

NEWS RELEASE

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STRANGE ADMINISTRATION HONORED TWICE FOR BEST BRIEFS TO U.S. SUPREME COURT

(MONTGOMERY) – The National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) has honored Attorney General Luther Strange with two Best Brief awards this year. These awards recognize excellence in brief writing by state attorneys to the United States Supreme Court. They are judged by a panel of leading members of the Supreme Court Bar.

The briefs were in Miller v. Alabama and Maples v. Thomas. In Miller v. Alabama, the Court is expected to rule on the constitutionality of mandatory life-without-parole sentences for 14-year-olds convicted of capital murder. In Maples v. Thomas, the Court held by a 7-2 margin that because a death-row inmate's attorneys abandoned him, he had good cause for failing to follow proper court procedures in asserting certain federal claims.

Alabama Solicitor General John Neiman was lead attorney for the State in both cases. Attorney General Strange appointed Neiman, a former clerk to Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy and former attorney at the Birmingham firm of Bradley Arant Boult Cummings, to the position of Alabama Solicitor General when General Strange first took office. Neiman thus wrote both briefs and argued both cases during his first year in the Attorney General's Office. In both cases, Neiman was assisted by a team of attorneys. The Miller team included Deputy Solicitors General Andrew Brasher and Prim Escalona, and Assistant Attorneys General Clay Crenshaw, Henry Johnson, John Porter and Stephanie Reiland. The Maples team included Deputy Solicitor General Escalona, Assistant Attorneys General Will Parker and Misty Fairbanks, and Special Deputy Attorney General Corey Maze.

The Alabama Attorney General's Office has a long history of success with the NAAG Best Brief award. In 2002, former Attorney General (and current Federal Judge) William H. Pryor created the position of Alabama Solicitor General to focus on the office's work in the U.S. Supreme Court. Over the 10 years since then, the office has won 10 Best Brief awards. Previous Solicitors General on those briefs were Special Deputy Attorney General Maze (three), Birmingham attorney Kevin Newsom (four), and current U.S. Department of Justice official Nate Forrester (one).

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