Robinson & McElwee Remembers Founding Partner Charles McElwee

Charles McElwee of Charleston passed away on December 18, 2024, at the age of ninety-seven.

He was born in the family home at Dunmore, Pocahontas County, the son of Winfred McElwee and Merle Moore McElwee, both of whom predeceased him many years ago. He attended a two-room elementary school in Dunmore and then went to Green Bank High School about five miles from his residence.

After high school, he was admitted to Glenville State College for its four-year program to qualify as a high school teacher, which he completed in 1949. That Fall he was employed to teach at his alma mater, Green Bank High School. He taught there for the school year 1949-1950 and for the first six weeks of school year 1950-1951, when he was drafted into the Army during the Korean War.

After nearly two years of military service in that War, he was honorably discharged in the Summer of 1952 in time to enroll in WVU Law School that Fall. He completed his law degree in the Spring of 1955. Graduating near the top of his class, he was elected to The Order of the Coif, an American Honor Society for law school graduates.

Immediately before graduation from Law School, Charles married Barbara Ella Clark, his first wife known as Babs, a high school teacher in Monongalia County. He and Babs moved to Charleston where his first law job was as an Assistant Attorney General. Thereafter, he practiced law with several law firms. In 1983, he founded the law firm of Robinson & McElwee, with E. Glenn Robinson, who passed away in February 2013.

During his legal career, Charles practiced in many disciplines including banking law, public utility

regulation, litigation, constitutional law, and appellate advocacy. Some of his public utility clients were American Electric Power, Columbia Gas, and AT&T. After withdrawing from the active practice of law, he worked for several years for the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals.

He and Babs were the parents of two sons, both of whom graduated from WVU Law School. Babs passed away on February 24, 1986.

Charles married his second wife, Kemp Littlepage Smith, in 1989, and they have been a devoted couple for the past thirty-five years and she a loving caretaker during his recent illness.
An indefatigable reader and writer, Charles was a frequent op-ed writer and a published contributor to both the Charleston Gazette-Mail and the Huntington Herald-Dispatch on deeply researched subjects of public interest. He was also dedicated to the improvement of governance, economic well-being, and public education in his beloved State and undertook many initiatives in those areas.

He is survived by his two sons, Charles (his wife, Ellen) and Douglas, and five grandchildren, Sam, Lily, Charles, Elisabeth and Willa Augusta.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to HospiceCare, 1606 Kanawha Blvd. W., Charleston, WV 25387.

Condolences may be sent to his family at www.barlowbonsall.com .

Robinson & McElwee Attorneys Recognized by Best Lawyers 2025

Fifteen lawyers from Robinson & McElwee PLLC were recently selected by their peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*© 2025.

The Robinson & McElwee attorneys listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*© 2025 for Charleston, WV include:

- **Craig S. Beeson**, Commercial Litigation, Product Liability Litigation – Defendants
- **Joseph S. Beeson**, Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions – Defendants, Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants
- **Kent J. George**, Commercial Finance Law, Construction Law, Corporate Law
- **Heather G. Harlan**, Closely Held Companies and Family Businesses Law, Corporate Law, Tax Law
- **Mark H. Hayes**, Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions – Defendants, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants
- **Robert E. Lannan II**, Environmental Law, Litigation – Environmental
- **Douglas C. McElwee**, Land Use and Zoning Law, Natural Resources Law, Real Estate Law
- **John C. Palmer IV**, Commercial Litigation, Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions – Defendants
- **William C. Porth**, Administrative / Regulatory Law, Energy Law, Utilities Law
- **Joseph M. Price**, Employment Law – Management, Labor Law – Management, Litigation – Labor and Employment
- **W. Bradley Sorrells**, Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law, Litigation – Bankruptcy, Real Estate Law

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Lawyers in America© 2025 for Clarksburg, WV include:

- **Richard W. Gallagher**, Commercial Litigation
- **Stephen F. Gandee**, Commercial Litigation, Litigation – Construction, and Transportation Law

The Robinson & McElwee attorneys listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*© 2025 for Alliance, OH include:

- **Brent A. Barnes**, Commercial Litigation
- **Michael A. Ogline**, Closely Held Companies and Family Businesses Law, Litigation – Trusts and Estates, Tax Law, Trusts and Estates

Since it was first published in 1983, Best Lawyers has become universally regarded as the definitive guide to legal excellence. Inclusion in Best Lawyers is considered a singular honor because Best Lawyers is based on an exhaustive peer-review survey in which almost 50,000 leading attorneys cast nearly five million votes on the legal abilities of other lawyers in their practice areas and because lawyers are not required or allowed to pay a fee to be listed. *Corporate Counsel* magazine has called Best Lawyers "the most respected referral list of attorneys in practice."

Robinson & McElwee PLLC Recognized by Chambers USA 2024

The newly released edition of Chambers USA 2024 recognized five Robinson & McElwee attorneys as leaders in their field for their practices in West Virginia:

- Kent George, Real Estate (Band 1) and Corporate/Commercial (Band 2)
- Heather Harlan, Tax (Band 2)
- Doug McElwee, Real Estate (Band 1)
- Joseph Price, Labor & Employment (Senior Statespeople)
- David Russo, Labor & Employment (Band 3)

Robinson & McElwee was also recognized as a leading firm in three practice categories in West Virginia:

- Real Estate (Band 2)
- Labor and Employment (Band 3)
- Corporate/Commercial (Band 3)

Chambers USA ranks the leading firms and attorneys in a wide range of practice areas by conducting in-depth, client-focused research. The results are published each year in a guide that serves as a legal resource for industry-leading companies and organizations. Rankings are assessed on criteria such as technical legal ability, professional conduct, client service, commercial awareness/astuteness, diligence, commitment, and other qualities that the client considers relevant.

Robinson & McElwee Listed in U.S. News Best Lawyers “Best Law Firms” for 2024

Robinson & McElwee PLLC has been recognized in three metropolitan tiers in three cities in the 2024 U.S. News – Best Lawyers© “Best Law Firms” list. Firms included in

this list are recognized for professional excellence with persistently impressive ratings from clients and peers, according to the Best Lawyers© press release.

Metropolitan Tier 1

Akron

- Closely Held Companies and Family Businesses Law
- Tax Law
- Trusts & Estates Law

Charleston-WV

- Administrative / Regulatory Law
- Commercial Finance Law
- Construction Law
- Employment Law – Management
- Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions – Defendants
- Real Estate Law
- Utilities Law

Morgantown

- Commercial Litigation
- Transportation Law

Metropolitan Tier 2

Akron

- Litigation – Trusts & Estates

Charleston-WV

- Commercial Litigation
- Corporate Law
- Energy Law
- Labor Law – Management

- Land Use & Zoning Law
- Litigation – Labor & Employment
- Product Liability Litigation – Defendants

Morgantown

- Litigation – Construction

Metropolitan Tier 3

Akron

- Commercial Litigation

Charleston-WV

- Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law
- Environmental Law
- Litigation – Bankruptcy
- Litigation – Environmental
- Natural Resources Law
- Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants

For a firm to receive a tier designation there must be present a high level of respect for that firm among other leading lawyers and clients in the same communities and the same practice areas for their capabilities, their professionalism and their integrity. The tier rankings were determined through the firm's overall evaluation derived from a combination of clients' impressive feedback, the high regard attorneys from different firms in the same practice area hold for Robinson & McElwee, and information provided by the firm.

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Litigation – Bankruptcy, Real Estate Law

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