

T. Aaron Dobbs

Counsel

Beneficiaries, trustees, executors, other fiduciaries, families and charitable organizations count on Aaron Dobbs to guide them through all aspects of estate and trust administration, probate, fiduciary litigation, and trust and probate litigation. Chair of the Fiduciary and Probate Litigation Practice Group, he has extensive experience handling litigation that involves the validity of wills, trusts, beneficiary designations and gift transfers; breach of fiduciary duty claims; creditor claims; and contested guardianships before trial and appellate courts across Texas.

In addition, Aaron assists individual executors, trustees, guardians and agents, and corporate fiduciaries with fiduciary risk management, preparation of accountings and beneficiary communications, fiduciary succession, and trust modifications. He also helps individuals and families develop effective estate plans to achieve long-term goals, including tax efficiency and mitigation of inheritance disputes.

Before entering private practice, Aaron worked as a Legislative Aide to U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas and as a Legislative Counsel for the Texas Legislative Council. During his tenure with the Texas Legislature, Aaron was a member of the team of lawyers responsible for drafting the first installment of the new Estates Code, which replaced the Texas Probate Code on January 1, 2014.

As a seventh generation Texan, Aaron is proud to have handled cases across all regions of the vast state of Texas, including Amarillo, Harlingen, Odessa, Paris, Eagle Pass, Athens, Beaumont, Austin, Dallas, Houston, historic Fort Bend County and many other places in between.

Experience

- Co-authored winning brief in an appeal in which the Dallas Court of Appeals upheld a probate court's denial of a motion to assess the executor's attorney's fees against the beneficiary, thus preventing the



T. Aaron Dobbs
1300 Post Oak Blvd.
Suite 2000
Houston, TX 77056
adobbs@grayreed.com

D: 713.986.7238
T: 713.986.7000
F: 713.730.5911

Practices
Trusts & Estates

Education
J.D., South Texas College of Law
Houston (2005)
B.S., Texas A&M University (2001)

Bar Admissions
Texas (2005)

Court Admissions
United States District Court, Southern
District of Texas

executor from seeking fees from beneficiary client.

- Obtained the removal of a trustee who was accused of breaching his fiduciary duties to a trust beneficiary by misapplying trust assets for his personal gain.
- Obtained injunction against an individual who was accused of using his position of authority to exploit an elderly person for purposes of gaining access to her finances.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of a beneficiary disputing a trustee's interpretation of a provision of the trust relating to the beneficiary's right to receive distributions from the trust.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor a child contesting his father's last will and testament on grounds of undue influence and lack of capacity.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of a spouse defending the validity of her husband's last will and testament.
- Obtained an order restraining a person from using a power of attorney who was accused of taking an elderly family member's assets.
- Obtained the appointment of a temporary guardian for an elderly woman who was being held captive by non-family members attempting to exploit her finances.
- Defended a trustee in litigation involving accusations that trustee was neglectful in fulfilling his responsibilities and duties to properly manage assets of a trust which was for client's benefit.
- Prepared and defended a trustee's multi-year accounting of the activities of a complex trust with numerous beneficiaries.
- Represented trust beneficiaries in the modification of provisions of an irrevocable trust.
- Represented trust beneficiary in a proceeding involving the early

termination of an irrevocable trust.

- Represented trust beneficiary in the negotiation of the distribution of trust assets upon the termination of a trust.
- Represented a child in a contest of the validity of her father's beneficiary designations on bank accounts and life insurance policies.
- Represented family members in a probate administration involving substantial farm and ranch holdings.

Press Releases

- "Twenty-Nine Gray Reed Attorneys Named 2018 Top Lawyers in Houston" (December 3, 2018)

Thought Leadership

- "The Case of the Missing Trust Agreement: What To Do When A Written Trust Agreement Is Lost Or Cannot Be Located", *Real Estate, Probate and Trust Law Reporter (Vol. 54, No. 3)* (2015)
- "Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Executors and Trustees", *Texas Lawyer Magazine* (March 2018)

Speeches and Presentations

- "I Want it All (and I Want it Now): Dividing, Partitioning & Distributing Estates", Intermediate Estate Planning & Probate CLE, Texas Bar Association (2018)
- "Resolving Issues Arising from Deaths of Texas Property Owners", Various Community Associations and Property Managers Throughout Texas (2018)
- "That's Mine: Partitioning Real Property and Personal Property in Trusts & Estates", Probate, Trusts and Estates Section of the Houston

Bar Association (2018)

- “Basics of Suing and Defending Fiduciaries”, Houston Bar Association (2017)
- “Making Charitable Bequests Stick”, Planned Giving Council of Houston (2017)
- “How to Avoid Accidentally Practicing Law in Gift Planning”, Planned Giving Council of Houston (2017)
- “Estate Planning in the Age of Litigation”, RIA Trust Education Program (2017)
- “The Ins and Outs of Drafting Accountings for Trusts, Estates and Guardianships”, Estate Planning & Probate Drafting Course, Texas Bar Association (2016)
- “How to Get Away with Breaching Your Fiduciary Duties (satire)”, Disability & Elder Law Attorneys Association (2014)
- “It’s Going to Be OK: Transition to the New Estates Code”, 28th Annual Wills and Probate Institute, South Texas College of Law (2013)
- “Powers of Attorney: Licenses to Steal”, 27th Annual Wills and Probate Institute, South Texas College of Law (2012)

Honors

- Selected by his peers for inclusion in Woodward/White, Inc.’s *The Best Lawyers in America* in the field of Trusts & Estates Litigation (2020)
- Named a “Super Lawyer” (2019) and a “Rising Star” (2014, 2015, 2018) by Texas Super Lawyers (a Thomson Reuters company) as published in *Texas Monthly*
- Named a Top Lawyer for Wills, Trusts & Estates by *Houstonia*

Magazine (2017 - 2019)

- Named a Top Lawyer for Wills, Trusts & Estates by *H Texas Magazine* (2014 - 2015, 2017 - 2018)

Organizational Involvement

Professional Activities, Memberships & Affiliations

- State Bar of Texas
 - Real Estate, Probate and Trust Law Section
 - Legislative and Campaign Law Section
- Houston Bar Association
 - Probate, Trusts and Estates Section
 - Council Member (2016 – present)
- Fort Bend County Bar Association
 - Probate, Trusts and Estates Section
 - Founding Co-Chair (2016 – 2017)
- Texas Bar Foundation
 - Fellow (2014 – present)
- Attorneys in Tax and Probate
 - Vice President of Membership (2015 – 2016)
 - Secretary (2014 – 2015)
- Disability and Elder Law Attorneys Association

- Board member (2014 – 2016)
- Charitable Gift Planners of Houston (formerly, Planned Giving Council of Houston)
- President-Elect (2018 – present)

Community Activities, Memberships & Affiliations

- Fred and Mabel R. Parks Youth Ranch - Fort Bend County, Texas
 - Board member (2016 - present)
- Skeeters Baseball Foundation - Sugar Land, Texas
 - Board member (2018 - present)
- Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce Leadership Forum, Class of 2017
- Excellence for Nonprofit Leadership, Class of 2018