

Martin Tate
ATTORNEYS & COUNSELORS

SHAREHOLDER · CHAIRMAN OF THE FIRM

Shea Sisk Wellford

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BIOGRAPHY

Ms. Wellford, Chairman of the Firm, represents large and small businesses, financial institutions, and individuals in civil litigation. She has more than 25 years of experience with commercial and business disputes, construction issues, contract and non-competition cases, business torts, trade secrets, intellectual property, product liability, defamation, fraud, lender liability, property disputes, employee matters, and insurance coverage questions. She also represents clients in arbitration.

Ms. Wellford also serves as outside general counsel to a number of clients. In that role, she reviews and drafts contracts, develops strategies to help clients avoid legal problems, and assists with strategic planning from a legal perspective.

Ms. Wellford is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and chairs the Executive Committee of Martin Tate. She has served as President of the Memphis Bar Association, the Federal Bar Association Mid-South Chapter, and the Leo Bearman, Sr. American Inn of Court.

Examples of the types of matters that Ms. Wellford has handled include:

- Representation of owners, contractors, and subcontractors in construction disputes, including the representation of a publicly-traded REIT
- Obtaining injunctive relief and a jury verdict that was upheld by the Sixth Circuit for a client whose service marks were being infringed by a competitor
- The representation of a financial institution to enforce a non-compete and non-solicitation agreement against a team leader on an expedited basis to prevent the misappropriation of a line of business
- The successful defense of a client sued by a publicly-traded company for defamation based on postings on the internet, which resulted in a defense verdict after a five-week jury trial
- Representation of insurance companies and insureds over issues of whether insurance coverage is available
- Representation of a publicly-traded company against a business whose activities constituted a nuisance to the client's adjacent real estate development
- Representation of a bank participation group sued by 19 subcontractors and a construction manager in connection with a failed real estate development
- Negotiation with a state Attorney General relating to a client's processing of internet payment transactions
- Defense of a company sued under product liability laws, which resulted in the favorable recognition of the "component parts doctrine" by the Tennessee Supreme Court
- Representation of business clients in the negotiation, drafting, and review of various contracts and agreements

Ms. Wellford received a B.A. in English from Vanderbilt University. Ms. Wellford received a J.D., with high honors, from the University of Memphis, where she was the Notes Editor of the Law Review, on the National Dean's List, and a recipient of the American Jurisprudence Award in Constitutional Law, Fair Employment Practices, and Civil Rights.

PRACTICE AREAS

Commercial Litigation · Construction Law · Insurance Coverage · Intellectual Property

EDUCATION

University of Memphis, Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, J.D., with high honors · Vanderbilt University, B.A., English with a minor in Sociology

BAR ADMISSIONS

Tennessee · Arkansas

COURT ADMISSIONS

U.S. Supreme Court · Tennessee Supreme Court · Arkansas Supreme Court · U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Sixth and Eighth Circuits · U.S. District Courts for the Western, Middle and Eastern Districts of Tennessee · U.S. District Courts for the Eastern and Western Districts of Arkansas · U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado · U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan

MEMBERSHIPS

Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers · Fellow, Memphis Bar Foundation · Fellow, Tennessee Bar Foundation · Life Fellow, American Bar Foundation · President, Leo S. Bearman, Sr. American Inn of Court (2021–22) · President, Memphis Bar Association (2016) · President, Federal Bar Association, Mid-South Chapter (2007) · Advisory Committee on Rules, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (2022–present)

RECOGNITION

AV Peer Review Rated, Martindale-Hubbell · Best Lawyers in America: Bet-the-Company Litigation Lawyer of the Year (Memphis, 2026) · Best Lawyers in America: Construction Lawyer of the Year (Memphis, 2015, 2025 and 2027) · Mid-South Super Lawyers: Top 50 Women Attorneys in the Mid-South