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Cusimano, Keener, Roberts, Knowles & Raley, LLC

The Best of Both Worlds

Apples and oranges? Or peas in a pod? When a law firm known beyond state boundaries for its litigation expertise merges with a firm specializing in business and real estate law, can there be

enough common ground to make it work? According to founding Partner Gregory Cusimano, the firms of Cusimano, Keener, Roberts & Raley and Knowles Law Firm shared two characteristics more important than legal compatibility: commitment and compassion.

"We've done a lot of personal injury work over the years," he explains. "And we feel compassionate toward our clients when we see the kind of devastation many of them endure.

Compassion builds commitment that goes beyond their court case. We try to give them whatever personal support they need to get through the difficult times."

When Cusimano met Christie and Jason Knowles through a mutual client, he immediately recognized their firms had that extended commitment in common. "We were impressed by their dedication to their business clients and real estate developers who were trying to positively impact our community and to people trying to buy a home or care for elderly parents," he says. "We quickly realized that bringing the two firms together would provide all our clients with a big-city range of legal services combined with the small-town touch of personal involvement." The firms merged in early 2009.

"Cusimano, Keener, Roberts, Knowles & Raley is now a firm of lawyers with a heartfelt commitment to our clients. We take great satisfaction in knowing clients come to us because they know we care," Cusimano continues. "We care whether their businesses are successful, and we care when they suffer a tragic loss. We also care when they're excited about buying a new home, expanding their business, developing residential or commercial property, or starting some other type of venture. We're proud to be their go-to firm whatever is happening in their lives."

Legal Expertise Is Also Part of the Equation

But don't let the firm's pride in its compassionate side fool you. It has major accomplishments under its legal belt as well. Its lawyers have been recognized in numerous legal honor rolls including *Best Lawyers in America* and *Super Lawyers*. The firm has a longstanding AV rating from Martindale-Hubbell®, the highest possible rating from the widely respected legal reviewer.

Cusimano is a past president of the Alabama Association for Justice and the co-editor of a national six-volume tort book. He received the coveted *Lifetime Achievement Award* from the American Association for Justice (formerly ATLA). Partner Mike Roberts is the author of another tort book that is widely considered the essential source for anyone practicing tort law in Alabama, says Cusimano.



Photo by Sarah Cusimano Miles and Doug Clark

Back row: Gregory S. Cusimano, Christie D. Knowles, Jason E. Knowles

Front row: Michael L. Roberts, Larry H. Keener, Emily Hawk Raley, Betsy L. Boggs, Practice Administrator

Christie Knowles has spearheaded the legal work on the largest proposed development in the northeastern part of the state in 65 years. Emily Raley won the prestigious ALAJ Champion of Justice Award, and Larry Keener is a former state senator. Jason Knowles was co-owner of a title company. They have assembled quite a team to balance the scales of justice.

"The merger allows us to offer an unrivaled level of services and commitment to individuals, entrepreneurs, contractors, developers, small businesses and other clients throughout the region," says Cusimano. "We feel good about what we're doing for the community and for the people we proudly represent."



153 South 9th Street
Gadsden, AL 35901-3645
256-543-0400
www.alabamatortlaw.com

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