



Deborah G. Hankinson

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Deborah Hankinson excels in many roles: appellate attorney, oral advocate, strategist, mediator, arbitrator, and problem-solver. In each, she draws on her background as a trial lawyer and jurist to bring a unique combination of skills and outstanding value to her clients. She is Board Certified in Civil Appellate Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, a Fellow of the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers, a member of the American Law Institute, and sits on the Board of Directors of the American Arbitration Association (AAA).

Deborah graduated at the top of her class at Southern Methodist University's Dedman School of Law. From there, she joined Thompson & Knight, L.L.P., where she tried cases and practiced appellate law. In 1995, she was appointed, and later elected, to serve as a Justice on the Fifth District Court of Appeals in Dallas. From 1997 to 2002, Deborah served as a Justice on the Supreme Court of Texas. In recognition of her many accomplishments on the bench, the Texas Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates honored Deborah as the Texas Judge of the Year in 1999. In 2002, she received the Distinguished Alumni Award for Judicial Service from Southern Methodist University.

Since returning to private practice in 2002, Deborah has been a trailblazer in her approach to the practice of appellate law, which features strategic involvement long before the appeals process begins. Clients retain Deborah not only for her excellence in oral advocacy and post-verdict briefing, but also to work closely with trial teams to develop and execute pretrial and trial strategy, build evidence, and optimize the positioning of a case for trial and appeal. As an essential member of the trial team, she frequently handles pivotal motions and argues jury charges.

In addition, Deborah consults with other lawyers on trial and appellate briefs and presides over mock arguments to offer insights as to how a court or jury may react. She has served as a special master and dispute resolution officer and maintains a vibrant

ADR practice. Deborah often serves as a neutral in arbitration proceedings and is a sought-after mediator for conflicts that include sophisticated business disputes, complex tort cases, and sensitive employment issues.

Deborah is nationally recognized for her deep commitment to the issue of equal access to justice. While on the Supreme Court of Texas, she was a driving force behind the creation of the Texas Access to Justice Commission, which works to ensure that low-income Texans have access to justice in civil legal matters. Since then, Deborah has made an ongoing imprint on the development of equal access to justice in jurisdictions across the United States.

EDUCATION

- Southern Methodist University School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 1983); Valedictorian; Editor-in-Chief, *Southwestern Law Journal*; Order of the Coif
- The University of Texas at Dallas (M.S., 1977)
- Purdue University (B.A., with distinction, 1973)

CERTIFICATIONS

- Board Certified in Civil Appellate Law, Texas Board of Legal Specialization (1992-present)

HONORS

- Distinguished Alumni Award, University of Texas Dallas (2017)
- AV Preeminent Rated by Martindale-Hubbell (2017)
- *Texas Lawyer*, Professional Excellence Award: Lifetime Achievers (2016)
- *National Law Journal*, ADR Champions (2016)
- Best Lawyers in America, Appellate Law (2008-2017), Arbitration (2016-2017), Mediation (2016-2017)
- Best Lawyers in America, Dallas Appellate Lawyer of the Year (2012)
- Chambers USA (2007-2016)
- Texas' Top Rated Lawyers, Martindale-Hubbell and ALM (2012-2016)
- *Texas Lawyer*, "Winning Women" (2011)
- Texas Super Lawyers (2003-2016), Thomson Reuters legal division
- Texas Super Lawyers, Top 10 in Texas (2011-2012, 2014-2016), Third overall in Texas (2015), Second overall in Texas (2012), Thomson Reuters legal division
- Texas Super Lawyers, Top 100 in Texas (2005, 2008-2016), Thomson Reuters legal division
- Texas Super Lawyers, Top 50 Women (2003-2016), Thomson Reuters legal division
- Texas Super Lawyers, DFW Top 100 (2004, 2005, 2007-2016), Thomson Reuters legal division
- *D Magazine*, Best Lawyers in Dallas (2003, 2005, 2007-2009, 2011-2017)
- Benchmark Appellate (2013)

- Benchmark Litigation (2016)
- *Lawdragon*, 500 Leading Lawyers in America (2010-2011, 2014-2015)
- *D Magazine*, Best Women Lawyers (2010)
- *Dallas Business Journal*, “The Defenders” Top Business Defense Lawyers (2009)
- *Texas Lawyer Go-To Guide* (2007)
- Texas Trial Legend, Dallas Bar Association, Tort and Insurance Practice Section (2015)
- Ann Clarke Snell Award, Women’s Advocacy Project (2003)
- Merrill L. Hartman Award, Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, Inc. (2003)
- Harold F. Kleinman Award, Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation (2002)
- Distinguished Alumni Award for Judicial Service, SMU Dedman School of Law (2002)
- Ma’at Justice Award, Women in the Law Section, State Bar of Texas (2002)
- Presidential Citation, State Bar of Texas (2001)
- Travis County Women Lawyers’ Association, Outstanding Achievement Award (2001)
- Judge of the Year, American Board of Trial Advocates, Texas Chapter (1999)

RECENT SPEECHES

- Speaker, Arbitration Law: Key Developments of 2015, AAA/ICDR/Mediation.org Panel Conference (2016)
- Panelist, *Individuals–Impact on Access to Justice and Trade*, Society, Commerce and Dispute Resolution: Goals for Justice and Trade, Fordham University School of Law and the American Arbitration Association (2015)
- Speaker, *Developing the AAA Judicial Panel, Working Together*, American Arbitration Association Webinar (2015)
- Speaker, *Do You Want to Arbitrate? Managing the Process When You Do*, Oil & Gas Disputes Course, State Bar of Texas and Texas Tech School of Law (2015)
- Speaker, *Proper Role: Opinions and Oral Argument*, College for New Judges (Texas, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014)
- Speaker, *The Arbitrator’s Perspective: Oil and Gas Arbitration*, State Bar of Texas’ 32nd Annual Advanced Oil, Gas and Energy Resources Law Course (2014)
- Panelist, *Making Your Appellate Position More Appealing: The Importance of Framing the Issues*, Appellate Judges Education Institute (New Orleans, 2012)
- Facilitator, *Managing the Arbitration Process for Efficiency & Economy Following the Preliminary Hearing*, American Arbitration Association (2012)
- Panelist, *How to Prevent a Runaway Arbitration*, ABA Section of Litigation CLE Conference (Washington, D.C., 2012)

AFFILIATIONS

- Fellow, College of Commercial Arbitrators (2016-present)
- Fellow, American Academy of Appellate Lawyers (2011-present)

- Member, American Arbitration Association's National Roster of Neutrals (2006-present)
- Member, American Arbitration Association Board of Directors (2009-present)
- Member, American Law Institute (1999-present)
- Member, Executive Board, SMU Dedman School of Law (1998-present)
- Vice-Chair (2007-present), Board (2003-present), Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation
- Former Member, Texas Access to Justice Commission (2001-2002)
- Member, National Association of Women Judges (1998-present)
- Member, American Bar Association (1983-present) and current member of Dispute Resolution Section and Appellate Judges Conference
- Committee Member (2003-2006) and Former Chair (2006-2009), American Bar Association Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants
- Member, Fifth Circuit Bar Association (2003-present)
- Fellow, American Bar Foundation (1998-present)
- Fellow, Texas Bar Foundation (1992-present)
- Former Chair (2005) and Life Benefactor Fellow, Dallas Bar Foundation
- Member, State Bar of Texas
- Member, Dallas Bar Association