

Rutledge & Yaghmai in the News: Slander Case Against Mayor Gene Robinson Goes to Trial

By Greg Yaghmai

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Rutledge & Yaghmai made news this week for representing Anniston resident Curtis Ray in his slander trial against Anniston Mayor Gene Robinson.

[The Anniston Star](#) has been following the case from its inception, which was tried this week by Greg Yaghmai.

The lawsuit involves an article published in The Star after Robinson won his 2008 election; the mayor was quoted by a newspaper reporter as saying that “I bought into the black corruption in Anniston. And it worked.”

In the article, Robinson stated that he had paid residents Curtis Ray and Board of Education member William Hutchings to pass out marked sample ballots at polling places and “assist people to the door.”

The mayor’s comments, which suggested Curtis Ray was involved in corruption, seriously damaged Ray’s reputation.

Amid outrage in the community, Robinson subsequently apologized for his comments in a meeting with members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and went so far as to take out a full-page advertisement in the newspaper.

Later, Robinson said he was tired and wasn’t thinking clearly when he made the remark.

After Ray sued the mayor for the alleged slander in 2009, Robinson filed an affidavit denying he had made the remark, that it was instead several comments cobbled together and taken out of context. Robinson reiterated this version of events during his testimony at trial.

Meanwhile, Ray testified that Robinson’s comment had damaged his standing in the community, hurting him both personally and financially.

As reported by [The Star](#), when the jury began deliberating at 9 a.m., they were split on the matter.

The jurors ultimately decided that Robinson's comments were not directed towards Ray. "It was more about a corrupt political system than Curtis Ray," reported one juror.

About Rutledge & Yaghmai

<http://rylaw.net/>

Rutledge & Yaghmai (R & Y) is a full service litigation firm that offers more than fifty-seven years of diverse legal experience. Formed in 2006, Rutledge & Yaghmai concentrates on giving each case individual attention as opposed to carrying a mass a number of cases. That way they are able to develop a lifelong relationship with clients.

William Rutledge

William Eugene Rutledge graduated from the University of Alabama in 1960. He graduated from the University of Alabama Law School 1966. Mr. Rutledge served as a Captain in the Judge Advocate General's Corps, U.S. Army and as Chief of Military Justice at Fort Bliss, Texas. He was trial counsel for the United States where he prosecuted several nationally publicized court marshalls. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Medal for his trial work in the Army.

He began the practice of law in Birmingham, AL on August 1, 1966. His early trial practice was a mixture of business litigation and railroad related litigation. He has a strong appellate practice in which he has excelled since the early 1970s and continues that practice till the present time. He has handled over 100 cases in the state appellate system and 80 cases in the federal appellate system.

He specialized through the years of his practice in business formations. He has assisted new entrepreneurs in the formation and strategy of their businesses. Also, he represents companies in business litigation. Cases have ranged from business disputes among members to representing smaller companies against the "larger corporations."

Practice memberships include the Bar of the Alabama Supreme Court, the United States District Court for the Northern, Middle and Southern Districts, the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, and the Supreme Court of the United States.

He is married to Sherry Crittenden Rutledge and has four children and six grandchildren.

Greg Yaghmai

Greg graduated with honors from The Citadel where he received his bachelor's degree in Business Administration. In 1997, he received his law degree from Cumberland School of Law.

For the first four and half of years of his legal career, Greg served as a Deputy District Attorney for the Jefferson County, Alabama District Attorney's Office. By age 26 he tried his first death penalty case. He went on to try either solo or as lead counsel seven capital murder and six murder cases. He also had the benefit of being the first lawyer in Alabama to be certified by the Alabama State Troopers as a Traffic Homicide investigator. He obtained this after attending a two-week seminar, which required him to live in a closed military base with forty other police officers. He also had the unique experience of being provided alcohol in a controlled setting so he could be utilized by the Jefferson County Sheriff's training academy in officers learning how to administer field sobriety tests. He is a member of the National College for DUI Defense (NCDD) which is a prestigious organization defending those charged with DUI.

He subsequently left the DA's office to become a partner in a forty lawyer civil litigation firm. This firm concentrated mostly on civil defense work, but Greg continued to expand his plaintiff and criminal defense practice.

In 2006, he co-founded Rutledge & Yaghmai. One of Greg's goals was to reduce the number of cases handled to allow for more individual attention to each case. Rutledge & Yaghmai maintains a general litigation practice. Greg focuses on personal injury, business litigation, and criminal defense cases.

Greg has truly handled cases from all sides: criminal prosecution/defense and civil plaintiff/defense. Overall, Greg has tried more than seventy-five jury trials to conclusion. He has significant experience in using visual presentations and present day media applications in presenting cases to jury. His ultimate jury consultant is his wife, Brandi, who he met when she served on the jury of a rape/kidnapping case he tried.

He has recently been asked to teach Trial Techniques for the International Web based site Solo Practice University. There he will share his expertise in trying jury cases.

Greg is licensed in all state and federal courts in Alabama and the 11th Circuit.

