



## Ronald A. Norwood

Member

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Ron Norwood represents clients in complex civil and criminal litigation across the country, with a practice spanning financial services, health care, government, and education.

Ron, a native of Chicago, joined the Firm after serving as a law clerk for U.S. District Court Judge Scott O. Wright in Kansas City from 1986 to 1988.

Throughout his legal career, Ron has served as both trial and appellate counsel in litigation matters across the United States, with a primary focus in Missouri and Illinois. His practice includes representing national and regional banks, mortgage companies, and other financial institutions in a wide range of commercial and tort disputes. He also represents health insurers, health maintenance organizations, and health care providers in litigation, and defends manufacturers in product liability cases, consumer fraud claims, and disputes under the Uniform Commercial Code.

Ron has represented governmental and quasi-governmental entities, including municipalities, in various litigation matters. He has defended clients in class actions involving the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Electronic Funds Transfer Act, the Federal Civil Rights Act, Title VII, and Section 1983. His public sector work includes serving as counsel to the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, the St. Louis Career Education District, and the St. Louis Public Schools District.

In addition to his civil litigation practice, Ron represents clients in federal investigations and criminal matters. His most notable criminal defense was the successful representation of a St. Louis Rams football player accused of participating in a nationwide drug conspiracy. After the government presented its case-in-chief, Ron secured a judgment of acquittal before presenting any defense evidence—the only such judgment ever entered by the presiding federal judge. This case is featured in Chapter 7 of Jeffrey Benedict's book *Pros and Cons: The Criminals Who Play in the NFL*.

Ron is an arbitrator with the American Arbitration Association. He has served as an adjunct professor at Washington University in St. Louis and taught trial practice courses at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law. He has also served as a disciplinary hearing officer for the Missouri Supreme Court and is a member of the American Law Institute. His service includes roles on the University of Missouri School of Law Foundation

### Services

- Appellate Litigation
- Banking Litigation
- Class Action
- Complex Litigation
- Data Protection
- Education
- Environmental, Chemical & Toxic Tort
- Health Care
- Health Care Litigation
- Labor & Employment
- Media & Communications
- Municipal Law, Zoning & Finance
- Products Liability
- Investigations and White Collar Crime

and Campaign Committees.

In 2014, Ron was appointed by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon to the Harris-Stowe State University Board of Regents and was elected Board Chairman in 2015. In 2009, he received the Citation of Merit Award from the University of Missouri School of Law. He is AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell and is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, an honorary organization recognizing lawyers, judges, and legal scholars for their commitment to community welfare and the legal profession.

Ron serves as Chairman of the Firm's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, reflecting his dedication to advancing inclusive practices within the Firm and the broader community.

## Education

- University of Missouri at Columbia School of Law (J.D., 1986)
  - Dean's List
  - *Missouri Law Review*, Board of Editors
  - Moot Court Competition, top oralist
  - UMC School of Law Scholarship
- University of Illinois (B.S., 1982)
  - Journalism

## Legal Background

- Adjunct professor, Washington University School of Law
- Law clerk, Hon. Scott O. Wright, Chief Judge, U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri (1986-1988)
- Summer associate, Lewis Rice LLC (1985)
- Teaching assistant (legal writing), Council on Legal Education Opportunity (1984)

## Professional Affiliations

- Fellow, Litigation Counsel of America
- Member, Diversity Law Institute
- American Law Institute
- Disciplinary hearing officer, Missouri Supreme Court
- Arbitrator, American Arbitration Association
- American Bar Association
- Illinois State Bar Association
- Chicago Bar Association
- Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis
- Mound City Bar Association

## Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- Seventh Circuit, U.S. Court of Appeals

- Eighth Circuit, U.S. Court of Appeals
- Eastern District of Missouri, U.S. District Court
- Western District of Missouri, U.S. District Court
- Northern District of Illinois, U.S. District Court
- Southern District of Illinois, U.S. District Court
- Missouri Bar
- Illinois Bar
- Kansas Bar
- Litigation Counsel of America

### **Charitable & Civic Involvement**

- Board of Directors, Sherwood Forest
- Chairman, Harris-Stowe State University Board of Regents (June 2015)
  - Appointed by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon to Harris-Stowe State University Board of Regents (June 2014)
- Board of Directors, College Bound St. Louis
- Participant, Mound City Bar Association Law Student Mentoring Program
- Moot Court Coach, Soldan International Studies High School and Northwest Academy of Law
- Mentor, University of Illinois College of Media

### **Special Honors**

- 2019 Royal Vagabonds Leadership Award for Excellence in Civic Engagement
- 2017 Medgar Wiley Evers Legal Advocacy Award
- 2015 Tai Chi Silver medal winner at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Hunyuan Taijquan Exchange in Beijing, China
- 2014 St. Louis Business Journal Diverse Business Leaders Award

### **Firm Committees**

- Chairman, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

### **Hobbies**

- Tai Chi
- Muay Thai Kickboxing
- Bagua
- International travel

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## **Diversity & Inclusion Committee Chair Q&A**

## **Why is diversity in the workplace important to you?**

Diversity is extremely important to me personally because I believe that when there is a diversity of thought, culture, perspectives, interests, backgrounds, and experiences in the workplace, everyone benefits. A diverse workplace is even more beneficial in the practice of law, as we represent a myriad clientele through a variety of legal matters. Diversity in legal teams facilitates the ability to think creatively, to craft comprehensive solutions that address all aspects of a given legal challenge, and to offer clients the most desirable outcomes. Fostering a diverse workplace is the right thing, and a commitment to diversity allows Lewis Rice to cultivate business relationships and opportunities that will serve as the foundation of the Firm well into the future.

## **How has your diverse background benefited your practice?**

As an African-American litigation attorney raised in a household of very limited means, I know firsthand the value of opportunity and how equal access and equal opportunity encourage success at all levels. Throughout my professional career, I have made it a point to focus on people, because the practice of law is a people business, and to view people as more than simply clients, judges, witnesses, or jurors. My background has helped me view life and situations through a prism that allows me to understand the circumstances of others, to be non-judgmental, and to appreciate differences that exist in society and throughout the world. This viewpoint has allowed me to expand my horizons personally as well, by learning about Chinese, Japanese, and Thai culture and about some of the philosophies that emanate from those cultures, through over 30 years of practicing various martial arts. Ultimately, my diverse background and experiences have enabled me to develop a multi-faceted, multicultural approach to legal problem solving, and to practice law in a way that connects with all types of people, from all types of backgrounds, and all types of businesses, large and small.

## **How is Lewis Rice actively supporting diversity in the legal community?**

"Proactively promoting legal diversity" remains the Firm's mantra and its diversity blueprint. Our Diversity & Inclusion Committee, working with the Firm's Management Committee, Recruiting Committee, and Associate Development Committee, promotes this mission on several levels: recruiting talented young attorneys from diverse backgrounds, mentoring these attorneys, and promoting policies that will help retain our attorneys. The Firm has proactively contributed to the St. Louis diversity conversation by encouraging attorneys to attend diversity networking events at each of the local law schools, including Saint Louis University, Washington University, and the University of Missouri. We are committed to supporting organizations that celebrate diversity and inclusion within our community, such as the Mound City Bar Association and the Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis. We are also active in many programs that support underserved communities, such as the College Bound Program, Herbert Hoover Boys & Girls Club, and Legal Services of Eastern Missouri. The Firm provides financial assistance to local OutLaw groups supporting Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender students, the local Hispanic Bar Association, the local Asian Bar Association, and various Black Law Student Associations. The overriding objective of these efforts is to position Lewis Rice as a recognized leader in legal diversity.

## **What are some of your goals for the future, as the Chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee?**

My goals are to vigorously continue the Firm's efforts to use recruiting to increase diversity among our attorneys and our staff, to promote qualified women to the ranks of equity and non-equity members, and to provide successful professional development for the Firm's existing minority and female attorneys. Ultimately, I hope that when I retire from Lewis

Rice, the Firm will serve as a model of how a genuine commitment to diversity benefits law firms, society at large, the local, legal, and business communities, and our diverse clientele.