

# Probate, Estate Planning & Trust Section Seminar

## **SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

*by order of presentation*

### **William “Billy” Newsome, III**

*Newsome Law, P.A.*

*Columbia, SC*

*(Course Planner)*

Billy Newsome practices in the areas of trust and estate administration, wealth transfer planning, taxation and exempt organizations. He is a Certified Specialist in the Areas of Estate Planning and Probate Law by the South Carolina Supreme Court.

He represents individual and corporate fiduciaries in complex estate and trust administration. Fiduciaries and beneficiaries also call on Billy to assist them with estate and trust litigation matters. He also assists high net worth individuals and business owners with structuring their estate plans and business succession plans.

Billy also represents tax exempt organizations and assists them with complying with the myriad rules applicable to 501(c)(3) organizations. Additionally, he provides general tax and business advice to individuals and businesses.

A native of Hartsville, South Carolina, Billy received a B.S. degree in Economics from Francis Marion College, attending as a Francis Marion Scholar. He received his law degree from the University of South Carolina School of Law, where he was a Roy Webster Scholar and a member of the Order of the Wig and Robe. He also received a Master of Laws in Taxation from the University of Florida School of Law.

Billy and his wife, Kim, and their daughters, Ann and Emily, are active members of Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Columbia.

### **Ed Walters**

*Fastcase*

*Washington, DC*

Ed Walters is the Chief Strategy Officer of vLex and the co-founder of Fastcase, a legal publishing company based in Washington, D.C. Fastcase and vLex merged in April 2023 to form one of the world's fastest-growing legal publishers. Its global law library serves more than 3 million subscribers and includes the law of more than 100 countries in a single platform, comprising more than 1 billion documents.

Before founding Fastcase, Ed worked at Covington & Burling, in Washington D.C. and Brussels, where he advised Microsoft, Merck, SmithKline, the Business Software Alliance, the National

Football League, and the National Hockey League. His practice focused on corporate advisory work for software companies and sports leagues, and intellectual property litigation.

Ed earned an A.B. in government from Georgetown University and a J.D. from the University of Chicago. He served as an editor of *The University of Chicago Law Review*. From 1996-97, he served as a judicial clerk with the Hon. Emilio M. Garza on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Ed worked in The White House from 1991-93 in the Office of Media Affairs and the Office of Presidential Speechwriting.

He is an adjunct professor at the Georgetown University Law Center and at Cornell Law School / Cornell Tech, where he teaches The Law of Robots. He serves on the board of directors of Lexum, Pro Bono Net, and Public.Resource.org. Ed serves on the Leaders Counsel for the Legal Services Corporation. He is the author and editor of *Data-Driven Law* (Taylor & Francis 2018) and a contributing author to *Legal Informatics* (Cambridge University Press 2021).

### **Michael J. Polk**

*Belser & Belser P.A.*  
*Columbia, SC*

Mike Polk is an attorney at Belser & Belser in Columbia. His practice focuses on probate administration and litigation, elder law, and general civil litigation. He attended Virginia Tech as an undergraduate and was a member of the Corps of Cadets. He served in the Navy for 4 years. Among other accomplishments, after appearing before King Neptune and his Royal Court, Mike was initiated into the Solemn Mysteries of the Ancient Order of Shellbacks. Mike attended USC Law School. After passing the bar in 1994, he practiced law in Winnsboro for one year with Kenneth G. Goode and Associates. He joined Belser Law Firm in 1995. Mike is the president elect of the Richland County Bar Association, is a member of the Elder Law Committee, received the 2020 Solo and Small Firm Section Lawyer of the Year. He is the chair of the South Carolina Bar Technology Committee and, in the words of Billy Joel, “probably will be for life”. He worked on the Probate Code Revision Committee and is a contributing author to A Practical Guide to Elder Law and Special Needs Law in South Carolina by Franchelle Millender. Mike enjoys watching hockey on TV (#Letsgopens) and playing fantasy baseball, which, it turns out, is somehow even lamer than it sounds. He also enjoys practicing yoga although, to be honest, he isn’t very good. Mike is married to Betsy Polk, who is also an attorney. Their daughter Jane is a teacher. They all thought it was a good idea to get two border collie puppies a couple of years ago, and boy were they wrong.

### **Jonathan E. Spitz**

*Todd & Johnson, LLP*  
*Columbia, SC*

Jonathan E. Spitz is a partner with the firm and represents clients in matters involving estate planning and administration; probate litigation; guardianship and conservatorship issues; and corporate formation. Jonathan graduated from Wofford College and received his Juris Doctor from the Charleston School of Law where he served as a research assistant to Professor Ginny Meeks. After law school, Jonathan clerked for the Honorable Amy W. McCulloch, Probate Judge for Richland County and has his Masters of Laws Degree in Taxation from the University of Alabama School of Law. Jonathan has been selected as a "Rising Star" in the area of Estate Planning and

Probate in the in Super Lawyers as well a Member “Legal Elite of the Midlands” by the Columbia Business Monthly Magazine in the field of “Tax & Estate Planning Law.”

Jonathan is Certified by the Supreme Court of South Carolina as a Specialist in Estate Planning & Probate Law.

Currently, Jonathan also serves as a member of the Wofford Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Jonathan grew up in Anderson, South Carolina, but now considers Columbia home along with his wife, Jescelyn, and their two sons, Tillman and William, and their Cavalier King Charles Spaniels

### **Andrew D. Merline**

*Merline & Meacham, P.A.*

*Greenville, SC*

Andy’s practice is focused on the areas of: Mergers and Acquisitions, Business and Transactional Law, Succession Planning, Estate Planning and Estate Administration, Taxation, LLCs, Partnerships, Family Limited Partnerships and Corporations and Asset Protection Planning.

Andy and his wife, Erin, are members of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church in Greenville. He is also an active member at the Caine Halter Branch of the YMCA in Greenville.

Outside of the office, Andy enjoys playing tennis, fishing, classic cars and craft beer.

#### Education:

Boston University School of Law, (LL.M) Taxation (2016)

University of South Carolina School of Law, (J.D.) (2015)

CALI Awards in Partnership Taxation, Legal Writing, Tort Theory, and Law, Society and Justice

Capers Bouton Scholarship Award at the University of South Carolina School of Law

Clemson University, (B.S.) Business Administration: Management, Cum Laude (2011)

### **Meagan MacBean**

*Newsome Law, P.A.*

*Columbia, SC*

A native of Cheraw, South Carolina, Meagan received her B.S. in Marketing from Clemson University. She graduated from the University of Mississippi School of Law, summa cum laude, in 2013. After graduation, Meagan clerked for United States District Court Judge Debra M. Brown in Greenville, MS. Following her clerkship, Meagan joined the firm of Glover, Young, Hammack, Walton & Simmons, PLLC in Meridian, MS, where she made partner. In September 2018, Meagan joined Trustmark National Bank as a Trust Officer, where she provided expertise and communication in trust and estate issues and advised clients regarding estate planning, asset protection, and planning for incapacity. Meagan moved home to South Carolina and joined Newsome Law in August 2020, where she practices in the areas of trust and estate administration, wealth transfer planning, taxation and exempt organizations. Meagan is an Adjunct Instructor at Cannon Financial Institute where she teaches trust officers and wealth management professionals on the topics of estate administration and trust administration. Meagan is a member of the Richland County Bar Association and the Probate, Estate Planning & Trust Section.