

Cleveland G. Clinton

Partner

With a client list full of family businesses, Fortune 500 companies and maverick risk-takers who won't take "no" for an answer, Cleve Clinton knows what it takes to develop creative solutions when big ideas result in big problems. Whether he's serving as lead counsel in one of the growing number of fiduciary litigation claims within family businesses, advising a family in transition, or helping a developer sidestep a legal and public relations disaster in a new residential community, Cleve's focus is always the same – achieve the client's goals, either in or out of the courtroom. His clients span nearly every industry, including beverage distribution, real estate, manufacturing, telecommunications and transportation.

Many lawyers claim they can strike the perfect balance between legal strategy and a client's practical goals, but Cleve demonstrates it every day. After 40 years of litigation practice, Cleve has learned one absolute truth – there's no one-size-fits-all solution. His starting point with every client is to fully understand their motivations and concerns so he can mirror their judgment. When the initial legal answer won't solve the problem or is too costly, he seeks practical solutions that reveal new legal paths that minimize both the financial and emotional impact. And most important – if it's not simple, it's not the best solution.

Always putting his clients' interests first, Cleve explores every resource available to ensure each case is in the right hands. It's often as simple as making an introduction to another lawyer in the firm who can take the lead and achieve the ideal outcome. When a deal or controversy has a lot of moving parts and requires a multi-disciplinary approach, Cleve assembles a team of lawyers and other professionals with the perfectly-matched skill set – tax, employment, real estate, construction, regulatory plus more – and then quarterbacks strategic planning and execution every step of the way.

Cleve is dedicated to keeping clients informed about the latest legal



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Practices

Commercial Litigation
Real Estate
Corporate & Transactional

Education

J.D., Southern Methodist University
Dedman School of Law (1978)
B.B.A., Finance, The University of Texas
(1975)
Burnet High School

Bar Admissions

Texas (1978)
Arkansas (2016)

Court Admissions

United States District Court, Northern
District of Texas
United States District Court, Southern
District of Texas
United States District Court, Eastern
District of Texas
United States District Court, Western
District of Texas

and industry trends that impact their businesses. As a regular contributor on the firm's blog, [Tilting the Scales](#), he focuses on analyzing new and interesting business issues from a legal perspective.

Experience

Attorney at Law - Board Certified Civil Trial Law, Litigation Solutions

- Separated two sparring business partners who each owned 50% of a number of LegalZoom.com limited liability companies involved in corporate governance issues.
- Successfully arbitrated on behalf of a tenant in a rental rate dispute with the landlord resulting in the return of overpaid rent and \$4 million in savings over the life of the lease.
- Resolved litigation over Florida real estate and loan guaranteed by Dallas Cowboy football player.
- Worked through over \$1 billion in loans collateralized by real estate, including Angel Fire Ski Resort.
- Litigated fraud and fiduciary claims between and among televangelist and LLC partners in multiple states.
- Defended real estate joint venture against homeowners claiming \$35 million damages from failed municipal utility district, and deflected homeowners' claims from the joint venture to third parties.
- Successfully defended \$25 million in insider bond trading claims against corporate officer.
- Resolved black male ex-employee's discrimination claim against publicly traded company.
- Secured court order permitting seizure and replication of former

employees' hard drive to prove theft of company trade secrets.

Counselor at Law - Non-Litigation Solutions

- Currently quarterbacking for a family-owned business to update corporate entities, resolve tax and employment issues, coordinate the purchase of real estate and related contract issues, and assist in navigating the family dynamics, all following the death of the family patriarch.
- Quarterbacked a myriad of corporate, tax and legal risk management issues to maintain a bright line separation of intertwined interests between a well-known radio personality and his high-profile charitable foundation.
- Advised a client to implement a master services agreement that tied product ordering with payment and a promise to purchase inventory unused for an extended time, saving the client over \$750,000, and later collecting an additional \$350,000 in arbitration.
- Helped a single family real estate development successfully navigate a PR crisis involving media attention on partially-treated sewage floating down a neighboring creek.
- Orchestrated homeowners approval of a bond issue resolving a lawsuit and averting bankruptcy of a special utility district.
- Marshaled and disposed of real estate assets, securing loans on chain sandwich shop properties, office buildings, car lots, strip and retail shopping centers.
- Assisted in sale of car dealership.
- Resolved demands for telecommunications relocation in city street abandoned to a property developer.
- Negotiated terms and enforcement of various non-compete agreements for both employers and employees.

- Protected residential lot developer negatively impacted by issuance of a Type 1 municipal landfill permit on adjacent property.

Thought Leadership

- “Hackers Perpetrate Wire Transfer Fraud in Real Estate Transactions”, Gray Reed Legal Alert (October 22, 2018)
- “Becoming a Texan: a Checklist for New Residents”, *Dave Perry Miller New Resident Packet* (January 12, 2017)
- “Making the Move”, *Texas Bar Journal* (November 1, 2016)

Speeches and Presentations

- “Fiduciary Duty: When a Business Relationship Becomes a Personal Affair”, Institute of Managerial Accountants- Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter (November 15, 2016)
- “Trimming Your Fat Without Becoming the Biggest Loser - Downsizing Your Workforce in a Down Economy” (2009)
- “The Cascading Credit Crunch - Implications to Entrepreneurs and Businesses” (October 2008)
- “What Every Business Owner and Entrepreneur Should Know about Litigation” (August 2007)
- “Anticipating and Managing the Costs of Litigation in a Commercial Lawsuit” (February 2007)
- “”Selling” in Special Districts - What are They and What to Disclose?”, Greater Dallas Board of Realtors (2006)
- “Labors for Neighbors - Gulf Coast Hurricane Relief after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita” (2005)
- “Alternate Dispute Resolution and Arbitration” (1985)

Honors

- AV Rated Attorney – Highest Rating in Legal Ability & Ethical Standards
- Faith Presbyterian Hospice - 2016 Each Moment Matters Honoree
- Rotary Club of Park Cities - 2009 Paul Harris Fellow
- Rotary Club of Park Cities - 2007 Club Service Award

Organizational Involvement

Professional Activities, Memberships & Affiliations

- State Bar of Texas
 - Litigation Section
 - Real Estate Section
 - Collaborative Law Section
 - Technology Section
- Dallas Bar Association
 - Chairman of the Fee Disputes Subcommittee (1984 - 1986)
- Dallas Association of Young Lawyers
 - Director (1985)

Community Involvement, Memberships & Affiliations

- Rotary Club of Park Cities
 - President (2013 - 2014)

- Director (2006 - 2008)
- Labors for Neighbors, Inc.
 - Co-founder and Director (2005 to present)
- La Fiesta de Las Seis Banderas
 - Director (2005 - 2009)
- Project Transformation,
 - Director and Vice Chairman (2006 - 2007)
- Highland Park United Methodist Church
 - Youth and Adult Sunday School Teacher
 - Bible Study leader
- Theatre Three
 - Board of Directors, Chair (1990 - 1992)
- Leadership Dallas (1992)
- Scottish Rite 32* Mason
- Dallas Young Texas Exes