SpencerFane®

Matthew P. James

Partner

Contact

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Overview

Matthew James represents diverse clientele as a business litigator with over 25 years of experience, focusing on all stages of construction and real estate matters throughout California with the goal of mitigating risk and maximizing resources for successful resolutions.

Within his litigation practice, Matt provides practical advice to a wide range of clients, including commercial property owners and tenants, residential property owners, prime contractors, subcontractors, material suppliers, architects, engineers, and bonding companies. After obtaining his California real estate broker's license in 2006, Matt used his multifaceted skill set and experience to adeptly navigate real estate-related disputes, including commercial lease disputes, breach of real estate purchase agreements, tenant improvement projects, and litigation related to breaches of real estate purchase agreements, easements, and partition actions.

In his construction practice, Matt routinely navigates legal issues throughout the life of both public and private works projects, from contract drafting and review, advice and counsel regarding construction administration issues during construction, and project close-out to addressing contract, mechanic's lien, stop payment notice, and bond claims. Matt also has broad experience handling administrative actions with the California Contractors State License Board and commercial and residential construction defect actions, including California's "Right to Repair Act".

When an issue cannot be resolved informally, Matt relies on his extensive trial experience to protect his clients' interests. His experience also includes substantial collections work after judgment is obtained.

As an attorney who blends evolving best practices with all forms of litigation and alternative dispute resolution, Matt frequently shares his insight and personal experience via lectures on new developments in construction and real estate law.

Education

- Santa Clara University School of Law (J.D.)

- University of California, Berkeley (B.A.)

Bar Admissions

- California, 2000

Court Admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California
- U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of California

Memberships

- Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce, Ambassador, 2014-present; Member, Board of Directors, 2026-present
- Business Network International, 2018-present
- First Community Housing, Board Member, 2016-present
- Happy Hollow Foundation, Former Board Member

Related Experience

- Obtained a $17 million judgment related to defective construction work after a trial lasting approximately 100 days.
- Obtained a judgment defeating a half-million-dollar material supplier claim against a large prime contractor on a sizable public works project.
- Obtained a judgment evicting a commercial tenant following a contested unlawful detainer trial.
- Represented commercial tenant in contentious litigation, resulting in re-negotiated lease terms beneficial to client.
- Obtained a defense judgment on behalf of a contractor creditor following a bench trial in a bankruptcy preference action.
- Represented owners against a contractor's claim for payment, resulting in an arbitration awarding damages against the contractor.
- Obtained payment on behalf of a subcontractor client through contract and mechanic's lien litigation following a Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing by the owner of a large, high-rise condominium project.