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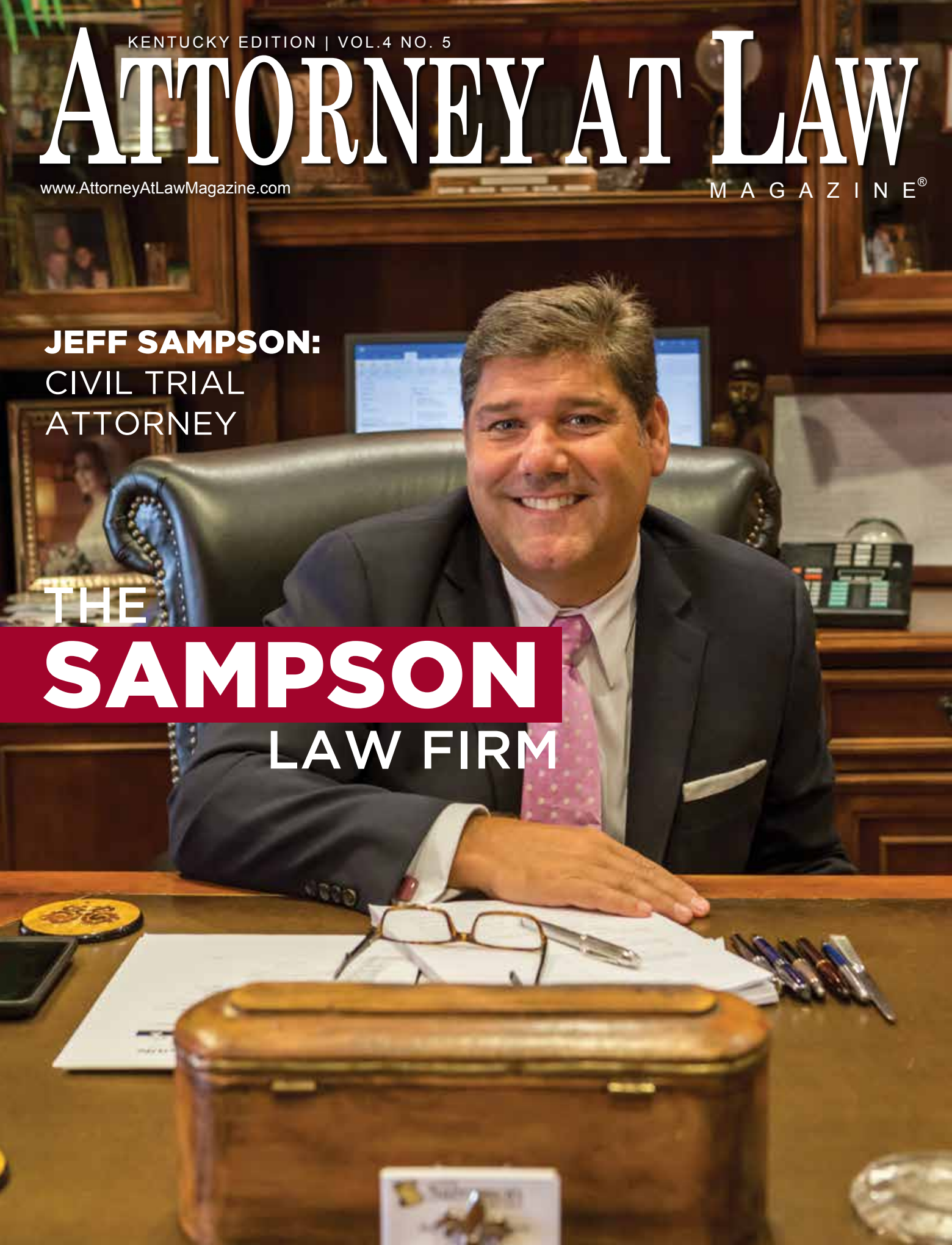
# ATTORNEY AT LAW

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MAGAZINE®

**JEFF SAMPSON:**  
CIVIL TRIAL  
ATTORNEY

THE  
**SAMPSON**  
LAW FIRM





LAW FIRM OF THE MONTH

THE

# SAMPSON

LAW FIRM

By Dan Baldwin

“For me we’re in the classic David vs. Goliath situation. You’ve got somebody who most often has been injured through no fault of their own. They’re in a bad, bad way and you get to help them put the pieces back together. That’s an amazing feeling really. When you can see somebody whose life is in shambles and you can help them. You certainly can’t put them back where they were, but you can help get them through this very trying time to at least get to the other side,” says Jeffrey T. “Jeff” Sampson, founder of Sampson Law Firm.

The Sampson Law Firm was founded in 1997 to focus primarily on the practice area of personal injury in such diverse areas a nursing home abuse and neglect, car and truck accidents, product liability, premises liability, and worker’s compensation. The firm employs two attorneys, two paralegals, a receptionist and an executive office manager. The Sampson Law Firm serves clients state-wide

Sampson, a lifelong resident of Kentucky earned his B.B.A. with honors in management from the University of Kentucky, graduating



## PERSONAL INJURY LAW | ONE OF KENTUCKY'S MOST PROLIFIC TRIAL LAWYERS

in 1989. He earned his J.D. from the University of Louisville School of Law in 1992. He is a member of the Kentucky Bar Association, the Louisville Bar Association, the American Justice Association, the Kentucky Justice Association, and he is recognized by the Kentucky Trial Court Review as one of Kentucky's Most Prolific Trial Lawyers.

When he decided to create his own firm he decided to concentrate on personal injury. "These are some dark, dark days for these folks. They're really in bad shape – financially and otherwise. Horrific injuries are costly. And families are dependent on checks that come in. If you can't work, your checks don't come in and you if don't have another source of income, things get tight



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really, really quickly. Helping those people is what I really wanted to do. I knew that's what I liked," he says.

Sampson's first interest in a law career occurred in college. He was a fan of the television programs featuring lawyers and law firms such as *LA Law*. "I was a junior or senior in college and I thought, 'Now, that looks interesting. It looks like a pretty interesting career choice.' That's one of the reasons I decided to give law school a try and I was fortunate enough to do well on the entrance exam and be accepted to law school."

After graduating from law school Sampson passed the Bar and took a job with a firm in Owensboro, KY with an employer who became a mentor, Charlie Wible. "He is fantastic. He is one of those old school trial lawyers who spent time teaching associates how to practice. I got a huge benefit from him immediately that quite frankly some of my classmates didn't get if they went with a larger firm where perhaps they didn't get the same level of mentorship."

He stayed in Owensboro for three years and then moved back to his home town of Louisville where he worked at a medium size defense law firm for two years. The firm

at that time faced a number of problems and, as Sampson says, "basically imploded." He was one of ten or more attorneys who suddenly found themselves out of work. Sampson says, "I thought well, this is the impetus for me. I've been kicked out of the nest so if I'm ever going to do it, this is the time. So, in May of 1997, I and a classmate and friend of mine started the firm and then another classmate and friend joined us about a year later. We practiced together until 2004 when one of my friends went a different route. Then my other partner and his wife went on their own in 2011 and began their own practice. Since January of 2012 it's been just me and my associate."

Sampson said he entered the field with "eyes wide open" knowing that he would face challenges not only in getting and holding clients, but also in the arena of business management. He says that one of the biggest surprises, and one of the best, encountered in his early career was the support from members of the Kentucky legal community.

"I was pleasantly surprised by how willing other lawyers were to help out someone going out on his own. People went out of their way to help me when I was new. I didn't have any clients. I had to go get them. One

of the ways I did that was to talk with other lawyers and say, 'Hey, if you have a conflict or you have a case you don't want to take for some reason or another, if you could give them my name and number that'd be wonderful. That would be very helpful to me. And people were very good about that. They did that seemingly gladly.'

As with most attorneys who also are the business managers of their own firms, Sampson found himself "wearing two hats." He hasn't found the two very different roles a burden. "It's never a conflict between the two, but sometimes it can be frustrating. Obviously the way the wheels of the business run, when I'm practicing as an attorney and creating income, but then along with that comes responsibility for running a business such as tax issues, payroll issues and income issues – things that have nothing to do with the practice of law, but have to be done to run the ship. And there are times when you feel there isn't enough time to do both, but beyond that, they're not really conflicts. It's just the nature of the beast."

Sampson sees the small size of The Sampson Law Firm as an advantage for his firm's clients. Larger firms obviously have more resources, but also they have more volume



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so it's likely very difficult to meet every client's personal needs regularly, he says.

"When you come here and I represent you, I'm going to know you. I'm going to know what your struggles are. I give people my cell phone number. My clients have access to me whenever they want it, whenever they need it. I know that to set our firm apart we have to be light years better in terms of service, which means returning phone calls and just being available to clients to let them know what their issues are. Sometimes we don't do that perfectly, of course, but I would say that is our goal. It is what separates us from others who maybe have a practice that doesn't lend itself to that. Every client we have is our lifeblood, so we take care of them as well as we can."

Personal injury law requires a willingness to adapt to change, especially in new technology. Sampson cites the recent introduction of driverless cars into the marketplace. The trend could on one hand negatively affect many personal injury attorneys who handle automobile and truck and related

cases. On the other hand, new technologies have a tendency to open up new areas of the law. "I don't know how long that will take, but that's something I see as handwriting on the wall. It's new technology and with every new development there is new opportunity for the lawyer," he says.

Sampson says his business, management and personal philosophy is "laid back." He is not a micromanager and considers himself a "big picture" manager who is flexible with clients, employees and the challenges of managing a business in a highly-competitive field." The main thing that I tell all my employees is that you work hard here, but that I want to cultivate a family atmosphere. More importantly, I want them to know that their family comes first. Their family comes before the firm. So if they've got family issues that they need to take care of they know they're free to come to me and say, 'Hey, I need a day off' or whatever it is and that I'm not going to be a task master and say, 'No, you can't do that.' So, that's my management philosophy."

Sampson is married and will celebrate a 20th wedding anniversary in November. He has three children: a daughter just entering college and two sons ages 13 and 15. The family is close and enjoys spending time together, especially traveling together. Sampson also plays golf in his spare time. "That's my primary hobby. I'm too old to play basketball or softball anymore, so golf is a great alternative."

He and his family attend Throne of Grace Community Church.

Sampson says family comes first, but he is committed to providing the best in legal services to his clients. "They are in a place where they don't know what to do or where to go and so when you're able to provide some assistance to those families it's very, very rewarding. The best days of my practice are when I've represented a family or a client through some very dark times and there is a settlement check that I can hand them at the end of the day – it's a great feeling."