STITES & HARBISON PLLC



Michael Denbow

Title: Member

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Michael Denbow is a member (partner) in the Louisville office, Chair of Stites & Harbison's White Collar Practice Group and Co-Chair of the Business Litigation Service Group. Michael focuses his practice on white collar criminal defense and other government and regulatory matters. He handles matters in federal and state courts throughout the southeast and represents clients when dealing with such government entities as the Department of Justice, the FBI, the SEC, and the CFPB, among others. Michael also routinely represents professional athletes and entertainers in contract negotiations, business advice, and litigation matters.

CAPABILITIES

Practice Areas

- White Collar Criminal Defense Litigation
- Health Care
- Employment Litigation
- Business Litigation
- Class Action, Mass Action & Multi-District Litigation
- Professional Liability Litigation
- Securities
- Antitrust, Consumer Protection & Attorney General Defense
- Appellate Advocacy
- Employee Benefits

- Litigation & Appeals
- Sports & Entertainment
- Gaming
- Hemp and Medical Cannabis

RECENT ASSIGNMENTS

- *United States v. Dino Gaudio.* In a nationally publicized case, former University of Louisville basketball coach and former ESPN analyst Dino Gaudio was charged with extortion in connection with a surreptitiously taped conversation Coach Gaudio had with University of Louisville Men's Basketball Coach Chris Mack. Upon reviewing our case submissions, particularly relating to Coach Gaudio's outstanding character, the presiding United States District Judge not only gave Coach Gaudio the minimum sentence permitted by law but went so far as to question the United States' decision to prosecute the case despite the United States Sentencing Guidelines recommending two (2) years of incarceration.
- Defended NBA player in arbitration before the National Basketball Players Association ("NBPA") over agent fee dispute
- Obtained a non-prosecution agreement on behalf of a client involved in the *Project Varsity Blues* college admission scandal
- Defended client in insider trading investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") that resulted in no charges or claims being made against the client
- Successfully challenged an initial determination of ineligibility by the Kentucky High School Athletic Association ("KHSAA") for a high school baseball player and ensured eligibility for his junior year of high school
- Defended client in homicide investigation involving a dispute with an Uber driver that resulted in no charges being brought against the client
- Negotiated consulting deal on behalf of client with NFL team
- Assisted client with negotiation and activation of augmented reality application at the 2019 College Football National Championship Game
- Negotiated several contracts on behalf of singer/songwriter from Nashville
- Successfully obtained a Temporary Restraining Order ("TRO") against a Kentucky business for accessing the confidential commission data of our client
- Obtained a non-prosecution agreement for individual client in an oil and gas fraud matter out of the Southern District of Georgia
- Represented a large corporate client in a federal antitrust investigation from the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice

- Negotiated an athletic shoe and apparel contract on behalf of NBA player
- Represented a large corporate client in response to multiple federal grand jury subpoenas in a large money laundering investigation in the Eastern District of Kentucky
- Obtained a directed verdict in a DUI trial in Kentucky state court
- Successfully obtained a temporary restraining order against the Kentucky High School Athletic Association ("KHSAA"), allowing a previously declared ineligible student athlete to compete during his senior basketball season
- Represented minority contracting company in federal false claims criminal investigation
- Represented casino consulting firm in federal grand jury investigation and before NIGC
- Represented Kentucky Commonwealth Attorney sued for malicious prosecution
- Represented a national client in an SEC insider trading investigation.
- Represented state's largest hospital system in false claims act litigation
- Represented numerous doctors in criminal investigations and in front of professional license boards
- Represented Durable Medical Equipment (DME) in false claims act litigation
- Represented large road contractor in Department of Justice antitrust litigation
- Defended litigation against a nationwide insurance company in a class action lawsuit
- Represented out-of-state law firm sued for malpractice over the creation of a trust

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Kentucky
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Kentucky

RECENT NEWS, ARTICLES & SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- DOJ Wants Charges Dropped In Breonna Taylor Warrant Case
  by Parker Quinlan, *Law360.com*, March 20, 2026

- Title Agencies Did Not Violate RESPA Affiliated Business Rule
  The Title Insurance Law Newsletter, American Land Title Association, September 2017 *,with David B. Owsley II, Richard A. Vance and T. Morgan Ward Jr.*
- Thad Barnes and Michael Denbow to Lead Stites & Harbison's Business Litigation Group
  by editor, *Louisville Business First*, March 29, 2024 *,with Thad M. Barnes*
- Stites & Harbison Names Business Litigation Co-Chair Duo
  By Adrian Cruz, Law360.com, March 29, 2024 *,with Thad M. Barnes*
- Stites & Harbison Appoints New White Collar Chair
  by Adrian Cruz, Law360.com, July 24, 2023
- Michael Denbow Named Chair of Stites & Harbison's White Collar Practice Group
  by staff writer, Attorney *At Law Magazine*, July 19, 2023
- Reevaluating Your Company's Compliance Program
  Stites & Harbison Client Alert, July 20, 2023
- KHSAA allows name, image, likeness benefits
  by Mark Glover, Fox56news.com, July 6, 2023
- NIL 101: The Revolution of Name, Image, and Likeness
  Speaker, Stites & Harbison Thirsty Thursday, March 23, 2023
- How to Deal with RAC Audits Related to Alleged Fraudulent Billing
  Co-presenter, KAHCF Annual Meeting, November 16, 2022
- Legal: Score!
  by Russ Brown, *The Lane Report*, September 15, 2022
- Responding to and Defending Government Investigations: What to do When the Government "Knocks" On Your Door
  Revenue Cycle and Compliance Summit, First Healthcare Compliance, June 23, 2022
- 20 People to Know in Law: Michael Denbow
  Louisville Business First, June 2, 2022
- NIL Compensation for High School Athletes: The Future is Now
  Stites & Harbison Client Alert, April 27, 2022
- Level Playing Field: Attorneys, like former University of Louisville football player Jake Eldemire Smith, are tackling name, image and likeness rights in search of a fair deal
  by Laurel Deppen, *Louisville Business First*, March 25, 2022
- Entering the NIL Game
  by Mark Green, *The Lane Report*, September 2021
- NIL Update – Should Student Athletes Seek Professional Advice?
  Stites & Harbison Client Alert, August 27, 2021
- Feds Oppose Prison For Fired NCAA Coach's Blackmail Threat
  By Rachel Scharf, Law360.com, August 11, 2021

- Kentucky Joins Growing Number of States Allowing Student-Athletes to Receive Name, Image, Likeness (NIL) Compensation
  Stites & Harbison Client Alert, July 2, 2021
- Kentucky's Prisons, COVID, and No Compassionate Release
  ,*with Joshua F. Barnette* Kentucky Bar Association, *Bench & Bar Magazine*, January-February 2021
- The Perfect Storm? A Look at the Federal Compassionate Release Program Following the First Step Act and a Worldwide Pandemic
  ,*with Joshua F. Barnette* Kentucky Bar Association, *Bench & Bar Magazine*, January-February 2021
- Responding to and Defending Government Investigations: What to do When the Government "Knocks" On Your Door
  Kentucky Bar Association Corporate House Counsel, Webinar, February 10, 2021 ,*with Joshua F. Barnette*
- No Good Deed: Protecting Yourself and Your Business from a Governmental Investigation Concerning Your PPP Loan
  ,*with Joshua F. Barnette* Stites & Harbison Client Alert, May 13, 2020
- Responding to and Defending Governmental Investigations: What to Do When the Government 'Knocks' On Your Door
  Blueprint for the Future: Drafting a New Plan for Health Care, Kentucky Hospital Association 89th Annual Convention, Lexington, KY, May 2018
- Practical Implications and Concerns of the Criminal Referral Process
  2017 Farm Credit System (FCS) Attorney's Conference, New Orleans, LA, September 2017

FIRM LEADERSHIP

- Business Litigation Service Group, Co-Chair (2024-present)
- White Collar Practice Group, Firm Chair (2023-present)
- Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, Member (2021)

MEMBERSHIPS

- American Bar Association
- Kentucky Bar Association
- Louisville Bar Association
- American Health Law Association
- National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL)
- Kentucky Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (KACDL)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- St. Agnes Catholic Church, Member
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Board Member

EDUCATION

- University of Louisville Louis D. Brandeis School of Law J.D., 2008
- Washington and Lee University B.A., *cum laude* 2004

MORE THAN STITES & HARBISON

Prior to joining Stites & Harbison, Michael worked at GE for three years as a program manager in the Warranty Management Division. Michael also participated in the firm's summer associate program in the summer of 2007. Outside of the practice of law, Michael and his wife, Ali, have four kids: Gracie, Jack, Henry, and George. While the kids account for most of his spare time, he still finds time to live and die with University of Kentucky football and basketball as well as the Pittsburgh Pirates and Pittsburgh Steelers.

ACCOLADES

- *Best Lawyers In America*®, Professional Malpractice Law (2027)
- *Kentucky Super Lawyers*® (2025-26)
- *Kentucky Super Lawyers*®, Rising Star (2013-21)
- *Louisville Magazine* Top Lawyers (2016)