

**Tennessee Trial Court Vacancy Commission**  
***Application for Nomination to Judicial Office***

1/31/19

Name: Jonathan Haston Wardle

Office Address: Office of Tennessee Attorney General  
(including county) [REDACTED]  
Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee 37202

Office Phone: [REDACTED] Facsimile: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Home Address: [REDACTED]  
(including county) Lebanon, Wilson County, Tennessee 37087

Home Phone: [REDACTED] Cellular Phone: [REDACTED]

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**INTRODUCTION**

Tennessee Code Annotated section 17-4-301 et seq. charges the Trial Court Vacancy Commission with assisting the Governor and the People of Tennessee in finding and appointing the best qualified candidates for judicial offices in this State. Please consider the Commission's responsibility in answering the questions in this application questionnaire. For example, when a question asks you to "describe" certain things, please provide a description that contains relevant information about the subject of the question and, especially, that contains detailed information that demonstrates that you are qualified for the judicial office you seek. In order to properly evaluate your application, the Commission needs information about the range of your experience, the depth and breadth of your legal knowledge, and your personal traits such as integrity, fairness, and work habits.

This document is available in word processing format from the Administrative Office of the Courts (telephone 800.448.7970 or 615.741.2687; website [www.tncourts.gov](http://www.tncourts.gov)). The Commission requests that applicants obtain the word processing form and respond directly on the form. Respond in the box provided below each question. (The box will expand as you type in the document.) **Review the separate instruction sheet prior to completing this document. Submit by the noon deadline date an original (unbound) completed application (with ink signature) to the Administrative Office of the Courts.** In addition, submit a digital copy with electronic or scanned signature via email to [ceesha.lofton@tncourts.gov](mailto:ceesha.lofton@tncourts.gov), or via another digital storage device such as a flash drive.

THIS APPLICATION IS OPEN TO PUBLIC INSPECTION AFTER YOU SUBMIT IT.

**PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND WORK EXPERIENCE**

1. State your present employment.

Assistant Attorney General, Office of Tennessee Attorney General.

2. State the year you were licensed to practice law in Tennessee and give your Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility number.

2006. BPR # 025741

3. List all states in which you have been licensed to practice law and include your bar number or identifying number for each state of admission. Indicate the date of licensure and whether the license is currently active. If not active, explain.

Tennessee. BPR # 025741. 2006. Active.

4. Have you ever been denied admission to, suspended or placed on inactive status by the Bar of any State? If so, explain. (This applies even if the denial was temporary).

No.

5. List your professional or business employment/experience since the completion of your legal education. Also include here a description of any occupation, business, or profession other than the practice of law in which you have ever been engaged (excluding military service, which is covered by a separate question).

**Office of Tennessee Attorney General**, 2014-present, assistant attorney general.

**Wardle Law, PLC**, 2011-2014, owner and sole member.

**Neal & Farwell, PLC**, 2006-2011, associate.

6. Describe the nature of your present law practice, listing the major areas of law in which you practice and the percentage each constitutes of your total practice.

For the past five years I have handled criminal appeals and appeals of other collateral proceedings on behalf of the State of Tennessee. During this time I have filed nearly 300 briefs and orally argued more than 50 cases in the Court of Criminal Appeals. This constitutes over 90% of my practice. I have also litigated habeas corpus cases in state and federal court, authored two opinions on behalf of the Tennessee Attorney General, and reviewed dozens of extradition applications for legal sufficiency.

Before joining the Attorney General's office I represented clients in a wide variety of matters. As a sole practitioner, most of my practice involved family law, civil rights, landlord-tenant, homeowners' association disputes, personal injury, and criminal defense, with a smattering of wills and probate matters and contract review. As an associate at Neal & Harwell, most of my practice involved personal injury and medical malpractice, commercial litigation, and toxic tort; I also dealt with some regulatory matters, criminal defense, workers' compensation, family law, and commercial landlord-tenant matters.

7. Describe generally your experience (over your entire time as a licensed attorney) in trial courts, appellate courts, administrative bodies, legislative or regulatory bodies, other forums, and/or transactional matters.

As an assistant attorney general, most of my practice has been in the Court of Criminal Appeals, although I have also filed pleadings in habeas corpus cases pending in state trial courts and federal district courts. I also filed an application for permission to appeal to the Tennessee Supreme Court; the application was granted and the decision of the Court of Criminal Appeals was summarily reversed (*Maxwell v. State*, No. W2018-00318-SC-R11-PC (Tenn. Sept. 3, 2019)).

While in private practice I represented clients in almost every level of state court: juvenile court, general sessions, circuit court, criminal court, probate court, chancery court, the Court of Appeals, and the Tennessee Supreme Court. I also represented clients in federal district court. Most of my cases were in Davidson County, but I represented clients in many of the surrounding counties as well.

I am admitted to practice in all three federal district courts in Tennessee and in the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

Please see the attached curriculum vitae for more information.

8. Describe any matters of special note involving your practice in trial courts, appellate courts, and administrative bodies.

The most-cited case I have litigated is *Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc. v. Epperson*, 284

S.W.3d 303 (Tenn. 2009), which I argued jointly with Bill Ramsey before the Tennessee Supreme Court as part of a S.C.A.L.E.S. project. The primary issue in the case was whether the underlying contract allowed for an award of attorney's fees, but the Tennessee Supreme Court also used the case as an opportunity to clarify the distinction between judicial estoppel and equitable estoppel.

As an associate with Neal & Harwell, I also worked on a case involving a joint venture dispute that was litigated simultaneously in federal court and state court. One of the joint venturers merged into a large national company, and the remaining joint venturer filed suit for breach of contract and tortious interference. We represented the national company that acquired the joint venturer. One of the federal court decisions is available in the Federal Supplement at *Freeman Mgmt. Corp. v. Shurgard Storage Ctrs., Inc.*, 461 F.Supp.2d 629 (M.D. Tenn. 2006).

As a solo practitioner, I represented the plaintiffs in a difficult civil rights and education law case that required filing a § 1983 action in federal court and a petition for writ of certiorari in chancery court. The petition for certiorari was denied (as expected) in both chancery court and on appeal. Unfortunately, I had to withdraw from the federal case when I began employment with the Attorney General's Office. The Tennessee Court of Appeals opinion is available at *Link v. Metro. Nashville Bd. of Pub. Educ.*, No. M2013-00422-COA-R3-CV, 2013 WL 6762393 (Tenn. Ct. App. Dec. 19, 2013).

As a solo practitioner, I represented the plaintiff in a homeowners' association dispute. We obtained a temporary injunction preventing the homeowners' association from creating a drainage ditch through my client's property. The parties were particularly acrimonious towards each other but, thankfully, the attorneys were not. Eventually the parties resolved the matter, but only after significant effort from the attorneys, experts, and even Metro Nashville employees.

As a solo practitioner, I handled some difficult child custody cases. In one case, I represented out-of-state grandparents who wanted custody of their young granddaughter. I was able to secure a favorable outcome for the grandparents and their granddaughter; unfortunately, the mother continued to relapse into her drug addiction. In another child custody case, I undertook the representation of an intellectually challenged mother whose parental rights had already been severely curtailed. After months of work, I was able to help my client stabilize her situation and regain some of the trust she had lost with the court and the guardian ad litem, and my client was again allowed some visitation with her child.

Please see the attached curriculum vitae for other representative cases.

9. Describe any other legal experience, not stated above, that you would like to bring to the attention of the Commission.

While in law school, I externed with the Honorable Kenneth F. Ripple on the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. This experience helped shape my belief that our legal system depends on good lawyers and judges. I particularly remember the emotional and mental effort Judge Ripple exerted while grappling with a death penalty case. I also took to heart the counsel

he gave us after oral arguments, that as lawyers we should always listen to the judge's question and then answer that question.

I also served as a research assistant for Professor Nancy King while she worked on a landmark habeas corpus study, and as a research assistant for Professor Mark Brandon (now Dean of the University of Alabama School of Law) while he worked on his book, STATES OF UNION: FAMILY AND CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER (2013). Both experiences broadened my horizons: Professor King's project opened my eyes to the complexities of the legal process, and Professor Brandon's research showed me how our legal system developed in the context of long-forgotten historical events.

10. List and describe all prior occasions on which you have submitted an application for any state or federal judicial position.

Not applicable.

### EDUCATION

11. List each college, law school, and other graduate school which you have attended, including dates of attendance, degree awarded, major, any form of recognition or other aspects of your education you believe are relevant, and your reason for leaving each school if no degree was awarded.

**Vanderbilt University Law School**, 2003-2006, J.D. Order of the Coif; Vanderbilt Law Review; Dean's List (every semester); Scholastic Excellence Awards in constitutional law, criminal law, and immigration law & policy. Note published in the Vanderbilt Law Review (58 VAND. L. REV. 1963 (2005)).

**Brigham Young University**, 1996-2003, B.A. Communications (print journalism emphasis). National Merit Scholarship; ORCA Grant; reporter and editor for the student newspaper.

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

12. State your date of birth.

1977

13. How long have you lived continuously in the State of Tennessee?

16 years.

14. How long have you lived continuously in the county where you are now living?

16 months.

15. State the county in which you are registered to vote.

Wilson County.

16. Describe your military service, if applicable, including branch of service, dates of active duty, rank at separation, and decorations, honors, or achievements. Please also state whether you received an honorable discharge and, if not, describe why not.

Not applicable.

17. Have you ever pled guilty or been convicted or are now on diversion for violation of any law, regulation or ordinance other than minor traffic offenses? If so, state the approximate date, charge and disposition of the case.

No.

18. To your knowledge, are you now under federal, state or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute or disciplinary rule? If so, give details.

No.

19. Please identify the number of formal complaints you have responded to that were filed against you with any supervisory authority, including but not limited to a court, a board of professional responsibility, or a board of judicial conduct, alleging any breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct by you. Please provide any relevant details on any such complaint if the complaint was not dismissed by the court or board receiving the complaint. You may wish to request a report from the appropriate supervisory authority (or authorities) for a complete history.

One complaint was filed against me with the Board of Professional Responsibility by a former client (File No. 32187-5-ES). The complaint against me was dismissed; I believe there may have been some action taken against my client's prior attorneys. I have requested a copy of my disciplinary report and will supplement this application when it is received.

20. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure been instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities or creditors within the last five (5) years? If so, give details.

I do not believe so. But see my answer to Question 22 below regarding a collection action filed on a business loan.

21. Have you ever filed bankruptcy (including personally or as part of any partnership, LLC, corporation, or other business organization)?

No.

22. Have you ever been a party in any legal proceedings (including divorces, domestic proceedings, and other types of proceedings)? If so, give details including the date, court and docket number and disposition. Provide a brief description of the case. This question does not seek, and you may exclude from your response, any matter where you were involved only as a nominal party, such as if you were the trustee under a deed of trust in a foreclosure proceeding.

Emily Jennifer Wardle v. Jonathan Haston Wardle, Case No. 12D3574, Davidson County Circuit Court. The divorce proceedings were filed in late 2012, the divorce was finalized in 2013, and subsequent parenting plan modifications and related proceedings continued through 2017.

Reliant Bank v. Jonathan Wardle, Case No. 16GC12705, Davidson County General Sessions Court. This was a collection action on a business loan for my solo practice. The case was filed in 2016 and I agreed to a judgment as soon as the correct amount of the outstanding debt could be ascertained. The debt has been paid in full and the judgment satisfied.

23. List all organizations other than professional associations to which you have belonged within the last five (5) years, including civic, charitable, religious, educational, social and fraternal organizations. Give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such organizations.

**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**, Mount Juliet 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, 2018-present. Member, Sunday School President, Organist.

**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**, Harpeth Ward, 2003-2018. Member, Finance Clerk, Music Committee Chair, Choir Director, Scout Committee Chair, Primary Teacher, Primary Chorister.

I was also a member of the Exchange Club of Bellevue, TN, in 2011 and 2012.

24. Have you ever belonged to any organization, association, club or society which limits its membership to those of any particular race, religion, or gender? Do not include in your answer those organizations specifically formed for a religious purpose, such as churches or synagogues.
- If so, list such organizations and describe the basis of the membership limitation.
  - If it is not your intention to resign from such organization(s) and withdraw from any participation in their activities should you be nominated and selected for the position for which you are applying, state your reasons.

a. Yes. I participated in the Boy Scouts of America, including when membership was limited by gender. I participated as a scout as a youth and earned the rank of Eagle. I participated on a scout committee, including as committee chair, when my oldest son participated in scouts.

b. I do not currently participate in scouts on a formal basis, although I occasionally volunteer with my youngest son's cub scout den.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

25. List all bar associations and professional societies of which you have been a member within the last ten years, including dates. Give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such groups. List memberships and responsibilities on any committee of professional associations which you consider significant.

**Nashville Bar Association**, 2006-2011, 2015-present. I am currently a member of the Nashville Bar Journal Committee (2016-present), where I also serve on the editorial committee; a member of the Government Lawyers CLE Committee (2017-present), where I have helped produce the Government Practice and Professional Seminars; and a member of the Historical Committee (2019-present).

**Nashville Bar Foundation**, 2019-present. Fellow.

**J. Reuben Clark Law Society**, 2005-present. I am currently the Director for the Southeast Area of the Mid-Atlantic Region (2011-2012, 2015-present). Previously I have served as Co-Chair of the Litigation Section for the global Law Society (2009-2011), Chair of the Nashville Chapter (2007-2009, 2016-2018), and President of the Vanderbilt University Law School Student Chapter (2005-2006).

26. List honors, prizes, awards or other forms of recognition which you have received since your graduation from law school which are directly related to professional accomplishments.



Named a fellow of the Nashville Bar Foundation in 2019.

27. List any public office you have held or for which you have been candidate or applicant. Include the date, the position, and whether the position was elective or appointive.

Not applicable.

**ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS**

28. What are your reasons for seeking this position? *(150 words or less)*

I love to serve. As a circuit court judge I will be present for some of the most difficult challenges some people will ever face, and I will be there when others celebrate some of the happiest moments in their lives. Regardless of the outcome in any particular case, I will be in a position to reaffirm litigants' faith in our judicial system by treating everyone with dignity and respect regardless of their position before the court.

I believe in the importance of local and State government, and I believe in the principle of "lifting where you stand." I enjoy serving Tennessee as an assistant attorney general, and I would love the opportunity to serve the people of my community as a judge. I believe I have the experience and expertise to administer the law in a fair and impartial manner for the people of the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.

I love the camaraderie of the courtroom, and I love to mentor young attorneys. In addition to serving the litigants who proceed through my courtroom, as a judge I will also be in position to serve my fellow professionals.

29. Describe the judgeship you seek (i.e. geographic area, types of cases, number of judges, etc. and explain how your selection would impact the court. *(150 words or less)*

This judgeship serves the Circuit Court for the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, which comprises Jackson, Macon, Smith, Trousdale, and Wilson Counties. This court handles civil lawsuits, domestic matters, probate, and criminal cases. There are three circuit court judges assigned to the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, one of whom is dedicated to criminal court. I believe retiring judge John Wootten also handles some criminal matters in this district.

The breadth of my experience will be an asset to the court. I represented both plaintiffs and defendants in a wide variety of civil lawsuits, represented clients in divorces and in child custody disputes, helped probate an estate, represented criminal defendants, and handled criminal appeals on behalf of the State of Tennessee. I have handled cases at almost every level of court in Tennessee, including juvenile court and general sessions, whose cases can be appealed to the

circuit court.

30. Will you uphold the law even if you disagree with the substance of the law (e.g., statute or rule) at issue? Give an example from your experience as a licensed attorney that supports your response to this question. (250 words or less)

Yes.

I believe our judicial system works best when all parties are represented by competent counsel who advocate zealously for their clients. I also believe our system requires competent and dedicated judges who will uphold the rule of law even when the outcome may seem unfair in a particular case.

I do not make arguments that lack legal or factual support. However, in both public and private practice, I have had occasion to advocate positions that I did not personally agree with. I have done so as effectively as I could, so long as the position was neither illegal nor unethical.

For example, the Legislature amended the theft statute to alter the gradation of the crime based on the value of the property taken. Last week, the Tennessee Supreme Court held this amendment changed the punishment only and did not alter an essential element of the crime. See *State v. Menke*, 2019 WL 6336427, --- S.W.3d --- (Tenn. Nov. 27, 2019). While *Menke* was still pending before the Tennessee Supreme Court, I had occasion to argue to the intermediate court that a contrary interpretation was correct, even though I personally believed the outcome reached by the Tennessee Supreme Court was more consistent with existing legal principles. However, as *Menke* had not yet been decided, I made the contrary argument as effectively as I could. And we prevailed, though likely because I suggested the court could decide the case on other grounds (*State v. Derring*, No. W2017-02290-CCA-R3-CD, 2019 WL 244471 (Tenn. Crim. App. Jan. 16, 2019)).

### REFERENCES

31. List five (5) persons, and their current positions and contact information, who would recommend you for the judicial position for which you are applying. Please list at least two persons who are not lawyers. Please note that the Commission or someone on its behalf may contact these persons regarding your application.

A. Rachel Willis, Deputy (retired), Criminal Appeals Division, Office of Tennessee Attorney General. [REDACTED] Ms. Willis was my deputy until she retired in September of this year.

B. Brent Cherry, Senior Counsel, Criminal Appeals Division, Office of Tennessee Attorney General. [REDACTED] Mr. Cherry is my closest friend at the Attorney General's Office.

C. Bill Ramsey, Member, Neal & Harwell, PLC. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I worked with Mr. Ramsey on the *Cracker Barrel* case when I was at Neal & Harwell; now we work together with the Nashville Bar Journal.

D. David Watson, owner of 30 SONIC franchises in Middle Tennessee. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I know Mr. Watson through his calling as the area leader (“Stake President”) of several congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the greater Nashville area.

E. Howard Lemmon, Business Analyst, Vanderbilt University Medical Center. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Mr. Lemmon is the bishop of my local congregation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which meets in Mount Juliet.


**AFFIRMATION CONCERNING APPLICATION**

Read, and if you agree to the provisions, sign the following:

I have read the foregoing questions and have answered them in good faith and as completely as my records and recollections permit. I hereby agree to be considered for nomination to the Governor for the office of Judge of the Circuit Court for the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Tennessee, and if appointed by the Governor, agree to serve that office. In the event any changes occur between the time this application is filed and the public hearing, I hereby agree to file an amended questionnaire with the Administrative Office of the Courts for distribution to the Commission members.

I understand that the information provided in this questionnaire shall be open to public inspection upon filing with the Administrative Office of the Courts and that the Commission may publicize the names of persons who apply for nomination and the names of those persons the Commission nominates to the Governor for the judicial vacancy in question.

Dated: December 3, 2019.

  
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Signature

When completed, return this questionnaire to Ceesha Lofton, Administrative Office of the Courts, 511 Union Street, Suite 600, Nashville, TN 37219.



**TENNESSEE TRIAL COURT VACANCY COMMISSION  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS**


511 UNION STREET, SUITE 600  
NASHVILLE CITY CENTER  
NASHVILLE, TN 37219

**TENNESSEE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY  
TENNESSEE BOARD OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT  
AND OTHER LICENSING BOARDS**

**WAIVER OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

I hereby waive the privilege of confidentiality with respect to any information that concerns me, including public discipline, private discipline, deferred discipline agreements, diversions, dismissed complaints and any complaints erased by law, and is known to, recorded with, on file with the Board of Professional Responsibility of the Supreme Court of Tennessee, the Tennessee Board of Judicial Conduct (previously known as the Court of the Judiciary) and any other licensing board, whether within or outside the State of Tennessee, from which I have been issued a license that is currently active, inactive or other status. I hereby authorize a representative of the Trial Court Vacancy Commission to request and receive any such information and distribute it to the membership of the Commission and to the Office of the Governor.

Jonathan H. Wardle  
Type or Print Name

  
Signature

3 December 2019  
Date

025741  
BPR #

Please identify other licensing boards that have issued you a license, including the state issuing the license and the license number.

Not applicable.

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## JONATHAN H. WARDLE

1424 Old Stone Rd., Lebanon, TN 37087

(615) 349-5686 (cell) / (615) 532-7402 (office)

jonathan.wardle@gmail.com / jonathan.wardle@ag.tn.gov

### EDUCATION

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#### Vanderbilt University Law School, J.D., 2006

- Honors: Order of the Coif  
Scholastic Excellence Awards in Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, and Immigration Law & Policy  
Dean's List (every semester)  
Dean's Scholarship
- Activities: Vanderbilt Law Review, Associate Editor  
J. Reuben Clark Law Society, Founder & Chapter President  
VU Law Partners, Vice President

#### Brigham Young University, B.A. Communications (print journalism emphasis), 2003

- Honors: National Merit Scholarship  
ORCA Grant
- Activities: NewsNet, City Desk Reporter, Associate Campus Editor, and Copy Editor  
SuperFans, VP Men's Intercollegiate Sports

### CAREER SUMMARY

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As an Assistant Attorney General, I have filed nearly 300 briefs and argued more than 50 cases before the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals, litigated habeas corpus cases in both federal and state court, and authored two opinions on behalf of the Tennessee Attorney General. In private practice, I litigated a broad spectrum of cases, including commercial litigation, personal injury, family law, criminal defense, landlord-tenant, civil rights, education law, class action, and toxic tort. I have represented clients in federal district court and practically every level of State court, from juvenile court and general sessions to the Tennessee Supreme Court.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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OFFICE OF THE TENNESSEE ATTORNEY GENERAL, Nashville, TN

2014-Present

*Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Appeals Division*

Appellate practice. File briefs and argue cases before the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals, primarily dealing with direct appeals of criminal convictions and related collateral attacks. Handle habeas corpus cases in state and federal court. Review extradition applications for legal sufficiency. Authored two opinions for issuance by the Tennessee Attorney General. Handled an appeal of the termination of paternity rights on behalf of the Department of Children's Services.

**Representative Cases:**

- State v. Braswell*, No. W2016-00912-CCA-R3-PC, 2018 WL 1719443 (Tenn. Crim. App. Apr. 9, 2018), *perm. app. denied* (Tenn. Sept. 14, 2018)  
*State v. Kim*, No. W2017-00186-CCA-R3-CD, 2018 WL 1679346 (Tenn. Crim. App. Apr. 6, 2018) (no *perm. app.* filed)  
*State v. Click*, No. E2015-01769-CCA-R3-CD, 2017 WL 1189750 (Tenn. Crim. App. Mar. 30, 2017), *perm. app. denied* (Tenn. Aug. 16, 2017)  
*State v. Bonsky*, No. W2014-00675-CCA-R3-CD, 2016 WL 1719466 (Tenn. Crim. App. Apr. 27, 2016), *no perm. app. filed*  
*State v. Baechtle*, No. W2014-01737-CCA-R3-CD, 2016 WL 1564128 (Tenn. Crim. App. Apr. 15, 2016), *perm. app. denied* (Tenn. Sept. 22, 2016)

**Opinion Letters:**

- Tenn. Att’y Gen. Op. 15-12 (Feb. 5, 2015) (re: expunction of records)  
Tenn. Att’y Gen. Op. 14-77 (Aug. 25, 2014) (re: legality of exploding targets)

WARDLE LAW, PLC, Nashville, TN

2011-2014

Owner

Litigation practice. Areas of practice included civil rights and discrimination, education law, family law, personal injury, criminal defense, estate and probate, landlord-tenant, homeowners’ association disputes, and other general civil matters.

**Representative Cases:**

- Link v. Metro. Gov’t of Nashville & Davidson County*, No. 3:12-cv-0472 (M.D. Tenn.)  
*Messner v. Hickman County*, No. 1-11-0059 (M.D. Tenn.)  
*Link v. Metro. Nashville Bd. of Pub. Educ.*, No. M2013-00422-COA-R3-CV (Tenn. Ct. App.), opinion available at 2013 WL 6762393

NEAL & HARWELL, PLC, Nashville, TN

2005-2011

Summer Associate (2005); Associate (2006-2011)

Litigation practice. Areas of practice included class action lawsuits, commercial litigation, commercial landlord-tenant disputes, toxic tort, personal injury, medical malpractice, wills and estates, criminal defense, franchise termination, intellectual property, and workers’ compensation.

**Representative Cases:**

- Freeman Mgmt. Corp. v. Shurgard Storage Ctrs., Inc.*, No. 3:06-cv-0736 (M.D. Tenn.)  
*Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc. v. Epperson*, 284 S.W.3d 303 (Tenn. 2009)

THE HONORABLE KENNETH F. RIPPLE, U.S. COURT OF APPEALS, SEVENTH CIRCUIT,  
South Bend, IN

Summer 2004

Summer Extern

Appraised federal court of appeals judge of issues pertinent to oral arguments, petitions for rehearing, and current legal trends; edited and cite-checked opinion drafts; drafted order affirming a drug conspiracy conviction (*United States v. Johnson*, 127 Fed. Appx. 894 (7th Cir. 2005)).

## OTHER EXPERIENCE

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CEDAR FORT, INC., Springville, UT <i>Intern; Freelance Editor</i>	2002-2003
VIA SUBSCRIPTION, Provo, UT <i>Developer; Web Development Team Lead; Strategic Web Architect</i>	2002-2003
WAL-MART, INFORMATION SYSTEMS DIVISION, Summer Intern, Bentonville, AR <i>Intern, Performance Management (Summer 2000); Intern, Windows Server Engineering (Summer 2001)</i>	2000, 2001
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, CITES OFFICE / TESOL, Provo, UT <i>Spanish Transcription and Translation</i>	2001
MISSIONARY TRAINING CENTER, THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, Provo, UT <i>IS Scheduling Specialist</i>	1999-2000, 2001
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, Santiago, Chile <i>Proselytizing Missionary, Trainer, District Leader, Mission Historian</i>	1997-1999

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

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NASHVILLE BAR ASSOCIATION <i>Nashville Bar Journal Committee (2016-Present)</i> <i>Government Lawyers CLE Committee (2017-Present)</i> <i>Historical Committee (2019)</i>	2006-2011, 2015-Present
NASHVILLE BAR FOUNDATION <i>Fellow (2019-Present)</i>	2019-Present
J. REUBEN CLARK LAW SOCIETY <i>Director, Southeast Area of the Mid-Atlantic Region, (2011-2012, 2015-Present)</i> <i>Chair, Nashville Chapter (2007-2009, 2016-2018)</i> <i>Chair/Co-Chair, Litigation Section (2009-2011)</i> <i>President, Vanderbilt University Law School Student Chapter (2005-2006)</i>	2005-Present
THE EXCHANGE CLUB OF BELLEVUE, TN <i>President-Elect (2012)</i>	2011-2012

## PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH

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*Are You Ready for (Electoral) College?*, NASHVILLE B.J., Oct./Nov. 2019, at 37.

*Looking Back: The Lingering Impact of the 2010 Nashville Flood*, NASHVILLE B.J., Apr./May 2019, at 11.



*Legal Tourism . . . In Nashville?*, NASHVILLE B.J., Oct./Nov. 2018, at 11.

Note, *The Strategic Use of Mexico to Restrict South American Access to the Diversity Visa Lottery*, 58 VAND. L. REV. 1963 (2005).

Research Assistant, Professor Nancy King, Vanderbilt University Law School, 2006. Reviewed filings in habeas corpus actions for a landmark habeas corpus study. The final report can be found at Nancy J. King, Fred L. Cheesman II, and Brian Ostrom, *Habeas Litigation in U.S. District Courts: Final Report* (August 2007), available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/219559.pdf>.

Research Assistant, Professor Mark Brandon, Vanderbilt University Law School, 2004-2005. Analyzed trends in judicial review of polygamy prosecutions in America over two centuries; catalogued sources dealing with the boarding school education of American Indian children. This research was used in MARK E. BRANDON, *STATES OF UNION: FAMILY AND CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER* (2013).

"Images of Newspapers in American Genre Painting from 1830 to 1865," American Journalism Historians Association Conference (October 5, 2001). I received a grant for this research, which was guided by Professor Alf Pratte; I presented the paper as a work-in-progress.

## OTHER

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- Spanish
- Violin, piano, harmonica, organ, voice
- Eagle Scout

## REFERENCES

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Rachel Willis  
Deputy, Criminal Appeals Division (retired)  
Office of the Tennessee Attorney General  
(931) 607-6800  
rachelewillis5@gmail.com

Brent Cherry  
Senior Counsel, Criminal Appeals Division  
Office of the Tennessee Attorney General  
(615) 741-6439  
brent.cherry@ag.tn.gov

Bill Ramsey  
Member, Neal & Harwell, PLC  
(615) 238-3519  
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