

UNDERWOOD



Thomas C. Riney

Senior Counsel

Profile



Mr. Riney has practiced civil trial law in Amarillo for over 40 years. He is board certified in Civil Trial Law (Texas Board of Legal Specialization) and is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. His practice includes general civil litigation, commercial litigation, professional liability, products liability, healthcare related litigation, mediation, and arbitration.

Tom was named as one of the "Top 100 Lawyers" in Texas for the eleventh time in 2020 by Super Lawyers (Thomson Reuters) and has been selected for inclusion in "The Best Lawyers in America" (Woodward White, Inc.). He was named "Outstanding Defense Bar Leader in the Country" by Defense Research Institute.

A profile by the *Texas Lawyer* (American Lawyer Media) on the practice of law in Amarillo reported its survey of lawyers in Amarillo indicated Tom was "the defense lawyer to call for a bet the company case," and is considered "very tough, thorough and always well prepared".

A frequent author and lecturer, Tom has given nearly 100 presentations to lawyers on civil trial matters in continuing legal education seminars.

Tom has been married to his wife Sandy for 50 years. They have two sons and seven grandchildren.

Tom has been active in the Amarillo community having served as President of the Amarillo area council of the Boy Scouts of America, President of the Downtown Kiwanis Club, President of the Coffee Memorial Blood Center, Chair of the Board of Governors of Northwest Texas Healthcare System, and has served on the Board of Directors of Catholic Family Service.

Practice Areas

- Commercial Litigation
- Healthcare Litigation

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Bar/Court Admissions

- 1976, Texas
- Supreme Court of Texas
- United States Supreme Court
- United States Courts of Appeals for the Fifth and Eleventh Circuits
- United States District Courts for the Northern, Southern and Western Districts of Texas, Western District of Oklahoma

Education

- [University of Oklahoma](#), J.D., 1976
 - Member, Board of Editors, Oklahoma Law Review, 1974-1976
- [University of Oklahoma](#), B.A., 1972

Affiliations

- Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers
- Board Certified, Civil Trial Law (Texas Board of Legal Specialization)
- Named as one of the “Top 100 Lawyers” in Texas for 2020 by Super Lawyers (Thomson Reuters). This was the eleventh year he was named to the Top 100 list.
- Texas Association of Defense Counsel (President, 1997–1998)
- Texas Supreme Court Advisory Committee (2006–)
- Texas Bar Foundation Board of Trustees (2018 - 2021)
- American Board of Trial Advocates (Advocate, President, West Texas Chapter 1991-1992)
- International Association of Defense Counsel
- American Health Lawyers Association
- Defense Research Institute
- Amarillo Area Bar Association (President, 2005–2006)
- State Bar of Texas (Director, 2012–2015)
- Civil Trial Law Exam Commission, Texas Board of Legal Specialization (2016 - 2019)
- Member, Pattern Jury Charge Oversight Committee (2006–2012)
- Chairman, Committee of the Administration of the Rules of Evidence (1991–1993)
- Sustaining Life Fellow: Texas Bar Foundation

Experience

Obtained a mandamus ruling from the Texas Supreme Court dismissing a defamation claim brought against a Roman Catholic diocese based on the ecclesiastical absention or church autonomy doctrine.

Obtained a summary judgment, affirmed by the Texas Supreme Court, in favor of a seller of oil and gas property regarding an indemnification agreement and an award of attorney's fees, including a contingent appellate fee award.

Obtained dismissals and an award of attorney's fees under the Texas Anti-SLAPP law (the Texas Citizens Participation Act) in a suit filed against a hospital by a physician, two suits for tortious interference with a contract, on a counterclaim filed by a physician against a physicians' group, and on a counterclaim against an attorney.

Obtained summary judgment, affirmed on appeal, for a church-owned financial services organization that manages retirement funds for missionaries and pastors in a multi-million-dollar case involving tortious interference with contract, fraud, conspiracy and lender liability claims arising out of a failed sale of working interests in oil and gas leases located in the Permian Basin.

Obtained a summary judgment for a winery in a \$4 million breach of contract and fraud case arising out of an auction of a winery.

Co-counsel for an international corporation in a \$90 million fraud case arising from the construction of an ethanol plant that resulted in a favorable settlement.

Negotiated a \$10,000,000 settlement with retention of mineral ownership for mineral owners sued for partition.

Obtained a \$1.57 million judgment for a law firm after a jury trial against a former client for unpaid legal fees.

Represented major energy companies in multiple litigation matters including lease disputes, environmental contamination, and personal injury and death claims arising from oil field accidents, exposure to hydrocarbons and other causes.

Obtained a take-nothing jury verdict for an agricultural commodities company in a \$5 million fraud/deceptive trade practices case.

Successfully defended a claim in arbitration for breach of fiduciary against the managers of a cattle feedlot.

Successfully represented numerous lawyers and law firms on claims of legal malpractice, breach of fiduciary duty and in fee disputes.

Obtained defense verdicts for automobile manufacturers in catastrophic injury cases as lead counsel and as co-counsel.

Represented major midstream energy company in catastrophic pipeline strike.

Represented hospitals and medical executive committees in medical staff hearings and litigation related to revocation of medical staff privileges.

Represented oil and gas operators and royalty owners in disputes over overriding royalty interests.

Successfully tried numerous cases to verdict for hospitals and physicians on claims of wrongful death and serious injuries.

Represented major pharmaceutical company in mass tort claims.

Obtained summary judgment for the guarantors of a \$1 million promissory note against the holder of the note.

Publications

Representative Publications

- **“Initiating Litigation”**
Speaker
- **“Demonstrative Evidence on a Budget - Persuasion and Use of Technology”**
Author/Speaker
- **“Regional Litigation in Texas: Urban vs Rural”**
Speaker
- **“Participatory and Vicarious Liability in Business Litigation”**
Author/Speaker
- **“Picking the Deep Pocket – Participatory and Vicarious Liability”**
Author/Speaker
- **“Participatory and Vicarious Liability in Personal Injury”**
Author/Speaker
- **“Expert Witnesses — Back to the Basics”**
Author/Speaker
- **“Use of Experts in Business Tort Litigation”**
Author/Speaker
- **“Limitations, Venue and Other Procedural Issues”**
Co-Author/Speaker
- **“Venue, Jurisdiction and Other Procedural Issues”**
Co Author/Speaker

- **“Professionalism After Twenty Years of the Texas Lawyer’s Creed”**
Co-Author/Speaker
- **“Voir Dire”**
Author/Speaker
- **“Continuing Developments in the Law of Voir Dire”**
Author/Speaker
- Twelve Underwood Lawyers Recently Recognized as 2023 Texas Super Lawyers
- Underwood Lawyers Recognized in the Best Lawyers in America, 2024 Edition