

# Henry King

**Position:** King, Krebs & Jurgens managing member and co-founder

**Age:** 58

**Family:** wife, Cary; children, Marguerite, 25, Lucy, 24, Spencer, 22

**Education:** bachelor's degree in English, Vanderbilt University; juris doctor, Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center

**H**enry King would be the first to acknowledge that, as he puts it, "Katrina created a whole lot of legal issues."

Many of those issues in the four and a half years since the storm have seen his firm involved in things such as title issues with homes.

"One of the most important things that owners have to settle when they are rehabilitating a house damaged by the storm is proving title to that house," King said. "And in many cases, these houses have passed from generation to generation without what we call succession here in Louisiana."

As a result, King, Krebs & Jurgens launched a pro bono program to assist people in dealing with legal issues that came out of the storm, such as proving title to a house. But perhaps King's most extensive post-Katrina work has centered on the claims and counterclaims dealing with State Farm Insurance Co.

"We represent State Farm," King said. "They have worked hard and have been able to resolve without litigation probably 90 percent of the cases."

But unfortunately, King said, the number left over has been very large, estimating that the firm probably had more than 500 individual cases.

The big issue in the vast majority of State Farm cases has been whether the damage was caused by wind or flood. With the insurance company arguing that it should not have to pay for damage that was not covered in a typical homeowner's policy, King said he was aware he was representing an unpopular point of view among the general public.

"But in order for the state to really come back, all businesses needed to be treated fairly, even insurance companies," King said. "If you make them pay out money that was not due under the policy, you create a terrible situation."

How terrible?

"It was possible that insurance companies might just decide to leave the state altogether," King said. "And if that happened, new businesses would not locate here and it would be very difficult to rebuild the state."

King, who co-founded King, Krebs & Jurgens in 1985, has been instrumental in mandating that all attorneys at his firm give back to the community with at least 20 hours of pro bono work per year, work that has seen firm members involved in charter schools, homeless advocacy programs and post-conviction work.

"It never really seems like you give enough back to your community," King said, "but I think it's important that we all at least try."•

— Garry Boulard

