

People



Anthony W. Morris

Partner, Litigation
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Anthony Morris focuses his practice on business litigation, in addition to professional ethics and entertainment. He represents some of the world's largest companies, with an emphasis on multi-national insurance companies, in complex litigation matters including class actions. Anthony litigates large dollar coverage claims with insureds and handles all types of coverage disputes, with a particular focus on those alleging bad faith. Most recently, he serves as part of a small team of lead counsel defending COVID-19 business interruption claims against one of the world's largest insurers. He has experience in the substantive law regarding first-party property loss. He also has experience rendering coverage opinions, representing clients in alternative dispute resolution, and monitoring and evaluating complex claims. Anthony serves as national coverage counsel for a major insurer, involving hundreds of claims under director and officer liability, employment practices liability, fiduciary liability, commercial general liability, non-profit coverage, cyber coverage, and educational institution coverage. Anthony also regularly provides advice to insurance companies regarding product development and has drafted numerous policy forms for various lines of coverage. He regularly appears before state and federal courts throughout the country in a wide-range of civil litigation matters, and has served as appellate counsel in numerous matters. Anthony also defends corporate directors and officers and licensed professionals in negligence, malpractice, breach of fiduciary duty, and/or securities fraud claims.

Anthony served as outside counsel to the Speakers of the 104th-109th Congresses of the United States. He has also represented many members of Congress, as well as certain Georgia elected officials. He represents attorneys in disciplinary proceedings before the Georgia Bar and in professional negligence claims.

In addition, Anthony negotiates literary, television, and speaking contracts for his clients. He has handled several *New York Times* best selling authors, including "A National Party No More" by Zell Miller; "Lessons Learned The Hard Way" by Newt Gingrich; "Lost Innocence - The JonBenet Ramsey Story" by John & Patsy Ramsey;

Areas of Experience

Litigation
Professional Liability
Commercial Disputes
Insurance Litigation

Education

J.D., Georgia State University College of Law, 1992
M.B.A., Emory University, 1989
B.B.A., Georgia State University, 1987

Admissions

Bars

Georgia
New York
District of Columbia

Courts

Georgia Court of Appeals
Supreme Court of Georgia
U.S. Supreme Court
U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
U.S. District Court, District of Colorado
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Georgia
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Georgia
U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit
Tennessee Court of Appeals
Tennessee Supreme Court
U.S. District Court, Middle District of North Carolina
U.S. District Court, District of Montana
U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey

Related Content

Akerman Lawyers Recognized in *GaBiz Magazine's*
2025 Top Lawyers List
December 02, 2024

and “Maya Lord” by John Coe Robbins. He negotiates speaking and broadcast talent contracts for cable and network news. Anthony also represents a range of clients from series creators to reality show contestants. He represents clients involved in the development, production, acquisition, financing, marketing, and distribution of content for motion pictures, television, video, Internet, and other traditional and emerging media, from both a production and investor point of view. He drafts and negotiates various agreements involved in publishing, content production, and financing, including development and production agreements, limited partnership and operating agreements, option and acquisition agreements, and producer/director/talent agreements.

Chambers USA Ranks Akerman Among the Nation's Best Law Firms in 2024
June 06, 2024

Akerman Sponsors Lambda Legal in Atlanta Event
September 10, 2023

Notable Work

Georgia:

- Secured a major victory at the Georgia Supreme Court for an insurance company client, clearing the insurer from liability for a \$5.3 million excess verdict against its policyholder in an underlying litigation over a car crash. The trial court had granted summary judgment in favor of client, finding the insurer did not act negligently or in bad faith by not responding to an offer to settle before the offer was withdrawn, where the offer did not include a deadline for acceptance. The Supreme Court reversed the Court of Appeals by affirming that original judgment. The decision clarifies Georgia law surrounding settlement offers, to the benefit of all insurers issuing liability policies in the state. The Court held that an insurer's duty to settle arises only when the injured party presents a valid offer to settle within the insured's policy limits, and not merely when the insurer knows or reasonably should know that settlement within the insured's policy limits is possible. The holding will help curb “set-up” claims against insurers by plaintiff's lawyers who try to manufacture bad-faith claims by sending vague settlement demands.
- After being retained following entry of a sanctions order against attorneys for bringing a frivolous action, and after filing a Notice of Appeal of the order, negotiated a settlement which included a stipulation by all parties to a joint motion to vacate the sanctions order. Although the particular judge had a history of denying consent motions, she was persuaded in this case to vacate her order, saving the attorney clients from having to disclose sanctions in future malpractice insurance applications and applications for pro hac vice admission.
- Drafted an Amicus Curiae Brief on behalf of an alliance of automobile manufacturers in the Georgia Supreme Court in the appeal of the largest wrongful death damages award in Georgia history.
- Defended one of the largest sports organizations in the U.S. and achieved dismissal of client in the first case brought in Georgia under the 2015 Hidden Predator Act.
- Litigated and mediated settlement of an investors' claim against the directors and officers of a Homeland Security-focused technology company alleging RICO, racketeering, breach of contract, fraud, fraudulent transfer, breach of fiduciary duty, tortious interference, conspiracy and collusion, insider dealing, aiding and abetting breach, Securities Act violations, and seeking receivership and an accounting.
- Litigated coverage action regarding allocation of defense costs and indemnity among various insurers and insured relating to claims arising out of 36 lawsuits filed against national healthcare

company by various patients for professional malpractice, personal injury, and other tort claims.

- Won summary judgment for large law firm in action alleging malpractice, breach of fiduciary duty, and fraud/constructive fraud arising out of the sale of millions in U.S. assets of a foreign company by its local agent. Upheld by Court of Appeals.
- Litigated insurer's obligation to indemnify a \$1 million consent judgment in an underlying case in which the insurer withdrew its defense of an insured law firm based on prior knowledge. Won summary judgment for insurer.

International:

- Handled coverage dispute relating to alleged \$1 trillion in claims against world's largest petroleum producer arising out of intentionally-set fires at oil fields in Kazakhstan and other countries in the Middle East during the Iraqi War.

National:

- Handled layered program coverage disputes and settlements involving dozens of claims against several international law firms which provided opinion letters and advice on numerous tax shelters which were subsequently deemed invalid by the IRS.

Florida:

- Defended one of the largest sports organizations in the U.S. and twice achieved dismissal of complaints alleging negligence and violation of the Florida Unfair and Deceptive Trade Practices Act.
- Litigated consolidated declaratory judgment action in federal court seeking declaration of available limits and damages plus private counsel fees for breach of duty to defend car dealerships. Won summary judgment for insurer on duty to defend.
- Won dismissal of a \$9.5 million garnishment action in state court against an insurer that disclaimed coverage for damages arising out of a landscaper's death based on the Bodily Injury to Employee Exclusion, which had resulted in a default judgment against the insured.
- Litigated \$3 million action relating to insurance coverage for an arbitration award arising out of a Purchase and Sale Agreement under which one mortgage company agreed to sell loans it originated to another mortgage company which resulted in a loss because the loans sold were not good and performing residential mortgage loans.

Arkansas:

- Won dismissal of 29 insurance companies from a class action lawsuit filed in state court arising out of the insurers' alleged use of software programs to adjust auto claims.

California:

- Arbitrated \$32 million coverage claim between professional liability carrier and two insurance agencies and claims administrator arising out of the agencies' failure to file rates with the California Department of Insurance, improper claims handling, failure to remit premiums, failure to implement changes to installment plans and cancellation procedures, and

failure to submit subrogation recoveries. Resulted in no coverage obligation to carrier.

- Handled \$50 million California coverage dispute for lead participant tail coverage insurer of dissolved international law firm relating to various claims made post-dissolution alleging errors in preparation of an asset purchase agreement, a tax opinion on estate apportionment, a tax exempt bond opinion, a return of fees dispute, and a failed challenge to a buy-sell provision.
- Handled coverage dispute for professional liability insurer of law firm relating to malpractice action arising out of malpractice of law firm in closing \$3 billion acquisition of cable television system and failure to disclose the error, acting as lead in \$100 million tower of coverage.

Pennsylvania:

- Litigated \$79 million action relating to coverage for construction defect claims against various insureds arising out of the planning and construction of an NFL Football stadium.

New York:

- Monitored defense and handled settlements of numerous, varied claims against now-defunct international law firm.

New Jersey:

- Litigated and mediated settlement of a \$197 million claim against a market of insurers arising out of an explosion at a PVC manufacturing plant located in Illinois in which key issues included scope of damage, proper valuation method, allowed site prep costs for a rebuild at a different location, and betterments in technology.

Tennessee:

- Tried the largest damages case ever in Tennessee, alleging breach of an insurance contract arising out of the Nashville flood of 2010. Prior to trial, achieved summary judgment on claims of bad faith, estoppel and violation of the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act. Post-trial, achieved \$45 million reduction in prejudgment interest and judgment notwithstanding the verdict on \$7 million of awarded consequential damages. As appellant counsel in the Tennessee Court of Appeals, achieved unanimous reversal of the Chancery Court's summary judgment ruling on policy limits and the \$204 million jury verdict, resulting in zero liability for insurer client. As appellant counsel in the Tennessee Supreme Court, defeated opposing party's application for appeal.

Texas:

- Obtained summary judgment in federal court, which ruled that the insurer had no duty to defend the lawsuits brought by class members who had opted-out of the settlement of a market conduct certified class action based upon the insured's alleged fraudulent scheme in marketing policies.
- Handled coverage dispute for professional liability insurer of international law firm sued for conspiracy, securities fraud, mail fraud, and wire fraud relating to the purchase and sale of securities by participants in an energy company's retirement

plan; and investigated and charged by the SEC and Justice Department.

Honors and Distinctions

- *Chamber USA*, 2024, Ranked in Georgia for Insurance
- Fulton County *Daily Report*, Insurance Litigation Department of the Year, 2013 and 2017
- Martindale Hubbell, AV Rated
- GLAAD, National Award of Honor Recipient, 2006
- City of Atlanta, Phoenix Award, 2004

Published Work and Lectures

- Georgia ICLE State Bar Program, Georgia Public Television Broadcast, Speaker, "Recent Developments in Georgia Malpractice Law," November 13, 2015
- ABA Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section Program, Property Insurance Law Committee Annual Spring CLE Meeting, Speaker, "From Claim to Verdict: Litigating the Complex Commercial Property Insurance Claim," May 7-9, 2015
- *The Journal of Insurance Issues*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Author, "Limitations on Punitive Damages Against Insurers Since *State Farm v. Campbell*: Lessons for Insurers," Fall 2008
- Georgia ICLE State Bar Program, Georgia Law of Torts Seminar, Speaker, "Ethics & Malpractice," December 5, 2008
- Georgia ICLE State Bar Program, Georgia Law of Torts Seminar, Speaker, "Ethics & Malpractice Update" November 16, 2007
- Georgia ICLE State Bar Program, Speaker, "Ethics - Carlson on Evidence," March 30, 2007
- Georgia State University College of Law Sports & Entertainment Law Society, "What You Need to know to Become an Entertainment Lawyer," February 7, 2006
- Georgia Residential Real Estate Closing Attorneys Association, Speaker, "Recent Developments in Ethics Laws Affecting Closing Attorneys," January 10, 2006
- Georgia Entertainment & Sports Law Section, Entertainment Law Bootcamp, Speaker, "Representing Clients in Book Publishing," October 21, 2005
- Zurich, Inc. Conference, Speaker, "Tempering Bad Faith Claims Through Claim Files," September 29, 2005
- Atlanta Bar Association Solo Practitioner & Small Firm Section, Speaker, "Considerations in Purchasing Legal Malpractice Insurance for the Solo Practitioner or Small Firm," 2005
- American Law Institute Practice Checklist Manual on Insurance, Author, "How to Purchase Legal Malpractice Insurance," 2002
- Professional Liability in the New Millennium, Author, "An Internal Audit for the Ethical, Non-negligent and Professional Attorney," 2000
- Professional Liability Underwriting Society, Author, "The Guidebook to Purchasing Legal Malpractice Insurance - 5th ed.," 1999
- *The Practical Lawyer*, Author, vol. 45, no. 1, "What to Look for in Legal Malpractice Insurance," January 1999
- *California Lawyer*, "Law Office Management: Calendaring is Critical," 1998
- *Mercer Law Review*, Annual Survey Issue, Author, "Legal Ethics," 1996

- Current Developments in Georgia Tort Law Seminar, Georgia State Bar Convention ICLE, Author, “Legal Malpractice in Georgia,” 1995

Affiliations

- State Bar of Georgia
 - Transition Into Law Practice Program, Mentor, 2006-2010
 - Elections Committee, Advisor, 2001-2006
 - Malpractice Committee, Member, 1999-2000
 - State Bar Committee on Professionalism, Member, 1999-2002
 - Tort & Insurance Practice (TIPS) Section, Chair, 1997-1998; Secretary/Treasurer, 1996-1997
 - Legislative Committee, Insurance Law Section, Co-Chair, 1993-1994
 - Policy Committee, Insurance Law Section, Member and Author, 1995
- American Bar Association
 - Economics of Tort & Insurance Law Practice Committee, Vice-Chair, 1998-1999
 - Membership Involvement Committee (TIPS), Chair, 1997-1998
- Professional Liability/Malpractice Sub-Committee of the Insurance Coverage Litigation Committee, Chair, 1997-1998
 - Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section, Member, 1995-Present
 - Insurance Coverage Litigation Committee, Member, 1994-Present
 - TIPS Government Law Committee, Member, 2014-Present
 - Professionals’ Officers’ & Directors’ Liability Committee, Member, 1995-Present
 - Forum Committee on Entertainment and Sports Industries, Member, 2004-Present
 - Section of Administrative Law & Regulatory Practice, Member, 2002-Present
- Fulton County Arts Council, Council Member, 2005-2009
- Atlanta Bar Association, Member, 1997-Present
- Stonewall Bar Association, 1998-Present
- Midtown Alliance, Member, 2000-Present
- Greater Atlanta Business Coalition, Member, 2004-Present
- National Legal Malpractice Data Center, Associate, 1995-2000
- Atlanta Volunteer Lawyer Foundation, 1993-Present
- Human Rights Campaign, Federal Club Member, 2014-Present