



## Ryan Pitts

**Associate**

**Houston | Austin**

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**PRACTICES** Appellate, Litigation, Oil and Gas Litigation, Power and Renewables Litigation

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Ryan Pitts represents clients in complex litigation matters, focusing on appellate advocacy. He began his legal career with clerkships at the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit and the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas. Ryan draws on these experiences to advocate for his clients using the clear, concise, and well-reasoned arguments that judges find persuasive, whether at critical trial moments or on appeal.

During law school, Ryan earned both a JD and a Master of Laws in International and Comparative law, while also serving as an editor of the *Duke Law Journal*. From his study of the world's legal systems, Ryan knows how to approach his clients' legal problems from different, and often unexplored, angles.

Ryan was selected as a member of the Houston Young Lawyers Association's Leadership Academy for 2018–2019. He currently serves on the Houston Young Lawyer's Association's Board of Directors. He is also a member of the Federal Bar Association, Houston Bar Association, and Texas Supreme Court Historical Society.

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## QUALIFICATIONS

### EDUCATION

- J.D., Duke University School of Law, 2017, cum laude; Editorial Board, *Duke Law Journal*
- LL.M., in International and Comparative Law, Duke University School of Law, 2017
- B.A., University of Kentucky, 2014, summa cum laude

### CLERKSHIPS

- Law Clerk to the Honorable Lee H. Rosenthal, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas, August 2018 - August 2019

Law Clerk to the Honorable Gerald B. Tjoflat, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, August 2017 - August 2018

### ADMISSIONS

- Texas

## COURT ADMISSIONS

- United States Supreme Court
  - U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
  - U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit
  - U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas
  - U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas
  - U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas
  - U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas
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## PUBLICATIONS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- "On Winter Storm Uri, the Texas Supreme Court and the Public Utilities Commission's Power to Address Statewide Emergencies," co-author, *The Texas Lawbook*, July 10, 2024.
  - "The FTC Ban on Non-Competes and Implications for Texas Litigation," presenter, the Appellate Section of the Houston Bar Association, June 13, 2024.
  - "[Appellate Review of Non-Economic Damages: Thoughts in Response](#)," co-author, *Texas Bar Journal*, January 2024.
  - "The Texas Third Court of Appeals Weighs in on Production Sharing Agreement Wells," author, Haynes Boone client alert, July 10, 2023.
  - Columnist for *The Appellate Lawyer* publication of the Houston Bar Association:
    - "[The Casteel Doctrine, Evidence, and Argument: Horton v. Kansas City Southern Railway Co.](#)," November 2023.
    - "[The Texas Supreme Court's 'Utilitarian Standpoint' in Contract Construction](#)," June 2023.
    - "[The Fate of the Texas Law of the Case Doctrine after Mitschke v. Borromeo](#)," February 2023.
    - "[Issue v. Argument Preservation](#)," October 2022.
    - "[A Couple Developments in Preserving Evidentiary Errors in Summary Judgment Practice](#)," July 2022.
    - "[The Timing of Record Supplements on Appeal](#)," April 2022.
    - "[The Scope of Permissive Interlocutory Appeals in Texas](#)," January 2022.
    - "[The Primary Jurisdiction Doctrine's 'Inherently Judicial' Boundary Under Texas Law](#)," October 2021.
  - "[The Use of Scattergrams to Challenge Extreme Verdicts: A Case Study](#)," co-author, *The Texas Lawbook*, September 19, 2023.
  - "[The Texas Supreme Court's 'Utilitarian Standpoint' in Contract Construction](#)," June 2023.
  - "[Straehla's Presumed Duties](#)," author, *The Houston Lawyer*, Volume 58 – Number 6, May/June 2021.
  - "Midstream Gas Gathering and Processing Agreements in Bankruptcy – A Hot Topic," presenter, Haynes and Boone, LLP's Oil Crash Course, October 14, 2020.
  - "Fifth Circuit Update," co-author, *The Appellate Advocate*, State Bar of Texas Appellate Section, 2020–present.
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## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND ENGAGEMENTS

- Austin Young Lawyers' Association, Board of Directors, July 2025 – June 2027 term
- Austin Bar & AYLA Leadership Academy, 2025
- Texas Bar Foundation, Fellow
- Texas Supreme Court Historical Society, Member

- Houston Bar Association, Appellate Practice Section, Council Member, 2023 – present
  - Houston Young Lawyers Foundation, Fellow, Class 2020
  - Houston Young Lawyers Association, Board of Directors, 2020-2021
  - Houston Young Lawyers Association, Leadership Academy, 2018–2019
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## SELECTED CLIENT REPRESENTATIONS

- Successfully reversed a \$3.8 million jury verdict and obtained a take-nothing judgment from the Texas Fourteenth Court of Appeals in Houston on behalf of Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company in a high-stakes maritime personal injury case.
  - Successfully defended a jury verdict in favor of a construction business against sufficiency challenges to the liability and damages findings on appeal, which involved the failure to pay by a property owner who alleged defects in the work, while also vindicating the business's right to prejudgment interest and to foreclose on the property through cross-appeal points. ([Opinion](#))
  - Won a very significant permissive appeal that vindicated a premises owner's right to immunity under Texas's workers' compensation laws against scores of personal-injury claims arising from an explosion, and which should stand as an important precedent for employers and premise owners across the state of Texas for years to come. ([Press Release](#) | Media Coverage by [Law360](#))
  - Having obtained over \$4 million on summary judgment for a consulting firm that was owed a commission for its role in promoting the sale of its former client, a Haynes Boone team successfully defended that judgment on appeal before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. ([Published Opinion](#) | Media Coverage by [Texas Lawbook](#))
  - After being hired post-verdict to handle the appeal of the largest actual damages award for an injured worker in Texas history, we persuaded the trial court to grant a historic \$117 million remittitur, reducing the plaintiffs' award from \$353 million to \$235 million. Then, after the filing of our opening appellate brief, we obtained a mediated settlement for a fraction of the original verdict.
  - Convinced the First Court of Appeals in Houston to affirm the trial court's order holding one of the defendants, a company based in India, subject to personal jurisdiction in the Texas courts with respect to claims asserting trade-secret misappropriation, fraudulent transfer, and related theories.
  - Persuaded the Texas Supreme Court to affirm a favorable decision from the Austin Court of Appeals for Travis Central Appraisal District. In doing so, the Texas Supreme Court articulated holdings of importance to the Texas property-tax framework and the authority of Texas appraisal districts, which included that trial courts have broad jurisdiction to hear appeals from appraisal districts by trial de novo and that appraisal districts may present evidence of fair-market value whenever the property's appraised value is at issue in those proceedings (overruling a prior intermediate court of appeals decision to the contrary). The result of these holdings will be to enhance the accuracy and fairness of property appraisals statewide.
  - Persuaded the Texas Supreme Court to grant mandamus relief enabling the client to obtain discovery from third-party medical providers regarding amounts and rates paid or incurred by patients who were similarly-situated to plaintiffs. This discovery was sought in connection with client's defense against plaintiffs' multi-million-dollar damage claims for past medical expenses.
  - Convinced the Fifth Circuit to affirm the district court's dismissal of a complaint, which made broad allegations regarding acreage and mineral rights, for failure to state a claim.
  - Persuaded Fifth Circuit to affirm a take-nothing summary judgment in favor of fracking engine manufacturer in products liability action seeking \$15 million in damages arising from fire at a wellsite.
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## AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- Ranked in *The Legal 500 U.S.*, Legalease Ltd., in Energy, 2024
- Named a *Texas Super Lawyers Rising Star* in Appellate, Thomson Reuters, 2024