



## Charles L. Stinneford

### Of Counsel

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### Overview

Charles practices in the area of commercial litigation. He has extensive trial and appellate experience in the state and federal courts of Texas in a variety of legal disciplines. Charles has successfully resolved many complex cases in the areas of oil and gas, admiralty, contract, construction, environmental contamination, antitrust, fraud, trusts, property damage, toxic torts and personal injury. He has also successfully litigated complex multi-district litigation and class action lawsuits. His clients include energy and energy service companies, chemical companies, insurance companies, franchisors, and other businesses in the fields of banking, shipping, and offshore construction.

In addition to his litigation practice, Charles also regularly advises clients on general corporate matters including regulatory compliance, safety, employment and contract construction.

A particular highlight of Charles' practice has been representing companies in the energy industry. Charles has successfully litigated operator and working interest owner disputes, contractor disputes, reservoir damage and other property damage, pollution and personal injuries on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Charles has written papers and lectured on topics such as how to navigate a complex maritime case, the benefits of jury focus groups, the advantages and disadvantages of mediation and accident investigations on the OCS.

### Practices

- Admiralty and Maritime
- Antitrust and Trade Regulation
- Appellate

### Industries

- Banking
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Maritime

- Banking
- Class Actions
- Commercial Litigation
- Environmental and Toxic Torts
- Oil, Gas and Energy Litigation and Arbitration

## Admissions

- Texas

## Education

- South Texas College of Law, J.D. *magna cum laude* 1992
- University of Texas at Austin, B.A. 1987

## Experience

- Successfully defended a publicly-traded exploration and production company in a \$1.2 billion lawsuit alleging fraud and conspiracy in the farmout of several offshore leases; after four years of extremely complex litigation, the parties settled shortly before trial for defendant's cost of defense
- Successfully defended a logistical solutions company in a \$20 million lawsuit alleging breach of contract and fraud in the construction of temporary housing following Hurricane Katrina; defendant filed a third-party action against a New Orleans university for breach of contract and then, following three years of exacting litigation, reached a seven-figure settlement with the university and resolved plaintiff's claims shortly before trial for defendant's cost of defense
- Successfully defended a television network in a \$15 million lawsuit alleging breach of contract and fraud in the production of television programming; after a short period of discovery, defendant negotiated a very favorable settlement agreement on confidential terms
- Successfully defended an exploration and production company in a \$12 million lawsuit alleging securities fraud, misrepresentation, and conspiracy in the sale of two oil and gas investments in South Texas; after the criminal indictment and bankruptcy of a co-defendant, and three years of protracted litigation, defendants settled shortly before trial on very favorable terms
- Successfully defended an exploration and production company in a lawsuit alleging breach of a purchase and sale agreement for a \$10.5 million working interest in an East Texas gas field; defendant filed a counterclaim against plaintiff for its breach of the agreement and, shortly before trial, obtained a very favorable settlement from plaintiff on confidential terms

- Successfully defended a publicly-traded chemical company in a \$10 million lawsuit alleging environmental damage to the property of 350 plaintiffs; following a period of time for discovery, defendant resolved all claims against it for less than the cost of its defense
- Successfully defended an offshore pipeline contractor in a \$4 million personal injury lawsuit resulting from a slip and fall on a pipelay vessel; following trial in Lufkin, the court found plaintiff 65% liable and awarded him \$380,000 in damages; defendant reversed and rendered the judgment on appeal, resulting in a \$0 judgment
- Successfully defended a pipeline construction company in a \$3.5 million personal injury lawsuit resulting from the explosion of a pipeline during pressure testing; defendant filed a third-party action against its contractor for breach of contract and then, following three years of complex litigation, settled plaintiff's claims for a reasonable sum and obtained a judgment against the contractor for the amount of the settlement plus defendant's attorneys' fees
- Successfully prosecuted a \$3.4 million claim of a working interest owner against the operator of a large Texas gas field for breach of the operating agreement and damage to the reservoir; following a period of time for discovery, plaintiff obtained a very favorable settlement from defendant on confidential terms
- Successfully defended an investment bank, a working interest owner, and an oil and gas operator in a lawsuit claiming that these defendants owed \$3 million to another working interest owner in an oil and gas field; after several years of litigation, defendants received a summary judgment declaring that they did not owe the working interest owner anything
- Successfully defended a pipeline inspection company in a \$3 million lawsuit alleging negligence in the inspection of oil well casing; after a brief period of discovery, plaintiff agreed to settle for an amount that was substantially less than defendant's cost of defense
- Successfully defended a work boat operator in a multi-million dollar lawsuit resulting from damage it caused to an offshore gas well and flowline; defendant demonstrated that its liability would be limited to the value of the vessel and settled with plaintiff for that amount
- Successfully defended an individual mineral interest owner in a \$1.4 million lawsuit alleging that he sold his mineral interest to an exploration and production company; after trial in Victoria, the court entered judgment finding that no sale had occurred
- Successfully defended a publicly-traded exploration and production company in a \$1.4 million breach of contract lawsuit alleging the failure to pay for subsea construction work; defendant filed a counter-claim against the contractor for its failure to perform the work in a good and workmanlike manner and settled shortly before arbitration for \$10,000
- Successfully defended a large chemical storage facility on the Houston Ship Channel in an \$800,000 lawsuit resulting from product contamination; defendant demonstrated that the

product manufacturer acted unreasonably in its disposition of the contaminated product and settled with the manufacturer shortly before trial for \$175,000

## Affiliations

- American Bar Association
- Houston Bar Association
- Maritime Law Association of the United States
- Southeastern Admiralty Law Institute
- Judge Alvin B. Rubin Conference on Maritime Personal Injury Law at Louisiana State University – Planning Committee
- Advisory Board for the Institute of Energy Law

## Recognition

- Rated *Martindale-Hubbell*® A-V Preeminent™ 5.0
- Texas' Top Rated Lawyers

## Publications

- *Navigating the Labyrinth of a Complex Maritime Case*, Presenter