



Emmet J. Bondurant

Counsel

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Biography

Emmet Bondurant has dedicated over five decades of his career to the pursuit of justice, representing clients with unwavering integrity and an unyielding spirit. His exceptional success as a trial lawyer is rooted in his commitment to community service and pro bono litigation, including advocating for clients in significant civil rights and constitutional cases involving death penalty defense, habeas corpus work, voting rights, and legislative reapportionment.

His dedication to the legal profession is reflected in his fellowships with the American College of Trial Lawyers and the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers, as well as leadership roles in prominent legal organizations. He has received numerous honors, including the ABA Medal, the highest award of the American Bar Association, the Georgia Bar Association's 1890 Award for Excellence in Antitrust, and the Anti-Defamation League's 2013 Southeast Region Lifetime Achievement Award. The National Law Journal has also recognized him as one of the Top 10 trial lawyers in the United States.

Emmet's vast knowledge and expertise have made him a sought-after speaker and author on a wide range of subjects, including antitrust law, appellate issues, criminal antitrust problems, ethics, federal practice and procedure, and more.

Representative Matters

- Successfully argued *Wesberry v. Sanders* in the United States Supreme Court, which held for the first time that congressional districts throughout the U.S. must contain equal populations (the one-person-one-vote rule).
 - Played a key role in *Toombs v. Fortson*, a U.S. Supreme Court case that required Georgia to reapportion its legislative districts under the one-person-one-vote principle of the Equal Protection Clause.
 - Argued *Fortson v. Morris*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court narrowly upheld a Georgia constitutional provision allowing the malapportioned state legislature to decide the outcome of a gubernatorial runoff election.
 - Litigated challenges to state voter-identification requirements in cases such as *Democratic Party of Georgia, Inc. v. Perdue and Common Cause/Georgia v. Billups*, arguing that these laws unconstitutionally and deliberately burden the right to vote and disproportionately disadvantage vulnerable minorities.
 - Argued *Rucho v. Common Cause* before the U.S. Supreme Court, advocating for an end to partisan gerrymandering by state legislatures.
 - Led efforts to establish a uniform statewide indigent defense system in Georgia, resulting in the 2003 Indigent Defense Act; served as the first chairman of the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council from 2003 to 2007.
 - Prevailed before the Georgia Supreme Court in *Fleming v. Zant*, establishing the state's ban on executing individuals with mental impairments, 13 years before the U.S. Supreme Court adopted the same rule in *Atkins v. Virginia*.
 - Won habeas relief in the Georgia Supreme Court for a death row inmate in *Nelson v. Zant*, securing his release by proving prosecutorial misconduct and disclosure violations.
 - Represented Elizabeth Hishon in *Hishon v. King & Spalding*, where the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously held that law firms must comply with Title VII and cannot discriminate against women in partnership decisions.
 - Successfully defended the Hospital Authority of Albany-Dougherty County against antitrust claims by the FTC and Georgia Attorney General, securing dismissal with prejudice and allowing its \$195 million acquisition of Palmyra Medical Center to proceed.
 - Successfully reversed a \$456 million judgment against client Weyerhaeuser on appeal in a contractual dispute over alleged indemnification for a patent infringement claim.
 - Represented one of the world's largest airlines in various class action lawsuits filed around the country asserting claims under Sections 1 and 2 of the Sherman Act.
 - Secured a defense verdict for Wyle Laboratories in a \$150 million case, recognized by the National Law Journal as one of the Top 10 defense verdicts of 2000.
- Represented Guantanamo detainees in pro bono litigation involving constitutional rights issues.

Professional Activities

- American College of Trial Lawyers, Fellow
- American Academy of Appellate Lawyers, Fellow
- American Law Institute, Member
- American Bar Foundation, Member
- American Bar Association, Member
- American Judicature Society, Member
- State Bar of Georgia, Member
- Atlanta Bar Association, Member
- Lawyers Club of Atlanta, Member

Honors & Awards

- Chambers USA, 2003 - 2025
- Benchmark Litigation, Litigation Star, 2025
- Georgia Bar Association, 1890 Award for Excellence in Antitrust, 2024
- American Bar Association Medal, 2024
- Georgia Super Lawyers, 2004 - 2023; Top 10, 2005 - 2021
- Gate City Bar Association, Hall of Fame Award, 2018
- Common Cause, Champion of Democracy Award 2018
- American Constitution Society, Georgia Chapter, 2016
- Common Cause, President's Award, 2015
- Gideon's Promise, Lifetime Achievement Award, 2013
- Anti-Defamation League, Southeast Region, Lifetime Achievement Award, 2013
- Best Lawyers in America, Lawyer of the Year, Arbitration and First Amendment Litigation, 2012
- Eleventh Circuit Professionalism Award, American Inns of Court, 2011
- Lewis F. Powell Award, American Inns of Court, 2011
- Best Lawyers in America, Lawyer of the Year, Antitrust and Bet-the-Company Litigation, 2010
- University of Georgia Law School, Alumni Distinguished Service Award, 2009
- Atlanta Fulton County League of Women Voters, Sidney Marcus Award, 2007
- AARP Georgia, Power of One State Recognition Award, 2005
- ABA Litigation Section, Excellence in State Justice Initiatives Award, 2004
- Emory University Law School, Epic Inspiration Award, Lifetime Commitment to Public Service, 2003
- Georgia State University Law School, Ben F. Johnson Jr. Public Service Award, 2001
- Elbert P. Tuttle Jurisprudence Award, 2001
- Atlanta Bar Association, Leadership Award, 1992
- American Board of Trial Advocates, Georgia Trial Lawyer of the Year, 1992
- ACLU of Georgia, Bill of Rights Award, 1984
- Good Government Award, 1980

- Legal 500, Atlanta City Elite, 2025

Credentials

Education

- University of Georgia School of Law, LL.B., 1960, Magna Cum Laude
- University of Georgia, A.B., 1958, Cum Laude
 - Phi Beta Kappa
 - Phi Kappa Phi
- Harvard Law School, LL.M., 1962

Previous Experience

- Law Clerk, Judge Clement F. Haynsworth, Jr., U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, 1960-1961

Admissions

- State Bar of Georgia
- Supreme Court of Georgia
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia

Thought Leadership

- Speaker, "Redistricting Reform: Mapping Our Future" at conference at Duke University on March 2, 2017
- Speaker, The Impact of the Senate Filibuster Rule on Judicial Nominations and the Federal Courts at an Inn of Court in Columbia, SC on March 19, 2013
- Panelist, "Presidential Abuse of Power: Current Challenges in The Lessons of Watergate" at The Lessons of Watergate conference on March 14, 2013

- Speaker, *Morris v. Fortson*: The Strange Election of Lester G. Maddox" at The Georgia Legal History Foundation, "Murder, Politics and Scandal: Famous Cases and Characters of the Athens Bar and Beyond" event at the University of Georgia School of Law on March 8, 2013
- Speaker, the constitutionality of the senate filibuster in a presentation to the University of Georgia Chapter of the American Constitution Society on Feb. 11, 2013
- Speaker, on mentoring at the Columbus Inn of Court on September 20, 2011
- Author, "The Senate Filibuster: The Politics of Obstruction" - *Harvard Journal on Legislation* - Volume 48, Number 2
- Speaker at the John Marshall Law School in the Bobby Lee Cook Practical Legal Symposium on April 8, 2011
- Speaker to Georgia State University Law Students about public interest and pro bono work on April 4, 2011
- Speaker, symposium on the Status of the Legal Profession sponsored by the American Inns of Court on April 1, 2011
- Panelist, "Obstruction in the Modern Senate: Is Reform Possible?" hosted by The Brennan Center for Justice, Common Cause and ACS
- Speaker, The 2008 Robert S. Vance Forum on the Bill of Rights on "Voter ID Laws: Preventing Fraud or Promoting Disenfranchisement?" at the Emory University School of Law
- Speaker on the Supreme Court's landmark ruling on presidential power in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* and on the Guantanamo Bay situation at the 13th Annual Supreme Court Update
- Panelist, "Fixing Michigan's Broken Public Defense System" at the annual meeting of the Michigan State Bar
- Panelist, "Economic Development and Eminent Domain: Public/Private, Open/Closed?", 15th Annual Georgia Bar Media & Judiciary Conference.