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Tyson & Mendes Expands To Carolinas With 2 Partner Hires

By **Adrian Cruz**

Law360 (November 12, 2026, 4:25 PM EST) -- Tyson & Mendes LLP announced Thursday that the insurance defense firm will open new offices in North and South Carolina following the hiring of a pair of experienced attorneys as partners from Barnwell Whaley Patterson & Helms LLC.



Christopher Hinnant

Christopher Hinnant and Michael Barfield will join Tyson & Mendes in January as managing partners of the offices in Wilmington, North Carolina, and Charleston, South Carolina, respectively, after 11 and 25 years at Barnwell Whaley, according to their LinkedIn pages.

"Our Southeast region is full of talented litigators and proven trial lawyers, and I'm thrilled that will now include Chris and Michael," Southeast regional managing partner Holly E. Howanitz said in a statement. "I look forward to serving our clients in the Carolinas — and beyond — with them."



Michael Barfield

Both attorneys said in statements that Tyson & Mendes' Apex **defense litigation strategy** released last year was a big factor in their decisions to join the firm.

"The Apex is a game-changing approach, and I look forward to leveraging it to serve our clients where they need us most," Hinnant said.

"Joining Tyson & Mendes allows us to combine deep local knowledge with the firm's innovative trial strategies and nationally recognized approach to defending against nuclear verdicts," Barfield said. "I look forward to joining an exceptional team of attorneys and continuing to deliver excellence for our clients, now in partnership with a nationally-recognized firm."

Hinnant graduated from Campbell University's Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law. He brings experience in litigation matters such as medical malpractice, construction defects, premises liability, dram shop claims, commercial disputes and personal injury, Tyson & Mendes said.

Along with his time with Barnwell Whaley, Hinnant has worked at Cranfill Sumner LLP and Patterson Dilthey Clay & Bryson LLP, his LinkedIn page says.

Barfield graduated from the University of South Carolina Joseph F. Rice School of Law. He focuses his practice on professional negligence, construction litigation, commercial litigation, property related litigation, personal injury and real estate matters, Tyson & Mendes said.

The firm added that associate Chamberlain Collier Smith will also be joining the North Carolina office from Barnwell Whaley.

The Carolinas expansion announcement comes shortly after Tyson & Mendes announced the opening of an **Austin, Texas, office**. Earlier this year, the firm also opened its **seventh California office** and has added attorneys in a number of markets such as **New York** and **Atlanta**.

Tyson & Mendes has 30 offices in 24 states, the firm said.

A representative of the firm wasn't immediately available for comment Thursday.

--Editing by Brian Baresch.

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