



— THE 2023 —
POWERLIST
— THE DAILY RECORD —
CRIMINAL LAW

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■ INTRODUCTION	2	Justin Holliman	6
Andrew I. Alperstein	3	Ty Kelly	6
Gregg L. Bernstein	3	Kathleen M. Kirchner	6
Robert C. Bonsib	3	Steve Mercer	6
Adele Louise Brockmeyer	3	Thomas C. Mooney	7
Jamar R. Brown	4	Randolph Rice	7
Christine B. DuFour	4	Debra A. Saltz	7
Jeremy Eldridge	4	Evan T. Shea	7
Richard A. "Rick" Finci	5	Stephanie A. Shipley	8
Christopher Flohr	5	Margaret "Mimi" Teahan	8
Latoya A. Francis-Williams	5	Brian G. Thompson	8
J. Wyndal Gordon	5	Jessica L. Zarrella	8

Introducing our 2023 Criminal Law Power List



Criminal law attorneys work in perhaps the most emotionally charged area of the law. After all, their clients face outcomes that can deprive them of their freedom,

perhaps for the rest of their lives.

Whether their client is charged with a crime of violence or of having committed a "white-collar" offense, these attorneys must be resourceful, exhaustively prepared and capable of operating in a pressure-cooker environment.

The 23 men and women you'll meet on these pages are at the top of the criminal law profession across the breadth of Maryland.

This list was chosen by our editorial leadership team. We reached out to leaders in the legal community for input and perspective, and we asked our readers for their suggestions.

In this section we explore how these attorneys view their profession, what they would

change if they could and what they might be doing if they hadn't chosen this career. We're hoping to offer insight into the kind of people they are and how they see their accomplishments as well as the challenges the criminal justice system faces.

This list is part of a series of Power Lists throughout 2023 that will showcase the most influential figures in law, higher education, health care, business, financial services and other fields.

You can find this list and all the Power Lists on our website, TheDailyRecord.com.

If you know of someone you think is a strong candidate for inclusion on our Power Lists, we'd love to hear from you. Just go to <https://thedailyrecord.com/power-list-recommendation-form/> and tell us about the individual.

We hope you enjoy this publication, and we welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Thomas Baden Jr.
Editor

ANDREW I. ALPERSTEIN

MEMBER
ALPERSTEIN & DIENER



Andrew I. Alperstein has handled a number of high-profile criminal cases, including the Smoot case in Baltimore City, where three correctional officers were charged with murder by stomping an inmate, and the Werdesheim case, where a former member of the Israeli Special Forces and his brother were charged with assault on a teenager.

He began his legal career in the Baltimore City State's Attorney Office, where he served as an assistant state's attorney from 1994 to 1999. While in that office he oversaw juvenile cases and the automobile manslaughter unit. He also regularly lectured to the Baltimore County Police Department – both to new officers in the academy as well as to provide continuing

education. He was the recipient of the Governor's Citation for Outstanding Service in 1999.

Alperstein is a member of several local bar associations. He has led the criminal law committee of the Baltimore County Bar Association and since 2007 has chaired the Baltimore County Circuit Court Sitting Judges Slate Political Committee. He has a J.D. from the University of Baltimore School of Law.

GREGG L. BERNSTEIN

PARTNER
ZUCKERMAN SPAEDER



Gregg Bernstein is a partner at the prestigious law firm Zuckerman Spaeder LLP, based in Baltimore. With over 25 years of experience, he focuses his practice on complex civil litigation and white collar criminal defense.

Bernstein rejoined Zuckerman Spaeder in 2015 after serving as Baltimore City State's Attorney from 2011-2015. As state's attorney, he led an office of approximately 400 lawyers and staff and worked to implement substantive reforms aimed at improving public safety, enhancing trust and confidence in the criminal justice system, and promoting fairness, integrity, and transparency.

Prior to being elected state's attorney, Bernstein was an assistant U.S. attorney in Maryland. During his tenure, he investigated and prosecuted numerous high-profile cases involving corruption, narcotics trafficking, firearms, gangs, and violent crime. He tried over 30 federal jury trials and briefed and argued criminal cases before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit.

At Zuckerman Spaeder, Bernstein represents individual and corporate clients in government investigations, regulatory enforcement actions, and complex civil litigation. He is an accomplished trial lawyer who has extensive experience litigating matters in state and federal courts across the country.

Bernstein attended Milford Mill High School and earned his law degree at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, where he was editor of the Maryland Law Review.

ROBERT C. BONSI

PARTNER
MARCUSBONSI LLC



With more than 40 years of experience in criminal practice, including stints as a state and federal prosecutor and, since 1990, a criminal defense attorney based in Greenbelt, Robert C. Bonsib is widely recognized as a state leader on the subject. He is past chairman of the Criminal Law Section of the Maryland State Bar Association.

What's the most important thing you do in your job?

Most (not all) criminal defense clients are good people who made a bad decision(s) during a difficult time in their lives. To effectively represent a client one needs to spend enough time with the client to not just gain an understanding the facts of his or her case. Equally important is spending enough time to get to know the

client as a person, the client's life story and the reasons that explain why the client are in need of the services of a criminal defense attorney.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

Spending hours traveling to court for a brief status hearing or other hearings that require little time and that could be conducted just as effectively with a 10- to 15-minute virtual hearing takes time that could be better utilized to service a client's needs. While some courts still permit such virtual hearings, post-COVID many courts have reverted to requiring in-person appearances.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

Being a traveling food critic would be great.

ADELE LOUISE BROCKMEYER

PARTNER
TURNBULL BROCKMEYER LAW GROUP



Adele Louise Brockmeyer found her love of law and the desire to help people at a young age when she spent time in the courtroom and doing trial prep with her father since she was 12. The third-generation attorney is now a partner at Turnbull Brockmeyer Law Group. Besides criminal law, she also handles protective orders, civil and domestic cases.

What's the most important thing you do in your job?

Our firm strives to fulfill the life-long mission of my father, R. Roland Brockmeyer, Esquire, who believed he could change people's lives for the better, one client at a time. We represent multiple generations of families in Baltimore stretching back into the mid-1960s. Our clients are as loyal to us as we are to them, and this

doesn't happen by going through the motions. You must be willing to roll up your sleeves and get down to work if you truly want to help people make positive changes.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

Aside from the obvious answer that we should all try to be more civil with one another, it would be nice if attorneys were better equipped to walk a mile in the shoes of the opposing party. Perspective and life experience matter and mold our perceptions of the world around us. A little empathy in this business goes a long way.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

I would definitely be in the marketing and advertising world. I love the creativity and brainstorming that goes along with that industry.

POWER LIST

JAMAR R. BROWN

PARTNER
ROSENBERG MARTIN GREENBERG



Jamar Brown joined Rosenberg Martin Greenberg in 2016. Prior to that he was an assistant state's attorney for Baltimore City. He clerked for the Hon. Marcella A Holland, the former administrative judge for the Circuit Court of Baltimore City.

The University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law graduate traveled across the country as part of the law school's nationally-ranked trial team.

In addition to practicing law, Brown serves on the boards of various institutions, including Job Opportunities Task Force, Open Society Institute – Baltimore and Pratt Contemporaries of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. He also serves as president of the board of directors for Court Appointed Special Advocates of Baltimore.

What's the most important thing you do in your

job?

I identify the precise issue (or issues) that a client is facing and find creative, effective solutions for resolving it.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

The vast majority of lawyers are professional and collegial. The one thing I would change about the profession is the small contingent of lawyers who are not.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

I'd be seeking admission into one of the world's best culinary schools.

CHRISTINE B. DUFOUR

OF COUNSEL
JEZIC & MOYSE



An attorney in Maryland since 1990, Christine B. DuFour has had an extensive career as a public defender, county attorney and a private defense lawyer.

Her work as a public defender, in both Montgomery and Caroline counties, saw her represent clients in murder, rape, theft and armed robbery cases before juries. She worked as a legislative aide to then-Del. Mark K. Shriver in Annapolis, was of counsel to Albright and Rhodes in Rockville and also spent eight years in Talbot County with the last three as the supervising attorney.

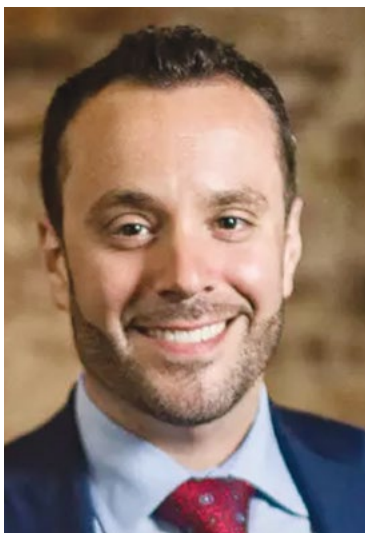
In 2013, DuFour was selected to be one of three members of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender's government relations team. During six years as part of that team, she helped lobby for the elimination

of the death penalty, the elimination of mandatory minimum sentences for low-level drug dealers, the elimination of jail penalties for certain classes of driving on a suspended license, and the implementation of the Good Samaritan Law.

A graduate of Villanova University and the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University, she joined Jezic & Moyse in opening the firm's first office on the Eastern Shore.

JEREMY ELDRIDGE

PARTNER
ELDRIDGE, NACHTMAN & CRANDELL LLC



As a former prosecutor for the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, Jeremy Eldridge has successfully handled hundreds of judge and jury trials. Eldridge has strong organizational skills and in-depth knowledge of the law and the criminal justice system. These skills helped him rise quickly through the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City.

As a prosecutor, Eldridge handled a wide breadth of cases involving felony drugs, domestic violence, theft, fraud, DUI/DWI, homicide, handguns and burglary.

In private practice, Eldridge serves clients as a partner with Eldridge, Nachtman & Crandell LLC facing a wide array of criminal charges. He is cognizant of the collateral consequences that often accompany a criminal conviction, working to resolve those issues while

also fighting for a favorable outcome of the criminal charges.

Eldridge argues in the appellate courts for clients appealing prior convictions. He speaks fluent Spanish and can communicate with people for whom English is not their primary language, which can be invaluable when a client is facing collateral consequences from their criminal charges, such as immigration hearings or deportation.

He received his Juris Doctor from the University of Baltimore School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts in government and politics from the University of Maryland.

Eldridge is a member of the Baltimore City Bar Association, Maryland Trial Law Club, Maryland State Bar Association, American Bar Association, Maryland Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys, Hispanic Bar Association and HSBA mentoring program. He was also named a Rising Star in 2012 and 2013 by Super Lawyers.



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RICHARD A. 'RICK' FINCI

CO-MANAGING PARTNER
HOULON BERMAN FINCI & LEVENSTEIN LLC



Richard "Rick" Finci primarily handles criminal and traffic matters in the federal and state courts of Maryland and the District of Columbia as co-managing partner at Houlon, Berman, Finci & Levenstein.

He also assists clients with asset forfeiture matters, complex civil and personal injury cases, and attorney grievances. He has significant experience in the Maryland appellate courts.

Finci is very active in professional and educational activities related to criminal and traffic law. He is currently serving his third consecutive term as commissioner on the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy, an advisory body that is appointed by the governor and is responsible for the Maryland sentencing guidelines.

He served as president of the Maryland Criminal Defense Attorney Association, chair of the Maryland State Bar Association Criminal Law Section and has led numerous seminars on criminal and asset forfeiture law. Finci has testified before the Maryland State Legislature in successful support of the repeal of the death penalty in Maryland, asset forfeiture reform and on other occasions concerning legislation being considered.

In recognition of his accomplishments as a best criminal defense lawyer in Maryland, Rick was selected for inclusion on the Super Lawyers list for both Maryland and the District of Columbia in from 2007 through 2019.

Finci earned his bachelor's degree in 1981 from the University of Maryland and his Juris Doctor, cum laude, in 1984 from the University of Baltimore Law School, where he served on the law review.

CHRISTOPHER FLOHR

PARTNER
BLACKFORD & FLOHR



Christopher Flohr began his practice as an attorney for the Legal Aid Society's Criminal Defense Division in Brooklyn, New York, in the early 1990s.

In 1998, Flohr and his family moved to Maryland, where he began work as the legal director for a grant-funded program focusing on bail reform in Baltimore. He supervised a team of lawyers and paralegals and personally litigated innumerable clients at the bail review stage of criminal proceedings.

In 1999, Flohr was chosen to participate in the Trial Lawyers College held at the ranch of famous trial attorney Gerry Spence. During this month-long training, Flohr experienced a transformation in his career by learning that he could win cases without the use of rhetoric, but rather through strategic storytelling and

revelation of both his and his client's truth.

Today, Flohr participates in a wide variety of professional activities and serves as president of the Maryland Criminal Defense Attorneys Association. In addition, he is an adjunct professor at the University Of Maryland Francis King Carey Law School, a former instructor for the National Institute For Trial Advocacy, the Anne Arundel County Bar Association, the Anne Arundel County CJCC and the Maryland State Drug Court Planning Committee.

Born in Long Island, New York, Flohr has enjoyed boating and fishing his entire life. Moreover, Chris continues his study of martial arts (black belt in Tae Kwon Do and current student of Filipino Kali) and is an accomplished guitarist. Flohr and his family live in Anne Arundel County.

LATOYA A. FRANCIS-WILLIAMS

FOUNDER
THE LAW OFFICE OF LATOYA A. FRANCIS-WILLIAMS



Latoya A. Francis-Williams is a first-generation American born into a family that demanded excellence and leadership with every task undertaken.

She was fortunate to be surrounded by a community of accomplished, hardworking and determined people who never shied away from hard work and the chance to fight for what they knew was just.

One such fight for Francis-Williams was to become a lawyer. Not for the money, but to represent those that seek a strong advocate, a thoughtful counselor and to claim membership to an honorable profession designed to create positive change in her community.

She graduated from Morgan State University and received her Juris Doctor from the University of Baltimore School of Law.

What's the most important thing you do in your job?

The most important thing I do in my job is bring transparency to criminal litigation. Insisting that an accused person's rights be acknowledged and honored is essential to attaining justice.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

One aspect of my profession I would like to change is the impression that being an effective lawyer requires one to be discourteous. It does not. An effective lawyer knows her audience, masters the facts and the law for which she is advocating.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

If I weren't in this industry I imagine I would spend my time advocating for marginalized people in another way as becoming a lawyer, and choosing criminal defense work, was a personal decision born from my immovable belief that every man is entitled to justice.

J. WYNDAL GORDON

PRINCIPAL COUNSEL
THE LAW OFFICE OF J. WYNDAL GORDON



A solo practitioner working out of his office in Baltimore, J. Wyndal Gordon represents individuals and small businesses in litigation throughout the state and in the District of Columbia federal courts. He has been involved in some high-profile cases, including serving as stand-by counsel for John Allen Muhammad, the alleged D.C. sniper, and is working on a book about the experience.

Gordon is past president of the Monumental City Bar Association in Baltimore, one of the oldest minority bar associations in the country, founded in part by the Hon. Thurgood Marshall in 1955. He participates and supports various local and national nonprofit organizations that advance the causes of African Americans, children and other vulnerable groups, and he has

served as legal counsel for the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus.

What is the most important thing you do in your job?

The most important thing I do in my job is help people. I defend the Constitution. I do my part to ensure that the rights and guarantees we enjoy as citizens are upheld. I keep the system honest and accountable.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

Race discrimination. Remote access jail visits would become statewide.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

Working at a tech company or with the EEOC.

JUSTIN HOLLIMAN

FOUNDER
THE HOLLIMON FIRM



The owner and founding member of The Hollimon Law Firm in Baltimore, Justin Hollimon earned his law degree at the Howard University School of Law, after which he began his legal career as a judicial law clerk in Prince George's County Circuit Court.

He followed that work with a three-year stint in the Prince George's County Office of the Public Defender, where he handled hundreds of trials and a variety of felony and misdemeanor criminal and traffic cases.

Hollimon then transitioned to civil litigation, working as an associate in a couple of local law firms, including handling commercial litigation, employment law and insurance defense matters with Niles, Barton & Wilmer LLP, in the Baltimore area.

His law firm, which he started in October 2019, represents individuals in personal injury and criminal matters, as well as corporations and individuals with entertainment law-related issues.

According to his LinkedIn page, Hollimon lives by the motto: "You matter," and, he explains: "No matter your situation, we know that you matter and we will fight to make sure that everyone else knows the same."

Hollimon is a member of the board of trustees for the state Office of the Public Defender. He also works as director of legal studies for the University of Baltimore.

TY KELLY

SHAREHOLDER
BAKER DONELSON



A fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers and a member of Baker Donelson's board of directors, Ty Kelly defends companies and individuals in government investigations, white-collar matters and high-stakes litigation.

Before joining Baker Donelson, she was an assistant U.S. attorney for the District of Maryland and a trial attorney in the Department of Justice's criminal fraud section.

Kelly was inducted into the American College of Trial Lawyers in Spring 2019 and serves on the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure Committee. Additionally, she previously served on the board of trustees for the Office of the Public Defender of Maryland, a position for which she was appointed by former Gov. Larry Hogan.

What's the most important thing you do in your

job?

There are many, but I'll choose two. The first is to understand the needs and desires of my clients and then to represent them as best as I can to meet those needs and to achieve their desired outcomes. Second, is to teach and mentor young lawyers on how to do that.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

The indictment process. An indictment can be the death of a company and the dreams of a person, even if they are later acquitted. In white-collar cases, where I practice mostly, more openness to considering defenses before indictment could change the trajectory of some cases and lives.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

I would work in mental health. There is such a shortage of mental health resources, especially for children.

KATHLEEN M. KIRCHNER

FOUNDER
KATHLEEN M. KIRCHNER, ATTORNEY AT LAW



A former assistant state's attorney in Anne Arundel County, Kathleen M. Kirchner started her own practice in Annapolis in 2002 as a criminal defense attorney. She has handled thousands of cases, including DUI, misdemeanors, serious felonies including homicide and family law.

What is the most important thing you do in your job?

The most important thing I do in my job is to impact a young person to change their life in a positive way. To assist a client getting into treatment. To get them to think about their past, present and future. The most rewarding experiences I have had is when a former client just stops by my office and shares how well they are. That they've started a business, gotten

married, changed their outlook on life or identified goals and are working toward them.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

I would like to see younger attorneys become more cordial and collegial with each other. Being rude does not make one a "better lawyer." It just makes a rude lawyer. I would also like to see judges and attorneys engage more in the Socratic dialogue on the points of law. The discourse between judges and attorneys sometimes seems more like a passive monologue or akin to a "parent and naughty child" interaction, rather than a meaningful exchange and understanding of the law.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

I would be teaching. I was a teacher first. I will likely be a teacher last.

STEVE MERCER

FOUNDING PARTNER
RAQUINMERCER LLC



A practicing lawyer since 1995, Stephen B. Mercer has more than two decades of experience and specific expertise on the use of scientific evidence in criminal law and civil litigation.

He is considered one of the nation's top attorneys on Touch DNA, a forensic method of analyzing DNA left at the scene of a crime, and was the chief attorney of the forensic division of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, considered a model of excellence in forensic science litigation, from 2010 through 2017.

What is the most important thing you do?

The most important thing I like to do in my job is to examine the details of a case. That is where the exculpatory forensic evidence will typically be found. Passing over details is a missed opportunity to spot

problems with forensic evidence in areas like DNA, firearm/toolmark and medical.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

One aspect of the profession that I would like to change is more joint defense, prosecution, expert, judicial, and law enforcement training on forensic science and the limits of scientific techniques. There are limited opportunities for training that includes all the stakeholders in the criminal justice system, but when it occurs, I have found it is very effective.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

If I wasn't in the legal profession, I would probably be a research scientist with my background in forensic science. Or, a mountain guide!

THOMAS C. MOONEY

CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYER
LAW OFFICES OF THOMAS C. MOONEY



Thomas C. Mooney is the owner of the Upper Marlboro-based Law Offices of Thomas C. Mooney, which he started in 2001.

Named Maryland Association for Justice Trial Lawyer of the Year in 2011 and a Super Lawyer in 2013, Mooney handles only jailable criminal and traffic offenses. As he notes on the firm's website, his practice is "intentionally limited to these areas of concentration so that he can focus all of his energy on those whose life and liberty are at risk."

What is the most important thing you do in your job?

I protect the civil liberties of my clients in the court of law.

What is the one aspect of your profession you

would like to change?

I'd like to see a change in mandatory minimum sentences. Every criminal case has a defendant, but each defendant has a story. Mandatory minimum sentences limit a defense attorney's ability to argue for the equitable treatment of a uniquely deserving client.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

If not a lawyer, I'd likely have endeavored into medicine. My passion is helping people in their most difficult moments

RANDOLPH RICE

MANAGING PARTNER
RICE, MURTHA, PSORAS



Managing partner in the Maryland office of the firm he helped establish in 2009, Randolph Rice specializes in personal injury, car and truck accidents, medical malpractice and civil matters. He has been recognized as a Rising Star in Maryland Criminal Defense by Super Lawyers.

What is the most important thing you do in your job?

The most important thing I do as a criminal defense lawyer is to provide effective legal representation and ensure that my clients receive a fair and just outcome in their cases. People are scared when they face any type of legal situation as it could mean their freedom. To be a trusted partner in the process is satisfying and I like to think I am helping my clients

get through a tough time in their lives.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

I think we have a great profession. I enjoy going to court and interacting with the judges and prosecutors. There is a real sense of community among the criminal defense bar. We all get along, and I think that comes from working together on cases every day and realizing that life is short and we need to enjoy the time we have practicing law.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

If I were not a lawyer, I would probably be a doctor. I love helping people and solving their problems, and I think that would be a profession where I could help the most people in their time of need.

DEBRA A. SALTZ

OWNER
LAW OFFICES OF DEBRA A. SALTZ



A former prosecutor and public defender, Debra A. Saltz heads the Annapolis criminal defense and personal injury law firm that bears her name.

She is past president of the Maryland Criminal Defense Attorneys Association.

What is the most important thing you do in your job?

I represent people who are often in the most difficult situations of their lives, facing criminal charges. This can cause a great deal of anxiety and stress. I am very honest with my clients as to what they are dealing with and the likely outcomes. I fight tirelessly to make sure they get treated fairly.

What is the one aspect of your profession you

would like to change?

The dishonesty in the profession makes us all look bad. There are too many lawyers who just want to make a quick buck and don't want to put in the work.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

I actually own a retail bulk food and coffee roasting store in Severna Park. It's a pleasure dealing with customers who are not facing the loss of liberty! I am also completing a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science. I hope to work with teens and young adults in a public library setting some day. I have so many juvenile clients that I believe this may be a way to help get them on the right track before they enter the criminal justice system.

EVAN T. SHEA

PARTNER
VENABLE LLP



An experienced trial and appellate attorney, Evan T. Shea is a partner working out of the Baltimore office of Venable LLP. He focuses on commercial litigation and white-collar criminal defense, and he also represents corporations and individuals in complex litigation involving commercial disputes, product liability and corporate governance.

He also assists clients with investigations by the Department of Justice and other federal and state agencies.

What is the most important thing you do in your job?

The most important thing I do in my job is to help clients make the most important decisions in their personal and professional lives armed with the best information and soundest judgment possible.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

The level of professionalism between opposing counsel. You can be a top-notch advocate for your client while treating opposing counsel with courtesy and respect (in fact, I would argue you cannot be a great lawyer unless you do). All lawyers should be trained that way.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

I cannot imagine a profession outside of the law. If I was not a lawyer, however, I would be a teacher.

STEPHANIE A. SHIPLEY

ATTORNEY
SHIPLEY LAW FIRM



A 1995 graduate of the University of Baltimore School of Law, Stephanie A. Shipley worked for two years as a prosecutor in the Talbot County Office of the State's Attorney. She was then a partner in the law firm of Campen & Walsworth, P.A. for six years, followed by an 11-year stint with the Talbot County Board of Elections.

In 2004, she opened her own law firm, the Shipley Law Firm, in Easton.

On her firm's website, Shipley notes her "extensive experience defending the rights of people arrested and accused of criminal cases.

"I handle all types of criminal cases, including minor infractions, misdemeanors and serious felonies, such as, drunk driving, drug possession, narcotics sales,

theft, white collar fraud, embezzlement, arson, and conspiracy."

In today's legal environment, the biography notes, "matching your needs with the correct firm is crucial to the successful outcome of your legal matters. Like so many other areas, in law, the pace of change can be breakneck, the details overwhelming."

Shipley's list of bar admissions includes Maryland, Florida, the U.S. District Court District of Maryland, the U.S. Supreme Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit.

MARGARET 'MIMI' TEAHAN

PARTNER
ETHERIDGE QUINN KEMP ROWAN & HARTINGER



Margaret "Mimi" Teahan has extensive criminal defense experience and has tried hundreds of cases to verdict in Maryland courts. For over 20 years, she was a trial attorney with the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, having served in Baltimore City District and Circuit Court, Washington County Circuit Court and Frederick County Circuit Court. She graduated from Loyola University of Maryland in 1989 and received her J.D. from the University of Baltimore School of Law in 1992.

What's the most important thing you do in your job?

Upholding the constitutional rights of individual citizens is an appropriate and scholarly response. However, I view ours as a service profession, and I think an attorney's most important task is to make their client feel less alone during litigation.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

Our reputation. There are way too many greedy lawyer jokes. None of the lawyers I practice with are motivated by greed.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

My dream job as a child was to be a professional actress and my childhood was full of plays and performances. It was a great foundation for the work I do now. Theatre is group storytelling and good trial lawyers are good storytellers.

BRIAN G. THOMPSON

SENIOR PARTNER
SILVERMAN THOMPSON SLUTKIN



Brian Thompson is one of the founding partners of Silverman Thompson Slutkin and chair of the firm's criminal defense practice group and devotes his time to litigating criminal cases and related civil and administrative actions.

After graduating with honors from Towson University, Thompson enrolled in law school at the University of Baltimore. In January of 1994 he accepted a position with the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore County, where he was employed for almost five years.

As an assistant state's attorney, Thompson successfully prosecuted thousands of criminal cases in the district and circuit courts.

Thompson developed a particular expertise in the prosecution of alcohol-related traffic cases, sexual offenses, white-collar crimes and cases involving violations of

the state's narcotics laws. He also prosecuted many high-profile cases including the prosecution of the sitting chief judge of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City.

He has received a perfect 10 "Superb" rating from Avvo, one of the most respected attorney rating services in the country. From 2014 through 2017, Thompson was named as one of Top 100 Lawyers in Maryland by Super Lawyers Magazine. This honor, which is based on peer voting, follows seven years of being named a Super Lawyer, a distinction reserved for only the top 5% of attorneys in the state.

Upon entering private practice in 1998 Thompson quickly built upon the reputation he developed as a prosecutor and is considered one of the most aggressive and talented criminal practitioners in Maryland. He appears in court daily, handling an average of 15 criminal and serious traffic cases per week.

JESSICA ZARRELLA

PRINCIPAL
THE LAW OFFICES OF JESSICA ZARRELLA



Based in Rockville, Jessica Zarrella worked as an assistant state's attorney for Montgomery County, where she gained extensive experience in all aspects of litigation and specialized in prosecuting gang members and violent felonies.

After a stint with a small family law firm, she started her own practice dedicated to both family law and criminal defense in March of 2018.

What is the most important thing you do in your job?

Listening is the most important thing I do. Criminal defense attorneys see good people on their worst day. Clients need an advocate who truly listens to be able to best help them make what is often the scariest, toughest and most important decisions they will ever make in their lives.

What is one aspect of your profession you would like to change?

Better funding for the public defender's office. This is truly a civil rights and Sixth Amendment issue. These jobs have crushing workloads and are compensated at a rate where many of the best and brightest can't even afford to apply. Most inequities of the criminal justice system can be directly redressed through this issue. Undercompensating public defenders undermines public confidence in the criminal justice system and has dire consequences for the diversity and quality of our profession

If you weren't in this industry what would you be doing?

If I wasn't practicing law I would still be involved in service, most likely through my local church or another community organization..