

William M. Droze

Partner

Atlanta

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**OVERVIEW**

William has more than 30 years of trial and appellate practice experience specializing in areas including commercial litigation, environmental litigation, business torts, fiduciary duty litigation, government procurement litigation, civil rights, real estate litigation, and legal malpractice defense. His practice is national in scope, having represented clients in state and federal courts throughout Georgia and across the U.S. In addition, William has participated in trials and proceedings before mediators and arbitrators in matters proceeding by alternative dispute resolution. He has supervised sophisticated electronic discovery in connection with class action litigation and has tried multiple serial week cases to verdict. William has extensive appellate experience having managed more than 60 reported cases in the state and federal courts.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Lead counsel for electric utility involving putative class action for regulatory rate dispute.
- Lead counsel for metropolitan Atlanta county government in connection with tri-state water rights litigation involving U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Lake Sidney Lanier.
- Lead counsel for electric utility in procurement challenge to award of service contract for large load customer.
- Lead counsel for Florida municipality in putative class action involving toxic tort litigation.
- Lead counsel for Georgia municipality in recovery of verdict exceeding \$1 million arising out of engineering malpractice for design/installation of land application system.
- Lead counsel for Georgia Corporation arising out of shareholder dispute and breach of fiduciary duty claims.
- Lead counsel for Delaware Corporation in Section 220 Books and Records action in Delaware Chancery Court.
- Lead counsel for Florida municipality in putative class action involving application of CERCLA bar and environmental justice claims.
- Lead counsel for area developer franchisee in dispute with franchisor over termination of area development rights in three states.
- Lead counsel for Chinese manufacturer in successful resolution of product liability action.
- Counsel for major southeastern law firm in legal malpractice claim arising out of duties as escrow agent.
- Counsel for limited partnership in successful defense of foreclosure claim affecting commercial real estate.
- Lead counsel for state of Georgia in connection with landmark right to die litigation and defense of product

liability punitive damages apportionment statute.

Representative Reported Cases

- *Ga. Power Co. v. Cazier*, 321 Ga. App. 576 (2013).
- *Florida v. United States Army Corps Eng'r (In re MDL-1824 Tri-State Water Rights Litig.)*, 644 F.3d 1160 (11th Cir. Fla. 2011).
- *Diverse Power, Inc. v. Jackson*, 285 Ga. 340 (2009).
- *Hendry v. Wells*, 286 Ga. App. 774 (2007).
- *Graham v. Palmtop Props.*, 284 Ga. App. 730 (2007).
- *Broward Gardens Tenants Ass'n v. United States EPA*, 311 F.3d 1066 (11th Cir. 2002).
- *Multifamily Mortg. Trust 1996-1 v. Ara Associates-Shangri-La*, 242 Ga. App. 465 (2000).
- *Wooten v. Campbell*, 49 F.3d 696 (11th Cir. 1995).

AWARDS

- Achieved Martindale-Hubbell's highest rating for legal ability and ethical standards
- *Best Lawyers in America*®: Product Liability Litigation – Defendants (2013-2026), Commercial Litigation (2013-2026), Environmental Law (2014-2026), Litigation – Environmental (2024-2026)
- *Benchmark Litigation*: “Local Litigation Star” in Georgia (2022, 2023-2025), “Future Litigation Star” (2014-2016, 2021)
- *Legal 500 United States* for Environment: Litigation (2022-2024)
- *Atlanta Super Lawyers*: Environmental Litigation (2013-2016); Business Litigation (2004-2012, 2017)(Top 5% of State Bar of Georgia)
- *Georgia Trend* “Legal Elite,” business litigation (2004, 2009, 2013)
- *Top Rated Lawyers Guide*, Energy/Environmental/Natural Resources Law (2012)

TOP AREAS OF FOCUS

- Business Litigation
- Environmental Litigation + Enforcement Defense
- Product Liability

ALL AREAS OF FOCUS

- Appellate + Supreme Court
- Business Litigation
- Contaminated Sites + Waste Management
- Ecosystem Markets
- Environmental + Natural Resources
- Environmental Due Diligence
- Environmental Justice
- Environmental Litigation + Enforcement Defense
- Financial Services
- Government Contracts
- Litigation + Trial

- Natural Resources
- PFAS + Emerging Contaminants
- Product Liability
- Real Estate Litigation
- Water Quality + Water Resources

PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Fellow, Lawyers Foundation of Georgia
- Fellow, Litigation Counsel of America, The Trial Lawyer Honorary Society
- Member, Diversity Law Institute
- Member, The Trial Law Institute
- Master, Joseph Henry Lumpkin American Inn of Court
- Immediate past chairman, Associate Members, Southern States Energy Board
- Board of director, Warrior 2 Citizen, Veterans Support Group
- Old War Horse Lawyers Club of Atlanta
- Coach, High School Mock Trial Competitions, 1991-2000

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- State Law Department:
Assistant attorney general, 1987-1996
Senior assistant attorney general, 1995-1996
Practice group leader, Opinions Practice Group
Practice group leader, Consumer Interests

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

EDUCATION

- University of Georgia School of Law, J.D., *cum laude*, 1987
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, B.A., 1984

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Georgia

COURT ADMISSIONS

- Supreme Court of the United States
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Middle District of Alabama
- U.S. District Court, District of Colorado
- U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit

- U.S. District Court, Middle District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Georgia
- Supreme Court of Georgia
- Court of Appeals of Georgia
- Georgia Trial Courts

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, "Energy Contracting and the Hidden Power of the Force Majeure Clause," *Energy Law Insights*, February 7, 2024.
- Speaker, "Navigating Power Allocation and Customer Choice in a Regulated Landscape," *Energy Law Insights*, January 24, 2024.

PUBLICATIONS

- Co-author, "Flint Water Crisis Ruling May Signal Broader EPA Liability," *Law360*, October 26, 2020.
- Co-author, "Despite New Attacks, Citizen Suits Are Constitutional," *Law360*, August 28, 2020.
- "Environmental Class Actions After *Dukes*: Is 'Rigorous' Analysis the New Rule of Law?," *Bloomberg BNA Class Action Litigation Report*, 2012.
- Author and Co-author, "Appellate Practice and Procedure in the Eleventh Circuit," *Mercer Law Review*, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1998, 2000, 2001.

MEDIA COMMENTARY

- Quoted, "Do 'Act of God' Clauses Still Work in the Era of Climate Change?," *Corporate Knights*, January 14, 2025.