



SpencerFane®

## James T. (Jim) Drakeley

Partner

### Contact

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## Overview

**Jim Drakeley has four decades of experience prosecuting and defending a broad range of business-related litigation, ranging from simple to complex matters. He has achieved meaningful outcomes for clients in disputes over complex contracts, employment matters, covenants not-to-compete, theft of trade secrets, commercial leases, commercial insurance policies, shareholder and partnership relations, business divorces, and fiduciary duty obligations.**

In addition, he has served as outside general counsel for several of his corporate clients and regularly provides advice and counsel to his diverse client base, including companies, C-suite executives, directors, shareholders, and employers on a variety of litigation, dispute resolution, business, and employment issues.

Jim has built a strong reputation in and out of the courtroom. He has prosecuted and defended high stakes multimillion-dollar lawsuits for his clients, has successfully obtained favorable verdicts, and has extensive experience in alternative dispute resolution, including the successful mediation of numerous lawsuits and pre-suit disputes. His peers have given him an AV Preeminent rating with Martindale-Hubbell for his ethical standards and legal ability. He recognizes the importance of zealously pursuing the client's objectives, and works closely with his clients in developing strategic solutions to help successfully resolve their disputes and legal issues in a practical and cost-effective manner.

Clients have included individuals, business entities and owners, entrepreneurs, executives, and sports figures.

Jim helped found a law firm shortly after graduating from the Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law in Dallas, Texas. He received his undergraduate degree from Western Kentucky University. He is a member of the State Bar of Texas and belongs to both the Litigation section and the Labor and Employment section. He is also a member of the Dallas Bar Association.

## Education

- Southern Methodist University School of Law (J.D.)
- Western Kentucky University (B.A.), *magna cum laude*

## Bar Admissions

- Texas

## Court Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas

## Distinctions

- AV®-Rated, Martindale-Hubbell
- *Best Lawyers in America*, Litigation – Banking and Finance, 2023–2025; Litigation – Labor and Employment, 2024–2025
- Martindale-Hubbell, AV-Preeminent

## Memberships

- Dallas Bar Association
- State Bar of Texas, Business Litigation Section; Labor & Employment Law Section
- National Association of Dealer Counsel

## Presentations and Publications

- “Executive Employment Contracts, Compensation, and Non-Competes,” February 2020–present

## Related Experience

- Represented a sports broadcaster in a lawsuit filed by a college football coach against a broadcaster and major university, and obtained dismissal of lawsuit.
- Represented a video game developer in school shooting cases in Kentucky and Colorado and successfully obtained dismissals of both cases.
- Successfully defended an investment banker and a chief restructuring officer against multimillion-dollar damage claims and allegations of breach of fiduciary duty and obtained zero-dollar defense verdict after weeklong jury trial in Dallas County District Court.
- Represented employers and employees in prosecuting and defending covenants not to compete, theft of trade secrets, breach of fiduciary duty, and usurpation of corporate opportunity cases.
- Represented executives in employment contract disputes involving termination and compensation issues.
- Represented a national tenant in a commercial lease lawsuit involving repair and maintenance obligations and implied warranty claims.

- Represented the alumni of major university against allegations of misconduct by NCAA.
- Represented a professional athlete against national brokerage company for multimillion-dollar misappropriation of funds claims and obtained full recovery in settlement.
- Represented an investment advisor in arbitration proceeding in defense of claims over suitability of investments and obtained zero dollars defense decision from arbitration panel.
- Represented a professional athlete against an insurance carrier and insurance agent for insurance code violations, fraud and negligence in failure to procure sports disability insurance and obtained multimillion-dollar settlement of lawsuit.
- Represented a prominent sports figure in a sexual assault case in California and obtained favorable settlement.
- Represented a company in defending and favorably resolving lawsuit involving claims by minority shareholder for breach of shareholder buy-sell agreement, shareholder oppression and fraud.
- Represented a business owner in very contentious business divorce and noncompete lawsuit in Dallas County District Court and successfully obtained court-ordered dissolution of Texas LLC to allow client to freely compete with new business.
- Obtained a jury verdict in Dallas County District Court for the recovery of attorneys' fees in excess of \$1 million in week long jury trial while serving as lead counsel, primary fact witness, and expert witness.
- Obtained a jury verdict in Dallas County District Court in excess of \$1 million on behalf of large national manufacturing client against landlord as damages for significant structural and foundation damages in three-week jury trial.
- Served as outside general counsel for Utah-based educational platform company.
- Served as outside general counsel for Texas-based continuing care retirement community.
- Served as outside general counsel in Texas-based fluid power distribution company.
- Served as outside general counsel for commercial truck dealership.
- Provided advice and counseling to business owners with business divorce issues and disputes.
- Counseled C-level executives with contract negotiation issues, equity and tax planning, crisis management, legal coaching, exit strategies and dispute resolution.
- Handled insurance claims and recovery issues including advice and counseling on commercial property and casualty policies, errors and omissions and directors and officer's liability policies.