

10 Haynes Boone Lawyers Recognized as Lawyers of the Year, Hundreds More Ranked as Best Lawyers in America 2025

August 15, 2024 Barry McNeil, David McCombs, Ernest Martin, Michael Boone, Nina Cortell, Stacy Brainin, Brian Vella, Diana Liebmann, Mark Trachtenberg

PRACTICES Insurance Recovery, Litigation, Corporate, Energy, Power and Natural Resources, Real Estate Litigation, Patents, International Arbitration, Appellate, Corporate Governance

Haynes Boone had another significant showing in *The Best Lawyers in America* directory, with a collection of lawyers from offices across the country recognized in the 2025 edition. Ten Haynes Boone lawyers earned special recognition as Lawyer of the Year in their respective practice areas, while hundreds more were designated as Best Lawyers and Ones to Watch.

The [Lawyer of the Year winners](#) include Senior Counsel [Barry F. McNeil](#), who received the distinction in two practice areas, as well as Partners [David McCombs](#), [Ernest Martin, Jr.](#), [Michael Boone](#), [Nina Cortell](#), [Stacy Brainin](#), [Brian Vella](#), [Diana Liebmann](#), Mark Erickson and [Mark Trachtenberg](#).

This year, 167 Haynes Boone lawyers from Austin, Charlotte, Chicago, Orange County, Dallas, Dallas-North, Denver, Fort Worth, Houston, New York, Northern Virginia, Palo Alto, San Antonio, The Woodlands and Washington, D.C. were listed as Best Lawyers. Selection is based on detailed peer-review evaluations. [See the full list of Haynes Boone Best Lawyers](#).

The guide also includes 102 Haynes Boone lawyers in its 2025 Ones to Watch directory. The Ones to Watch distinction is given to lawyers in practice for five to nine years, in recognition of their outstanding professional excellence in private practice in the U.S. They are nominated by industry peers. [See the full list of Haynes Boone Ones to Watch](#).

The Lawyer of the Year honor is given to lawyers with the highest overall peer feedback for a specific practice area and geographic region. Only one lawyer is recognized as Lawyer of the Year for each area of focus and location. Read more about Haynes Boone's Lawyers of the Year below:

Dallas/Fort Worth

[Barry F. McNeil](#): Litigation – Regulatory Enforcement (SEC, Telecom, Energy) and Litigation – Securities

From his early days as a federal antitrust prosecutor to his 30 years with Haynes Boone, McNeil has been an aggressive advocate on behalf of clients. He has successfully represented clients in numerous jury trials, in matters ranging from civil and criminal conspiracy, breach of contract and fiduciary duty, RICO, securities and antitrust offenses. One of those cases prompted the *National Law Journal* to recognize McNeil and his colleagues for a “slam-dunk defense verdict.”

[David McCombs](#): Patent Law

McCombs is primary counsel for many leading corporations in inter partes review (IPR) and is regularly identified as one of the most active attorneys appearing before the Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB). His clients benefit from his 39 years of practice, which include appellate argument, patent litigation and portfolio development. Nationally ranked, McCombs has been commended by clients stating “David is awesome, one of our go-to counsels. I’m extremely impressed with his work. He is absolutely first-rate.” (*Chambers USA*, 2023).

[Ernest Martin, Jr.](#): Insurance Law

Martin has spent his career serving as a close ally to companies, helping them maximize recoveries when their insurance carriers refuse to pay claims and defense costs. His success in helping corporate clients has earned him a Band 1 rating every year since 2004 as one of the top-ranked insurance lawyers in Texas in the *Chambers USA* directory.

[Michael Boone](#): Corporate Governance Law

Boone is one of the co-founders of the firm. He has more than 40 years of experience in mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance, securities transactions and board of director representations. Boone was selected as part of the Texas Business Hall of Fame as part of the Class of 2024. He was also recognized by *Chambers USA* 2016-2024, as one of the leading practitioners in Texas for Corporate/M&A and was featured in *D CEO Magazine's* Dallas 500, *D Magazine* Partners, as one of the "most influential leaders in North Texas" in 2024.

[Stacy Brainin](#): Litigation – Antitrust

Brainin has extensive experience in white collar criminal defense and government investigations, including representation of companies and individuals in both criminal and civil matters. Her practice includes complex business litigation with an emphasis on healthcare and professional liability matters. She has defended cases alleging civil and criminal business fraud in state and federal courts throughout the country. Brainin is experienced in handling internal investigations and routinely advises clients regarding difficult compliance and disclosure issues.

[Nina Cortell](#): Appellate Practice

For more than four decades, Cortell has represented corporations, public entities and individuals in cases that have put her at the forefront of Texas litigation. *Chambers USA* notes her “superlative reputation” and ranks her as a top appellate lawyer in Texas, with a “star” rating (2016-2024). *Best Lawyers* recognized her as the 2020 “Lawyer of the Year” for bet-the-company litigation in Dallas/Fort Worth. Cortell is also the co-founder of the Center for Women in Law at the University of Texas School of Law, which is devoted to enhancing the success of women in law.

Washington, D.C.

[Brian Vella](#): Arbitration

Vella’s practice focuses on heavy construction and commercial construction law matters. For over 30 years, he has represented contractors, engineers and owners in construction-related disputes. This includes matters involving defective specifications, differing site conditions, variations in estimated quantities, design changes, constructive changes and mechanics liens. In addition to representing parties in litigation, arbitration and mediation, Vella counsels clients regarding contract formation and interpretation issues, and in developing strategies for risk analysis and avoidance.

San Antonio

[Diana Liebmann](#): Energy Law

Liebmann is valued as a “utilities guru” and a “leading name” in energy law (*Chambers USA*, 2021). Her broad transactional experience and in-depth focus on the details of wholesale and retail power regulation and market structure enable her to effectively guide clients with respect to structuring transactions, compliance and in the investment and deployment of capital in electricity markets. Liebmann leads the firm’s Power and Renewables Practice Group and is the managing partner of the San Antonio office. She offers clients an unusual synergy between her transactional work and her experience creating the rules for the evolving ERCOT market.

Orange County

Mark Erickson: Litigation – Real Estate

Erickson has been solving business disputes through litigation, arbitration and mediation for more than 40 years. His work for clients involves a diverse range of sophisticated commercial and real estate litigation matters, including contract, trade secret, and business governance and dissolution disputes. Erickson’s client base includes a number of Fortune 500 companies, many of whom have worked with him for decades. He also helps clients advance their interests through litigation, with over four decades of courtroom experience that began with criminal defense work in the Army Judge Advocate General’s Corps.

Houston

[Mark Trachtenberg](#): Appellate Practice

Trachtenberg, who represents major companies in high-stakes appeals, is recognized by his peers as a top lawyer in his field. Among his accomplishments on behalf of clients, Trachtenberg obtained reversal in the Texas Supreme Court of a \$22 million tortious interference and trade secret misappropriation, and he persuaded the court of appeals to vacate a \$7 million arbitration award based on evident partiality. This is his second year recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* as a Lawyer of the Year—Appellate Practice in Houston. He is also ranked in *Chambers USA*, 2019-2024 for appellate law in Texas, in which clients called Mark a “thought leader” and a “very effective” advocate who “comes across as trustworthy and persuasive in his work,” and whose “broad knowledge of Texas law serves his clients really well.”