



2009 LAWYERS OF THE YEAR

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REPORT**

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Judson Graves

Alston + Bird

PERSONAL INJURY LITIGATION

Nationally renowned litigator Judson Graves developed his love of the courtroom as a naval weapons officer during the Vietnam era, when, not yet a lawyer, he represented some of his rowdier friends during courts-martial. Today, Graves—who's tried more than 100 cases—loves the drama of trials and translating complex medical terms so the jury can understand. He has the ideal temperament for his profession—a cool head during the heat of battle combined with a fiercely competitive nature. "I love to win," he says.

Though he's represented a range of clients including the largest medical malpractice carrier in Georgia, Graves says his most meaningful victory was the successful representation of Dale Earnhardt's widow, Teresa Earnhardt, and her family in their fight to prevent the release and on-line publication of autopsy photographs after the race car driver's death in the Daytona 500 in 2001. The case resulted in the enactment of a new privacy statute in Florida, which served as a model for other states. "The beauty of that case was that it was based entirely on love and principle, not money," says Graves.

Co-chair of his firm's Pro Bono Committee, Graves is also a counselor at Camp Sunshine for children with cancer, and serves on the board of two Atlanta inner-city non-profits, one that assists men recovering from addiction, the other providing church-based, sliding-scale psychological counseling. "All of this work helps remind me of how ridiculously lucky I have been in my life and how much need is out there to be addressed," he says.

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