

Former Assistant U.S. Attorney Joins Waller Lansden's Trial and Appellate Group

*William Athanas brings over 14 years of high-profile litigation experience to
firm*

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Oct. 12, 2009 – Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis, LLP, a full-service law firm with more than 200 attorneys, has added seasoned federal prosecutor William Athanas as Of Counsel to the firm's Birmingham, Ala. office. Athanas joins Waller Lansden's trial and appellate practice after nearly eight years prosecuting federal criminal matters. As an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Northern District of Alabama, Athanas headed up numerous complex grand jury investigations and prosecutions in the areas of economic crime and public corruption, and successfully tried several high-profile cases including one of the lengthiest and most complex bank fraud trials ever conducted in the Northern District of Alabama. At Waller Lansden, Athanas will provide counseling and representation to clients around the United States and abroad on all aspects of corporate criminal defense, governance, and regulatory matters, including Foreign Corrupt Practices Act matters, internal investigations, white collar defense, and complex litigation issues related to healthcare, securities, and financial institutions.

"Bill is a talented attorney with an impressive, successful trial record in difficult high-profile cases," said John Tishler, chairman of Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis, LLP. "His experience at the federal level will be an invaluable asset to our clients—he strengthens our already stellar trial and appellate practice, which is one of the cornerstones of our firm."

Athanas will reside in the firm's Birmingham office, which is headed by Larry Childs, a partner with more than 30 years' experience in complex litigation matters. "We are excited to welcome Bill to Waller Lansden and specifically to our Birmingham office. Bill will provide much-needed reinforcement for our busy practice, which includes complex litigation and the defense of class action lawsuits and shareholder derivative suits against financial institutions," Childs noted.

Within Waller Lansden's Trial and Appellate Practice, Athanas will become a member of its Government Investigations and White Collar Criminal Defense subgroup. That subgroup is headed by Sheila Sawyer, a partner based in the firm's Nashville office who also has substantial prosecutorial experience, having spent nine years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Boston. The group also includes Paul Summers, who previously served as the Attorney General of the State of Tennessee and as a Judge on the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals.

Prior to joining Waller Lansden earlier this month, Athanas served as a federal prosecutor with the United States Department of Justice for nearly eight years, first as a Trial Attorney with the Criminal Division's Fraud Section in Washington, D.C, and then as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Northern District of Alabama. During that service, he

acquired a wealth of federal litigation experience, heading up numerous complex grand jury investigations and prosecutions in the areas of economic crime and public corruption, and successfully trying several high-profile cases. Athanas' successful trial experience included the public corruption convictions of former Alabama Senator Edward "E.B." McClain and former Alabama Representative Sue Schmitz; the tax fraud conviction of Pastor Gregory Clarke; and the bank fraud convictions of five individuals charged with perpetrating an elaborate scheme to defraud the now-defunct Community Bank of Blountsville of more than \$1.7 million. Athanas also successfully prosecuted Dedrick Griham, an armed carjacker who abducted and assaulted a Birmingham attorney in 2006, securing a sentence of life imprisonment after trial. Prior to his service as a federal prosecutor, Athanas was engaged in the private practice of law in Boston, where he represented clients in civil and criminal healthcare matters, white collar criminal defense, and complex commercial litigation. Athanas received his Juris Doctor, *cum laude*, from Suffolk University Law School in Boston and his undergraduate degree from the University of New Hampshire in Durham, N.H.