

Texas Lawyer Names Stephen D. Susman ‘Lifetime Achiever’ in First Annual Professional Excellence Awards

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HOUSTON (August 24, 2015) — Susman Godfrey founder Stephen D. Susman has been honored as a “Lifetime Achiever” by Texas Lawyer in the publication’s first annual Professional Excellence Awards.

Texas Lawyer is honoring outstanding attorneys and judges for their body of work and overall contribution to the Texas legal community – including shaping the law, achieving outsized results for their clients, being remarkable jurists or assisting those in need of legal services.

A Houston native, Susman is routinely recognized as one of the most successful plaintiff’s attorneys in the country. He founded Susman Godfrey in 1980 on the back of a \$550 million-plus landmark victory he won as a plaintiff’s attorney for the victims of a nationwide price-fixing conspiracy. It was the largest jury verdict of its time. Since then he has represented both plaintiffs and defendants ranging from Northop in its suit against McDonnell Douglas over the F-18 jet fighter, House Speaker Jim Wright in his ethics battle, the Hunt brothers in the largest lender liability case in history, and the state of Arkansas in a milk price-fixing case.

“Steve’s success in the courtroom alone makes him worthy of this award,” said Neal Manne, Susman’s co-Managing Partner at their firm. “But Steve has done much more than just win big cases in the courtroom. He has taught lawyers around the country about effective advocacy; he has crafted and lobbied successfully for reforms in the civil justice system; he has advocated for creative ways to improve jury comprehension, streamline class actions, and make trials more efficient and affordable. And he has devised and promoted real-world mechanisms to bring more civility to litigation and trials. Steve always wanted to have a big impact on the legal field as a whole, and he has succeeded brilliantly.”

Susman created the Susman Agreements – a list of pretrial and trial agreements – available at TrialbyAgreement.com. A board-certified civil trial specialist, he serves on the national board of the American Board of Trial Advocates and is co-chair of its Jury Trial Committee.

This year Susman donated \$2 million to establish and fund The Civil Jury Project at NYU Law School, where he’ll serve as the Project’s Executive Director. He also serves on the Advisory Board of the Center of Civil Justice at NYU Law School, the Federal Judicial Evaluation Committee and co-chair of the Judicial Nominations Task Force of the American Constitution Society. He also serves as co-chair of the Aspen Institute’s Justice Circle.

A native Houstonian from a highly respected family of lawyers, Susman worked his way through Yale University, graduating magna cum laude. Returning to his home state and the University of Texas Law School, he was Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review and graduated first in his class, with the highest-grade point average in the school’s history. After serving as law clerk to The Honorable John R. Brown of the Fifth Circuit Court of appeals, Susman clerked for the United States Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black.