

Probate, Estate Planning & Trust Section

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

by order of presentation

W. Verne McGough, Jr.

McGough Law Firm, P.A.

Columbia, SC

Verne McGough practices in the areas of estate planning and probate for high net worth professionals and business owners, business formations, mergers and acquisitions, and tax controversies and collections for individuals and business entities. He is a certified specialist in Taxation Law and in Estate Planning and Probate Law, having received a law degree from the University of South Carolina and a Master of Laws in Taxation from Boston University. Verne is a member of numerous tax and estate planning legal organizations and currently serves as Chair-Elect of the Tax Law Section of the South Carolina Bar. Verne presents regularly to attorneys and accountants on estate planning, business succession and tax topics.

Douglas B. O'Neal

Merline & Meacham, P.A.

Greenville, SC

Mr. O'Neal is a shareholder at Merline & Meacham, P.A. He specializes in the areas of estate planning and the representation of privately owned businesses. He is certified specialist in the fields of both Taxation Law, and Estate Planning and Probate Law by The Supreme Court of South Carolina. He received his Bachelor of Arts in History from Furman University, his Juris Doctor from the University of South Carolina School of Law, and his Master of Laws in Taxation from the University of Florida Levin College of Law. He is married to Mary Teal O'Neal and they have three children ages 5 to 9.

Thomas G. Sinclair

Thomas, Fisher, Sinclair & Edwards, P.A.

Greenville, SC

Thomas G. Sinclair is a shareholder with the law firm of Thomas, Fisher, Sinclair & Edwards, P.A. in Greenville, South Carolina. He practices in the areas of taxation, estate planning, trusts and estates, probate, employee benefits, pension and profit-sharing plans, partnership, limited

liability company and corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, and non-profit and tax-exempt organization law. He is listed in The Best Lawyers in America in the fields of Taxation Law and Trust and Estate Law. Mr. Sinclair earned his Master in Taxation Law Degree from the New York University School of Law and his Juris Doctor Degree, cum laude, from the University of South Carolina School of Law. He was a member of the South Carolina Law Review, Moot Court Bar and the Order of Wig and Robe. Mr. Sinclair was published in the South Carolina Law Review, and his article has been cited by several Circuit Courts of Appeals, one of which adopted its reasoning. He received the Albert C. Todd III Estate Planning Award. Mr. Sinclair is a member of the American Bar Association, the Greenville County Bar Association, the South Carolina Bar, the Greenville Estate Planning Council (President, 2014-2015) and the Greenville Estate Planning Study Group. He is also a member of the Probate, Estate Planning and Trust Section of the South Carolina Bar and a member and past Chair of the Tax Law Section of the South Carolina Bar.

Laurel R.S. Blair

*Womble Bond Dickinson
Charleston, SC*

Laurel R.S. Blair, Esq. is a partner in the Charleston, South Carolina office of Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP, a transatlantic law firm with offices across the U.K., the U.S. east coast, and in California.

Laurel is a strategic advisor and litigator with over 20 years of experience counseling professional fiduciaries and individuals in the private wealth, trusts and estates, and wealth management areas. Her clients include financial institutions serving as trustees, personal representatives, and conservators. Laurel advises financial institution chief fiduciary officers, in-house general counsel, trust officers, investment portfolio officers, and registered investment advisors. She is a certified mediator, and is admitted to the U.S. Tax Court, U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina, U.S. Court of Appeals (Fourth Circuit) and all South Carolina state courts. She received her B.A. from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, and received her J.D. from the Syracuse University College of Law in New York.

The Honorable Deborah A. Faulkner

*South Carolina Probate Court
Greenville, SC*

Judge Debora Faulkner is serving her fifth consecutive term as Probate Judge.

Prior to her judicial service, Judge Faulkner practiced law for 13 years. She graduated Magna Cum Laude/Phi Beta Kappa from the University of South Carolina in 1979. In May, 1982, she received a Juris Doctorate degree from the University Of South Carolina School Of Law; and, was admitted to the S. C. Bar in November, 1982. She has been admitted to practice in the U.S. District Court Fourth Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court. Her memberships in professional

organizations include the county, state and American Bar associations; the S. C. Probate Judges Association, the National College of Probate Judges, and the S. C. Women Lawyers.

She has held and continues to hold many leadership positions in her profession.

By appointment of the Chief Justice of the S. C. Supreme Court, she serves on the Probate Court Advisory Committee to the Supreme Court, the S.C. Commission on Alternative Dispute Resolution, and the S.C. Supreme Court Commission on Judicial Conduct.

She has been published in various S. C. Bar Publications and other professional magazines. As chairperson of the S.C. Supreme Court Task Force on State Courts and the Elderly, she oversaw an in depth study and comprehensive report detailing how the court system can be more responsive to seniors. The report was accepted nationally as a resource for other state courts and organizations.

Her office has been innovative in promoting public education, protecting incapacitated adults, and providing a user-friendly Probate Court. She instituted classes on estate administration, developed a national award winning website, and produced a helpful how-to estate video along with numerous step-by-step brochures on how to use the services of the Court. Judge Faulkner launched a Volunteer Court Monitoring program. In the Program top paralegal students are trained by the Court and then visit with adults under the jurisdiction and protection of the Court. These visits allow for the Court to monitor the ongoing health and safety of these individuals. Further, to insure that reports can easily be made to the Court anytime by any concerned citizen, an online complaint process was designed and implemented to allow early Court intervention should the need arise. In the marriage license division, Judge Faulkner oversaw the implementation of bi-lingual marriage license information in order to be responsive to our Hispanic and Latino communities. In 2016, Judge Faulkner conceived and Deputy Judge Tracy Sharp-Robertson developed and implemented the PAWS system. This system allows SC attorneys free online access to all estate and protective proceedings filings in the court's case management system. This very popular service has promoted efficiency and cost savings for attorneys, their clients, and court resources.

Judge Faulkner has received numerous awards including an Award from the S. C. Attorney General's Office for her work on behalf of South Carolina's Senior citizens the Scales of Justice Award for her innovative work in educating the public, lawyers and legal support staff on probate practice and procedures.

She has serves on the Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum Board and various other non-profit boards. She is a graduate of Leadership Greenville, Class XXVI, and a graduate of Furman University's Riley Institute for Diversity, and designated as a Paul Harris Fellow from Rotary International.

Senator William R. Timmons, IV

*Timmons & Company, LLC
Columbia, SC*

William Timmons is a Republican State Senator who works as an attorney and entrepreneur in Greenville.

William previously served as a prosecutor in the 13th Circuit Solicitor's office. He currently owns and operates Swamp Rabbit CrossFit, Soul Yoga, and Timmons & Company.

While in the Senate, William focuses his time on limiting government, economic development, and ethics reform.

Charles "Chuck" S. Verdin, IV

*McNair Law Firm, PA
Greenville, SC*

Course Planner

Charles ("Chuck") S. Verdin, IV, a partner of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP resident in Greenville, practices in the areas of taxation, estate planning, and corporate law. He is a certified public accountant as well as a certified specialist in estate planning and probate law, and taxation law. He has specific experience in estate planning and planned giving, trust and probate administration, asset protection planning, and tax issues related to divorce, including the preparation of qualified domestic relations orders. He also represents tax-exempt and nonprofit organizations and advises businesses and individuals in franchising of businesses and in regard to federal, state, and local tax controversies. He also has experience in the areas of business acquisitions, reorganizations, restructuring and succession planning and tax aspects in connection with such transactions and planning. He currently chairs the South Carolina Bar Probate, Estate Planning and Trust Section Council and is a member of the Tax Law Section.