

Texas Lawbook Names Nina Cortell Among 'Lions of the Texas Bar'

October 26, 2017 Nina Cortell

PRACTICES Appellate, Litigation

[Nina Cortell](#) rose from the counsel table to make her first oral argument to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in 1981.

The young lawyer felt comforted, as opposing counsel had presented his side in the complex securities dispute without much push-back from the three-judge panel. Suddenly, the docile court became a hot panel.

"I barely got my name out when I was hit with a barrage of questions — and that continued for the entirety of my time before the court," says Cortell, who represented a real estate developer who was challenging a contract because the counter party was not a registered broker.

"This led my opposing counsel to be a bit smug on the flight back [from New Orleans to Dallas]," she says.

Months later, the lawyers realized they had misread the appellate court, which issued a unanimous opinion in favor of Cortell's client. ...

Nearly four decades later, Cortell is a senior partner at Haynes Boone in Dallas and is widely respected as one of the best and most successful appellate lawyers in Texas. She broke through glass ceilings, gracefully convinced leaders of the legal profession to hire and promote more women and proved through her actions that gender was not a factor when it comes to being a great advocate.

Lawyers who know Cortell say she is never meek or shy to speak up, but always does so in a respectful and often quiet manner.

Cortell has successfully argued scores of major cases to the state and federal appellate courts on behalf of some of the biggest corporate clients in Texas, including American Airlines, AT&T, Exxon Mobil, Energy Transfer Partners and Trinity Industries.

"We searched for the best appellate lawyer to handle our case and everyone pointed us to Nina," says NextEra Energy General Counsel Charles Sieving. "Nina did not disappoint."

Excerpted from *Texas Lawbook*. To read the full article (pdf), click [here](#).

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