, he commenced employment at a highly regarded Northern California law firm, where he represented workers and their families in asbestos-related cases.

A California native, born in Southern California and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Ori Shaffin is a first-generation Israeli-American, fluent in Hebrew. A son of Israeli parents and a grandson of four Holocaust survivors, Mr. Shaffin has drawn upon his immediate ancestors’ extremely difficult and challenging experiences to gain a deep sense of conviction in furthering the preservation of all people’s basic human and civil rights.

Mr. Shaffin lives in the Los Angeles area with his wife and their agility dog, Mushu. He enjoys playing basketball, traveling and spending his free time with family.



**Torri Sherlin** is a native San Diegan who brings a lifelong passion for the environment to Baron & Budd's Environmental Litigation Group, which she joined in 2018. Ms. Sherlin is proud to be a shareholder and key attorney on the Baron & Budd team that has resolved more than \$1.62 billion for public entities in wildfire claims since December of 2018 alone.

Ms. Sherlin received the prestigious California Lawyer Attorney of the Year Award from the Daily Journal in 2020 for her work on the most comprehensive public entity wildfire resolution in the state's history on behalf of 23 public entities that suffered losses as a result of the 2017 Thomas fire and associated Montecito debris flows, and the 2018 Woolsey fire with Southern California Edison for \$360 million. The resolution involved a historic agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services that reimburses federal and state disaster relief funds. Ms. Sherlin was instrumental in crafting and managing this first of its kind program with FEMA and Cal OES, and also handled key aspects of the litigation and the resolution.

Ms. Sherlin's favored niche is in public entity representation, which is a natural fit as several members of her family dedicated their careers to public entities, most notably her father, for the county of San Diego for more than 40 years, and her mother, for the San Diego Unified School District for more than 30 years. Continuing this rich heritage of public advocacy, Torri Sherlin is proud to represent public entities as plaintiffs in litigation to recoup losses resulting from corporate negligence.

She actively represents or has resolved the cases of public entities of all sizes in wildfire litigation against utility companies such as PG&E, Southern California Edison, and PacifiCorp. Her public entity clients include: the counties of Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino, Shasta, Tehama, Plumas, Butte, Lassen, and Siskiyou; the cities of Santa Barbara, Malibu, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village, Santa Rosa, Chico, and San Buenaventura; and special districts such as Los Angeles County Flood Control District, the Consolidated Fire Protection District of Los Angeles County, Ventura County Watershed Protection District, Ventura County Fire Protection District, Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District, Mountains and Recreation Conservation Agency, Conejo Recreation and Park District, Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency, Montecito Water District, Montecito Fire Protection District, Carpinteria Summerland Fire Protection District, Ebbetts Pass Fire District, San Andreas Fire District, West Point Fire District, and Thermalito Water and Sewer District, among others. Ms. Sherlin also represents non-profit agencies, community associations, and community college districts in wildfire litigation.

In addition, Ms. Sherlin represents numerous school districts in litigation against JUUL Labs, Inc., the leading e-cigarette manufacturer, for creating an epidemic of youth vaping that has infiltrated schools across the nation, impeding student learning and putting the health and safety of students at risk. Ms. Sherlin represents

more than 75 school districts across the nation in the JUUL litigation. As the mother of a young toddler, she cares deeply for the future of our next generation, and is dedicated to “Protecting What’s Right.”

The steadfast determination Torri Sherlin now brings to Baron & Budd once drove her competitive spirit as a college athlete. Ms. Sherlin competed in the women’s soccer, cross country and track teams at Concordia University in Austin, Texas, concluding her athletic campaign with a conference championship, regional rankings and individual all-conference awards. In her free time, Ms. Sherlin enjoys exercising in the great outdoors, exploring restaurants around the world, and spending time with her family.

**Alex Sherman** joined Baron & Budd’s Los Angeles office in 2018 as an attorney in the Firm’s Class Action Litigation Group. Mr. Sherman has dedicated his career to “protecting what’s right” and standing up to fight for people facing significant struggles, whether it’s justice for those harmed by financial fraud, automobile defects, or pharmaceutical malfeasance. Mr. Sherman is particularly skilled at managing cases that involve complex electronic discovery challenges.

Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Sherman worked at a boutique law firm in Los Angeles where he represented businesses, entrepreneurs, and creative industry professionals throughout Southern California. There, he handled actions involving real estate, environmental protection and entertainment, and successfully brought numerous actions on behalf of clients from initiation to settlement. In 2017, together with a team of scientists at the Bloomberg Data Science Group, Mr. Sherman co-authored "Civil Asset Forfeiture: A Judicial Perspective", a research paper demonstrating the utility of data-mining techniques to show evidence of bias in the civil asset forfeiture process. Mr. Sherman has also served as a law clerk at a firm specializing in civil rights litigation for victims needlessly harmed by Taser devices.

Mr. Sherman graduated from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, California, in 2013. As a law student, he investigated and drafted a report on constitutional policing practices in the Los Angeles County jail system. He also developed class curriculum and served as an instructor for incarcerated people. Additionally, Mr. Sherman served as staff editor at the International Law Review.

Prior to becoming an attorney, Alex Sherman was a freelance music journalist for a variety of magazines, including Billboard and Interview. In his free time, he enjoys attending live music venues, cycling along the Pacific coast, cooking with his fiancée and exploring California’s natural wonders.

**Elizabeth Smiley** joined Baron & Budd’s Los Angeles office in 2018 as an associate in the Firm’s Class Action Litigation Group. There she helps bring nationwide, multi-million-dollar lawsuits to successful conclusion on behalf of our clients.

In her work at Baron & Budd, Ms. Smiley is a trial attorney protecting the rights of consumers from corporate fraud. In 2020, she was a member of the trial team that won the largest verdict in the State of Hawaii against a pair of pharmaceutical

companies that were shown at trial to have suppressed research into critical drug safety issues and failed to warn consumers about known risks associated with a popular cardiovascular medication. She was also a member of the appellate team representing the State of Hawaii at the Hawaii Supreme Court regarding the same case. In 2022, Public Justice nominated Ms. Smiley for Trial Lawyer of the Year for her work on that case.

Ms. Smiley has also been an integral member of the trial teams for several cases in opioid litigation across the country. In 2022, she was trial counsel for the State of New Mexico in an eight-week trial against a number of major pharmacies responsible for contributing to the opioid epidemic. She was also on the trial team representing the State of Michigan in opioid litigation against a major pharmacy. Ms. Smiley was the lead associate handling the abatement and damages witnesses for both cases, which included seeking billions of dollars on behalf of each client.

When Ms. Smiley is not working on cases against the pharmaceutical industry, she works on class-action cases against major institutions, such as banks and mortgage brokers, regarding large scale corporate fraud. She has worked on cases ranging from insurance and banking fraud to fraudulent concealment of product safety defects. Ms. Smiley is proud to use her experience to hold companies accountable for their actions and protect consumers.

Ms. Smiley attended the University of Arizona where she received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree in Finance. She then obtained her Juris Doctor from the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law.

While in law school, Ms. Smiley served as the Senior Managing Editor for the Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law. She also interned at the Pima County Public Defender's office where she aided attorneys in providing high quality representation to indigent defendants. Before coming to Baron & Budd, Ms. Smiley clerked at the Los Angeles Superior Court for the Honorable Elaine Lu.

Ms. Smiley grew up in Arizona with a passion for arts and performance. She studied ballet through the Royal Academy of Dance for 12 years and minored in ballet in college.

Ms. Smiley first became interested in law while participating in mock trial programs in high school and college. She was a national finalist in several mock trial competitions at both the college and law school levels of competition. Ms. Smiley has a passion for teaching trial skills and advocacy. She is the Head Coach of UCLA's undergraduate mock trial program and she is also on the Board of Directors of the American Mock Trial Association.

In her free time, Ms. Smiley takes advantage of the thriving performing arts scene in Los Angeles and attends as many ballet and theatrical performances as she can.

**Adam Tamburelli** joined Baron & Budd's Class Action Litigation Group in its Los Angeles office in 2020. Mr. Tamburelli chose to dedicate his career to seeking justice for victims of corporate greed after graduating law school in the midst of the

late-2000s recession and witnessing the devastating impact that the predatory corporate conduct responsible for the recession had upon the lives of so many people. He has served as lead or co-lead counsel in many national and statewide class action cases against some of the largest corporations and law firms in the country, where he has recovered tens of millions of dollars for consumers and employees through his passionate representation.

A Michigan native, Mr. Tamburelli began his career in Chicago representing plaintiffs in consumer fraud, false advertising, product defect, and environmental class actions, as well as in personal injury and civil rights cases. He also represented professionals, such as physicians, dentists, nurses, insurance producers, and real estate brokers, in professional disciplinary proceedings before state and federal agencies. After moving to California in 2015, Mr. Tamburelli continued his work on behalf of consumers and employees at a prominent plaintiff-side employment litigation firm, leading teams of law firms in the fight against wage theft and other employer misconduct. Mr. Tamburelli also has substantial appellate experience, as he has successfully litigated numerous state and federal appeals.

Mr. Tamburelli earned his law degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law. During law school, he received academic awards and appeared on the Dean's List multiple times. He also served as a summer law clerk for a district court judge in Michigan and completed an externship with Justice Margaret O'Mara-Frossard of the Illinois Appellate Court.

Mr. Tamburelli's passion for fighting for individuals is predicated upon his belief in economic and social justice for all and the fact that class actions are often the only check on rapacious corporate malfeasance. In his free time, Mr. Tamburelli can be found in the mountains hiking, watching baseball, and exploring California.

**Chad Taylor** joined Baron & Budd's trucking and catastrophic injury section as an associate in 2021. Prior to joining Baron & Budd, Mr. Taylor worked for a boutique personal injury firm in Dallas, Texas. At that law firm, Mr. Taylor represented individuals in a wide range of personal injury cases including motor vehicle accidents, premises liability, dangerous dog bites, sexual assault, medical malpractice, and truck accidents.

Prior to practicing law, Mr. Taylor graduated from Texas A&M School of Law in Fort Worth, Texas, where he was a Citations Editor on the Texas A&M Law Review Board of Editors. Mr. Taylor graduated with concentration certificates in Environmental Law and Water Law while co-authoring a forthcoming publication titled Groundwater Laws and Regulations: A Preliminary Survey of U.S. States. Mr. Taylor also worked with the Trinity River Authority in researching potential liability for the operation of dams at East Texas' Lake Livingston in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

While in law school, Mr. Taylor worked with small businesses to acquire trademarks in the school's Trademark & Copyright Clinic. He also worked with elderly clients on wills and estate planning in the school's Wills & Estates Clinic.

**Kris Thompson** has been a member of the New Orleans office of Baron & Budd since 2018. As part of the firm's Mesothelioma Litigation Group, Mr. Thompson represents clients harmed by exposure to asbestos. His determination to obtain justice for victims of corporate greed sprung from his first representation of asbestos clients at Roussel & Clement in Mandeville, Louisiana. Advocating now for Baron & Budd's mesothelioma patients has only intensified Mr. Thompson's passion for representing individuals who don't always have the knowledge or resources to help themselves. "I am dedicated to protecting those who have been harmed by companies that profit from failing to ensure the safety of others". He is admitted to practice law before all Louisiana state courts, as well as the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Kris Thompson received his juris doctor from the Paul M. Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, where he was a quarterfinalist in the Ira S. Flory Mock Trial Competition and served as vice president of the campus Torts Society and as a Barristers Bowl team member. He also holds a degree in political science from Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond. While in law school, Mr. Thompson served a judicial externship under Judge Jewel E. "Duke" Welch of the Louisiana Court of Appeal, First Circuit, in Baton Rouge.

Kris Thompson was born, raised and educated in southeast Louisiana and is deeply familiar with the area's customs, traditions, and strong ethical and religious backgrounds. He enjoys being able to utilize his legal training and knowledge to provide thorough representation to severely injured mesothelioma patients in complex litigation, perhaps appreciating the one-on-one communication he has with our clients best of all. "I am honored to represent individuals and families through one of the most medically, emotionally and financially challenging times in their lives. I take special pride in the strong, personal relationships I've built with them".

**Brandon Tyler** is an attorney with the Opioid Litigation Group in the Dallas offices of Baron & Budd. Mr. Tyler is an Oklahoma native who relocated to Texas in 2019 when his wife accepted a transfer for work. He attended Oklahoma's Northeastern State University where he graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance in 2005.

Mr. Tyler worked in the securities industry for Edward Jones prior to pursuing his lifelong dream of becoming an attorney. His passion has always been advocacy for clients' rights, and he has dedicated his legal career to representing individuals who have been injured through the negligence of others.

While in law school, Mr. Tyler worked as a law clerk for Graves McLain, PLLC, an Oklahoma personal injury law firm specializing in the representation of individuals in medical negligence, wrongful death and motor vehicle accident cases. Mr. Tyler graduated summa cum laude from University of Tulsa College of Law in 2014.

Upon graduation from law school, Brandon Tyler returned to his hometown in Oklahoma, where he established a solo practice representing individuals in personal

injury cases. His successes in complex litigation include medical negligence, wrongful death, motor vehicle accidents, and worker's compensation.

**Kelly Wheeler** joined Baron & Budd as an associate in 2021. She works with our Opioid Litigation Group to represent states and municipalities harmed by the opioid epidemic.

Prior to coming to Baron & Budd, Ms. Wheeler gained valuable experience in commercial litigation, personal injury and insurance defense. During her four years with a national trial firm in Dallas, Texas, Ms. Wheeler worked zealously to represent individuals and families harmed by dangerous drugs, defective products, and asbestos exposure. In that time, Ms. Wheeler headed the firm's pharmaceutical mass tort department and represented hundreds of plaintiffs in multidistrict litigation cases and other consolidated litigations. She was part of the trial team for the first bellwether trial involving Pradaxa, a prescription drug. In addition to her pharmaceutical practice, she represented individuals and families devastated by diseases caused by exposure to asbestos.

Ms. Wheeler graduated from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana in 2012 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in the Classics and a concentration in Latin language. As a law student at Baylor Law School in Waco, Texas, she received the Dean's Academic Excellence scholarship for her undergraduate efforts, was named to the Dean's Academic Honor List and was a recipient of the W. Frank Newton Best Brief award.

During law school, Ms. Wheeler worked for two years as a research assistant for her Contracts and Federal Courts professor. During her summers, she gained valuable experience while employed at the Texas Attorney General's Child Support office in Waco, Texas, and by working with a major Texas hospital's legal department in her hometown of Temple, Texas. In her third year of law school, Ms. Wheeler expanded her practical experience while working for a Waco law firm where she conducted legal research and drafted memoranda and expert reports for insurance matters.

Ms. Wheeler attributes her decision to attend law school to a knack for speech and debate in high school, at which she excelled. "I am grateful to enjoy a career where my strength in advocacy combines with my desire to help others. I have focused my career on obtaining justice for people who have been seriously hurt by corporate misconduct, and I'm excited to continue that work at Baron & Budd."

Kelly Wheeler and her husband are the proud "parents" of a rescue pup named Olivia and an elderly rescue cat named Mrs. Buttersworth. In her free time, Ms. Wheeler enjoys fitness classes, cross-stitching and quality time with her friends and family.

**Christopher Yoder** joined Baron & Budd as a staff attorney in 2021. He works in our Opioid Litigation Group.



Chris Yoder studied philosophy and English literature at Wichita State University, receiving a bachelor of arts in each. His family history of farming closely connected him to grassroots America, and he applied to law school hoping to advocate for those living in underserved rural areas by providing ready access to legal representation.

While attending Washburn University School of Law, Mr. Yoder was a recipient of the Hansen Foundation Rural Initiative grant, which allowed him to gain experience practicing criminal defense in remote areas of western Kansas. This advocacy at such a hyper-local level in the farm community inspired in him a passion for representing those who struggle to afford legal representation that provides them with a sincere and powerful voice in the court system. Because of the great need for attorneys in rural areas, and the difficult barrier of entry for new practitioners, Mr. Yoder was motivated to found the *Rural Practice Group* at Washburn University School of Law to connect aspiring attorneys with established small-town lawyers and to give them a foothold in the community.

In his spare time, Mr. Yoder enjoys spending time with his wife, a cancer researcher, and their young son. He also plays jazz guitar and studies sustainable agriculture.

**Evan Zucker** joined Baron & Budd's Los Angeles office as an associate in 2014. He specializes in class action cases, as well as banking and pharmaceutical litigation. Mr. Zucker is dedicated to fighting for the rights of consumers who have been harmed by the systemic, uniform and unscrupulous practices of corporations.

Before joining Baron & Budd, Evan Zucker represented clients in matters which had positive ramifications across the country for those who had been victims of improper mortgage and insurance practices. He has been appointed class counsel or co-class counsel in more than a dozen state and nationwide class action matters dealing with corporate malfeasance. During that time, Mr. Zucker also represented individuals in civil rights cases against various state and local law enforcement entities, receiving several favorable settlements for these citizens. Additionally, he worked with California senators to pass legislation protecting the privacy of Californians who were victimized by online extortion schemes which posted consumers' personal information online. Mr. Zucker was instrumental in furthering litigation aimed at shutting down these prolific cyber-extortionists.

In his work at Baron & Budd, Mr. Zucker was a member of the trial team that won the largest verdict in the State of Hawaii against a pair of pharmaceutical companies who defrauded the public for more than a decade by failing to warn consumers about known risks associated with their cardiovascular medication. He was also a member of the Plaintiffs' Leadership team in a case resulting from one of the largest methane leaks in the U.S., which forced tens of thousands of Southern California residents to relocate from their homes. Mr. Zucker was instrumental in securing a settlement in that case for well over a billion dollars on behalf of the impacted residents. Additionally, Mr. Zucker was the lead associate in a case holding Bank of America responsible for years of appraisal fraud that helped form the foundation of the 2008 housing market collapse, recovering in excess of a quarter-billion-dollar settlement for mortgagees.

urrently, Mr. Zucker is an integral member of the trial team seeking to hold the opioid industry responsible for the devastating impacts of the epidemic it caused. He is proud to put his experience to work fighting for victims of the ongoing opioid crisis.

In 2022, Public Justice nominated Evan Zucker for Trial Lawyer of the Year. The same year, he was also nominated by the Consumer Attorneys of California for Consumer Attorney of the Year. Both nominations reflect his strong affinity for protecting the rights of individuals.

Evan Zucker was in middle school when his family's home was devastated by the '94 Northridge earthquake. At the time, he saw the tremendous impact that industry-wide insurance and corporate practices could have on middle class families, especially after a natural disaster. As a result of this experience, even before deciding to attend law school, Mr. Zucker gravitated toward work in law firms that handled cases against large companies who sought to take advantage of those with less power.

Ultimately, Mr. Zucker found himself working to recover hundreds of millions of dollars on behalf of commercial and residential policyholders faced with catastrophic losses after that same Northridge earthquake. As a result of these experiences, he was inspired to seek a career in law. He has been representing plaintiffs ever since, and has continued that work as a part of Baron & Budd's consumer protection team.

In his spare time, Mr. Zucker enjoys hiking in the mountains around his home with his wife and playing basketball. During the winter he finds time for skiing and snowboarding.