



Richard W. Hess Partner

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Overview

I represent both plaintiffs and defendants in nearly every type of civil litigation. On the plaintiff side, my practice includes commercial disputes between businesses, compensation and non-compete disputes from employers against former executives, commercial class actions, partnership disputes, and whistleblower cases. On the defense side, I've helped clients of all sizes, from the largest corporations to startups, individual entrepreneurs and inventors, business executives and doctors.

A typical case for me is in a federal district court, but my work takes me to state trial courts, state and federal appeals courts, hearings before single and multiple arbitrators and even probate court. I have appeared and argued in court in Delaware, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, and of course, in Texas.

In January 2016, my partners appointed me as Susman Godfrey's General Counsel. From 2016–2018, in addition to my regular practice, I advised the firm and over 100 partners and associates in our four offices around the country.

I have served as lead counsel in a week-long private arbitration in New York, and have examined and cross-examined expert and fact witnesses in trials and arbitrations around the country. I advised the board of one of the nation's largest medical device manufacturers as Counsel to its Special Litigation Committee. And I won—in a Texas state court—summary judgment for client TMZ and its host Harvey Levin in a defamation case brought against the entertainment news giant by the mother of the late model/actress Anna Nicole Smith.

In addition to my trial and arbitration hearing work, I have argued all types of court hearings, including motions to dismiss, discovery disputes, Daubert hearings, and temporary restraining orders. I have also successfully petitioned the Texas Supreme Court, obtaining extraordinary relief for a client and stopping runaway litigation in a jurisdiction considered by some to be a "judicial hellhole." The magazines Texas Monthly and Texas Law & Politics (Thomson Reuters) named me a Texas "Rising Star" five times.

I am admitted to practice in every U.S. District Court in Texas, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, the Courts of Appeals for the Second, Fifth and Federal Circuits, and every state court in Texas.

Education

- Emory University (B.A., History and Political Science, 1995)
- The University of Chicago Law School (J.D., with honors, 2004)

Clerkship

Law Clerk to The Honorable Lee H. Rosenthal, United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas (2004-05)

Honors and Distinctions

- Recognized on Lawdragon 500's 2019 list of the country's Leading Plaintiff Financial Lawyers ([2019](#), [2020](#), [2021](#))
- Phi Beta Kappa
- Member, The University of Chicago Law Review, 2002-2004
- Thomas R. Mulroy Award for Excellence in Appellate Advocacy (2004)
- Finalist, Hinton Moot Court Competition (2004)
- Winner, Karl Llewellyn Memorial Cup
- Named, Texas Super Lawyers' Rising Star by Law & Politics, as published by Thomson Reuters (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2014)

Articles

Note: No Fair Play for Millionaires? McCain-Feingold's Wealthy Candidate Restrictions and the First Amendment, 70 U. Chi. L. Rev. 1067 (2003).

Professional Associations and Memberships

State Bar of Texas

Director, Writers in the Schools