

## **William F. McMurry**

William F. McMurry represents a distinguished legacy in Kentucky law, carrying forward a tradition of legal excellence as a third-generation attorney. Born in Paducah in 1955, his early exposure to the legal profession came through watching his father, Pelham McMurry, serve first as County Attorney for 13 years and then as County Judge for 7 years. These formative experiences in the courthouse halls of Western Kentucky would shape his future dedication to justice.

After law school, McMurry served three years as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney in both McCracken and Jefferson Counties, where he tried child rape and sexual abuse cases to jury verdict. These prosecutions, among the most emotionally challenging cases in criminal law, forged his commitment to pursuing justice for society's most vulnerable victims.

Throughout his career, McMurry has distinguished himself as a fearless advocate for society's most vulnerable. His practice has focused particularly on representing children and families affected by negligence and abuse, taking on cases that many other attorneys wouldn't touch. Early in his career, he successfully championed the rights of young children wrongfully incarcerated in adult facilities, including a 6-year-old detained for taking bubble gum and a 5-year-old imprisoned simply for being present during his father's arrest.

In 1997, McMurry took on a groundbreaking case representing women who had been sexually abused by their workers' compensation attorney. The case began when two sisters discovered they had both been victimized by the same lawyer, who had exploited his position of trust by falsely claiming medical expertise and conducting unnecessary "physical examinations" of his female clients. As McMurry's investigation deepened, he uncovered that thirty years earlier, the same attorney had been reported to the Kentucky Bar Association for performing a vaginal examination on a female client in his office. Despite a hearing officer finding probable cause, the Kentucky Supreme Court had quietly dismissed that complaint as "so preposterous as to not be believable" – a decision made under rules that kept all bar complaints strictly confidential. As the 1997 case unfolded, dozens of additional women came forward, revealing a pattern of abuse spanning three decades. When the earlier victim shared her story with the Courier-Journal, the resulting public outcry led to a landmark change: the Kentucky Supreme Court revised its secrecy rules, making all bar complaints public after a finding of probable cause. The case not only resulted in a settlement that held the perpetrator accountable but also created lasting reform in legal transparency that continues to protect Kentucky citizens today.

In 1998, he volunteered pro bono to represent a mother dying of AIDS who faced discrimination when her HIV status was unlawfully disclosed by hospital staff. Taking the case on the eve of trial when other attorneys had abandoned her, McMurry secured a verdict that transformed the

lives of both the mother and her five children, demonstrating to them that the legal system could work for everyone, regardless of circumstances.

His advocacy work has led to groundbreaking achievements in holding institutions accountable. In 2003, he served as lead counsel in securing a \$25.7 million settlement from the Archdiocese of Louisville on behalf of 243 survivors of clergy abuse, marking the largest settlement at that time paid exclusively from diocesan assets.

Another significant victory came in 2006 when McMurry negotiated settlements for 43 survivors of abuse at a Kentucky orphanage operated by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, a case chronicled in the book "The Unbreakable Child" by Kim Michelle Richardson.

In 2009 case of *O'Bryan v. Holy See*, McMurry made legal history by successfully arguing that the Vatican could be held accountable in U.S. courts for the actions of American bishops in cases of child abuse, effectively challenging the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act.

On October 16, 2014, McMurry was inducted into the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame for Exemplary Leadership in Civil Rights by the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. This honor was bestowed on McMurry for his McMurry's \$2.5 million verdict against the leaders of the Imperial Klans of America. While attending a county fair, Klan members severely beat a 16-year-old Central American young man because of the color of his skin. McMurry served as trial counsel with Morris Dees, the founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC).

Today, McMurry focuses his practice on medical and legal malpractice cases, bringing decades of experience and expertise to these complex areas of law. He holds the distinction of being board-certified as both a Medical Malpractice and Legal Malpractice Trial Specialist by the American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys (ABPLA), representing the highest level of professional excellence in these fields.

McMurry's career exemplifies an attorney's profound impact in fighting for justice, particularly for those who might otherwise have no voice in the legal system. From representing victims of professional misconduct to challenging powerful institutions, William F. McMurry has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to protecting the rights of the injured and vulnerable while helping to shape the landscape of professional liability law in America.

**WILLIAM F. McMURRY**

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**BORN:** Paducah, Kentucky, August 17, 1955

**ADMITTED TO BAR:** Kentucky, 1979, bar number 46750  
Florida, 1981, bar number 315540  
North Carolina, 2020, bar number 55579  
United States District Court, Western District of Kentucky, 1979  
United States District Court, Middle District of Florida, 1985  
United States Court of Appeals, 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 1983  
United States Court of Appeals, 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 2003

**EDUCATION:** University of Kentucky, B.G.S. with high distinction, 1976  
University of Louisville, J.D., 1978

**AWARDS:** Inducted into the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame for Exemplary Leadership in Civil Rights by the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, October 16, 2014

2014 Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year, Florida Bar Association

American Jurisprudence Award in Criminal Law,  
Bancroft-Whitney Lawyers Cooperative Publishing Co., 1977

**CERTIFICATIONS:** BOARD Certified as a Medical Malpractice Trial Specialist by the American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys, 1994, recertified 1999, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021.

Board Certified as a Legal Malpractice Trial Specialist by the American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys (ABPLA), 1994, recertified 2000, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021.

**PAST PRESIDENT OF ABPLA 2010-2014**

**CERTIFICATIONS:** Board Certified as a Civil Trial Specialist by the National Board of Trial Advocacy, 1993, recertified 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2023.

Board Certified as a Civil Trial Specialist by the Florida Bar Board of Legal Specialization and Education, 1991, recertified 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021.

**HONORS:** Martindale-Hubble, 2001-2025 designated “**AV**” – *Preeminent* by lawyers and judges. This rating is the highest possible rating in **legal ability and ethical standards** awarded by Martindale-Hubble.

Peer-selected for *Kentucky Super Lawyers*, designation of the top five percent of lawyers in Kentucky, 2007-2024.

Peer-selected for Kentucky Super Lawyers, **TOP 50 Super Lawyers in Kentucky**, 2025.

Top 10 Nursing Home Trial Lawyers in Kentucky, 2025, by The National Trial Lawyers Association.

Top 25 Medical Malpractice Trial Lawyers in Kentucky, 2025, by The National Trial Lawyers Association.

Top 25 Brain Injury Trial Lawyers in Kentucky, 2025, by The National Trial Lawyers Association.

Top 100 Trial Lawyers in the State of Kentucky, 2007-2025, designated by The National Trial Lawyers Association (NTLA)

Passed the Multi-State Professional Responsibility Examination, administered by the National Board of Bar Examiners, November 5, 2011.

Top 10% in the USA – Recognizing Excellence in Medical Malpractice Law, 2025, *Lawyers of Distinction*.

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:** Diplomate, American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys (**ABPLA**) since 1994.

**PAST PRESIDENT OF ABPLA 2010-2014**

National Board of Trial Advocacy (NBTA)

**PROFESSIONAL  
MEMBERSHIPS:**

Kentucky Bar Association (KBA)  
Louisville Bar Association (LBA)  
The Florida Bar  
American Association for Justice (AAJ)  
Kentucky Justice Association (KJA)  
The National Trial Lawyers Association (NTLA)  
American Bar Association (ABA)

**PROFESSIONAL  
HISTORY:**

William F. McMurry & Associates, Louisville, Kentucky, 2002-  
Present  
McMurry & Talbott, Louisville, Kentucky, 1994-2002  
Oldfather & Morris, Louisville, Kentucky, 1987-1994  
Bross, Trachtman, Henderson & Childress, Merritt Island, Florida,  
1985-1987  
Boehl, Stopher, Graves & Deindoerfer, Louisville, Kentucky,  
Associate, 1982-1983; Partner, 1984-1985. Representative  
insurance clients include Traveler's Insurance, CNA, Associated  
Aviation Underwriters, Medical Protective, St. Paul and The  
Hartford  
Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney  
• Second Judicial District, 1979-1980 (Paducah, Kentucky)  
• Thirtieth Judicial District, 1980-1982 (Louisville,  
Kentucky)  
McMurry & Livingston, Paducah, Kentucky, 1979-1980

**SERVICE IN  
PROFESSIONAL  
ASSOCIATIONS:**

Past President, American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys  
(APBLA), June 2010 – 2014.

**SERVICE IN  
PROFESSIONAL  
ASSOCIATIONS:**

Chairman of the Legal Malpractice Credentialing Committee,  
American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys, 2008-2025.

Board of Governors, American Board of Professional Liability  
Attorneys, 2006-2025.

Bylaws Committee Chair, American Board of Professional  
Liability Attorneys, 2025.

Trial Practice Editor, *The Advocate*, Kentucky Academy of Trial  
Attorneys, 2005.

Legal Aid Society of Louisville, Board Member, 2004-2007

International Academy of Integrative Psychology, Board Member,  
January 2005.

Paul L. Adams Center for Psychoanalytic Education, Founding  
Board Member, Sept 2003.

**AVOCATION  
ACHIEVEMENTS:**

October 8, 2016 **World Record** (Large Formation Skydive) “128-  
Person” formation (38 Nations participated)

October 9, 2016 **World Record** (Large Formation Skydive) “130-  
Person” (Skydivers over age 40) (38 Nations participated)

June 30, 2017 **World Record** (Large Formation Skydive) “60-  
Person” (Skydivers over age 60)

August 13, 2018 **World Record** (Large Formation Skydive) “75-  
Person” (Skydivers over age 60)

October 10, 2018 **World Record** (Sequential Skydive) “Four-point  
(four separate formations) with 33 persons” (Skydivers over age  
40)

Licensed *Senior Rigger*, certified by Federal Aviation  
Administration (FAA) since 1976 to pack reserve parachutes and  
make repairs.

**FEATURED  
LECTURER:**

*Breaking the Sacred Silence: Lessons from the Front Lines of Faith-Based Institutional Sexual Abuse Cases*, to be presented at Alliance For Children Summit, Child Advocacy Centers, Southern Georgia Judicial Circuit, April 10, 2025.

*Legal Malpractice – when Medical Malpractice is the “case within the case,”* presented at the American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys (ABPLA) and National Board of Trial Advocates (NBTA) board meeting in Chicago, Illinois, November 15, 2024.

*Presenting and Developing Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Cases and focus on Ethics*, Kentucky Justice Association, in-person live and online seminar, Embassy Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky, June 24, 2022.

*Presenting and Developing Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Cases and focus on Ethics*, Kentucky Justice Association, in-person live and online seminar, Campbell House, Lexington, Kentucky, June 23, 2022.

*Traumatic Brain Injuries Made Simple and Legal Ethics*, National Business Institute (NBI), live online seminar to Kentucky attorneys, June 29, 2021.

*Electronic Medical Records*, presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys (APBLA), New York, NY, May 4, 2018.

*Legal Malpractice: The Case Within The Case*, presented at the All Stars Conference by the National Board of Trial Advocacy (NBTA), New Orleans, LA, November 8, 2018.

*Legal and Ethical Considerations in Traumatic Brain Injury Cases – Automobile crash trauma*, presented by Neurosurgery/Pain Management, Louisville, KY, May 25, 2018.

*Electronic Medical Records: Proving the Medical Malpractice Case*, presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys, Chicago, IL, May 3, 2018

*Legal Ethics: Ethical Dilemmas of Multiple Client Representation*, co-presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys (ABPLA), Miami, Florida May 3, 2014.

*Legal Malpractice: The Case within the Case*, presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys (ABPLA), Miami, Florida May 1, 2014.

*Legal Liability and Ethical Dilemmas: The Case within the Case*, presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys (ABPLA), New Orleans, LA, April 27, 2013.

*Legal Liability and Ethical Dilemmas: The Case within the Case*, presented to the Annual Convention of the California Bar, Monterey, California, October 13, 2012.

*Masters in Trial*, presented by the Foundation for the American Board of Trial Advocacy (ABOTA) and the Nashville Bar Association, April 27, 2012. Performed the Direct Examination of the Plaintiff's expert witness and the Closing Argument for the Plaintiff's case. Mock jury verdict/deliberations in favor of Plaintiff for combined compensatory and punitive damages of \$6.6 million.

*The Exercise of a Lawyer's Professional Judgment (The Judgmental Immunity Defense)*, an adaptation of *How We Decide*, by author Jonah Lehrer, State Bar of California Annual Convention, Long Beach, California, October 11, 2011.

"Rethinking the Value of Emotions: A Trial Lawyer's Quest for Better Decision-making," Tennessee Trial Lawyers, Chattanooga, TN – June 16, 2011.

"Opening Statements in Legal Malpractice," American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys, San Diego, CA May 11, 2011.

"Using the New Science of Decision-Making: The Trial Lawyer's Guide to Better Decisions," Louisiana Trial Lawyers, Carmel, CA – June 27, 2010.

"Rethinking the Value of Emotions: A Trial Lawyer's Quest for Better Decision-making," American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA – June 10, 2010.

"Legal Malpractice: When Medical Malpractice is the Case within the Case," American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys, Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA - June 8, 2009.

"Fight Hate Now More Than Ever," an in-depth review of William F. McMurry's work with co-counsel Morris Dees in the

case of Gruver vs Imperial Klans of America, presented at the Annual Convention of the Southern Trial Lawyers Association, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

*“Legal Malpractice Disasters Stemming from the Handling and Litigation of Mass Tort Cases,”* American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, June 7, 2008.

*“Legal Malpractice: When Society Loses Trust in Authority,”* National Civil Litigation Conference, Law Education Institute, Aspen, Colorado, January 6, 2007.

*“Fresh Approaches to Medical Malpractice: Liability when Treatment Policies Conflict with Hospital Advertising,”* Advanced Litigation Symposium, Louisiana Trial Lawyers Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 30, 2006.

*“Fresh Approaches to Medical Malpractice: Liability when Treatment Policies Conflict with Hospital Advertising,”* National Civil Litigation Conference, Law Education Institute, Aspen, Colorado, January 4, 2006.

*“Litigating Beyond Borders: Justice in a Global Society,”* National Civil Litigation Conference, Law Education Institute, Aspen Colorado, January 5, 2005.

*“Crime and Punishment in the Free Market Economy,”* Moscow Social and Psychological Institute of the Moscow State Sociological University, Moscow, Russia, December 9, 2004.

*“Holding the Vatican Accountable for Its Worldwide Problem of Childhood Sexual Abuse,”* Center for International Legal Institute, CILS Conference on Negligence and Damages in the International Setting, Salzburg, Austria, September 24, 2004.

*“Keeping Your Clients Informed through the Web,”* Kentucky Academy of Trial Attorneys Annual Convention, Louisville, Kentucky, September 9, 2004.

*“News Media Relations and Case Management in High Profile Cases,”* National Civil Litigation Conference, Law Education Institute, Aspen, Colorado, January 2004.

*“Medical Malpractice in Kentucky,”* National Business Institute, Louisville, Kentucky, December 2003.

*“Legal Ethics in Kentucky,”* Lorman Education Services, Louisville,

Kentucky, May 2003.

*“Ethical Issues Surrounding Use of Courtroom Technology,”* Kentucky Academy of Trial Attorneys, Louisville, Kentucky, March 2003.

*“Overcoming the Statute of Limitations in Childhood Sexual Abuse Cases,”* National Civil Litigation Conference, Law Education Institute, Aspen, Colorado, January 2003.

*“Solutions to the Most Common Ethical Challenges,”* Eminent Domain Conference, Louisville, Kentucky, June 2002

*“Jury Bias in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,”* Chairperson, Kentucky Academy of Trial Attorneys, Louisville, Kentucky, May 2002.

*“Practical Legal Ethics in Kentucky: Issues and Answers,”* National Business Institute, Louisville, Kentucky, June 2001.

*“Medical Professional Liability, Failure to Properly Treat Carbon Monoxide Exposure,”* American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys, Annual CLE Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, October 2000

*“Medical Malpractice, The Plaintiff’s Perspective,”* National Business Institute, September 1996.

*“Premises Liability: Preparation and Trial of a Difficult Case in Kentucky (The Plaintiff’s Perspective),”* National Business Institute, Louisville, Kentucky, March 1995.

*“Trying the Automobile Accident Case in Kentucky (The Plaintiff’s Perspective),”* National Business Institute, Louisville, Kentucky, February 1994.

**PROFESSIONAL  
PUBLICATIONS:**

*“Litigating UIM Cases After Earle v. Cobb,”* The Advocate, Kentucky Academy of Trial Attorneys, Vol. 32, No. 6, November/December 2005.

*“Winning During Difficult Times,”* The Advocate, Kentucky Academy of Trial Attorneys, Vol. 32, No. 4, July/August 2005

**SELECTED VERDICTS  
AND SETTLEMENTS:**

*\$25.7 Million Sexual Abuse Class Action Settlement*

Arising out of sexual abuse of 243 children, now adults, while attending Catholic churches and schools in the Louisville, Kentucky Archdiocese. At the time of the settlement, this was the largest amount ever paid by an archdiocese out of their own pocket; no insurance proceeds were available.

*[Confidential Settlement Amount – after fourth day of trial]*

Legal Malpractice settlement arising out of large regional law firm's failure to properly meet pleading deadlines resulting in client's loss of commissions from a lucrative business-finding agreement. Loss of claimed commissions totaled \$93 million.

*\$2.5 Million Verdict against the Leader of the Imperial Klans of America and other Klan Members*

William F. McMurry served as co-counsel with Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center in representing a 16-year old Native American who was beaten by a group of Klan members engaged in recruitment activities at the Meade County Fair in Brandenburg, Kentucky.

*\$2.250 Million Medical Malpractice/Wrongful Death*

Arising out of the death of a thirty-three-year-old woman hospitalized for constipation.

*\$2.05 Million Medical Malpractice/Products Liability Settlement*

Arising out of an injury caused by an allegedly defective medical device product.

*\$16 Million Legal Malpractice/Living Trust Scam Settlement*

Arising out of a nationwide scam where over 15,000 elderly class members fell victim to lawyers involved in a living trust and life insurance scam. This is the only nationwide class action ever certified by a Circuit Court in Kentucky.

*\$950,000 Legal Malpractice Settlement*

Arising out of negligent handling of Client's medical malpractice claim. Case was settled during trial.

*\$2.1 Million Medical Malpractice Verdict*

Arising out of the failure to diagnose and treat a stroke patient.

*\$1.5 Million Sexual Abuse Settlement*

Arising out of sexual and physical abuse of 45 children, now adults, at an orphanage between the late 1940's through 1984. Only settlement arising out of sexual abuse perpetrated by nuns at an orphanage in the United States.

***SELECTED VERDICTS  
AND SETTLEMENTS:***

*\$500,000 Legal Malpractice Settlement* arising from attorney's failure to file client's lawsuit before the running of the Statute of Limitations. Client suffered a mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI).

*\$450,000 Wrongful Use of Civil Proceedings/Malicious Prosecution Verdict*

Arising out of the filing and prosecution of a frivolous medical malpractice suit against an orthopedic surgeon. Largest such verdict in Kentucky.

*\$2.9 Million Automobile Accident Verdict*

Arising out of the "mild" traumatic brain injury suffered by a lawyer in a rear-end collision. Insurance company for lawyer refused to pay UIM claim and argued he was malingering. Largest "mild" traumatic brain injury verdict in Kentucky.

*\$1.4 Million Products Liability Settlement*

Arising out of house fire related death caused by a consumer product defect in a cordless phone.

*\$3 Million Medical Malpractice Settlement*

Arising out of failure to diagnose kidney cancer. Case was settled during jury deliberations.

*\$2.35 Million Medical Malpractice Verdict*

Arising out of emergency room physician's failure to properly treat carbon monoxide poisoning.

*\$1.5 Million Insurance Bad Faith Settlement*

Arising out of automobile insurance carrier's violation of the Kentucky Unfair Claims Practice Act.

*\$1.5 Million Settlement*

Arising out of a highspeed police chase resulting in a crash and the deaths of four innocent children. (2017)

*\$500,000 Settlement*

Arising out of the sexual assault of a student passenger on a Jefferson County Public Schools bus. (2018)

*\$5.5 Million in medical malpractice settlements in 2024.*