

Elder Law: Medicaid Planning, The SECURE Act, and More

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

by order of presentation

Andrew J. Atkins

*Millender Elder Law LLC
Columbia, SC
(Course Planner)*

Andrew Atkins is an attorney-at-law with Millender Elder Law LLC. He is admitted to practice in South Carolina. He is a member of the Richland County Bar Association, the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), and the South Carolina Chapter of NAELA (SC NAELA). Mr. Atkins is the former Chair of the Elder Law Committee of the South Carolina Bar and is the current President of SC NAELA. In 2013, he was selected as Outstanding Chapter Member of SC NAELA. Mr. Atkins earned his B.A. degree from Furman University and his J.D. degree from the University of South Carolina School of Law.

Barbara E. Brunson

*Law Offices of Barbara E. Brunson
Columbia, SC
(Course Planner)*

Ms. Brunson is the owner/principal of the Law Office of Barbara E. Brunson. She is a graduate of the College of Charleston and the University of South Carolina School of Law. Ms. Brunson has experience as an attorney with a large law firm and as in-house counsel to two national mortgage companies. Her practice now consists of elder law, estate planning, and consumer bankruptcy.

Sarah Garland St. Onge

*Millender Elder Law LLC
Columbia, SC*

Mrs. St. Onge started at Millender Elder Law in 2018. She brings to Millender Elder Law over fifteen years of experience in advocating for people with disabilities and their families. Her knowledge includes an understanding of the services and systems in South Carolina available to people with disabilities and the elderly. This knowledge base allows for her to take a holistic approach to problem solving, including establishing working plans based upon her clients' goals. Mrs. St. Onge has brought federal litigation to enforce the rights guaranteed by the Americans with Disabilities Act, drafted amicus briefs in both state and federal court, and investigated allegations of abuse and neglect at facilities throughout South Carolina. She has experience in the fields of estate planning, probate, elder law, administrative law, mental health law, appellate practice, and

affirmative litigation. At the University of South Carolina School of Law, she taught Legal Writing for five years and has also taught Advanced Legal Writing. She is active in the South Carolina Bar, serving on the Elder Law Committee, a past chair; a member of SC Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, serving on the Board of Directors; and has taught continuing legal education classes on guardianship, Medicaid, estate planning, ethics, and advanced directives. She chaired the Article 5 Task Force, which was the body that drafted the changes to the guardianship and protective proceedings portion of the Probate Code. She is a contributing author and editor of A Practical Guide to Elder Law and Special Needs Law in South Carolina by Franchelle Millender.

Donna V. Sands
Priest & Sands, LLC
Summerville, SC

Donna V. Sands is a solo practitioner who practices at the law firm of Priest & Sands, LLC. Mrs. Sands devotes her practice to estate planning, adult guardianships, adult conservatorships, probate law and long-term care planning. Mrs. Sands earned her B.A. degree from the University of South Florida in 1988 and her J.D. degree from the University of South Carolina in 1992. She is a member of the South Carolina Bar Association and the Dorchester County Bar Association. She is also a member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA) and has been certified as an Elder Law Attorney (CELA) by the National Elder Law Foundation (NELF).

Mitchell C. Payne
Payne & Black, LLC
Rock Hill, SC

Mitchell C. Payne is a Partner in the firm of Payne & Black, LLC with offices in Rock Hill and Columbia. Mr. Payne received his Master's in Accounting from the University of South Carolina in 1981, and his JD from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1984. Mr. Payne concentrates his practice in the fields of Elder Law, Long Term Care Planning, Estate Planning, Probate and Estate Administration, and Planning for Disabilities and Special Needs. Mr. Payne is a Member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys and the Academy of Special Needs Planners. He is a founding board member and past Chair of the Carolina's Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys and Past President of the South Carolina Chapter of NAELA. Mr. Payne also serves on the Elder Law Committee of the South Carolina Bar. Mr. Payne is a member of the South Carolina (1984) and Georgia (1985) Bar Associations.

Victor A. Hirth, MD
Geriatric Health & Wellness, LTD. Co
West Columbia, SC

Dr. Hirth grew up in the Seattle, Washington area. His career in geriatrics started as a nurse aid at the Issaquah Villa nursing home. He worked as a certified nurse aid from his Junior year in high school, through 5 years of undergraduate work until the second year of medical school, at the University of Washington, at which time, time constraints required his full attention to his studies.

Dr. Hirth completed an internship and residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. This was followed by a 2-year fellowship in Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology at the University of Washington in Seattle. Upon graduation he was recruited to the University of South Carolina, School of Medicine Division of Geriatrics.

He worked his way up from instructor to Assistant Professor, to Associate Professor and then Full Professor in 2010. Dr. Hirth was the founder of Prisma Health's Senior Primary Care Practice, helped develop the first Geriatric Medicine Fellowship training program and Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship in South Carolina, and was project lead in the development of the only Acute Care in the Elderly (ACE) geriatric hospital unit in South Carolina as well. He wrote the legislation for the first in the nation, SC geriatric loan forgiveness program which was passed into law in 2005.

Dr. Hirth obtained a Master's in Health Administration (MHA) from USC in 2001 is a Fellow of the both the American College of Physicians as well as the American Geriatrics Society. He has been granted awards and been involved in grants from the Alzheimer's Association, the National Institutes of Health, the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, Health Services and Resources Administration and others totaling over \$10,000,000 in awards. He was Editor in Chief for the McGraw-Hill Geriatric Textbook, Case-Based Geriatrics: A Global Perspective, published in 2011.

When Dr. Hirth departed Prisma Health to start his new practice he was Professor and Chief of Geriatrics, Medical Director for Geriatric Services at Prisma Health, Medical Director for Senior Primary Care, Medical Director for Ambulatory Case Management, Medical Director for the Prisma Health PACE program, Medical Director for Still Hopes skilled rehabilitation and long-term care, Medical Director for Prisma Health, Physical Therapy Specialists and Supervisor for the Palliative Care and Hospice program.

On a national level Dr. Hirth has been a study section reviewer for the National Science Foundation, committee member for Public Policy and the nominating committee for the American Geriatrics Society. He currently serves on the board of directors for the American Geriatrics Society and was recently re-elected to a second term.