

Alabama Litigation Update: Jefferson County Sewer Debt Crisis

By: Rutledge & Yaghmai

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A recent order in the Jefferson County sewer lawsuit provides court-appointed receiver John Young Jr. with total control over the operating and capital funds of Jefferson County's wastewater system, the [Birmingham Business Journal](#) reports.

The ruling comes after Young requested that \$60 million be transferred from the sewer system to a private corporation he established to "open and maintain bank accounts for the collection, maintenance, disbursement and application of system revenues." According to a press release, the order gives Young 100 percent control over all wastewater system bank accounts.

In related news, the [Birmingham News](#) reports that Young has been paid \$563,611 since he was appointed in September by a circuit court judge to manage the county's troubled sewer system. Overall, more than \$1.8 million has been paid from Jefferson County sewer department revenues to the court-appointed receiver and his team of consultants, according to county finance department records.

There are clearly differing opinions regarding whether Young's fees are money well spent.

In support of his work to date, Young stated, "This is an absolutely unique problem, nowhere in the United States has it ever occurred before and we need the best and the brightest to fix it. I have looked at the capabilities of the team that I brought in, how cost effective they are, their experience and brought those types of people in."

Conversely, in an opinion piece published in The Birmingham News, Commissioner George Bowman argued that lawyers aren't concerned about a settlement.

"The receiver's lawyers are fighting to get more money sent to the Wall Street bankers, JPMorgan Chase and others that promoted an environment of corruption to get the bond deals done in Jefferson County," Bowman wrote.

As it becomes clearer that the JeffCo debt crisis will not be resolved in the near future, we will continue to monitor the status of the litigation as well as any other developments.

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About Rutledge & Yaghmai

<http://rylaw.net/>

Rutledge & Yaghmai (R & Y) is a full service litigation firm that offers more than fiftyseven 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 Yaghamai

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