



Deborah G. Hankinson

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Deborah Hankinson, formerly a Justice on the Supreme Court of Texas, is a well-known mediator and arbitrator and the creator of a comprehensive set of conflict resolution services called ADR Plus. The concept behind ADR Plus is to promote opportunities for problem-solving and potential settlement at all stages of a dispute by using a variety of processes. Thus, ADR Plus includes and goes beyond Deborah's well-established mediation and arbitration services to provide a new, broad-based resource for dealing with legal conflict.

Deborah graduated at the top of her class at Southern Methodist University's Dedman School of 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 before returning to private practice as an appellate lawyer. While on the judiciary and as an attorney, Deborah gained exposure to numerous types of lawsuits in different industries, as well as a myriad of legal issues. This breadth of experience gives her exceptional facility when dealing with the intricacies of effective conflict resolution, whether in the role of mediator, arbitrator, special master, or consulting attorney.

An important feature of ADR Plus is litigation avoidance, which includes Deborah's providing pre-litigation claims assessments and helping clients to actively develop early settlement strategies. Deborah also consults on settlement issues at later stages of litigation, including post-trial, and she can be retained as special settlement counsel as well. Deborah is proficient at facilitating both business and legal objectives in settlement situations.

Deborah sits on the Board of the American Arbitration Association (AAA), has trained new arbitrators, and speaks on key arbitration-related topics. As part of ADR Plus, she leverages this experience to advise clients on how to optimize operative arbitration provisions, take advantage of the arbitration process, and choose arbitrators. She also provides guidance on drafting and revising arbitration clauses.

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As a mediator, Deborah is particularly renowned for unraveling complex legal matters involving multiple issues and parties, often in a series of thoughtfully-sequenced sessions with focused follow-up. As an arbitrator, Deborah has led or participated in panels deciding matters in areas including oil and gas, commercial transactions, healthcare, and more.

In 2016, Deborah was selected to the National Law Journal's inaugural ADR Champions list. She is a Fellow of the College of Commercial Arbitrators and a member of the American Law Institute. 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. In 2017, she received the Distinguished Alumni award from the University of Texas at Dallas.

While on the bench, Deborah 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. In recognition of her efforts, Deborah is the recipient of the Harold F. Kleinman Award from the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation and the Merrill L. Hartman Award from Legal Aid of Northwest Texas.

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)

BOARD CERTIFICATION

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

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, International Centre for Dispute Resolution Roster of Neutrals (2016-present)
- Member, American Arbitration Association Board of Directors (2009-present)
- Advisory Board Member, Institute for Energy Law, a division of The Center for American and International Law (2018)
- 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
- 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

HONORS

- AV Preeminent Rated by Martindale-Hubbell
- *Texas Lawyer*, Professional Excellence Award: Lifetime Achievers (2016)
- *National Law Journal*, ADR Champions (2016)
- Best Lawyers in America, Appellate Law (2008-2019), Arbitration (2016-2019), Mediation (2016-2019)
- Best Lawyers in America, Dallas Arbitration Lawyer of the Year (2019)
- 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 (2003-2018), Thomson Reuters legal division
- Texas Super Lawyers, Top 10 in Texas (2011-2012, 2014-2018), Third overall in Texas (2015, 2017-2018), Second overall in Texas (2012), Thomson Reuters legal division
- Texas Super Lawyers, Top 100 in Texas (2005, 2008-2018), Thomson Reuters legal division
- Texas Super Lawyers, Top 50 Women (2003-2018), Thomson Reuters legal division
- Texas Super Lawyers, DFW Top 100 (2004, 2005, 2007-2018), Thomson Reuters legal division
- *D Magazine*, Best Lawyers in Dallas (2003, 2005, 2007-2009, 2011-2018)
- Benchmark Appellate (2013)
- Benchmark Litigation (2016-2018)
- *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)

- Distinguished Alumni Award, University of Texas Dallas (2017)
- 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, *Appellate Mediation*, Dallas Bar Association (2016)
- 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*, Texas College for New Judges (Texas, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016)
- 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)