Deanna Markowitz Willson

Partner

Houston

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Deanna brings a strategic and tailored approach to managing, litigating, and resolving a wide variety of complex commercial disputes. Clients value her practical counsel and commitment to securing dismissals, settlements, and significant multimillion-dollar outcomes on their behalf.

OVERVIEW

Deanna represents clients in complex commercial litigation and dispute resolution matters, including contract and license disputes, tort claims, construction litigation, fiduciary relations issues, insurance coverage, royalty disputes, environmental claims, administrative agency actions, and alleged statutory violations. She represents energy and construction companies, financial institutions, academic institutions, and individual officers and directors. Deanna manages the entire litigation process, from pre-dispute analysis through trial advocacy and appeals.

Deanna is skilled in preparing witnesses for testimony and navigating substantial and technical discovery challenges.

Deanna regularly counsels clients as a litigation representative on corporate deals, as well as assists clients in pre-litigation claim evaluation and dispute avoidance.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Regularly assists midstream companies in obtaining approval to cease pipeline services from the Texas Railroad Commission.
- Frequently represents companies, as well as officers and directors, in inter-company disputes, fiduciary duty claims, earn-out and buy-out issues, and ownership disputes.
- Regularly assists clients as a litigation representative on corporate deals.
- Represents numerous natural gas marketers in class action, contractual, and AG action suits claiming alleged damages resulting from Winter Storm Uri.
- Represented the owner of an LNG Facility on Elba Island, Georgia, against a contractor for claims relating to construction delays, obtaining a settlement for the owner.
- Obtained summary judgment dismissing an insurance company in complex coverage litigation. The firm’s client was the only defendant (out of more than a dozen) that was dismissed before trial.
- Obtained summary judgment dismissing a financial institution against breach of fiduciary duty and negligence

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claims, including the Fifth Circuit adopting the novel holding in the district judge's opinion.

- Trial counsel for the nonprofit owner of an affordable housing project in San Antonio, Texas, against claims related to a surplus cash note. Following a bench trial, a verdict was rendered for the nonprofit on all claims, and the client was awarded nearly $1,000,000 in attorneys fees.
- Obtained a settlement in favor of a contractor in a dispute with multiple subcontractors regarding delay and performance claims.
- Represented a midstream company in a dispute regarding the termination of a gathering agreement.
- Obtained the dismissal for an E&P oil company in a suit alleging discrimination in payment of royalties.
- Obtained a settlement in favor of academic institutions in a claim for underpayment pursuant to a patent licensing agreement.
- Represented an EPC contractor in a dispute regarding payment of remediation costs.
- Served as lead counsel for a landowner in a real estate lease dispute, obtaining summary judgment requiring specific performance for the landowner.
- Represented a construction company in an AAA arbitration hearing relating to a joint venture and fiduciary duty dispute.
- Defended the owner of an NGL storage facility in a suit by the state attorney general's office environmental regulatory agency involving alleged unauthorized and unpermitted air emissions from the facility associated with a plant explosion.
- Obtained summary judgment for a property owner against a claim that the owner breached an informal fiduciary duty to the lender.
- Trial counsel for a fabrication subcontractor in their claim for several million dollars of disputed change orders, obtaining a verdict in favor of the client and the first finding of a non-governmental cardinal change in Texas.
- Obtained a multimillion-dollar pre-trial settlement for an oil and gas company alleging breach of contract and negligence claims.
- Represented a major midstream pipeline company throughout the condemnation process.
- Assisted in securing a verdict in a bench trial for an industrial services company in a breach of representation and warranty matter with serious environmental implications, including claims involving alleged non-compliant solid waste management and disposal, as well as permit compliance and compliance with applicable state solid waste rules.

AWARDS

- *The Best Lawyers in America*® Ones to Watch, Commercial Litigation, Construction Law, Environmental Law (2022-2023)
- *Super Lawyers*® Texas Rising Star, Business Litigation (2023-2024)

TOP AREAS OF FOCUS

- Construction Litigation
- Energy
- Environmental Litigation + Enforcement Defense
- Litigation + Trial
- Privacy + Cyber

ALL AREAS OF FOCUS

- Business Litigation

- Class Action
- Construction
- Construction Litigation
- Data + Privacy
- Energy
- Environmental Litigation + Enforcement Defense
- Litigation + Trial
- Local Government Services
- Privacy + Cyber

PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Co-chair, Houston Bar Association Campaign to End Homeless and Hunger Committee
- Co-chair, Houston Bar Association Habitat for Humanity Committee
- Member, Houston Bar Association

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Intern, Chief Justice Hecht, The Supreme Court of Texas, 2014
- Legal legislative intern, Texas House of Representatives, 2013

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

EDUCATION

- The University of Texas School of Law, J.D., *with high honors*, 2014, Dean's Achievement Awards, Oil & Gas and Advocacy; Order of the Coif
- University of Virginia, B.A., *summa cum laude*, 2009, Phi Beta Kappa; Echols Scholar; Dean's List, government and history

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas

COURT ADMISSIONS

- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, "Hot Issues for Privacy and Cybersecurity in Texas," Locke Lord, October 2, 2024.
- Speaker, "Damages & Environmental Issues in the Energy Arena," American Society of Appraisers Energy Valuation Conference, May 16, 2024.
- Speaker, "The Texas Data Privacy and Security Act: Protection for the Brave New World," Locke Lord,

September 21, 2023.

MEDIA COMMENTARY

- Mentioned, "Troutman Pepper Locke Attorneys David Harrell and Deanna Markowitz Willson Named "Litigator of the Week" by Litigation Daily for Role in Winning Defense Team in Tenth Circuit Natural Gas Act Ruling Stemming from Winter Storm Uri," *Litigation Daily*, August 10, 2026.