

CLEVELAND'S

# BEST LAWYERS<sup>®</sup>

2011 EDITION

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO LEGAL REPRESENTATION IN CLEVELAND



SPANGENBERG  
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CLEVELAND TRIAL LAWYERS  
GIVE BACK TO  
THE COMMUNITY

WHO ARE THE  
LAWYERS OF  
THE YEAR?

A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO  
THE PLAIN DEALER  
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO

An **ALM** Publication

**CORPORATE COUNSEL**

THE NATIONAL  
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THE  
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 **Best Lawyers<sup>®</sup>**  
THE WORLD'S PREMIER GUIDE

# LOWE EKLUND WAKEFIELD & MULVIHILL CO., LPA

PERSONAL INJURY LITIGATION,  
PRODUCT LIABILITY LITIGATION



From Left: Michelle Holiday, Gregory Scott, James Lowe, Ryan Fisher, Mark Wakefield, Dennis Mulvihill

SELECTED FOR INCLUSION IN  
CLEVELAND'S  
**BEST  
LAWYERS**  
2011 EDITION  
JAMES A. LOWE

**IN ITS 35-YEAR HISTORY, CLEVELAND LAW FIRM LOWE EKLUND** Wakefield & Mulvihill has earned its reputation by pursuing product safety litigation of all types. Specializing in auto defect, car and truck accidents, workplace injuries and medical malpractice cases, the firm is now a recognized leader both in Ohio and nationwide for its work in the areas of products liability, medical malpractice, and complex class actions.

**FOUNDING PARTNER JAMES LOWE WAS LEAD TRIAL COUNSEL AND** along with Partner Dennis Mulvihill and other co-counsel, recently obtained a verdict which resulted in an award of \$2 billion against Ford Motor Company on behalf of a national class of Ford's big and medium truck dealers.

**THE FIRM'S ABILITY TO TAKE ON COMPLEX PROBLEMS IN A VARIETY** of areas and prepare them for trial has helped it to become one of the most well-regarded litigation firms in the state. "A hallmark of our firm has been our willingness to take on substantial risk in terms of the expense of pursuing complex litigation and the difficulty of our cases, in order to help those who have been devastated," Lowe says.

**LOWE HAS BEEN ANNUALLY SELECTED FOR INCLUSION IN**

*The Best Lawyers in America*® since 1993 and in 2010 Best Lawyers named him "Lawyer of the Year" in Cleveland for his work in products liability litigation. Lowe, who has been board certified in Trial Advocacy by the National Board of Trial Advocacy for more than 20 years, is the author of multiple texts and treatises on products liability and motor vehicle defect cases, and frequently lectures on the subject both in the U.S. and abroad. He and the firm have been retained by the Ohio Attorney General as special counsel. Along with partner Dennis Mulvihill, Mr. Lowe has been consistently named in Ohio *Super Lawyers*.

**LOWE IS ALSO VERY ACTIVE IN THE LEGAL COMMUNITY: HE IS A**

Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the International Society of Barristers, and is immediate past President of both the Ohio Chapter of American Board of Trial Advocates and the Attorneys Information Exchange Group, a nationwide association of lawyers specializing in litigation relating to motor vehicle and transportation products. Mulvihill, meanwhile, just finished his one year term as President of the Ohio Association for Justice, the lead bar association in Ohio for trial lawyers.

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# CLEVELAND'S BEST LAWYERS® 2011 EDITION

## A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO CLEVELAND'S LEGAL TALENT

Cleveland's Best Lawyers® helps take the mystery out of locating a high-quality advocate to protect you, your family, your business and all other assets. Keep this comprehensive guide available for those times when you need a first-rate advocate to assist you. The lawyers listed in Cleveland's Best Lawyers are happy to help.

Cover Photograph by Billy Delfs

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## CLEVELAND'S BEST LAWYERS BY SPECIALTY

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# PORTER WRIGHT MORRIS & ARTHUR LLP

87 Porter Wright lawyers are honored as Best Lawyers in the 2011 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*®. With the most Ohio attorneys named Best Lawyers in key practice areas, Porter Wright stands out for the excellence of its attorneys and its commitment to the highest quality of client service.

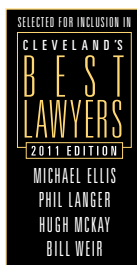
Porter Wright's clients range from *Fortune* 20 companies to middle market to emerging start-up companies. The Firm is nationally recognized for its strength and depth in litigation, intellectual property, environmental, labor and employment, banking, corporate, bankruptcy and workouts, utilities and regulatory law.

"Cleveland is one of the finest law towns in America and clients here expect and demand the highest quality of legal service," says Cleveland office Partner-in-Charge and Best Lawyer, Hugh McKay. "Good is not good enough. We've been fortunate to attract outstanding lawyers who understand this reality and know how to deliver the highest quality, cost-effective legal services."

Porter Wright's lawyers are also heavily involved in leadership roles in the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association as well as numerous community organizations, charities and non-profits. Cleveland partners Bill Weir, Hugh McKay, Phil Langer, and Michael Ellis (pictured above) have again been named Best Lawyers.



From Left: Bill Weir, Hugh McKay, Phil Langer, and Michael Ellis



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**Sales Manager,**  
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The 2011 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* is available from the publisher. For information call 803-648-0300; write 129 First Avenue, Aiken, SC 29801; email [info@bestlawyers.com](mailto:info@bestlawyers.com); or visit [www.bestlawyers.com](http://www.bestlawyers.com). "The Best Lawyers in America" and "Best Lawyers" are registered trademarks of Woodward/White, Inc. "ALM" is a trademark of ALM Media Properties, LLC.

**METHODOLOGY**

This list is excerpted from the 2011 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*®, the preeminent referral guide to the legal profession in the United States. Published for more than a quarter of a century, *Best Lawyers*® lists attorneys in 79 specialties, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia, who have been chosen through an exhaustive survey in which thousands of the nation's top lawyers confidentially evaluate their professional peers. The 2011 edition of *Best Lawyers*, which was published in November 2010, is based on more than 2.8 million evaluations of lawyers by other lawyers.

The method used to compile *Best Lawyers* remains unchanged since the first edition was compiled more than 26 years ago. Lawyers are chosen for inclusion based solely on a vote of their peers. Listings cannot be bought, and no purchase is required to be included. In this regard, *Best Lawyers* remains the gold standard of reliability and integrity in lawyer ratings.

The nomination pool for the 2010 edition consisted of all lawyers whose names appeared in the previous edition of *Best Lawyers*, lawyers who were nominated since the previous survey, and new nominees solicited from listed attorneys. In general, lawyers were asked to vote only on nominees in their own specialty in their own jurisdiction. Lawyers in closely related specialties were asked to vote across specialties, as were lawyers in smaller jurisdictions. Where specialties are national or international in nature, lawyers were asked to vote nationally as well as locally. Voting lawyers were also given an opportunity to offer more detailed comments on nominees.

Voting lawyers were provided this general guideline for determining if a nominee should be listed: "If you had a close friend or relative who needed a real estate lawyer (for example), and you could not handle the case yourself, to whom would you refer them?" All votes and comments were solicited with a guarantee of confidentiality – a critical factor in the viability and validity of *Best Lawyers* surveys. To ensure the rigor of the selection process, lawyers were urged to use only their highest standards when voting, and to evaluate each nominee based only on his or her individual merits. The additional comments were used to make more accurate comparisons between voting patterns and weight votes accordingly. *Best Lawyers* uses various methodological tools to identify and correct for anomalies in both the nomination and voting process.

Ultimately, of course, a lawyer's inclusion is based on the subjective judgments of his or her fellow attorneys. While it is true that the lists may at times disproportionately reward visibility or popularity, the breadth of the survey, the candor of the respondents, and the sophistication of the polling methodology largely correct for any biases. For all these reasons, *Best Lawyers* lists continue to represent the most reliable, accurate and useful guide to the legal profession in the United States.

*Best Lawyers* lists are available at [www.bestlawyers.com](http://www.bestlawyers.com). "Best Lawyers" and "The Best Lawyers in America" are registered trademarks of Woodward/White, Inc.

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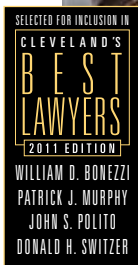
**MEDICAL MALPRACTICE LAW**

For over a decade, Bonezzi Switzer Murphy Polito & Hupp has provided its diverse base of clients with an elite level of representation in all aspects of civil litigation. With its 17 experienced attorneys, the firm is able to offer efficient, cost-effective representation in areas such as medical malpractice, nursing home defense, general liability defense, employment law and environmental litigation. "The firm also recently opened an office in St. Pete Beach, Florida, where it provides the same superior level of representation," says Steven J. Hupp, Managing Director.

"We are proud that our firm consists of such a strong group of professionals," says founding Director, William D. Bonezzi. "They are genuinely good people and that makes for a very collegial working environment."

This year, William D. Bonezzi, Patrick J. Murphy, John S. Polito and Donald H. Switzer were selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for their work representing defendants in the area of medical malpractice law. Attorneys at the firm also garnered numerous other accolades in 2011, with eight lawyers included in Ohio *Super Lawyers* and two additional lawyers named as Rising Stars in that publication. Furthermore, half of the firm's attorneys have been AV-rated by Martindale-Hubbell.

Over the years, the firm has secured a reputation for its responsive representation by placing an emphasis on building long-term relationships with its clients. Attorneys at the firm are also known for their trial experience: Bonezzi notes that he has tried in excess of 250 cases in front of a jury, while other lawyers at the office have handled upwards of 100 cases. "We really know our way around a courtroom," states Bonezzi.



From Left: Bret C. Perry, John S. Polito, William D. Bonezzi, Donald H. Switzer, Patrick J. Murphy, Steven J. Hupp

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Billy Delfs

# SPANGENBERG SHIBLEY & LIBER LLP

CATASTROPHIC INJURY AND WRONGFUL DEATH, MALPRACTICE, DANGEROUS PRODUCTS AND DRUGS, BUSINESS DISPUTES AND MEDIATION



Standing from Left: William B. Eadie, Stuart E. Scott, Nicole Greer, Peter H. Weinberger, Peter J. Brodhead, William Hawal and Nicholas A. DiCello  
Sitting from Left: John D. Liber, Rhonda Baker Debevec and Dennis R. Lansdowne

**S** PANGENBERG SHIBLEY & LIBER LLP IS A BOUTIQUE litigation firm composed of experienced trial lawyers who concentrate on cases of wrongful death, personal injury, medical malpractice, negligence and defective products. The firm also handles civil litigation claims for businesses of all sizes on issues ranging from insurance coverage denial to vendor contract disputes.

**IN ITS MORE THAN 65 YEARS OF PRACTICE, THE FIRM HAS EARNED A** nationwide reputation as a premier trial law firm, and its attorneys are often called upon by other lawyers to help represent clients in complex litigation. Some of the firm's nationally recognized cases include the Vioxx® and Gadolinium Dye litigation. Attorneys at the firm have also handled a full spectrum of health care cases, as well as nursing home injuries and civil rights issues such as police misconduct and discrimination.

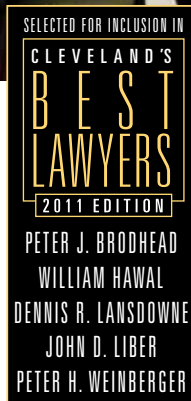
**IN ORDER TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD FOR ITS CLIENTS, THE FIRM** works on a contingency fee basis where clients only pay attorney fees when a case is successful. This approach has allowed clients lacking in resources to bring meritorious claims against powerful, well-funded defendants.

**"WITH OUR CONTINGENCY FEE APPROACH WE ARE ABLE TO** represent those who may not have the funds to afford the high hourly fees charged by larger firms," says managing partner Peter H. Weinberger. "Ultimately it allows us to maximize the resolution to the benefit of the client because they don't have to worry about the time frame for the litigation or its expense."

For more info go to [www.law.com/clevelandbest](http://www.law.com/clevelandbest)

**SPANGENBERG SHIBLEY & LIBER IS UNIQUE IN** that, in addition to representing individuals and families on a contingency fee basis, the firm also takes the same approach with its business clients. Therefore, any business owner or general counsel with a valid dispute or claim who is worried about pursuing litigation because of its potential drain on business capital can turn to Spangenberg Shibley & Liber for assistance.

**ATTORNEYS AT THE FIRM ARE REGULARLY NAMED AS LEADERS IN** their field for their exceptional knowledge of the law and superior level of service. Five of the firm's attorneys were selected for inclusion in the 2011 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*®: Peter J. Brodhead, William Hawal, Dennis R. Lansdowne, John D. Liber, and Peter H. Weinberger. In addition, Brodhead, Hawal, Lansdowne, Liber, Weinberger and Stuart E. Scott were named in this year's *Ohio Super Lawyers*. Partners Brodhead, Hawal, Lansdowne and Weinberger were also included in The American Trial Lawyers Association's "Top 100 Trial Lawyers in Ohio."



Billy Deifs



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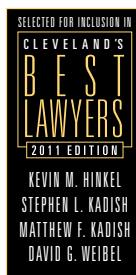
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Kadish, Hinkel & Weibel is a contemporary business and tax law firm that takes a practical approach to representing individuals and closely-held businesses in income and estate tax, corporate, business law and litigation matters. "Our foundational goal was to provide legal counsel in an atmosphere rich in experience, integrity and common sense, and we never lost sight of that objective," says Stephen L. Kadish.

Since its inception in 1975, the firm has established a reputation for its preeminent tax practice. The firm has also expanded its areas of expertise to include corporate and limited liability entity structuring, employment and shareholder issues, real estate acquisition and development, real estate tax assessment, civil, business and commercial litigation, estate planning and probate administration, and a full-range of pension and employee benefit-related services.

In addition to its wide range of services, the firm actively works to ensure that it takes advantage of the most state-of-the-art resources available. The result of this effort is a competitive, efficient method of practice that allows the firm to specifically tailor its strategies to its clients' needs. David G. Weibel says: "Our commitment to the continued development and use of modern technology defines our firm today and will continue to characterize us in the future."

The firm's attorneys are recognized leaders in both the legal and business communities. For example, Stephen L. Kadish, Kevin M. Hinkel, David G. Weibel, and Matthew F. Kadish were all selected for inclusion in this year's edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*®. Still, the firm has long measured its success by the success of its clients. "We have maintained an extraordinary level of trust and mutual respect with our clients over the years," notes Kevin M. Hinkel.



Sitting from left: Kevin M. Hinkel, Stephen L. Kadish, David G. Weibel. Standing from left: William A. Duncan, Rita M. Jarrett, Matthew F. Kadish, Daniel P. Hinkel, Dean M. Rooney, Kent S. Hedman, Aaron H. Bulloff, James H. Rownd

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Since its beginning over ten years ago, Frantz Ward has grown steadily to more than 65 attorneys and is recognized as one of Ohio's premier full-service law firms. The firm's lawyers resolve problems for clients in matters involving antitrust, bankruptcy, construction, corporate and banking, employee benefits, environmental, estate planning and probate, health care, higher education, labor and employment, litigation, and real estate.

"We've been able to attract very talented lawyers and staff who are committed to building strong client relationships and providing excellent legal work in a cost effective manner," says Michael J. Frantz. "The quality of our work and dedication to client service has allowed us to attract and retain a wonderful group of clients over the years."

The firm serves a diverse group of clients nationally and locally, consisting of individuals and professionals, small and medium size businesses and Fortune 500 companies. As a member of ALFA International, a global legal network of independent law firms, Frantz Ward is able to serve the needs of clients across the United States and around the world.

The partners at Frantz Ward average more than 25 years of experience, and they are recognized by a number of publications and legal organizations for their work, including Chambers USA and U.S. News and World Report. This year, nine of the firm's attorneys were selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America®, representing the practice specialties of antitrust law, construction law, labor and employment management law, and business and high stakes Bet the Company Litigation.



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Back Row from Left: James B. Niehaus, Michael J. Frantz and T. Merritt Bumpass, Jr. Front Row from Left: Andrew J. Natale, Joel R. Hlavaty and M. Neal Rains. Not Pictured: Keith A. Ashmus, Brett K. Bacon and Daniel A. Ward

# SPANGENBERG SHIBLEY & LIBER

*Cleveland Trial Lawyers Give Back to the Community*

The impact of the results that Spangenberg Shibley & Liber lawyers achieve doesn't end with our clients who retain the firm. It also has a meaningful effect on shaping the law and policy brought about through court decisions where our lawyers have advocated for recognition of individual rights and duties. In addition, the firm continues to make a difference through community involvement and by supporting numerous charitable programs.

"We work in a very cohesive manner to attain the very best results for our clients, and often times, these results contribute to legal precedent in the particular area that benefits other similarly-situated victims," says Peter H. Weinberger, one of the firm's five attorneys selected for inclusion in the 2011 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*®.

Fellow Best Lawyers Peter J. Brodhead, William Hawal, Dennis R. Lansdowne and John D. Liber, and the entire firm have worked on cases whose decisions have impacted how individual or corporate defendants should conduct themselves in the future.

In a case involving an operating room fire, the firm achieved a favorable jury verdict finding a plastic surgeon responsible for causing the fire that resulted in second-degree burns on a young patient.

"This verdict was published across the country, and affected the way that doctors, nurses and staff communicate when using oxygen and combustible sources in operating rooms," Weinberger says.

Results from Spangenberg have saved taxpayer money by requiring the careless and negligent parties who cause injuries to pay for the medical costs instead of the taxpayer-supported Medicare and Medicaid. The firm's verdicts and settlements have led to decreases in the cost of health insurance by reimbursing the health care insurers the medical costs paid on behalf of those injured victims by the negligence and carelessness of others.

Spangenberg's work has resulted in reduced health care costs by holding doctors, nursing homes and hospitals accountable for dangerous practices, which discourages those practices in the future. Finally, the firm's accomplishments have also caused increased public protection by forcing drug manufacturers to provide dangerous side effect warnings associated with prescription drugs, Hawal says.

"I have come to appreciate the enormous difficulties which disabling injuries and the resulting economic hardships can have on individuals and their families," Hawal says. "As government assistance is reduced for those in need, charitable giving becomes increasingly important."

"One of the fundamental principles and core values of the firm has been the sense of obligation and commitment to "give back" to the legal profession and community through providing education and mentoring leadership when asked, and philanthropy when and where appropriate and needed," Liber says.

"In exchange for being given the privilege of practicing law as a member of the firm, each one has devoted time to educating young lawyers, providing leadership to various bar associations and professional and honorary organizations of the trial bar, and involving ourselves in various community charitable organizations and foundations," Liber says.

Spangenberg contributes to the United Way of Greater Cleveland, Community Shares of Greater Cleveland, and The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland. The firm is a sponsor of the City Club of Cleveland, and endows its Craig Spangenberg Memorial Forum that brings speakers of note to lecture on topics of general public interest.

An active participant in the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (CMBAs), Spangenberg consistently supports CMBAs' annual "Run for Justice" and "Rock the Foundation" events. Lansdowne also volunteers on the Beck Center Board of Directors, which combines professional theatrical productions with comprehensive curriculum-based arts education.

The firm additionally supported the Circle of Caring gala, affiliated with Hattie Larlham Foundation, which offers health care and social programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

In addition, Spangenberg is a sponsor of the Frank J. Battisti Memorial Lecture, which brings distinguished speakers to Case Western Reserve University, Weinberger's alma mater.

"We measure our success in ways beyond our achievements in court. Our goal is to further the interests of justice for everyone we represent. The skill set which we bring to bear on our cases transfers equally to the important work that many of us do in our involvement with charitable and not for profit organizations," Weinberger says. "That is why I am proud to serve currently as chair of the Case Skin Cancer Research Advisory Board, and am equally proud to have served as President of the board of trustees of the First Unitarian Church of Cleveland and President of the Chagrin Valley Country Club."

Brodhead serves as an active Trustee and Committee Chair with North Coast Community Homes, which provides safe and affordable residential housing for individuals with disabilities. The law firm supports the Trial Courtroom Project Fund at his alma mater, Cleveland State University's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, where he serves as a member of the Cleveland-Marshall Visiting Committee. Brodhead also serves on the board of the Cleveland Institute of Music, and lends his keyboard talents to the No Name Band, which plays for charity and non-profit organizational events at no charge.

"Serving on non-profit boards and committees allows me to meaningfully connect with our community through the many gifted professionals who quietly and tirelessly devote their lives to these worthy causes," Brodhead says. "I am humbled by their noble work and hope that, in some way, I have become a better and more compassionate citizen through this experience."



Billy Delfs

From Left:  
Dennis R. Lansdowne,  
Peter H. Weinberger,  
John D. Liber,  
William Hawal and  
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"WE MEASURE  
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Since its founding in 1931, Thrasher Dinsmore & Dolan has established a reputation for its exceptional service, as well as the skill and integrity of its attorneys. From the firm's Chardon office, lawyers represent individuals, businesses and government entities in a variety of practice areas throughout Northeast Ohio. TDD lawyers are licensed to practice in Ohio, New York and Florida. They are recognized as Ohio Super Lawyers, carry Martindale-Hubbell's coveted AV-rating, are Board Certified in Family Law, are Law Directors for local municipalities, some for more than six decades, and serve as principal legal counsel for the Cleveland Indians Major League Baseball Club and Sports Time Ohio regional sports network.

In celebration of its 80th Anniversary, the firm is proud to introduce the personal injury department that will spearhead the new offices in Cleveland. In addition to general litigation involving businesses and individuals, attorneys John Liber and Brandon Dynes represent injured plaintiffs in cases that range from automobile or machine accidents, to catastrophic injuries in the workplace and wrongful death.

Together, Liber and Dynes have over 35 years of complex plaintiff's trial experience in the personal injury field. They are very selective in accepting cases, and Liber says that they work vigorously to prepare every case as if it will ultimately go to trial: "There is no substitute for thorough preparation. Successful results for our clients are achieved by the ability to prove to the other side that you have the evidence, and are prepared to take the case to trial."

Liber has been selected for inclusion in the 2011 edition of *The Best Lawyers of America*® for his work in the personal injury field. He has been named in *Best Lawyers* annually since 2008 and has also been AV-rated by Martindale-Hubbell. Currently he serves as the President of the Cleveland Academy of Trial Attorneys, Trustee of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, and Legal Counsel to the Chagrin Valley Jaycees, a charitable organization.

Of all these distinctions, Liber says that he most appreciates seeing clients achieve justice for the horrible things they've endured. "I work under the maxim that good lawyers make a living, but great lawyers make a difference," he says.



From Left: Brandon Dynes, Nancy Burroughs, John R. Liber



Billy Delfs

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JAMES R. SKIRBUNT

Best Lawyers  
 Lawyer of the Year  
 2011

FAMILY LAW  
 CLEVELAND

From Left: Amy Y. Wirtz, James R. Skirbunt, Sharon A. Skirbunt

Skirbunt, Skirbunt & Wirtz, LLC is a boutique family law firm that utilizes litigation, cooperative and collaborative processes to obtain consistent and creative results for its clients. The firm has been recognized as one of only four tier one family law firms in Cleveland by *U.S. News & World Report*, in part because of its distinctive competence in business valuation issues and experience in creating unique settlement structures.

"Our ability to identify the interests of our clients and recognize what their goals are has been integral to our success over the years," says founding partner James R. Skirbunt.

Jim has been recognized in all editions of *Ohio Super Lawyers* and in every edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*® since 1995. This year, *Best Lawyers* designated him as "Lawyer of the Year" for family law in Cleveland. He is also the founding president of the Center for Principled Family Advocacy.

Jim established Skirbunt, Skirbunt & Wirtz in 1991, along with his wife Sharon A. Skirbunt. In 2006 they added Amy Wirtz as a partner, who brought to the firm her 19 years of experience in practicing family law, with a current focus on collaborative divorce.

Since its founding, the firm has been a pioneer in alternatives to litigation. Indeed, Sharon was one of the first attorneys in Ohio to receive certification in mediation. Jim says that this reflects the firm's focus on the preservation of the family notwithstanding the termination of the marriage. "We try to transition families through this experience with their dignity intact, knowing that they'll still be a family, albeit a restructured family, with a need to interact long after the marriage has ended."

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# 2011 LAWYERS OF THE YEAR

BEST LAWYERS HAS NAMED INDIVIDUALS AS LAWYERS OF THE YEAR IN CLEVELAND, BASED ON THEIR PARTICULARLY HIGH LEVEL OF PEER RECOGNITION.

## James R. Skirbunt *Skirbunt, Skirbunt & Wirtz LLC* FAMILY LAW, CLEVELAND



Since earning his JD from Boston College Law School in 1974, James R. Skirbunt has become a go-to lawyer on the most complex aspects of divorce law, including business valuation issues and analysis of executive compensation. Skirbunt has been selected for inclusion by *The Best Lawyers in America*® for more than 15 consecutive years and in all editions of *Ohio Super Lawyers*. His firm, Skirbunt, Skirbunt & Wirtz, LLC has been ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of only four Tier One Family Law Firms in Northeast Ohio. Skirbunt notes, "We have the experience and creativity to find solutions to difficult problems in divorce cases."

As founding president of the Center for Principled Family Advocacy, Skirbunt promotes alternative processes to litigation, such as cooperative divorce, collaborative divorce, and mediation, as options for navigating divorce that minimize trauma for families. These alternative processes allow attorneys to focus on the interests of clients, rather than litigation strategies, and "gotcha" tactics. "It is important to give clients all of their choices, including litigation, so that they can choose the process that will enable them to address their concerns most effectively," Skirbunt says.

As a veteran divorce lawyer, Skirbunt knows that a family does not end when a divorce occurs, but it is restructured. As a result, family law attorneys must have good judgment to keep the interests of their client in focus. "When a person goes through a divorce, their emotions can cause them to want to act in ways which are inconsistent with their goals," Skirbunt says. "Sometimes the role of the divorce lawyer is to say 'no' to a client, and not just be a mouthpiece."

Skirbunt's experience as a successful trial lawyer, and as a pioneer in the use of alternative processes to litigation, coupled with a client centered practice philosophy, have all contributed to his being named Lawyer of the Year in Family Law.

## JAMES S. CAHN



### FAMILY LAW

Jim works with clients to find human solutions to very human problems. Offering a choice between litigation and non-litigation processes, he provides assertive, creative, and effective representation which emphasizes personal service and a principle-centered practice philosophy.

Jim has been recognized by his peers with his election as a fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (1989), an AV-rating in the Martindale-Hubbell Legal Directory, inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for more than fifteen consecutive years, listing in the Martindale-Hubbell Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers, and election as Chair of the Family Law Section of the Cuyahoga County Bar Association, President of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy, and President of the Center for Principled Family Advocacy. Since the inception of the honor, Jim has been named annually as a *Super Lawyer* in the Law & Politics survey (published in Northern Ohio Live), identifying the top 5% of Ohio's lawyers.

Jim has been a frequent teacher at professional education programs, including the Ohio Judicial College (issues in business valuations), the Ohio Society of Certified Public Accountants, (personal and corporate goodwill), and the Ohio Chapter of the National Association of Certified Valuation Analysts (cross-examination of business appraisal experts). A strong advocate for the use of alternative dispute resolution processes in divorce, Jim has lectured extensively on their value to divorcing families.

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## THE CLEVELAND AREA'S LAWYERS OF THE YEAR

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- Antitrust Lawyer of the Year:  
Merritt Neal Rains
- Banking and Finance Lawyer of the Year:  
Osborne Mills, Jr.
- Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Lawyer of the Year: Gerald Christopher Meyer
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EMPLOYMENT LAW—INDIVIDUALS, MEDIATION,  
LITIGATION—LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

Billy Deits

Initially meeting during law school at Cleveland State University's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, Elfvin & Besser partners Bruce B. Elfvin and Barbara Kaye Besser leverage decades of experience in representing individuals both as plaintiffs or defendants, plus employers, public entities, and classes of individuals in employment matters.

Elfvin worked for more than 13 years for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), serving as Regional Attorney for the Cleveland District and Assistant General Counsel. While there, Elfvin earned two group performance awards for multi-district litigation from now Justice Clarence Thomas. Meanwhile, Besser made a name for herself at the EEOC as Senior Trial Attorney. As Director of Litigation for the Women's Law Fund, Besser worked regularly with now Justice Ruth Ginsberg, who served on the fund's litigation committee.

Having served as both court appointed and private mediators, the attorneys at Elfvin Besser have significant experience in alternative dispute resolution including negotiation and mediation. In addition, they have represented clients in several state and federal courts at the trial and appellate levels, as well as administrative agencies such as the EEOC, State Personnel Board of Review and the Merit Systems Protection Board.

After Elfvin represented a woman who was wrongly terminated, the judge ruled in the client's favor, and the woman was able to go back to work for some 20 years. "It's gratifying to see the impact your results can have on your clients," Elfvin says.

While being a small firm, Elfvin Besser is able to compete with much larger firms — and win, Besser says.

"We only have three lawyers at the moment, yet in many respects, we're better than the bigger firms because of being so dedicated to what we do," she says.



Standing from Left: Barbara Kaye Besser, Stuart Torch and Pamela G. Richards. Seated: Bruce B. Elfvin



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ENVIRONMENTAL LAW, LITIGATION — ENVIRONMENTAL

**M**cmahon DeGulis LLP is the largest law firm in Ohio that focuses on environmental law, toxic tort, renewable energy and related litigation. Founded in 1994, the firm offers a cost-effective alternative to large firm environmental law departments.

Five of the firm's partners were selected for inclusion in the 2011 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*® for their work in environmental law and environmental litigation: Gregory DeGulis, Louis McMahon, Michael McMahon, David Nash and Suzanne Fisher-Edwards.

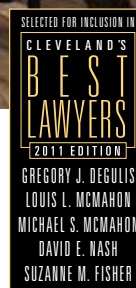
Michael McMahon was named the *Best Lawyers* "Lawyer of the Year" for environmental law in Cleveland for 2011.

The firm's clients include large corporations, major manufacturers, partnerships, real estate developers and small businesses. The firm also handles cases for a number of government entities, including cities, counties and townships.

The firm has developed a reputation for its innovative and creative solutions, establishing itself at the forefront of burgeoning industries such as offshore wind. Partner David Nash notes, "Our low cost model allows our attorneys to be frontline lawyers on projects without bumping up the budget."



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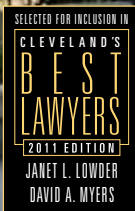
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Hickman & Lowder is a team of experienced attorneys who advocate for those whose lives have been complicated by the special concerns of age and disability. The firm's nine lawyers devote their time to helping children with special needs, adults with disabilities, and elders and their caregivers. Says Janet Lowder, "We believe that everyone, regardless of age, health, or capacity, deserves access to services which provide the best life possible."

Lowder joined Franklin Hickman in 1984. Since then, several like-minded attorneys have joined the firm, including David Myers, whose long-established Lorain County elder law practice merged with Hickman & Lowder five years ago. Myers' connection with the firm has strengthened and expanded the firm's reach across northeast Ohio.

Lowder and Myers are both Certified as Elder Law Attorneys by the National Elder Law Foundation — two of only 18 in Ohio — and have been selected for inclusion in the 2011 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*® for their work in the field. Lowder, who is also included for her outstanding work in Trusts & Estates, is a recognized authority on Medicaid issues and estate planning for families with special needs. Myers has devoted his professional and civic activities to helping individuals who face special obstacles for more than 25 years.

Hickman & Lowder offers advanced elder law services, sometimes referred to as Life Care Planning. The firm has a seasoned Licensed Independent Social Worker on staff as a Care Coordinator to help clients navigate the long-term care maze. As Myers puts it: "We strive to empower vulnerable individuals and those in their circle of support, so that they can fully understand their options, make significant, sometimes gut-wrenching, decisions, and develop plans that are right for them."

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Assessing and refining her approach to each case according to the needs and wishes of her clients is Mrs. Akers-Parry's forte. She has an aggressive litigation practice and also encourages certain clients to resolve their custody, support, property and other divorce matters by the Collaborative process or by other

Alternative Dispute Resolution. Having practiced family law for over 34 years, Mrs. Akers-Parry is a principal in the firm of Wolf and Akers, LPA and a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. As part of her family law practice, Mrs. Akers-Parry is skilled in drafting prenuptial agreements, rendering divorce tax advice and representing professional athletes. She practices in Cuyahoga, Summit, Geauga, Portage, Lorain, Erie, Lucas, Wood and other counties in Ohio. She has an Appellate Court practice and has argued in the Supreme Court of Ohio. Contributing to the profession outside the courtroom, Mrs. Akers-Parry is past Financial Officer of the Family Law Section of the American Bar Association and she has chaired the Ohio State Bar Association Family Law Section. She is an active member of the Center for Principled Family Advocacy in Cleveland.

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Richard C. Haber, a founding partner of Haber Polk Kabat, LLP, is honored to have been recognized by *Best Lawyers*® as the 2011 Lawyer of the Year in the area of Labor and Employment Law in Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. Haber is a graduate of Case Western Reserve School of

Law and has been representing individuals and companies in employment litigation for more than 20 years. In addition to this prestigious honor, Mr. Haber was also named one of the top 100 lawyers in the State of Ohio for 2010 by *Super Lawyers* magazine and also listed in the 2010 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* published by *Best Lawyers*® in conjunction with U.S. News Media Group as well as the 2010 edition of Cleveland's *Best Lawyers*. In 2009 and again in 2010, Mr. Haber also was dubbed a "Leading Lawyer" in the area of Labor and Employment by *Inside Business* magazine. Since it was founded on August 1, 2005, every partner of Haber Polk Kabat, LLP has been recognized by *Super Lawyers* magazine as among the top attorneys in their field of practice.

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Brent M. Buckley is Managing Partner of Buckley King LPA. He maintains an active practice counseling financial institutions, private equity, lenders, businesses, and executive management on complex and structured finance, workouts, and asset-based lending matters. His vast experience includes matters involving corporate and commercial issues, corporate investigations, finance (both debt and equity), governance, lender liability, and secured transactions. Brent represents clients in commercial litigation often involving "bet the company" litigation, including multidistrict litigation, primarily on behalf of corporations, financial institutions, and educational entities. In such engagements, Brent's trial and business experience has proven critical. He has successfully defended directors and officers, as well as professional liability matters. Actively involved in the community, he dedicates time and resources to numerous non-profit organizations, and is frequently sought to share his knowledge on complex litigation issues, business, and financial matters.

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Rob, a native Clevelander, has extensive experience in the areas of commercial litigation, business litigation and criminal defense. Early in his career, Rob was recognized as an Ohio *Rising Star* and, for the last two years, has been selected as an Ohio *Super Lawyer*. Before joining the Firm, Rob was appointed to the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court where he presided over complex civil litigation and criminal cases. Rob also

teaches Advanced Trial Advocacy as an Adjunct Professor of Law at Cleveland State University's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. An outstanding member of the Bar, Rob's extensive experience as a trial attorney and former judge affords his clients an unparalleled level of talent and insight.

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For more than 40 years, Harry W. Greenfield has handled matters in the Ohio state and federal courts involving receiverships, mechanic's liens, collections, foreclosures, and UCC issues on behalf of both corporate debtors and creditors, including: commercial lessors, financing companies, national and regional financial institutions, official creditors committees, secured lenders, and trustees in bankruptcy. Harry is known to excel in corporate reorganizations, bankruptcy and insolvency matters, and out-of-court workouts.

He is a Certified Specialist in Business Bankruptcy and Creditors' Rights by the American Board of Certification. Harry serves as Emeritus Director for the American Board of Certification of Bankruptcy and Creditors' Rights. He is past Chairman of the Bankruptcy Insolvency Section, Chairman of the Midwest Region, and an Editor of the Journal and Bulletin for the Commercial Law League of America and Commercial Damages, Matthew Bender. Among numerous organizations, Harry is a member of the ABI, CLLA, TMA, and INSOL International.

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Kimon is admitted to practice in the State of Ohio, before the U.S. Tax Court and the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Ohio. A frequent lecturer on the topics of federal, state and local taxation, as well as estate planning, Kimon also has extensive legal expertise in a wide range of tax law, corporate law, general business, partnership matters and estate planning. Kimon has served as an Adjunct Professor of Law in Taxation at Case Western Reserve University School of Law. Kimon, certified by the Ohio

State Bar Association as a Specialist in Federal Taxation Law, listed in *Best Lawyers in America*® and named to the Corporate Counsel Edition of *Super Lawyers*, 2009, and has established himself as one of the leading authorities on tax and wealth preservation.

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Mr. Leopold's immigration, visa, and citizenship practice is based in Cleveland, Ohio. He focuses on corporate- and family-based immigration matters; removal and employer sanctions defense; and federal litigation. He is the Immediate Past President of

the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), and has testified before the U.S. Congress on cutting edge immigration issues. In addition to his national practice, Mr. Leopold is an adjunct professor at the Cleveland-Marshall School of Law. Mr. Leopold has earned Martindale-Hubbell's highest AV rating, is listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® and has been named an *Ohio Super Lawyer*.

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opportunity and privilege to work for dynamic clients. An expert in corporate structuring, commercial and residential real estate matters, and banking, Ken's clientele includes closely held businesses, publicly-held banks and Fortune 100 companies. This is Ken's tenth consecutive year as one of Northeast Ohio's leading lawyers. He has also been selected by his peers on numerous occasions to be included in *The Best Lawyers in America*® and as an *Ohio Super Lawyer*.

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responsiveness and excellent customer service, providing quality legal counsel at reasonable, budgeted fees. The firm's services include a variety of technologies and clients, from entrepreneurs to large companies. Mr. Moxon holds a BS ChE from University of Maryland and a JD from Catholic University. He is a member of numerous bar associations including CMBA, ABA, CIPLA, AIPLA, INTA, AIPPI, LES. He served on numerous Boards, including President of WeatherVane Playhouse, and currently is Vice Chairman of the Greenleaf Family Center Board.

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MARY ANN ("MICKEY") RABIN

BANKRUPTCY AND CREDITOR  
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Mary Ann ("Mickey") Rabin is the managing partner of Rabin & Rabin Co. LPA, where her partner is her elder daughter, Julie. Mickey has been practicing bankruptcy law for

over thirty years. The firm represents debtors in Chapter 7, 11 and 13 proceedings. Mickey has been a Chapter 7 bankruptcy trustee since 1983. She is a former trustee of the Cleveland Bar Association, a past chairman of the Bar Association's bankruptcy section, a founding member of the Ohio Women's Bar Association, a recipient of the Alice Robie Resnick award from that organization, a co-chairman of the 2011 O'Neill Seminar and a fellow of the American College of Bankruptcy. She has earned Martindale Hubbell's highest AV-rating and has been an *Ohio Super Lawyer* since 2006.

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Siegel & Agins, Co., LPA was founded in 1986, under the name of Nessa G. Siegel, Co., L.P.A. As a teacher of the learning disabled, Nessa recognized the inadequate education provided to children with disabilities. Upon her completion of law school, she began

advocating for full inclusion services for all children. Today, the firm services hundreds of Ohio families in special education law and estate planning. Nessa has been included in *Leading Lawyers*, *Super Lawyers* and *Best Lawyers in America*®. In 2008, she received the Exceptional Parent Maxwell J. Schliefer Distinguished Service Award. Siegel & Agins was the only law firm in Ohio representing parents and children in education law named to *U.S. News* "2010 Top Law Firms."

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For over thirty years, Ellen's trial practice has concentrated on representing individuals in employment and civil rights cases. She was profiled in *The American Lawyer* for her successful

jury verdict in one of the first AIDS discrimination cases in the country; in *Lawyers Weekly USA* for her verdict in Ohio's first same-sex sexual harassment trial; and in *The National Law Journal* for a record three million-dollar verdict in an age discrimination case. Ellen has lectured locally and nationally on trial tactics, taught employment law at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, and currently authors a legal blog, [www.employeerightspost.com](http://www.employeerightspost.com). She has been consistently listed as one of *The Best Lawyers in America*®.

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CHRISTOPHER P. THORMAN

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Christopher Thorman is an experienced trial lawyer who has primarily focused his practice on discrimination and employee rights litigation. He has successfully tried age, gender, disability, and race discrimination claims, and sexual harassment, whis-

tleblower and retaliation claims on behalf of employees. He has obtained numerous million dollar judgments on behalf of his clients, including a \$16 million dollar verdict in federal court, a \$7.765 million dollar verdict in an age discrimination and unlawful retaliation case, and a \$6.7 million dollar discrimination award in arbitration. Mr. Thorman is AV-rated by Martindale Hubbell, is listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® and has been identified by his peers as an *Ohio Super Lawyer*. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Ohio Environmental Council.

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ANDREW ZASHIN

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Andrew Zashin is the co-managing partner at Zashin & Rich Co., L.P.A., and practices in the firm's Cleveland, Ohio office. Andrew is an Adjunct Professor of Law at Case Western Reserve University and is a certified Family Relations Law Specialist.

Andrew is a fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, and a fellow of the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, and has been listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® (2006-present). In 2007, Andrew was listed in *Ohio Super Lawyers* magazine as one of the top 100 lawyers in the state and top 50 in the City of Cleveland. Andrew was selected for *Worth* magazine's 100 Top Attorneys in the U.S. Andrew is licensed to practice in Ohio, Florida, New York, Washington, D.C., and in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio. He is also the Executive Director of the non-profit Center for International Child Custody and Relocation (CICCAR).

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**Patrick J. Keating** Bankruptcy and  
Creditor Debtor Rights /  
Insolvency and Reorganization  
Law - Commercial Litigation -  
Litigation - Banking & Finance -  
Litigation - Bankruptcy  
**David Kern** Corporate Law - Tax  
Law - Trusts and Estates  
**James D. Kraus** Corporate Law  
**David Lindner** - Real Estate Law  
**Richard J. Lolli** Construction Law  
**Frederick M. Lombardi** Banking  
and Finance Law - Bankruptcy and  
Creditor Debtor Rights /

Insolvency and  
Reorganization Law  
**Robert W. Malone** Litigation &  
Controversy - Tax- Mergers &  
Acquisitions Law - Tax Law  
**Patricia A. Pacenta** Trusts and  
Estates  
**Orville L. Reed III** Bet-the-  
Company Litigation - Commercial  
Litigation - Personal Injury  
Litigation - Defendants - Personal  
Injury Litigation - Plaintiffs  
**John L. Reyes** Commercial  
Litigation - Litigation - Bankruptcy  
**Dirk E. Riemenschneider** Medical  
Malpractice Law - Defendants  
**Susan C. Rodgers** Employment  
Law - Management - Labor Law -

Management- Litigation -  
Labor & Employment  
**Mark J. Skakun III** Bet-the-  
Company Litigation - Commercial  
Litigation - Criminal Defense:  
White-Collar - Litigation -  
Intellectual Property - Litigation -  
Patent  
**John P. Slagter** Litigation - Real  
Estate - Real Estate Law  
**Patrick J. Weschler** Trusts and  
Estates  
**Philip R. Wiese** Litigation -  
Intellectual Property Litigation -  
Patent  
**Ronald F. Wayne** Litigation - Trusts  
& Estates - Trusts and Estates  
**David W. Woodburn** Real Estate  
Law - Trusts and Estates