

In Memory of T. Maxfield Bahner

With deep sorrow, we share the news of the loss of our legendary partner, beloved colleague, and dear friend, T. Maxfield “Max” Bahner. He joined the Chambliss law firm in 1964, which would later become Chambliss, Bahner & Stophel, P.C.

“He was a cornerstone of our firm and a personal friend over many years. He exhibited a unique and steadfast devotion to the law, scholarship, and life. He was a hero to us,” said Mark Cunningham, president and managing shareholder at Chambliss. “He will be dearly missed.”

Max was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, and raised in Jefferson City, Tennessee. He grew up around Carson-Newman, where he would later graduate in 1954 thanks to his father, who taught on the university’s campus for nearly four decades. After graduating with a biology degree at age 20, Max followed in his father’s footsteps by attending Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. After graduating from seminary, Max then went to the University of Virginia, where he earned his law degree. After graduation, he and his wife, Sara, made their way to Chattanooga, where Max began his legal practice at Duggan, McDonald and Kefauver.

“One of the things that caused the then multi-generational Chambliss family law firm to invite Max to join in the 60’s was his passion for the practice of law that he demonstrated while representing clients in the courtroom. What Max brought with him was an inexhaustible level of energy that he applied to whatever he undertook. His passion for the law has been both inspiring to watch and contagious to experience as a partner as well as an adversary. He has tested limits of accomplishment with an abundance of enthusiasm and a remarkable work ethic while challenging others to do so as well,” said Nelson Irvine, long-time partner of Max.

Max’s legal practice primarily focused on complex litigation. He was also an AAA arbitrator and a Rule 31 certified mediator. Max’s zealous advocacy and fierce loyalty to clients and the legal community are the foundation of Chambliss’ culture today. He left a lasting impression on many.

“While he [Max] has been respected and appreciated by lawyers around the city, state, and country, and by friends and neighbors, those of us who have had the good fortune to practice law with him on the same team have been particularly blessed,” said Irvine.

Throughout his 50+ years of law practice, Max’s leadership benefitted an extensive list of community and legal organizations. Max is the past president of the Chattanooga and Tennessee Bar Associations and served nearly 17 years in the American Bar Association House of Delegates, where he led the Tennessee delegation for almost a decade. He was also on the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association and the Executive Committee during his last year on the board. Max was chair of the Tennessee Supreme Court’s Advisory Commission on the Rules and Civil Procedure, during which the Commission wrote the Tennessee Rules of Evidence, which the Tennessee Supreme Court adopted. He also chaired the Task Force to review and recommend changes to the Tennessee Rules of Judicial Conduct that the Supreme Court adopted. Max is a founding Fellow of the Tennessee Bar Foundation and the Chattanooga Bar Foundation, and is a Life Fellow of the American Bar Association.

In addition, Max was involved in many community nonprofits and organizations focused on higher education, including Carson-Newman College, the University of Chattanooga Foundation, the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, the United Way of Greater Chattanooga, the Rotary Club of Chattanooga, Orange Grove Center, the

BOTA Foundation, and the Chattanooga Symphony and Orchestra. He served in board positions for many of these nonprofits and the presidency role in several cases.

Max was the recipient of numerous [awards and recognitions](#) throughout his lifetime from professional and community organizations. Among his most cherished recognitions was the 2019 American Inns of Court Professionalism Award for the Sixth Circuit at the Celebration of Excellence in the United States Supreme Court presented by Chief Judge Steward.

At the time of his passing, Max was looking forward to the next adventure, which was being with his Lord in Heaven and with a host of family and friends who had already gone before, including his son, Maxfield Tabb Bahner, and his daughter, Sara Margaret Bahner.

Max is survived by his wife and best friend of 66 years, Sara, their children Susan (Frank Lancaster), Catharine (David Lillard), their grandchildren, and his sisters Molly Bahner Day, Frances Bahner Hendricks, and their spouses.

Finding the words to express how much Max meant to the firm and our community is difficult. Our hearts remain heavy as we continue to mourn the loss of a beloved member of the Chambliss family. Please continue to keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Updated as of October 29, 2023:

Sara Minta McIntyre Bahner passed away peacefully on October 29, 2023. The funeral will now be a joint service. We rejoice in knowing Max and Sara had a glorious reunion and were not without one another very long.

**Memorial Service for
Thomas Maxfield “Max” Bahner
and
Sara Minta McIntyre Bahner**

Friday, November 10, 2023
1 p.m.
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 305 W 7th Street

Reception to follow at the Mountain City Club, 729 Chestnut Street

Memorial gifts for Thomas Maxfield “Max” Bahner may be made to Orange Grove Center (615 Derby Street, Chattanooga, TN 37404) or the University of Virginia Law School Foundation (580 Massie Road, Charlottesville, VA 22903). Please note: T. Maxfield Bahner ’60 Unrestricted Endowment.

Memorial gifts for Sara Minta McIntyre Bahner may be made to Orange Grove Center (615 Derby Street, Chattanooga, TN 37404) or St. Paul’s Episcopal Church (305 W 7th Street, Chattanooga, TN 37402). Please note: music fund.

[Tribute for Thomas "Max" Bahner | Heritage Funeral Home & Crematory \(heritagebattlefield.com\)](#)

[Thomas Maxfield "Max" Bahner – Chattanooga.com](#)

[Tribute for Sara Minta \(McIntyre\) Bahner | Heritage Funeral Home & Crematory \(heritagebattlefield.com\)](#)

[Sara Minta McIntyre Bahner – Chattanooga.com](#)