



Michael Murphy

Partner

Houston

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Michael is an accomplished litigator and first-chair trial attorney who counsels and represents clients in a broad range of disputes.

He has served as trial counsel in over 30 contested matters in state courts, federal courts, arbitrations, and administrative proceedings throughout the United States. His practice is focused on a wide range of complex commercial disputes and also includes significant experience in the defense of toxic tort, products liability, environmental claims, catastrophic event, and insurance coverage litigation.

Key Matters

Some of the experience represented below may have been handled at a previous firm.

COMMERCIAL LITIGATION

- Successfully defended global pharmaceutical manufacturer in commercial dispute with U.S. distributor
- Represented an industrial air supplier in multiple disputes arising from its customer bulk purchase agreements
- Defended a former light heavyweight boxing champion against a purported advisor in a contractual dispute

- Defended a movie producer in two-week jury trial against claims of breach of contract and business tort brought by a co-investor/lead actor arising from a failed movie venture
- Obtained take-nothing summary judgment on behalf of an international automobile manufacturer in a suit alleging breach of contract, violations of the Deceptive Trade Practices Act; in subsequent jury trial, obtained full recovery of attorneys' fees on DTPA counterclaim (first-chair trial attorney)
- Obtained take-nothing judgment in an AAA arbitration on behalf of an international automobile manufacturer arising from allegations of breach of contract and the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act (first-chair trial attorney)
- Represented an international automobile manufacturer in two administrative hearings before a State Office of Administrative Hearings; the matters were both settled on terms favorable to the client following cross-examination of claimants (first-chair trial attorney)

PRODUCTS LIABILITY LITIGATION

- Served as lead Texas counsel for global valve manufacturer overseeing litigation of hundreds of products liability matters
- Served as lead counsel for global plumbing distributor and retailer in asbestos litigation matters in Texas and New Mexico; obtained full dismissal of all claims
- Represented a leading pharmaceutical company as Texas counsel in diet drug litigation filed by plaintiffs opting out of a related class action
- Defended a leading pharmaceutical company as Texas counsel in hormone replacement therapy litigation
- Represented a global chemical supplier in litigation arising from alleged exposure to benzene and butadiene
- Served as lead Texas counsel for luxury automobile manufacturer in multiple suits brought under Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act

TOXIC TORT/ENVIRONMENTAL LITIGATION

- Defended sand mining company in multiple actions involving over 2,000 plaintiffs arising from flood events during Hurricane Harvey
- Defended major pharmaceutical manufacturers in suits stemming from prescription drug use
- Represented oil and gas companies against alleged occupational asbestos exposure in multiple lawsuits pending in Texas MDL
- Defended a Fortune 100 oil and gas company in multiple lawsuits arising from alleged occupational exposure to benzene and related products
- Defended clients in multiple matters pending in Texas MDL involving allegations of harmful exposure to silica
- Defended a midstream oil and gas company against claims arising from alleged exposure to hydrogen sulfide during work-over operations; obtained non-suit of all claims prior to hearing on motion for summary judgment
- Represented a chemical manufacturer in a mass action stemming from leaks from underground storage tanks brought by a gasoline retailer

ENERGY LITIGATION

- Advised exploration and production company in connection with various disputes with tribal lessor/regulator
- Successfully defended a mining company in litigation over valuation and ownership of mining interests
- Successfully defended a large midstream company in a class action arising from a crude oil spill in a suit that involved claims of strict liability for ultra-hazardous activity, violations of the Oil Pollution Act, trespass, negligence, negligence per se, public nuisance, continuing private nuisance, and a prayer for permanent injunction

- Obtained a favorable pre-suit settlement for the purchaser of a natural gas storage facility in a dispute arising from misrepresentations made in connection with the acquisition
- Represented an exploration and production company in a dispute arising from loss of well during the course of well completion activities
- Advised a private equity portfolio company in connection with its acquisition of an international exploration and production company and related litigation matters
- Represented upstream and midstream energy clients in disputes involving the Texas Oilfield Anti-Indemnity Act
- Represented a midstream oil and gas company in multiple personal injury disputes arising from a fire and explosion that occurred at a midpoint pump station

CONSTRUCTION LITIGATION

- Represented an EPC contractor and obtained a favorable pre-suit settlement in mediation in a dispute with project owner over refinery expansion
- Defended an engineering and construction firm as third party in a dispute between a refiner and pipe fabricator arising from refinery expansion

OTHER LITIGATION

- Represented a mechanical pump seal manufacturer in a copyright and trade secrets lawsuit stemming from the misappropriation of its mechanical drawings by a competitor in connection with a third-party bid process
- Defended the former chief executive of an offshore seismic company in a lawsuit brought by a former company for alleged mishandling of trade secrets, breach of covenant not to compete, breach of nondisclosure agreement, and breach of fiduciary duty
- Obtained summary judgment, as team member, on behalf of a media conglomerate and its subsidiary in a defamation action brought by a record promoter arising from a nationally televised broadcast and related commercial advertisements

PRO BONO MATTERS

- Successfully co-led trial team that obtained permanent injunction on behalf of prisoners in geriatric, medical facility prison in connection with COVID-19 pandemic
- Successfully obtained asylum from India for a Muslim asylum-seeker on the grounds of religious persecution (first-chair trial attorney)
- Represented an adult day care center in administrative licensure proceedings, including a two-day administrative hearing before the State Office of Administrative Hearings (first-chair trial attorney)
- Tried more than 15 jury trials to verdict as a volunteer prosecutor for the City of Houston
- Represented multiple pro bono clients in family law disputes referred via the Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program

Recent Experience

Secured Settlement for Fox on Brink of Trial in High-Profile Defamation Litigation Brought by US Dominion Voting Systems

Argus Capital Corp. Announces Closing of Upsized US\$304.75M IPO

Recognitions

- *Chambers USA*—Ranked for Litigation: General Commercial (2024)
 - *Benchmark Litigation US*—Recognized as a “Future Star” (2021–2025) and on the “40 & Under List” (2021)
 - *The Legal 500 U.S.*—Recognized as a “Key Lawyer” in the areas of Dispute Resolution: General Commercial Disputes (2021–2022); Energy Litigation: Oil and Gas (2023); and Dispute Resolution: Product Liability, Mass Tort and Class Action - Defense: Toxic Tort (2024)
 - *The Legal 500 Latin America*—Recognized in International Firms for City-Focus Houston (2024)
 - *Lawdragon*
 - Recognized in “500 Leading Energy Lawyers” (2023–2025)
 - Recognized in “500 Leading Litigators in America” for Commercial Litigation, Product Liability, and Mass Torts (2024–2025)
 - Recognized in “The Green 500: The Leading Environmental Lawyers” (2024–2025)
 - *The Best Lawyers in America*®—Recognized for Commercial Litigation and Product Liability Litigation - Defendants (2024–2025)
 - *Texas Lawyer*—Named a “Diversity & Inclusion Champion” (2022)
 - *Super Lawyers*—Selected as a “Texas Rising Star” (2016–2020)
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Activities

- Board Member, Energy Editorial Advisory Board, Law360 (2023)
 - Member, Houston Bar Association
 - Member, American Bar Association, Section of Litigation
 - Member, Defense Research Institute
 - Regional Co-Chair, ABA Judicial Internship Opportunity Program
 - Director, Midtown Redevelopment Authority
 - Director, Houston Urban Debate League
 - 2013 Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Fellow
 - Admitted to State Bar Pro Bono College, 2007
 - Former Ambassador: Greater Houston Partnership
 - Graduate, United Way Project Blueprint Class XXX
 - Fellow, Texas Bar Foundation
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“Michael is very measured and calm, and if a crazy situation comes up, he takes his time and comes up with a thoughtful approach. He is a very strong advocate.”

Chambers 2024 Testimonial

“He is a talented trial lawyer.”

Chambers 2024 Testimonial

Credentials

EDUCATION

Michael received his B.A., *cum laude*, from Duke University in 2002, and he received his J.D. from Harvard Law School in 2005.

ADMISSIONS

- Texas

Related Insights & News

Publications and Speaking Engagements

- Speaker, “Preparing and Presenting Corporate Witnesses at Trial,” Winston & Strawn Product & Mass Torts Summit, June 7, 2022
- “If the Judge Ain’t Happy, Ain’t Nobody Happy,” Texas State Bar Litigation Institute, February 5, 2020
- “Millennials in the Workplace,” National Diversity & Leadership Conference, April 11, 2019
- “Attorney-Client Privilege: This is Off the Record, Right?” ABA Section of Litigation 2018 Professional Success Summit, November 14, 2018
- “Credibility and Impeachment,” University of Houston Law Foundation, Advanced Evidence and Discovery, November 2008

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Featured on the 2025 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Energy Lawyers List

MARCH 6, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Featured on the 2025 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Environmental Lawyers — The Green 500 List

FEBRUARY 4, 2025

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *The Legal 500 Latin America* 2025

OCTOBER 24, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in 2025 *Benchmark Litigation*

OCTOBER 3, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Featured on the 2025 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Litigators in America List

SEPTEMBER 6, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*® 2025

AUGUST 15, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *The Legal 500 U.S.* 2024

JUNE 12, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in *Chambers USA* 2024

JUNE 6, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Featured on the 2024 *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Energy Lawyers List

FEBRUARY 16, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston Attorneys Featured on *Lawdragon's* Green 500: The 2024 Leaders in Environmental Law List

FEBRUARY 2, 2024

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in All Categories of *The Legal 500 Latin America* 2024

OCTOBER 26, 2023

RECOGNITIONS

Winston & Strawn Recognized in 2024 *Benchmark Litigation*

OCTOBER 6, 2023

Capabilities

Litigation/Trials

Commercial Litigation & Disputes

Product Liability & Mass Torts

Environmental Litigation & Enforcement

Class Actions & Group Litigation

Energy

Oil & Gas

Energy Industry Litigation & Investigations

Medical Devices

Automotive & Mobility

Insurance