



Michael Kelso

Partner

Houston

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Overview

Michael Kelso is a skilled trial lawyer with landmark wins for plaintiffs and defendants in high-stakes commercial cases across the country. Michael has recovered more than half a billion dollars for plaintiffs and successfully defeated multi-billion-dollar claims for his defense-side clients.

Michael combines strategic vision with skillful execution—compelling writing, thoughtful legal and factual analysis, and gifted courtroom advocacy. This approach has led to success for his clients in federal and state courts and in arbitrations across a broad range of subject areas: antitrust, securities fraud, energy, finance, breach of contract disputes, executive compensation, partnership breakups, even alcohol regulation.

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“Kelso is an “outstanding” lawyer “who doesn’t miss a thing” and is “simply smarter, faster, more aggressive (when appropriate) and more strategically astute than competitors.”

As quoted in *Legal 500 2021 Analysis*

Michael has been repeatedly recognized for his successes by leading legal industry publications. Michael was named a Rising Star by *Texas Super Lawyers* (2024, Thomson Reuters), a Rising Star by *Texas Lawyer* (2023, ALM), selected to the Lawdragon 500X – the Next Generation of Leading Lawyers (2023), and recognized with the award for Outstanding Antitrust Litigation Achievement by a Young Lawyer by the American Antitrust Institute (2019).

PROMINENT WINS

Plaintiff-Side

- Recovered over half a billion dollars in settlements (so far) in the *Libor* antitrust case, won class certification* for the direct-purchaser plaintiffs on their antitrust claims, and recently won a significant appellate victory defeating jurisdictional challenges by major foreign-bank defendants. Michael has been recognized for his work on *Libor* by the American Antitrust Institute with its award for Outstanding Antitrust Litigation Achievement by a Young Lawyer. This case has received substantial news coverage including in *The New York Times*, NASDAQ, New York Law Journal, Reuters and Law360* (*subscription required).
- Argued against and successfully defeated the defendants' motion to dismiss and then secured a \$6.25 million settlement (\$4.1 million net of fees and expenses) in a federal securities-fraud class action by Bristow Group Inc. shareholders.

Defense-Side

- Won a major summary judgment victory for Vitol in federal court defeating claims by Puerto Rico's public utility seeking to nullify six fuel-supply contracts and recover nearly \$4 billion in payments. The Court also awarded Vitol a full recovery on its counterclaim (\$41.4 million with interest). Michael wrote Vitol's summary judgment briefs and argued for Vitol at the summary judgment hearing.
- Won complete dismissal of a \$10 billion lawsuit brought by a special purpose litigation entity purported to bring Civil RICO and antitrust claims on behalf of Venezuela's state-owned oil company against more than 40 defendants. Michael successfully led the joint defense group's legal briefing challenging the plaintiff's standing to bring the lawsuit. Less than 9 months after the case was filed, the Magistrate Judge recommended dismissal, and the District Court adopted that recommendation and dismissed the case in its entirety a few months later.

Michael joined Susman Godfrey after clerking for Judge Carolyn D. King of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. He graduated with high honors from the University of Texas School of Law, where he served on the Editorial Board of the Texas Law Review, was awarded Clerk of the Chancellors Honor Society for earning the third-highest GPA in his class, and won first place in the Thad T. Hutcheson Moot Court Competition.

Honors & Distinctions

PROFESSIONAL

- Rising Star, *Texas Super Lawyers* (2024 Thomson Reuters)
- Rising Star, *Texas Lawyer* (2023, ALM)
- Lawdragon 500X – The Next Generation of Leading Lawyers (2023)

SUSMAN GODFREY

- Outstanding Antitrust Litigation Achievement by a Young Lawyer, American Antitrust Institute(2019) for work on *In re: Libor-based Financial Instruments Antitrust Litigation*
- Life Fellow, Texas Bar Foundation
- Life Member, Texas Law Review Association
- Advisory Board Member, Center for American & International Law, Institute for Energy Law
- Second Highest Score, Texas Bar Examination (July 2014)

ACADEMIC

- *Clerk of the Chancellors*, Chancellors Honor Society (Third-highest GPA in the class of 2014 at the University of Texas School of Law)
- Order of the Coif
- Articles Editor, *Texas Law Review*(Volume 92)
- Thad T. Hutcheson Moot Court Competition Champion
- Interscholastic Moot Court

Clerkships

Honorable Carolyn Dineen King, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, 2014-2015

Education

The University of Texas School of Law (J.D., with High Honors, 2014)

The University of California, Los Angeles (B.A., cum laude, 2010)

Admissions

Bar Admissions

- Texas

Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

Wins

Susman Godfrey Secures 11th Circuit Win for Vitol, Inc. in \$10 Billion PDVSA US Litigation Trust Case

Susman Godfrey Wins for Vitol in \$4 Billion Litigation with Puerto Rico Utility

Susman Godfrey Wins for Vitol, Inc. in \$10 Billion PDVSA US Litigation Trust Case

Susman Godfrey L.L.P. and Hausfeld LLP Secure \$240 Million Deutsche Bank LIBOR Settlement

Susman Godfrey LLP and Hausfeld LLP Secure \$130 Million Citibank LIBOR Settlement

Languages

French