



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mark Debro Installed as President of Alabama Defense Lawyers Association

AUBURN, ALABAMA (JULY, 16 2026) – The Alabama Defense Lawyers Association (ADLA) installed its 2026–2027 officers during the Association's **61st Annual Meeting**, held June 18–21, 2026, at Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama.

Huntsville attorney **Mark Debro** of **Grace, Matthews & Debro LLC** officially assumed the office of President following the Association's Annual Membership Meeting and Elections. Debro succeeds **Bains Fleming** of MMPO Defense, who now serves as Immediate Past President.

"It is a tremendous honor and privilege to serve as President of the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association. I am proud to represent an organization comprised of some of the finest attorneys in our state.

As President, I am committed to advancing our mission of improving the administration of justice and preserving the rule of law while ensuring that our Association remains a valuable resource for defense lawyers across Alabama.

I also want to express my sincere appreciation to our outgoing President, Bains Fleming, for his exceptional leadership and dedication over the past year. His hard work and commitment have strengthened our Association, and I look forward to building on the strong foundation he has helped create.

I am excited about the year ahead and the opportunity to work alongside our outstanding Board of Directors and committee chairs. Together, we will continue to strengthen our Association and serve our members," said Mark Debro, President of the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association.

2026–2027 ADLA Officers

- **President:** Mark Debro, Grace, Matthews & Debro LLC – Huntsville
- **President-Elect:** Melissa Hunter, Galloway Wettermark & Rutens LLP – Mobile
- **Secretary-Treasurer:** D. Kirby Howard Jr., Starnes Davis Florie LLP – Mobile
- **Immediate Past President:** Bains Fleming, MMPO Defense – Birmingham

About President Mark Debro

J. Mark Debro is a shareholder with Grace, Matthews & Debro LLC in Huntsville, Alabama. His practice focuses on civil litigation, including personal injury, general liability defense, insurance litigation, and construction litigation. Debro currently serves on the Alabama State Bar Board of Bar Commissioners and is a past president of the Huntsville-Madison County Bar Association and Alabama Lawyers Association. A longtime leader within ADLA, he has previously served on the Board of Directors, as District 1 Director, as Secretary-Treasurer, and as President-Elect.

About Secretary-Treasurer D. Kirby Howard Jr.

Kirby Howard is a partner with Starnes Davis Florie LLP's Mobile office. Kirby has been practicing law for 20 years with an emphasis on general insurance defense, including pest control defense (termite), premises liability, product liability, wrongful death, automobile liability, and construction defect cases. He also has experience with state-agent immunity and qualified immunity issues through representation of counties, municipalities, and state agents such as educators.

The ADLA's 61st Annual Meeting welcomed attorneys, judges, legal professionals, exhibitors, and sponsors from across Alabama for four days of continuing legal education, networking, and fellowship. The conference featured recognized speakers and timely presentations addressing developments in civil litigation, trial practice, appellate advocacy, ethics, insurance law, and emerging issues affecting the defense bar.

Founded in 1965, the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association remains committed to advancing excellence in civil defense practice through high-quality education, professional collaboration, and advocacy while promoting fairness and integrity throughout Alabama's civil justice system.

In addition to electing its officers, the Association elected four new District Directors and installed new Young Lawyers Section leadership. These volunteer leaders will help guide ADLA's strategic initiatives, educational programming, membership initiatives, and professional development efforts throughout Alabama.

New ADLA Board of Directors

2026–2029 District 1 Director

Terri Olive Tompkins
Rosen Harwood PA – Tuscaloosa

Terri Olive Tompkins is a shareholder at Rosen Harwood, P.A. in Tuscaloosa. She practices in state and federal court across Alabama. While much of her practice focuses on medical malpractice defense and health care law, she also defends governmental employees in employment matters and complex constitutional claims and handles general civil litigation matters. She also counsels clients on strategies to avoid litigation. She is a former Alabama State Bar Commissioner.

2026–2029 District 2 Director

Jansen Voss

Christian & Small LLP – Birmingham

Jansen Voss helps clients avoid problems and assists them in resolving issues both inside and outside the courtroom. He represents a diverse range of businesses, government entities, and professionals in high-stakes, complex personal injury and wrongful death lawsuits. Jansen represents healthcare providers in medical malpractice actions and licensure board matters. His practice includes representing municipalities and government entities, as well as advocating for retailers, restaurants, bars, breweries, and hotels in premises liability and dram shop litigation. He also assists clients with regulatory and licensing matters before the Alabama Beverage Control Board and other state licensure boards.

2026–2029 District 3 Director

Katie Archer

Rushton Stakely Johnston & Garrett PA – Montgomery

Katie Archer is a shareholder with the law firm of Rushton, Stakely, Johnston & Garrett in Montgomery. Mrs. Archer's practice area includes personal injury, medical malpractice, construction, and general civil litigation defense. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from The University of Alabama in 2014. She received her Juris Doctorate from The University of Alabama School of Law in 2017. Along with serving on the ADLA board, Mrs. Archer serves on the Board of Directors with the Montgomery County Bar Association.

2026–2029 District 4 Director

Tom Gaillard

Helmsing Leach Herlong Newman & Rouse PC – Mobile

Tom Gaillard is managing partner at Helmsing Leach Herlong Newman & Rouse, P.C., in Mobile, Alabama. Tom maintains an active civil trial and appellate practice in federal and state courts. His practice focuses on the defense of individuals, companies and governmental entities in a wide variety of legal disputes. Tom has extensive experience handling claims related to personal injury, wrongful death, medical and other professional liability, product liability, toxic tort, pharmaceutical/medical device, governmental liability, construction, and employment law.

Young Lawyers Section Leadership

The Association also installed the following Young Lawyers Section officers for the 2026–2027 term.

Chair

Kevin W. R. Bufford
Samford & Denson LLP – Opelika

Kevin W. R. Bufford is a partner at Samford & Denson, LLP in Opelika, Alabama, where he maintains a civil defense litigation practice focusing on medical malpractice defense and insurance defense. He is licensed in both Alabama and Georgia. An active member of the legal community, Kevin coaches Cumberland School of Law's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) teams. Outside the practice of law, he enjoys traveling with his wife, Valerie, and their young daughters.

1st Vice-Chair

Ashley T. Britton
Holtsford Gilliland Hitson Howard Stevens Tuley & Savarese PC – Montgomery

Ashley is a partner in Holtsford Gilliland's Montgomery office, where she practices various types of civil defense primarily focusing on civil rights and government liability. Outside the practice of law, Ashley is an active member of her community and serves on boards for Brantwood Children's Home and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts.

2nd Vice-Chair

Amanda Graham
Gaines Gault Hendrix PC – Birmingham

Amanda Graham is a partner at Gaines, Gault, Hendrix in Birmingham, Alabama. Her practice is focused on advocating for the interests of her clients in first- and third-party insurance defense cases, and cases involving personal injury, auto accidents, premises liability, and general civil matters. As an experienced litigator practicing for just over a decade, she has taken hundreds of depositions and takes numerous cases to trial each year, both in district, circuit, and federal courts in venues across the state of Alabama. Many of these trials have resulted in defense verdicts (50%), or in verdicts where the award was significantly below the amount offered prior to trial (80%).

2026–2028 Young Lawyers Section District Directors

The Young Lawyers Section is also supported by District Directors who represent each region of

Alabama and work alongside the officers to advance leadership development, educational programming, networking opportunities, and member engagement across the state.

District I

- Nathan Hill, Lanier Ford Shaver Payne PC – Huntsville, AL
- Whitney Lott, Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP – Huntsville, AL
- Hunter Pearce, Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP – Huntsville, AL

District II

- Murphy Barze, Barze Taylor Noles Lowther LLC – Birmingham, AL
- Kendall Herron, Porterfield Harper Mills Motlow & Ireland – Birmingham, AL
- Dennis Vann, Carr Allison – Birmingham, AL

District III

- Sydney Brasfield, Ball Ball Matthews & Novak PA – Montgomery, AL
- Caitlin Cobb, Capell & Howard, PC – Montgomery, AL
- Acker Holt, Ball Ball Matthews & Novak PA – Montgomery, AL

District IV

- Samantha Gunnoe, Helmsing Leach Herlong – Mobile, AL
- Ranse Hare, McDowell Knight Roedder & Sledge LLC – Mobile, AL
- Katherine Peek, Hand Arendall Harrison Sale LLC – Mobile, AL

About the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association

The Alabama Defense Lawyers Association (ADLA) is a statewide professional organization of more than 900 attorneys dedicated to the defense of civil litigation. ADLA provides exceptional continuing legal education, professional networking opportunities, leadership development, and advocacy on issues affecting the civil justice system. The Association serves attorneys representing businesses, insurers, healthcare providers, governmental entities, and individuals throughout Alabama.

For more information, visit www.adla.org or contact the ADLA office at (334) 395-4455.