



Burch, Porter & Johnson, PLLC
130 North Court Avenue | Memphis, TN 38103
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Lawrence J. Laurenzi

Senior Attorney

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Practice Areas

- Commercial & Business Litigation
- White Collar & Criminal Investigations



As a former United States Attorney, Mr. Laurenzi assists companies and individuals who are under investigation by government entities or who have been sued or charged by prosecutors or other regulators. He brings extensive litigation experience in both criminal, civil, and regulatory matters in federal and state courts.

Lawrence (Larry) Laurenzi brings extensive litigation and defense experience to bear for his clients. Some of Mr. Laurenzi's engagements included the defense of a corporate executive of a publicly traded company that was under investigation by DOJ and the SEC, the representation of a corporate executive in federal court for anti-kickback violations, the representation of professionals and hospitals under investigation by DEA for drug diversions, and the representation of medical professionals under investigation by state and federal regulatory agencies. Mr. Laurenzi focuses his practice on individuals in white collar criminal investigations and indicted cases in federal court. In civil matters, he represents parties in commercial disputes, regulatory matters and qui tams actions.

Mr. Laurenzi served as lead counsel on numerous complex grand jury investigations and trials including cases involving health care fraud, bank fraud, mail and wire fraud, tax offenses, securities fraud, controlled substance offenses by medical professionals, and civil false claims. Mr. Laurenzi was recognized by the Department of Justice for his trial work in his receiving the Department of Justice's Director's Award – one of the highest national awards given by the Department of Justice.

Mr. Laurenzi was the United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee from 2008 to 2010. He also served as the Acting United States Attorney on four occasions. He was the First Assistant United States Attorney for sixteen years and the Chief of the Criminal Divisions for ten years. In his multiple positions within DOJ, Mr. Laurenzi worked closely with investigative agencies including the FBI, IRS, FDA, EPA, DEA, ATF, Postal inspection Service and the OIG for the FDIC and HUD.

As the First Assistant United States Attorney, Mr. Laurenzi oversaw the litigation work of both the civil and criminal divisions. Mr. Laurenzi has had numerous trials in federal court. He has been recognized for his trial skills by being selected as a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Mr. Laurenzi was selected as a "Best Lawyer" in commercial litigation and is an active member of the "National Association of Former United States Attorneys". He was an adjunct professor at the University of Memphis School of Law where he taught "Trial Advocacy" for five years.



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Admitted to Practice

- United States Supreme Court (1991)
- Tennessee (1981)
- United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee (1981)
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas (2019)
- United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (1981)

Bar Admissions

- American Bar Association
- Tennessee Bar Association
- Memphis Bar Association

Education

- University of Memphis Law School (J.D., 1981)
- University of Memphis (B.A., 1978)

Professional Honors and Activities

- National Association of Former United States Attorneys
 - Lawyer's Journal Club
 - Named to the Best Lawyers in America® list in the practice area of Commercial Litigation (2019-2020)
 - Fellow, Memphis Bar Foundation
 - Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers
 - Recipient, Department of Justice Superior Performance Awards
 - Recipient, Department of Justice National Director's Award for Excellence in Litigation
 - Recipient, Department of Justice and Federal Agencies' Special Act Award
 - Letter of Commendation for trial work from Attorney General Richard Thornburgh
 - Letter of Commendation from Attorney General Janet Reno
 - Recognition, Congressional Record, House of Representatives Vol 164 (2018)
- Adjunct Law Professor, University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, Trial Advocacy (2012-2017)



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Publications and Presentations of Note

- Presenter, "Defending Federal Government Investigations," Annual Georgia State Bar Conference (2018)
- Author, "A Tale of Two Investigations – A Comparison of Ken Starr's and Robert Mueller's Investigations into Alleged Presidential Misconduct," Law360 (2018)
- Author, "Is Your Institution Immune from the College Admission Scam?" JDSupra (2019)
- "[United States Attorney Larry Laurenzi Celebrated After 36 Years](#)," Commercial Appeal (May 2018)

Community Involvement

- Former Chair and Founding Board Member, Tennessee Dangerous Drug Task Force (2008-2018)
- Former Board Member, Memphis Shelby County Crime Commission
- Former Board Member, Multi-Agency Gang Task Force
- Former Board Member, Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Unit
- Former Board Member, Alliance for Drug Endangered Children

Representative Matters

- Defended a corporate executive of a publicly traded company that was under investigation by DOJ SDNY and the SEC for securities and healthcare violations. No charges filed by DOJ or the SEC.
- Represented corporate executive in federal court for anti-kickback violations.
- Represented individuals and hospitals under investigation by DEA for Drug Diversion with favorable outcomes.
- Lead counsel for the Western District of Tennessee into corruption and financial abuse in the federally subsidized "childcare industry." After a two-year investigation and a five-week trial, principals for overseeing the federally-funded program were found guilty and sentenced to prison. *United States v. John Madison and Willie Ann Madison*
- Lead counsel with the Securities and Exchange Commission into the investigation and prosecution of Lee Bradford Arberg, a registered Investment Advisor with Hemisphere Trading Company. Lee Bradford Arberg pled guilty to multiple counts of securities violations and sentenced to prison. *United States v. Lee Bradford Arberg*
- Lead trial counsel in the investigation and prosecution of the principals of First American Monetary Consultants, a commodities firm with offices in Tennessee and Colorado. After a six-week trial, Charles Bates, the president and CEO, along with his two sons and daughter-in-law were found guilty for their involvement in a twenty million dollar investment fraud. (2017, *United States*



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- Qui Tam action sought against a California medical device company for making “kickbacks” to physicians for the use of the companies’ medical equipment. Substantial recovery by the United States under the False Claims Act.
- False Claims action by the United States against Joseph Woodbury, a local dermatologist for up-coding for services provided to Medicare and Medicaid patients. Favorable settlement for the United States. (*United States v. Joseph Woodbury*)
- International investigation into the USDA Step II Agricultural Program. Three-year investigation into illegally obtained subsidies by American exporters of cotton to Asian countries. Investigation resulted in multiple settlements under the False Claims Act, as well as criminal convictions. (*United States v. W. D. Mask Inc.*)
- Lead counsel in a medical malpractice case against a urologist for failure to diagnose prostate cancer timely. Case settled the day of trial for a nominal sum. (2018, *Dennis James v. United States*)
- Lead counsel in the prosecution of Claude Conley, the owner and chairman of the Board of the Bank of Alamo for his involvement in illegal banking transactions, which lead to the failure of the Bank of Alamo. Worked extensively with FDIC in the investigation and prosecution. (*United States v. Stephen Sims*)
- Lead counsel in a wrongful death action brought against the Veteran Administration for negligent care received by Danny Laden in the emergency room. Treatment in the emergency room resulted in the death of the patient. Case settled for substantially less than demanded in the complaint. (*Danny Laden v. United States*)
- Lead counsel in a month-long trial against deputy jailers at the Shelby County jail were convicted of unjustifiably beating inmates housed at the facility. The jailers used riot batons to beat the inmates in an effort to retaliate against the inmates for an assault on a fellow deputy jailer. (*United States v. Belinda Marshal, et al.*)
- Lead counsel in the investigation and prosecution of Ron Blackwood of the Blackwood Brothers gospel group. Blackwood was convicted on multiple counts of defrauding aspiring singers out of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Blackwood used his connection to the music industry as well as his church affiliations to persuade aspiring artists to pay for what they believed were recording and promotion contracts. (*United States v. Ronald Blackwood*)



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- Lead counsel in a contested jury trial against Michael Allan for intentionally setting fire to a local church located in Shelby County. Two firefighters lost their lives battling the blaze. The trial required extensive expert testimony concerning the fire's causation. Allan was sentenced to life imprisonment. (*United States v. Michael Lee Allan*)
- Successfully tried and convicted a Shelby County Deputy Sheriff for the murder of a young man during his arrest. Case required extensive expert testimony on the cause of death and police practices during arrest. (*United States v. Sherman Boyland, et al.*)
- Lead counsel in eight-day jury trial against Michael Lilley for sex trafficking minors. Lilley was found guilty of recruiting girls from local high schools, some as young as fifteen, to engage in commercial sex acts. He was convicted on multiple counts. (*United States v. Michael Lilley*)
- Lead counsel in the prosecution of Justin Baker for his violation of the civil rights of students and faculty of the Margolin Hebrew Academy. Baker defaced a Torah and other religious items, while the students were staying at a hotel in Jackson, TN. The case raised a legal issue of whether a hotel conference room is a place of worship under the civil rights statute. (*United States v. Justin Shawn Baker*)
- Lead prosecutor in the investigation and prosecution of David Bumpus, the sheriff of Henry County. Sheriff Bumpus pled guilty to public corruption charges and was sentenced to prison. (*United States v. David L. Bumpus*)
- Lead counsel in the investigation and prosecution of Kevin Grothe, the Assistant Athletic Director at the University of Memphis. Kevin Grothe pled guilty to misappropriation of government funds and sentenced to prison. (*United States v. Kevin Grothe*)
- Lead counsel in the investigation and prosecution of white supremacists in West Tennessee. Defendants found guilty of multiple civil rights violations, gun violations, and threatening the President of the United States.