

Women's Forum NEWSLETTER

HBSS is pleased to introduce our first quarterly Women's Forum Newsletter. This newsletter will provide clients with information on upcoming events sponsored by the firm, announcements about the firm and our members, as well as news and legal information that our clients might find useful.

Attorney Spotlight: Ashley Phillips Purcell



After joining HBSS in 1998, Ashley Phillips Purcell made partner in 2003. Part of Ashley's role at the firm is to lead and mentor the 25 women attorneys in the firm. Her unique perspective in problem solving, marketing, and management style had much to do with her achieving professional success, not only with her partners and colleagues, but especially with her clients.

In addition to Ashley's devotion to the firm, she participates in a number of the local community-based organizations. She currently serves on the Board of Visitors at the UGA

Libraries, and is involved with the Atlanta Community Food Bank, The Junior League of Atlanta, The Virginia Highlands Civic Association, and the Georgia Historical Society. She is active in numerous professional organizations including the National Association of Women Lawyers; Georgia Association of Women Lawyers; National Association of Insurance Women, the US Law Network's Women's Forum, the Georgia Society for Healthcare Risk Management, and the American Society for Healthcare Risk Management. Ashley is an avid lover of Georgia history, and spends time researching Georgia history in the hopes of one day writing her novel. In addition, she is a visual arts enthusiast, and actively supports Atlanta's High Museum of Art, including time spent as a volunteer docent offering tours for school aged children.

News You Can Use

U.S. Supreme Court Has Defined "Principal Place Of Business" For Corporate Entities

The United States Supreme Court's new definition of "principal place of business" benefits corporate defendants. Plaintiffs filing suit against a business entity are allowed to file suit in the jurisdiction where the business has its "principal place of business." However, various state and federal courts have varying definitions to determine the location of a corporation's "principal place of business," making it more difficult for business entities to remove cases to federal court based on diversity jurisdiction. For example, some courts would say the principal place of business would be the state where they conduct the most significant portion of their business.

In *Hertz Corp. v. Friend*, decided February 23, 2010, the Supreme Court of Georgia recently defined the term "principal place of business" to make clear where a principal place of business is located. It defined this term as the location of the corporation's "nerve center", which is the location where "the corporation's high level officers direct, control and coordinate the corporation's activities." This location is typically the corporation's headquarters. The result is that these corporations, regardless of where they do business, can now choose their state of citizenship by locating their "nerve center" in that state.

Georgia Supreme Court Upholds O.C.G.A. § 9-11-68 (Offer of Settlement Law) As Constitutional

On March 15, 2010, the Supreme Court of Georgia held that O.C.G.A. § 9-11-68(b), which was enacted as part of the Tort Reform Act of 2005, was constitutional. This law, commonly referred to as the "Offer of Settlement" law, provides that if a defendant makes an offer of settlement that is rejected by the plaintiff, the defendant is entitled to recover attorney's fees and expenses of litigation incurred from the date of the rejection through the entry of judgment if there is a defense verdict or if the final judgment obtained by the plaintiff is less than 75% of the offer of settlement. Conversely, if the plaintiff makes an offer of settlement that is rejected by the defendant, they can recover these fees and costs if the plaintiff recovers a final judgment in an amount greater than 125% of the offer made.

This newsletter is intended to inform clients and other interested parties about legal matters of current interest and is not intended as legal advice.

Recent Firm News

- HBSS is moving the Atlanta office from the midtown location to downtown on April 23, 2010. We look forward to serving our clients in this new location.
- Denise Spitalnick, one of our attorneys, was just elected President of the Georgia Chapter of the National Society of Insurance Investigators.
- In February, HBSS partner Robert Shannon was nominated to the rank of Brigadier General. General Shannon is also to be awarded the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements.

Upcoming Events

- April 1, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. - Women's Forum Spring Event - Learn to cook extravagant hors d'oeuvres at Cook's Warehouse, located at Ansley Mall in Atlanta. RSVP to Nina Tickaradze at ninat@hbss.net to join us.
- April 15, 2010 - Atlanta Claims Convention at the Gwinnett Civic Center. Visit the HBSS Hospitality Suite with live music, cocktails and food, opening at 4:30 p.m.
- Summer 2010 - Women's Forum Summer Event - Evening at the Botanical Gardens. Learn quick tips about gardening while you sip cocktails and eat hors d'oeuvres. More details coming soon.

HBSS In The Community



For the past four years, HBSS Attorney Ann Cox Steedman has volunteered as a coach for high school mock trials, a state bar Young Lawyers Division (YLD) program that she was fortunate enough to be involved in

when she was a teenager. She began working last year with a new team from the South Atlanta School of Law and Social Justice, an Atlanta public school where kids have faced many social and economic challenges in their lives. Although it is not an easy task, Ann helps these students learn about their own talents and skills that can enable them to be successful professionals in the future.

For more information, visit this website: http://www.gabar.org/young_lawyers_division/high_school_mock_trial_program/

About HBSS

Hall Booth Smith & Slover is a full-service and diverse law firm with eight regional offices in Georgia, Tennessee and South Carolina. The firm has attorneys licensed to practice in sixteen states, including: Alabama, District of Columbia, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Our practice areas are focused and diverse, and include complex civil defense litigation, employment, mass torts, medical malpractice, healthcare, regulatory and governmental matters, and international law.

For more than twenty years, HBSS has been living up to its promise: "Serving to Achieve Excellence." This promise is alive in everything we do from strategically recruiting nationally recognized attorneys and top law students, to being among Atlanta Magazine's "Best Places to Work."

Whether it's a matter of litigation taking place in the courtroom or negotiations happening in the board room, the attorneys at HBSS will aggressively represent your interests every step of the way.