



Burch, Porter & Johnson, PLLC
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W.J. Michael Cody

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PRACTICE AREAS

- Alternative Dispute Resolution, Mediation & Arbitration
- Government Relations & Municipal Law

Mike Cody's practice is presently focused on the mediation and arbitration of complex commercial disputes, as well as commercial litigation, internal investigations, and regulatory matters.

Mr. Cody began his practice at the firm in 1961 and, except for his years in public service, has been with Burch, Porter & Johnson since that time. He served as the Attorney General of Tennessee from 1984 to 1988, was the United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee from 1977 to 1981, and served on the Memphis City Council from 1975 to 1977.

He has represented major corporations across the United States in a wide variety of litigation and in matters before state attorneys general and regulatory agencies. In 2005, he was appointed to serve as Co-Chair of the Tennessee Commission on Ethics, charged by the Governor of Tennessee with revising state ethics laws. In 2010, Mr. Cody was elected co-chair of the Society of Attorneys General Emeritus or SAGE. One of the founding members of the group, he is only the second co-chair in SAGE's history.

EDUCATION

- Rhodes College (Honorary Doctor of Laws, 1989)
- University of Virginia (J.D., 1961), Phi Delta Phi
- Rhodes College (B.A., 1958), with distinction, Omicron Delta Kappa

EXPERIENCE

- Distinguished Adjunct Professor, Rhodes College (2018-present)
- Co-Chair, Society of Attorneys General Emeritus (2010)
- Co-Chair, Governor's Commission on Ethics in Government (2005)
- Adjunct Professor, Vanderbilt University School of Law (1987-1988)
- Attorney General, State of Tennessee (1984-1988)
- Personally argued four cases before the United States Supreme Court: - *Rose v. Rose*, 481 U.S. 619 (1987) - *Rose v. Clark*, 478 U.S. 570 (1986) - *Alexander v. Choate*, 469 U.S. 287 (1985) - *Tennessee v. Garner*, 471 U.S. 1 (1985)
- Adjunct Professor, Memphis State University School of Law (1981)
- United States Attorney for Western District of Tennessee (1977-1981)
- At Large Member, Memphis City Council (1975-1977)
- Adjunct Professor, Lemoyne Owen College (1970-1972)
- Adjunct Professor, Southwestern (1969-1973)
- First Lieutenant, U.S. Army Reserve (1961-1967)
- Admitted to Tennessee Bar in 1961



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PROFESSIONAL HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

- Named Best Lawyers® "Lawyer of the Year" Arbitration and Mediation in the Memphis area (2024)
- Recipient, The Luminary Award, Memphis City's highest honor (2020)
- Named Best Lawyers® "Lawyer of the Year" for Mediation in the Memphis area (2019)
- Named to the Best Lawyers in America® list (2006-2024) and in the practice areas of Arbitration and Mediation (2011-2021)
- Recipient, Tri-State Defender Newspaper 65th Anniversary Legend Honor (2017)
- Recipient, Rhodes College Distinguished Alumni Award
- Listed in Mid-South Super Lawyers in the area of Alternative Dispute Resolution (2007-2017)
- Named Best Lawyers® "Lawyer of the Year" for Mediation in the Memphis area (2014)
- Named Best Lawyers® "Lawyer of the Year" for Arbitration in the Memphis area (2013)
- Named Best Lawyers® "Lawyer of the Year" for Alternative Dispute Resolution in the Memphis area (2011)
- Recipient, Lifetime Achievement Award, International Academy of Mediators (2010)
- Named to the "Top 100 Tennessee Super Lawyers" list (2009-2010)
- Named to the "Top 50 Memphis Super Lawyers" list (2009-2010)
- Recipient, National Bar Association's Outstanding Community Service Award (2008)
- Recipient, Francis X. Bellotti Award, National Association of Attorneys General (2007)
- Recipient, Memphis Bar Association's Lawyer's Lawyer Award (2001)
- Member, Tennessee Supreme Court Board of Professional Responsibility (1990-1992)
- Fellow, Memphis Bar Foundation, Tennessee Bar Foundation, and American Bar Foundation
- Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers
- Member, Tennessee Academy of Mediators and Arbitrators
- Listed in Chambers USA: America's Leading Attorneys in Business
- Listed in Business Tennessee magazine as one of the "Top 100 Lawyers in Tennessee"

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS OF NOTE

- Speaker, [43rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast](#), Frontiers International Springfield, IL Club
- Presenter, [Session VI, M. J. Cody; Burch, Porter & Johnson \(Memphis\): Dr. King's Lawyer in Memphis](#) (1968), 10 Nw. J. L. & Soc. Pol'y. 679 (2016)
- Author, "[Exclude Mentally Ill Defendants from Death Penalty](#)," Special Guest Column to The Commercial Appeal (February 2016)
- Author, "Special Ethics Duties for Attorneys Who Hold Public Positions," 23 Memphis State University Law Review 3 (Spring 1993)
- Co-author, "Honest Government, An Ethics Guide for Public Service" (Greenwood Publishing, 1992)
- Co-author, "The Southern Consciousness: A Source for National Renewal," You Can't Eat Magnolias, McGraw-Hill (1972)
- Author, "The Privatization of Correctional Institutions: The Tennessee Experience," (40 Vanderbilt Law Review 822 (1987)
- Author, "White Collar Crimes," 10 Memphis State University Law Review 411 (1980)
- Author, "The Death Penalty in America: Its Fairness and Morality," 31 The University of Memphis Law Review 4 (Summer 2001)
- Author, "[King at the Mountain Top: The Representation of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Memphis, April 3-4, 1968](#)," 41 U. MEM. L. REV. 699 (2011)



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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Member, Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame
- Member, Memphis Amateur Sports Hall of Fame
- Member, Rhodes College Athletic Hall of Fame
- Member, Board of Directors of the National Civil Rights Museum
- Vice Chair, Memphis and Shelby County Library Foundation
- Vice Chair, Memphis Travel Aid Society
- Board of Trustees, Leadership Memphis
- Board of Directors, Memphis YMCA
- President of Board of Trustees, Lausanne Collegiate School (2007)
- President, Memphis in May (1996)
- Appointed by Governor as a Commissioner for Goodwyn Institute Commission

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Tennessee, 1961

United States Supreme Court, 1965

BAR ASSOCIATIONS

American Bar Association

Tennessee Bar Association

Memphis Bar Association