

People



## Wm. Bruce Stanfill

Partner, Litigation  
Commercial Disputes

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With three decades of trial experience before courts and arbitrators, Bruce Stanfill has built a robust career counseling and representing clients in complex commercial matters worldwide, as well as advising clients with trade secrets, restrictive covenants, and unfair competition disputes. Business managers rely on Bruce for a real-world foundation in either preventing disputes or resolving them in the most practical, cost-effective manner.

Most recently, Bruce's practice has been devoted to business management and contract issues, as well as the enforcement of commercial security rights, commercial fraud and recovery (including fraudulent transfers), and wrongful foreclosures, particularly in the energy sector.

### Notable Work

**Trade Secrets, Restrictive Covenants, and Unfair Competition:** Represented numerous clients across sectors in the defense and prosecution of temporary restraining order and temporary injunction proceedings in diverse matters relating to independent oil exploration, oil field equipment and pipeline service companies, high end motorsport companies, insurance agencies, and online driver safety education programs. Worked with clients to create internal policies and procedures to protect their workforce and confidential and proprietary information.

**Ex Parte TRO Attempt:** Defeated both an ex parte TRO attempt and a follow-up temporary injunction attempt to enforce restrictive covenants and non-compete/non-solicitation agreements arising from the sale of a fiber optics cable business in Houston.

**Breach of Fiduciary Duty:** Represented a secured private equity lender and the officers, directors (managers) and majority shareholders of a related LLC in an AAA commercial rules arbitration and achieved a complete exoneration of claims exceeding \$25 million alleging breaches of fiduciary duty and of contract (and

### Areas of Experience

Commercial Disputes  
Litigation  
Energy and Infrastructure  
Commercial Mortgage Foreclosures and Receiverships  
Construction Litigation and Dispute Resolution  
Financial Institutions Commercial Litigation  
Intellectual Property Litigation  
International Litigation and Arbitration  
Power Generation, Petrochemical, and Process Construction  
Preference and Fraudulent Transfer Litigation  
Secured Financing Litigation  
Trade Secrets, Restrictive Covenants, and Unfair Competition  
Oil & Gas: Downstream and Petrochemical  
Oil & Gas: Environmental  
Oil & Gas: Midstream  
Oil & Gas: Upstream  
Financial Services

### Education

J.D., University of Houston Law Center, 1986, Order of the Barons, Law Review: Houston Law Review, Notes and Comment Editor, 1984-1985  
B.A., Houston Baptist University, Communications, 1979, *magna cum laude*

### Admissions

#### Bars

Texas

#### Courts

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas  
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas  
U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas  
U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas  
U.S. District Court, District of Columbia  
U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit

wrongful foreclosure) related to the purchase and sale of an electric power plant facility.

**Kickbacks/Fraud:** Represented a group of privately held companies against vendors and individuals involved in paying kickbacks to, and otherwise aiding and abetting, former agents' breaches of fiduciary duties and fraud in connection with the purchase of millions of dollars in inventory, including obtaining cash payments, judgments, and the denials of bankruptcy discharges.

**Internal Management Disputes:** Represented majority and minority owners of LLC's, and general and limited partners in Delaware and Texas entities (including oil and gas investment partnerships, commercial demolition and marine salvage companies, a cryogenic vessel company, a fiber optic network company, and gun range and retail store companies) in internal management/control disputes, minority interest oppression, books and records inspection, and accounting proceedings.

**Upstream Operational Disputes:** Represented several major oil companies in drilling rig charter, offshore drilling contract, vessel conversions, downhole failures, operational agreements and force majeure disputes in the North Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, Trinidad, and Brazil.

**Receivership/Fraudulent Transfers:** Represented officers and managers of Delaware LLC's in receivership and fraudulent transfer proceedings relating to \$50 million of private equity start-up capital for the construction of cutting-edge cancer treatment facilities.

**Debt Collection:** Represented independent oil and gas companies and commercial lenders in several suits to collect on debts/promissory notes, foreclose on collateral and/or pursue fraudulent transfers.

**International Arbitration Collection Proceedings:** Represented a major Chinese trading company in collection proceedings in federal and bankruptcy court litigation arising from an international arbitration award relating to the construction of a chemical plant in Pakistan.

**Commercial Arbitration/Force Majeure:** Represented a major, multinational oil company in a commercial arbitration relating to force majeure declarations for refinery supply and output contracts following Hurricane Rita.

**International Business Disputes:** Represented a major international oil company and its subsidiaries in a fraud and breach of contract suit related to a failed greenfield LPG plant development project in northwest India.

**Condemnation Proceedings:** Represented a pipeline company in multiple highly-publicized condemnation proceedings in which summary dismissals were obtained of numerous counterclaims brought by landowners in an effort to halt the construction of a high pressure, high temperature oil pipeline.

**Power Plant Disputes/Arbitration:** Represented an electrical power distributor in litigation and arbitration in disputes arising from the sale of a cogeneration power plant.

**Upstream Property Ownership Disputes:** Represented major oil companies in disputes over the ownership of several producing oil

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## Related Content

Akerman Partner Bruce Stanfill Featured in *Law360* Article Detailing Biden's Climate Change Pledge  
June 28, 2021

Bruce Stanfill Quoted in *Midstream Business* on Sector's Regulatory Outlook  
June 6, 2017

Bruce Stanfill to Speak on Challenges and Opportunities Facing Midstream Businesses  
May 24, 2017

and gas fields, on-shore and offshore, in the United States and as far away as East Timor.

**Class Actions:** Represented automobile, medical device and pharmaceutical product manufacturers, and a nationwide service company in several state and nationwide class action suits.

## Community Involvement

- Houston Volunteer Lawyer's Program: Pro Bono Family Law Practice, 1987 - Present
- Mercy Street, Chapelwood United Methodist Church

## Published Work and Lectures

- *Law360*, Author, "Obstacles Abound For Biden's Climate Change Pledge," June 28, 2021
- Hart Energy MIDSTREAM Texas Conference, Panelist, "Legal Roundtable," May 24, 2017
- 2015 Offshore Technology Conference, "Project Management, Contracts and the Law: Can Attorneys and Managers Get Along?," May 2015
- American Conference Institute, 2nd National Forum on Oil and Gas Litigation, "Bolstering Defense Strategies in Lease Termination Suits," September 2013
- International Legal News, Co-author, "Negotiating, establishing or overcoming force majeure clauses under American Law: A Practice Explication," July 2011
- Litigation & Trial Tactics Course, University of Houston Law Foundation, Co-author, "Cost Effective Discovery Strategies in Complex Litigation - Planning Discovery in the Brave New World," 2007

## Affiliations

- American Society of International Law
- European Society of International Law
- State Bar of Texas - Commercial Litigation, Oil & Gas, and Appellate Sections - Special Committee to Nominate ABA Delegates, 2003-2004
- Houston Bar Association
- Texas Bar Foundation
- A.A. White Society, University of Houston Law Center