

Michael Bentley is a partner in the Jackson, Mississippi office, where he concentrates his practice on appeals and litigation, with an emphasis on healthcare litigation, zoning law, and complex commercial disputes. He has been recognized by *Chambers USA*, *The Best Lawyers in America*<sup>®</sup>, and *Benchmark Litigation* as one of Mississippi's leading litigators and appellate practitioners.

Michael regularly serves as lead appellate counsel, a role that often begins at trial where he assists in developing legal strategy, handles critical motions, and advises on error-preservation. He has argued numerous appeals, including *Reeves v. Gunn*, a constitutional challenge to the governor of Mississippi's line-item veto power; *American Tower v. Marshall County, Miss.*, a case establishing the proper procedure for appealing a county's denial of a special exception to its zoning ordinance; and *Express Oil Change, LLC v. Mississippi*, which struck down a state ban on the use of a trade name and service mark as an unconstitutional restriction on commercial speech. In addition to his active appellate practice, Michael serves on the Board of Governors for the Fifth Circuit Bar Association. Prior to joining the firm, Michael clerked for Judge Leslie H. Southwick at the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

His litigation experience ranges from class actions and commercial disputes to tax protests, premises liability cases, zoning contests, Section 1983 civil rights suits and constitutional claims. Michael has extensive experience in healthcare litigation, including defense of private correctional healthcare providers operating in state prison systems and representing payors in contract and claim disputes. He recently served as lead counsel on medical and mental healthcare claims in *Dockery v. Hall*, a six-week federal class action trial that resulted in a defense judgment for his client. He has also represented healthcare providers in regulatory investigations, administrative proceedings, and litigation.

From 2000 to 2004, Michael served in state government, first as an aid to Mississippi Gov. Ronnie Musgrove and later as office manager for the State Superintendent of Education. As a member of the governor's staff, Michael was responsible for constituent communications and legislative affairs; he was also the governor's liaison to county and municipal governments.

In addition to his law practice, Michael remains active in bar associations and community organizations, having served on the boards of the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, Mississippi Association of Partners in Education, and the Millsaps College Arts & Lecture Series. He has been recognized by the *Mississippi Business Journal* as a "Leader in Law" (2020) and one of Mississippi's "Top 40 Under 40" business leaders (2014). In 2011, he was named "Young Lawyer of the Year" by his alma mater, Mississippi College School of Law, for his contributions to the legal community.

Michael graduated *summa cum laude* from Mississippi College School of Law, where he served as articles editor for the *Mississippi College Law Review* and was a member of the Moot Court Board, and graduated *magna cum laude* with a B.A. in political science from Millsaps College.