

Peggy Smith Bush

Shareholder

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Peggy is a shareholder in the Casualty Department and an accomplished litigator, advocate, and counselor with more than 23 years of experience. She focuses her practice on defending corporations, large self-insureds, and public entities in cases involving negligence, transportation and trucking liability, and premises liability. Born and raised in North Alabama, Peggy is known for pairing strategic, results-oriented litigation with professionalism, civility, and a practical approach to problem-solving.

Peggy routinely defends claims arising from motor vehicle accidents, premises liability, product liability, negligent security, and general liability. Her broad experience also extends to commercial matters—such as breach of contract and indemnification—as well as code compliance, environmental toxic torts, crisis management, false imprisonment, malicious prosecution, negligent hiring and retention, and ADA accessibility claims, including complex website accessibility disputes. She also brings more than a decade of experience in public entity defense, with extensive knowledge of Florida’s Public Records Act, Sunshine Law, sovereign immunity, statutory limitations, fee-shifting provisions, and compliance and enforcement issues. She regularly works alongside risk management professionals on investigations, litigation, and risk avoidance strategies.

Peggy began her career at a respected Orlando defense firm, gaining valuable trial experience before becoming a founding shareholder of Southern Trial Counsel | PLC in 2010, where she also served as managing partner. Her legal career is rooted in a broader 40-year career working with and for businesses, which began in television and radio before moving into the financial industry, where she held Series 7, Series 6, and Series 63 licenses as a stockbroker. While working her way through law school, Peggy clerked for the in-house general counsel of an international restaurant company headquartered in Orlando. Today, she is recognized with Martindale-Hubbell’s highest rating (5.0/5.0 Preeminent®), and is also a Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator and a Certified Claims and Litigation Management Professional.

Practices

- Automobile Liability
- Premises & Retail Liability
- Product Liability
- General Liability
- Trucking & Transportation Liability
- Environmental & Toxic Tort Litigation
- Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation
- Amusements, Sports & Recreation Liability

Outside of the courtroom, Peggy has been married to her husband, Stephen, since 1985. They live in Orlando with their twin boys, Jack Hunter and Finn, and their calico cat, Harlie. Peggy treasures family time, enjoys music, cooking, and reading, and is dedicated to mentoring the next generation of attorneys.

Education

- Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 2002)
- University of North Alabama (B.S., 1984)

Admissions

- Florida
- U.S. District Court Middle District of Florida
- U.S. District Court Northern District of Florida
- U.S. District Court Southern District of Florida
- U.S. Court of Appeals 11th Circuit
- U.S. Supreme Court

Honors & Awards

- AV® Preeminent™ by Martindale-Hubbell®
- The Best Lawyers in America®, Personal Injury Litigation - Defendants (2023-2026)
- Florida Trend Legal Elite NOTABLE Women Leaders in Law (2024)
- Barry University School of Law Outstanding Achievement Alumni Award, 2017
- Florida Elite-Civil Trial by Florida Trend Magazine (2013)
- Florida Super Lawyers Rising Star (2010-2012)
- Florida Supreme Court Certified Circuit Court Mediator
- Litigation Management Institute, Graduate 2013 (CLMP)
- University of North Alabama 2023 Alumni Award for Public Service
- WTS International Executive Signature Leadership Program

Associations & Memberships

- Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs (AFWC), 1992-Present
- American Bar Association
- Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers - Awards Chair (2019-2020)
- Florida Association for Women Lawyers
- Florida Bar Association - Standing Committee on Mental Health & Wellness of Florida Lawyers, Senior Lawyers Committee (2017-2025), Animal Law Section
- The George C. Young First Central Florida American Inns of Court - Master Level
- GFWC du Midi Woman's Club, 1992-Present
- GFWC Oviedo Woman's Club, 2025-Present
- International Association of Defense Counsel (IADC) - In-House and Law Firm Management Committee; Product Liability Committee; Transport Committee
- National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms
- Orange County Bar Association - In-House and General Counsel Committee,

Professionalism Committee, Mentorship Program

- Public Risk Management Association (PRIMA)
- Transportation Lawyers Association (TLA) - Co-Chair of Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee; Executive Committee
- WTS International, Central Florida

Classes/ Seminar Taught

- *Mock Trial, Trial Run, Tabletop Role Playing – Guilty or Not Guilty?*, Bus Industry Safety Council (BISC) Annual Summer Meeting, Orlando, FL, July 22, 2024
- "Current Employment Law Issues in Trucking & Transportation Litigation," *AM Best Insurance Law Podcast*, June 4, 2024
- *Rules of the Trucking Industry: Staying on Track!*, Transportation Lawyers Association (TLA) Annual Conference - Virtual, June 24th, 2021

Published Works

- "How to Get Your Business Relationships - And Yourself - Back on Track After a Year of Isolation," *Orlando Business Journal*, February 23, 2021

Thought Leadership

February 23, 2021

How to Get Your Business Relationships – and Yourself – Back on Track After a Year of Isolation