

Debra Donaldson

Partner

ddonaldson@thompsoncoe.com

713- 403-8280



For more than thirty years, Debra Donaldson has enjoyed handling appeals and insurance coverage litigation. Her hybrid practice allows her to indulge her love for research and legal writing in various matters, representing individual and corporate clients in numerous contexts.

Her insurance coverage practice is focused on complex litigation concerning general liability, directors and officers/errors and omissions, construction, professional liability, accident, and title/property disputes. In addition to coverage appeals, Debra has handled appellate matters in numerous areas, including commercial disputes, probate and guardianship, real estate and title matters, and premises liability.

Her diverse experience provides a unique perspective on differing client needs, which allows Debra to best protect their interests. Debra thrives on immersing herself in learning the new topics each case brings and engaging with clients.

Appellate

Debra has handled more than 50 appellate matters in Texas and the United States courts. After several years in private practice, Debra served as a staff attorney for the Texas First District Court of Appeals for two years, where she handled civil and criminal appeals, original proceedings, and motions. Since then, Debra has deployed and expanded her knowledge advocating for clients in state and federal courts, including preserving errors and arguing legal issues, drafting appellate briefs and motions, and presenting oral arguments.

Insurance Coverage and Bad Faith

Like appeals, insurance coverage and bad faith matters provide a forum to engage in the research and written analysis she enjoys most. Debra guides clients in these disputes at every phase, from pre-litigation coverage analysis to appeals.

Representative Experience

In a significant ICC highway construction defect arbitration, Debra recently coordinated briefing between two law firms representing geotechnical engineers. Over two years, she drafted, edited, and/or coordinated thousands of pages of argument, and the related exhibits.

Favorably resolved construction defect claims against an architect based on alleged failure to design an apartment complex in compliance with the FHA's accessibility guidelines.

Represented a dependent administrator in an appeal from a summary judgment and bench trial in probate court involving the decedent's former wife's attempt to modify the divorce decree and her claims against the estate rooted in the decedent's alleged breach of the divorce decree.

Obtained favorable rulings on death penalty sanctions motions filed prior to the client's retention of new counsel, which were rooted in the clients' alleged spoliation of evidence while represented by another attorney; subsequently favorably resolved the matter at mediation.

Represented attorneys and guardians ad litem in a guardianship/estate matter to successfully contest attempts to deny them their fee under the Estates Code; the court of appeals affirmed the trial court's judgment refusing to reduce the fees.

Obtained a favorable summary judgment in connection with the opposing party's breach of a real estate contract for the full contract amount, interest, and attorneys' fees, which the court of appeals affirmed in its entirety.

Secured judgment from Harris County District Court declaring that a UCC financing statement standing alone did not permit a fixture financing company to foreclose on real property, and successfully defended the judgment in the intermediate court of appeals (including oral argument) and the Supreme Court of Texas.

Successfully defended a favorable summary judgment on appeal in a case where the seller of real property contended, he had reserved the right to use an exclusive easement that he could convey to third parties; the court of appeals concluded the trial court had correctly determined the deed excepted to the easement, but did not reserve an ownership interest in the seller.

Obtained an opinion from the Texas First District Court of Appeals affirming the trial court's judgment that an unambiguous will devised all the decedent's personal property (including intangible assets like bank accounts) to the client, instead of limiting the gift to tangible household goods. Obtained this opinion within 9 days of oral argument.

Collaborated to secure a favorable judgment at trial in United States District Court in a surety's lawsuit against its agent for breach of contract, then successfully defended the judgment and substantial attorney fee award against the agent on appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Related Services

Appellate Litigation

Insurance

Education, Admissions & Activities

EDUCATION

South Texas College of Law Houston

J.D. , 1993

The University of Texas at Austin

B.A., 1989

European History

Philosophy

Kappa Delta Sorority

BAR ADMISSIONS

Texas

1993

COURT ADMISSIONS

United States District Court of Texas

Southern

United States Court of Appeals

Second and Fifth Circuit

United States District Court of New York

Eastern

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The Junior League of Houston