



Neal S. Manne

Partner

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Overview

Neal Manne is one of the premier trial lawyers in America.

When *Lawdragon* identified 41 lawyers around the country as “[Lawdragon Legends](#),” it featured Manne on its cover and said:

“

“He’s the olive in the cocktail, the Frank Sinatra of the Rat Pack. Which is to say, he’s supremely that guy – the politico, legal genius and community activist without whom there’s only a bunch of separate voices.”

Lawdragon Legends

NATIONAL ACCLAIM

Lawdragon’s founder called Manne a “brilliant and incisive advocate as well as a leader in the profession.” In 2017, when *Lawdragon* named Susman Godfrey as “[America’s Leading Trial Firm](#)” and “the nation’s most elite litigation firm,” it described Manne as “the emotional core of the firm.”

Texas Lawyer (ALM) named Manne the “[Attorney of the Year](#)” in Texas in 2017. In five separate years *The Best Lawyers in America* (Woodward White Inc.) named Manne the “Lawyer of the Year” in Houston in a major practice area: Antitrust [2024](#), [2019](#) and [2017](#), and Bet-The-Company Litigation in [2018](#) and [2016](#).

In 2023 *Business Today* included Manne among the Top Ten Trailblazing Commercial Litigation Lawyers in Houston: “*Renowned for his representation of a prestigious client base in critical business disputes, Neal Manne of Susman Godfrey LLP showcases his versatility in both antitrust and*

*commercial litigation. **Praised as one of Texas' and the nation's best lawyers, his courtroom acumen is unparalleled.***"

Chambers USA (Chambers and Partners), which surveys clients and other lawyers, ranks Manne as one of the nation's best commercial litigators:

*"**He's one of the best lawyers in Texas and nationwide.**" 'He is regularly called on to represent clients from across the country in trial. He enjoys a 'great reputation.' Manne is "a **top-flight trial lawyer who gets called for the big cases**" and "**remarkably bright and analytical.**" He is "widely recognized as 'an exceptional trial lawyer' . . . in business-critical disputes, including antitrust and commercial litigation."*

*"The 'excellent' Neal Manne is '**incredibly smart, thoughtful and very strategic.**'" "Clients consider the 'passionate and thoughtful' Neal Manne 'one of the finest commercial litigators around' due to his '**astute, incisive and nimble mind,**' his "**deep knowledge base**" and his '**rare gift of penetrating dense rhetoric and complex facts**' to get quickly to the heart of the matter."*

*A "**tenacious litigator**" and a "**straight-shooter,**" "Manne has a 'wonderful reputation' among clients and peers, who commend 'his **ability to understand the central weakness or strength of the case** and convey his judgment with analysis that is appropriately detailed and dispassionate and which carries no more certainty than is warranted by the facts.'" (Quoted material is from Chambers rankings in 2006, 2012, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021 and 2023).*

Manne is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, the most prestigious organization of trial lawyers. In [2017](#) and [2018](#), the College highlighted Manne's pro bono work, writing that "his stellar example of furthering the administration of justice and ensuring access to justice for all, regardless of ability to pay, makes all Fellows of the College proud." In 2019, the Texas Law Review honored Manne with the Leon Green Award, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the legal profession.

LANDMARK VICTORIES

Manne has an extraordinarily broad and diverse litigation practice, having tried dozens of cases around the country.

ANTITRUST

Antitrust litigation has been a specialty of Manne and his firm for decades. He has handled cases in a wide range of industries for both plaintiffs and defendants. The *Best Lawyers in America* named Manne the Antitrust Lawyer of the Year in Houston in 2024, 2019 and 2017.

ENERGY LITIGATION

Energy litigation takes Manne to the courthouse often. He currently represents Chevron in dozens of coastal land loss cases in Louisiana and in global

climate change cases around the country. Manne also represents Vitol in major antitrust litigation in California. In 2021, after more than a decade of litigation, he and his team won dismissal of a \$3.8 billion claim against Vitol by Puerto Rico's electric power utility. The court also granted Vitol summary judgment on its \$28 million counter-claim.

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Manne is one of very few lawyers to win constitutional cases at trial. Manne tried a case in San Juan, Puerto Rico challenging the constitutionality of an onerous transfer tax. The federal district judge struck down the statute as unconstitutional, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit unanimously affirmed. In addition, Manne won a landmark ruling in federal court in Houston, affirmed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, that the system of cash bail used in Harris County, Texas, violated the constitutional rights of thousands of misdemeanor arrestees. Manne also tried a case in federal court in Austin, Texas challenging the constitutionality of Texas statutes prohibiting public companies from selling liquor. The federal district judge agreed that the statutes were unconstitutional; the Fifth Circuit begged to differ.

TORT LAW

Manne handles complex tort cases for both plaintiffs and defendants. He is lead counsel for Live Nation in hundreds of injury cases filed by thousands of plaintiffs regarding the 2021 Astroworld Music Festival. Manne helped devise the first mass subrogation claim, which allowed Susman Godfrey to make large recoveries for hundreds of health care plans in national class action litigation involving products as diverse as Vioxx, silicone breast implants and diet drugs. Manne was lead counsel for defendants in the Rio Piedras Explosion Litigation in San Juan, Puerto Rico, directing the efforts of seven law firms in the defense of more than 500 consolidated lawsuits. He has been Walmart's national trial counsel on dozens of high-exposure tort cases involving serious injuries or death.

CLASS ACTIONS

Manne handles class actions for plaintiffs and defendants throughout the country. He was national trial counsel for Walmart in the largest wage & hour class actions in the country, trying cases from California to Pennsylvania. He tried an antitrust class action for more than 4 months in Alaska for a class of salmon fishermen. In Kentucky, for Rawlings Group, he won the first employment class action ever tried to a jury verdict. Manne has resolved class actions for Chevron, ACE Insurance, Ltd., and many other companies.

COMPLEX INSURANCE COVERAGE DISPUTES

Manne has represented plaintiffs and defendants in complex insurance coverage disputes, across the country and even internationally. For Equitas, he handled matters involving coverage for environmental clean-up and

asbestos liability. For ACE Insurance Ltd., Manne handled not only insurance matters relating to D&O coverage and product liability coverage, but also matters involving antitrust, aviation, and securities fraud claims. Manne represented Texas Brine Company in insurance coverage litigation arising from an enormous sinkhole in Louisiana. He also has handled complex insurance coverage litigation for Walmart.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION DISPUTES

When CEO's and other top corporate executives are fired by their companies, they often call on Manne to represent them in breach of contract litigation. Most such cases settle before trial, but when they don't Manne has never lost. He's won trials for terminated executives suing Cambrian Capital Partners, Great Western Resources, Enserch, and Budget Group.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DISPUTES

Manne handles intellectual property litigation for both plaintiffs and defendants. He defended Dealix on patent infringement claims by Autobytel and won large recoveries for SuperSpeed Software in separate patent infringement cases against Oracle and IBM. Manne defended Walmart at trial on claims of misappropriation of trade secrets brought by a former vendor. The 8th Circuit affirmed the federal district court's judgment in favor of Walmart on the majority of the trade secret claims. The award to the former vendor was smaller than its own attorney's fees, and the vendor later went bankrupt.

11TH HOUR DEPENDABILITY

As a trial specialist, Manne often is hired in a case when trial is imminent:

- CBRE hired Manne to take over a long-running construction dispute as trial neared. After Susman Godfrey won dismissal of the fraud claim, the case settled.
- Walmart has brought Manne in to take over a variety of cases as trial approached, including IP disputes, employment class actions, and products liability cases.
- Modern art icon Robert Rauschenberg hired Manne after dozens of his paintings were seized from a museum to satisfy a default judgment. Manne won an injunction ordering the return of the art. When Manne eventually resolved the underlying dispute, a grateful Rauschenberg gave Manne's law firm two of his paintings as a bonus.
- Lloyds, on behalf of the London insurance market, hired Manne to take over and resolve four pollution clean-up coverage cases, some of them pending for many years.
- Aetna hired Manne just before trial in an eight-year-old pollution coverage dispute.

- The Torrington Company hired Manne only months before trial to defend it in a helicopter crash case that had been pending for seven years.
- Precision Airmotives hired Manne just before trial in an airplane crash case.
- Investment banker Frank Benevento hired Manne and his partner Steve Susman a few months before trial to take over a long-running case against RJR Nabisco. They won a large jury verdict for Benevento in federal court in New York.

PRO BONO SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Manne takes seriously the legal profession's mandate that lawyers provide free legal services to the underprivileged. His fast-paced trial practice and his work as a Managing Partner of Susman Godfrey have not stopped him from serving the community and the legal profession.

The American Bar Association (ABA) is the country's largest organization of lawyers. In 2021, Manne received the ABA Litigation Section's John Minor Wisdom Award for Public Service and Professionalism, given annually to a lawyer who makes "outstanding contributions to the quality of justice in their community, ensuring that the legal system is open and available to all." Also in 2021, Manne received the national ABA's Pro Bono Publico Award, which honored him for his "outstanding commitment to volunteer legal services for the poor and disadvantaged." Manne is the only person ever to receive both awards in the same year. Click [here](#) to watch the ABA's video about Neal, which features some of the extraordinary clients Neal has represented.

In 2020 Manne was recognized by Texas Appleseed for his pursuit of justice. In 2018, the *National Law Journal* (ALM) profiled Manne's pro bono work, which landed Susman Godfrey on its "Pro Bono Hot List." In 2017, the American College of Trial Lawyers praised Manne's "incredibly wide range of pro bono cases." The ADL honored Manne with its 2011 "Jurisprudence Award," given for "commitment to equality, justice, fairness, and community service."

In recognition of Manne's "lifetime of volunteer service to the community," the Houston Bar Association Auxiliary selected Manne as the 2003 recipient of the Leon Jaworski Award. In 1996, he was named the "Distinguished Alumnus for Community Service" by The University of Texas School of Law. Manne's pro bono legal work on behalf of women's rights led the National Women's Political Caucus to honor Manne (along with then-Vice President Al Gore) as the national "Good Guy of the Year" in 1994. The *Houston Press* followed suit, calling Manne "Good Guy Lawyer of the Year" in Houston, and Planned Parenthood gave him its Public Service Award.

On a pro bono basis, Manne has represented:

- a class of indigent individuals held in jail because they could not afford cash bail,
- a refugee resettlement agency successfully opposing the State of Texas' effort to block Syrian refugees,
- an indigent woman facing the loss of her home,
- a religious organization,
- women's health clinics targeted by violent protesters,
- a charitable trust,
- two different exonerated death row inmates,
- Houston's public access television station,
- Muslim jail inmates seeking accommodation of their religion's dietary restrictions,
- the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts,
- the Texas Defender Service, and
- world-renowned artist James Turrell.

In these and other pro bono cases, Manne has donated more than \$2 million of his time to people and organizations who would not otherwise have had high quality legal services. Click [here](#) to read about some of Manne's noteworthy pro bono cases.

Honors & Distinctions

- Associate Editor, Texas Law Review (1979-80)
- Chief Counsel and Staff Director, U. S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice (1985-86)
- Chief of Staff, U. S. Senator Arlen Specter (1987-88)
- Commissioner, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (appointed by Governor Ann Richards, 1992-93)
- Member, Harris County-Houston Sports Authority (appointed by Mayor Bill White, 2005-06)
- "Good Guy of the Year" (co-honoree with then-Vice President Gore), National Women's Political Caucus (1994)
- Profiled in "45 Under 45," *The American Lawyer's* profile of the 45 best young lawyers in America (ALM, 1995)
- University of Texas School of Law "Distinguished Alumnus of the Year for Community Service"(1996)
- Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers

- Included on *Lawdragon's* list of The 500 Best Lawyers in America in every year since 2010, and named a "Lawdragon Legend" in 2016
- *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Litigator (2022)
- Houston Bar Association Auxiliary's Leon Jaworski Award for "a lifetime of volunteer service to the community" (2003)
- ADL Jurisprudence Award for "commitment to equality, justice, fairness and community service" (2011)
- Recipient of the Leon Green Award by the Texas Law Review in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the legal profession (2019).
- Top Ten Trailblazing Commercial Litigators in Houston, *Business Today* (2023)
- Ranked as one of the Top 100 Trial Lawyers in America by *Benchmark Litigation* (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)
- Ranked as one of the best attorneys in the state of Texas in *Law & Politics* magazine's "Texas Super Lawyers" (Thomson Reuters, 2003-2023)
- Named one of the best 20 commercial litigation attorneys in Texas in multiple editions of Chambers USA *Awards for Excellence* client guides (based on survey of clients and other lawyers)
- Repeatedly named as one of the top "Bet-the-Company" litigators in Texas by "The Best Lawyers in America" (Woodard White Inc.). The 2016 and 2018 editions named Manne "Lawyer of the Year" for "Bet-the-Company Litigation" in Houston. The 2017, 2019, and 2024 editions named Manne "Lawyer of the Year" for Antitrust Litigation in Houston
- Recognized by Texas Appleseed for Pro Bono Service (2020)
- John Minor Wisdom Public Service and Professionalism Award, American Bar Association Litigation Section (2021)
- Pro Bono Publico Award, American Bar Association (2021) Click [here](#) to watch the ABA's video about Neal, which features some of the extraordinary clients Neal has represented.
- Board of Directors (current or previous): The University of Texas School of Law Foundation, Houston Bar Foundation (Vice Chair), Texas Law Review Association (President), The Houston Zoo, Houston Food Bank, Texas Freedom Network, Texas Appleseed Foundation, Texas Defender Service (Chair), University of Texas Foundation, Women's Advocacy Project, Center for AIDS (Chair), Houston Area Women's Center, People for the American Way, Annie's List, Houston Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Congregation Beth Israel, Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, Anti-Defamation League, Planned Parenthood Federation of America Action Fund, University of Texas Development Board Executive

Committee, University of Texas Chancellor's Council Executive
Committee, Grand Teton National Park Foundation.

Clerkships

Honorable William A. Norris, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth
Circuit, 1980-1981

Education

The University of Texas School of Law (J.D., with High Honors, 1980)

The University of Texas (B.A., summa cum laude, 1976)

- Phi Beta Kappa
- Friars
- University Scholar
- Order of the Coif
- Chancellors

Admissions

Bar Admissions

- Texas
- California
- District of Columbia
- Arkansas
- Wyoming

Wins

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

Susman Godfrey Secures Victory in Texas Supreme Court for Wrongfully
Incarcerated Pro Bono Client

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

Susman Godfrey Wins Partial Summary Judgment for Alley Theatre in Pro
Bono Insurance Lawsuit over Coverage of Hurricane Harvey Damage

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

Susman Godfrey Wins Pro Bono Appellate Victory in Unconstitutional Prison
Search Case

Two Pro Bono Victories In One Day For Susman Godfrey Co-Managing Partner Neal Manne

Susman Godfrey Wins Defense Verdict for The Rawlings Company in Employment Class Action

Leadership & Professional Memberships

Manne has served on numerous boards of directors, both within the legal profession and in the community at large. He was the founding Chair of the Board of Houston's Center for AIDS, Vice Chair of the Houston Bar Foundation, President of the Texas Law Review Association, Commissioner (appointed by Governor Ann Richards) of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, member (appointed by Mayor Bill White) of the Harris County Houston Sports Authority, and a member of the boards of directors of many organizations, including The University of Texas School of Law Foundation, The Houston Zoo, the Houston Area Women's Center, People for the American Way, Annie's List, the Anti-Defamation League, the University of Texas Foundation, the Houston Food Bank, the University of Texas Development Board Executive Committee, Texas Defender Service, the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America's Action Fund, the Houston Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, the University of Texas System's Chancellor's Council Executive Committee, Congregation Beth Israel, Texas Appleseed Foundation, the Women's Advocacy Project, the Texas Freedom Network, and the Grand Teton National Park Foundation.

- American Bar Association
- Houston Bar Association
- Fellow, Texas Bar Foundation
- Fellow, Houston Bar Foundation
- Texas Law Review Association
- Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers
- Elected member, American Board of Trial Advocates