

TWO BELL NUNNALLY PARTNERS HONORED AT TEXAS LAWYER'S "TEXAS LEGAL AWARDS"

September 23, 2020

Bell Nunnally Partner R. Heath Cheek has been named a lawyer "On the Rise" and Partner Tammy S. Wood a "Best Mentor" by *Texas Lawyer* as part of its "Texas Legal Awards 2020" (TXLA). The entire roster of honorees, numbering fewer than 75 across the state of Texas, were highlighted at a virtual ceremony on September 17.

TXLA features "attorneys and judges who have made a remarkable difference in the legal profession in Texas." Cheek is one of 30 attorneys under the age of 40 selected to the "On the Rise" list on the basis of "wield[ing] influence in their practice areas in Texas and beyond." Nomination criteria noted the publication was seeking, "innovators, developing unique practice niches, amassing robust books of business, demonstrating strong leadership qualities, showing expertise in litigation, in-house or transactional work and committing themselves to pro bono, charitable and professional volunteer work."

Wood is one of five selected for the "Best Mentor" award, recognizing lawyers who have helped less-experienced colleagues become better lawyers.

"Heath and Tammy are tremendous leaders here at Bell Nunnally," said Bell Nunnally Managing Partner Christopher B. Trowbridge. "Both have demonstrated a genuine commitment to giving back to the firm and the community as a whole. We congratulate Heath and Tammy and consider ourselves fortunate to call them colleagues."

Cheek's practice focuses on commercial litigation. He represents everyone from *Fortune 500* companies, startup businesses and high-net-worth individuals, in complex and high-stakes litigation involving securities, real estate, labor and employment, intellectual property and trade secrets, high-net-worth trusts and estates, internal investigations and general commercial litigation. Cases have involved amounts in controversy ranging up to \$1.2 billion.

Recently named Chairman of the firm's Marketing and Business Development Committee, Cheek has helped position Bell Nunnally as one of the rare firms that is growing its business in a time of marked decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic – a development central to his “On the Rise” nomination.

Cheek led the creation of Bell Nunnally's “COVID-19 Legal Services Resource Directory,” a comprehensive, industry-focused guide updated continually with over 50 articles authored by 45 attorneys, covering every firm practice.

In addition to helping guide clients, and inform potential clients, the directory has led to more than a dozen media mentions in high-profile outlets such as CNBC, *DCEO*, *The Washington Post* and *Legaltech News*.

Cheek, listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* and *D Magazine*'s “Best Lawyers Under 40 in Dallas” awards, is a graduate of Baylor Law School (J.D., 2006) and Texas Tech University (B.A., *magna cum laude in Honors Studies*, 2003) – where he sits on the National Board of Directors.

Wood, Bell Nunnally's Litigation Chair, serves clients across a diverse range of industries – including telecommunications, manufacturing, insurance, health care, energy, SaaS, advertising, retail, food service, security services, trucking, construction, real estate and high technology. These clients rely on Wood to be their advocate in litigation, arbitrations and other business-critical matters.

As detailed in her nomination, Wood's life story includes near homelessness, parental abandonment and financial struggles. Her parents, who were born in Puerto Rico and later moved to Texas, separated while she was in high school, leaving her reliant on various family members across the area for basic necessities, such as housing.

In 1986, Wood was interviewed by the board members, including Carolyn Clark, of Educational Opportunities (EdOp) – a Dallas-based volunteer organization dedicated to assisting youth who have the academic ability but not the financial means to attend college. Clark, one of the organization's founders, eventually became Wood's mentor, offering everything from rides to organizational events when she had no transportation, to lengthy phone calls discussing Wood's studies and helping her navigate personal issues. With the financial aid support of EdOp, Wood graduated with honors from college and later law school. She today works closely with EdOp, serving in a host of capacities, including past president and student mentor team lead.

An active mentor at Bell Nunnally, Wood recently revamped the firm's Associate Training and Mentorship Program, and now leads it. Her success at the firm and in the courtroom is only part of her story. Wood is the mother of five children, two of whom have pursued legal careers.

Martindale-Hubbell AV-rated and listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*, Wood is a graduate of Southern Methodist University's Dedman School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 1993) and Texas Woman's University (B.S., 1990).



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Related Practices

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