



The following section features attorneys who have demonstrated leadership qualities and have achieved the AV Preeminent rating by Martindale-Hubbell®.

Martindale-Hubbell®, the company that has long set the standard for lawyer ratings, has supplied ALM with a list of Top Rated Lawyers who have achieved an AV® Preeminent® Peer Review Rating, the highest rating in legal ability and ethical standards. To create this section, Martindale-Hubbell® tapped its comprehensive database of Martindale-Hubbell® Peer Review Ratings™ to identify lawyers who have been rated by their peers to be AV® Preeminent™.

Martindale Hubbell Peer Review Ratings are driven by the confidential opinions of lawyers and members of the judiciary who receive invitations from Martindale-Hubbell®, via an online survey or by mail, to provide reviews of lawyers of whom they have professional knowledge.

A complete directory of all AV® Preeminent™ lawyers can be found online at Lawyers.com® and Martindale.com, in the Martindale-Hubbell® Law Directory in print and CD-ROM formats, and online through the LexisNexis® services and at lexis.com. Attorneys shown do not constitute the full list of "Top Rated Lawyers"



TOP RATED LAWYERS

TEXAS AUSTIN

TODD KELLY

Born in Nacogdoches, and raised in Arlington, Todd Kelly has been blessed to receive numerous awards and honors over the years. As a U.S. Marine from 1987 to 1998, Kelly first served as a combat engineer then went on to graduate from The Dickinson School of Law in 1995 and attained the rank of Major as a Judge Advocate. Before joining the Carlson Law Firm, he owned The Kelly Law Firm in Houston from 2006-2012, where he gained national recognition for his representation of a sexual assault victim against a military contractor, when his efforts changed the rules related to funding of military contractors overseas and defeated the mandatory binding arbitration provision in one major military contractor's employment contracts for the first time in the history of that provision.

Todd was selected as one of Houston's Top Lawyers in 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2012, before moving to Austin to join The Carlson Law Firm in 2012. He has been named a Texas Super Lawyer in 2011-2012 as well as 2014-2020. Rated AV by Martindale-Hubbell, he has been recognized for Excellence in Personal Injury Litigation by Texas Monthly Magazine numerous times for his top verdicts.

Kelly is a member of The American Board of Trial Advocates, as well as The "F- Warriors" Region 4 Representative. In 2013, he was inducted into the Texas Lawyer Hall of Fame for attaining a verdict of \$16.9 Million for a rape victim against a long-term care facility. Nationally, Kelly is a member of the Million and Multi-Million Dollar Advocate's Forums. Additionally, Kelly is member of the National Trial Lawyers Top 100 Trial Lawyers, the Elite Lawyers of America, and the National Association of Distinguished Counsel.

He serves as the President of the Capital Area Trial Lawyers' Association and as the Vice President of Political Affairs for the Texas Trial Lawyers' Association. Kelly also chairs the advisory committee to the local chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

Kelly still handles sexual assault and medical malpractice cases, but also a wide range of serious vehicle collisions. He is also handling a significant docket of cases on behalf of human trafficking victims. Kelly is licensed in four jurisdictions including Texas, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Virginia, and is Board-Certified in Personal Injury Trial Law.



11606 N IH-35, Austin, Texas 78753
512-346-5688
www.carlsonattorneys.com

**TEXAS** DALLAS

LES WEISBROD

Dubbed the “pit bull” of the Texas medical malpractice bar and recognized nationally and internationally as one of the top plaintiff’s medical malpractice trial lawyers in the United States, Les Weisbrod is a leader in personal injury law with a strong history of results.

Les Weisbrod gets results. His \$31 million verdict against Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas in 2003 was one of the top 100 verdicts in the United States that year. More recently in August 2014, Mr. Weisbrod successfully obtained a summary jury trial verdict in Dallas Country Court At Law No. 1 for \$3.7 million on behalf of an injured 79-year-old client, which included \$2 million in punitive damages. Cumulatively, since May 1986, Mr. Weisbrod has tried or settled over 205 medical malpractice and medical product cases that have each resulted in verdicts or settlements of \$1 million or more for his clients. According to Michael Rustad, a Professor of Law at Suffolk University Law School in Boston, who has done extensive research of punitive damage awards, “Les Weisbrod has obtained more medical malpractice punitive damage jury verdicts for his clients than any other attorney in the United States.”

Mr. Weisbrod has served as President, President-Elect, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Parliamentarian of the American Association for Justice (AAJ). AAJ (formerly known as the Association of Trial Lawyers of America) is the world’s largest trial lawyer association. He has also served on the AAJ Board of Governors since 1998 and on the 17-member Executive Committee of AAJ since 2001. Mr. Weisbrod was the founding Co-Chair of AAJ’s Birth Trauma Litigation Group (1991), founding Co-Chair of AAJ’s Medical Negligence Litigation Group (1999), and Chair of AAJ’s Professional Negligence Section (1996). He is a past president of the Dallas Trial Lawyers Association (1993) and has been a member of the Texas Trial Lawyers Association Board of Directors since 1990. He is Board Certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in Personal Injury Trial Law and Civil Trial Law. He has lectured to lawyers groups across the US, Canada, England and Australia, and has written extensively on medical malpractice and medical product topics. Les received his bachelor’s degree *magna cum laude* in



1975 from Claremont Men’s College and his law degree in 1978 from Southern Methodist University.

A founding partner of Miller Weisbrod LLP, Les Weisbrod is uniquely qualified to handle the intricacies of cases involving medical malpractice, personal injury or wrongful death. With his tenacity and relentless pursuit of discovery, Mr. Weisbrod continually exceeds client expectations. Simply stated, Les Weisbrod has more experience, more expertise and more of what it takes to win.



Miller Weisbrod LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

11551 Forest Central Drive, Forest Central II, Suite 300, Dallas, TX 75243
p: 214.987.0005, f: 214.987.2545
www.millerweisbrod.com



KoonsFuller, P.C. Family Law 2020 Legal Leaders: Top Rated Attorneys in Texas



Left to Right: Fred Adams, Heather King, Rick Robertson, Ike Vanden Eykel, Charla Bradshaw, and Sherri Evans

As the largest family law firm in Texas and the second largest in the U.S., KoonsFuller offers an unmatched level of clout and a range of resources. The firm and its attorneys are frequently honored within the business and legal community, most recently with the selection of Ike Vanden Eykel, Rick Robertson, Heather King, Charla Bradshaw, Sherri Evans and Fred Adams to the **2020 Legal Leaders: Top Rated Lawyers in Texas**. *Legal Leaders* recognizes these attorneys due in part to their AV® Preeminent Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review Ratings for having cultivated the esteem of both colleagues, clients, and records of success which speak to their abilities for helping clients prevail in even the most complex cases.

It is no surprise that five of the firms managing shareholders are named to the 2020 Legal Leaders: Top Rated Lawyers in Texas list alongside shareholder and family law veteran Fred Adams who has served clients in Dallas/Fort Worth for more than 30 years.

In addition to being board-certified in family law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, all six of these attorneys are recognized among *The Best Lawyers in America*® in family law by Best Lawyers, LLC, with Rick Robertson, Charla Bradshaw and Heather King earning additional recognition by being named to the family law mediation list.

- KoonsFuller, P.C. CEO and Dallas Managing Shareholder **Ike Vanden Eykel** is known nationwide as one of the most renowned family law attorneys and continues to be named the #1 Family Law Super Lawyer in Texas by Thomson Reuters. He has an ability to craft complex property settlements or take a large case to court. In an issue of *Town & Country* magazine, Ike Vanden Eykel was the only Texas attorney featured among the nation's 15 most effective family law attorneys for wealthy, famous clients. He has been described as the “reigning king” of Texas divorce and the “divorce law jedi” by *The Dallas Morning News*.



KoonsFuller

Family Law

- KoonsFuller, P.C. President and Plano Managing Shareholder **Rick Robertson** is a family lawyer who counsels high net-worth individuals, A-level executives, pro athletes, entertainers and their spouses, but he never mentions their names or actions. He respects the privacy of his clients above all else. Rick Robertson is honored as one of the Top 100 Super Lawyers in Texas and DFW by Thomson Reuters and continues to be known as one of Collin County's most highly respected divorce attorneys due to his discretion and proven track record of success.
- Southlake Managing Shareholder **Heather King** is a well-known family lawyer in Texas and one of the few family law attorneys with extensive experience from the beginning of a case, through trial or settlement to the handling of an appeal. Because of her range of talents, she is called upon to handle trials and appeals throughout the state. She continues to be recognized among the elite family law and divorce attorneys as evidenced by her recent recognitions such as the prestigious Sam Emison Award by the Texas Academy of Family Law Specialists, being named a Texas Trailblazer by Texas Lawyer, and listed among the Top 50 Women Super Lawyers in Texas as well as Top 100 DFW and Top 100 Texas Super Lawyers by Thomson Reuters, among other recognitions.
- Denton Managing Shareholder **Charla Bradshaw** is an accomplished board-certified family law attorney. She is a well-known speaker and author in the area of family law and also trained in collaborative law. While she employs an aggressive approach to litigating family law cases, Charla Bradshaw is also a certified mediator and handles collaborative law cases. Most recently, she has been named the Best Attorney by Living Magazine N. Irving/

Coppell, Best Divorce Lawyer by Best Of Denton County and Top 50 Women Super Lawyer in Texas as well as Top 100 DFW and Texas Super Lawyers by Thomson Reuters.

- Houston Managing Shareholder **Sherri Evans** is uniquely qualified to analyze and litigate complex property cases in a divorce. With more than 25 years of experience practicing law in Harris County, she is a well-respected, dynamic family law attorney and a gifted litigator, adept at trying even the most complex property division and child custody cases, among many others. She is recognized as a Top Lawyer in Houston by H Texas Magazine, Houstonia Magazine and ReviewIt Magazine, as well as a Top 50 Women Texas Super Lawyer and among the Top 100 Houston and Top 100 Texas Super Lawyers by Thomson Reuters.
- Shareholder **Fred Adams** has practiced family law in Dallas for over 30 years and has extensive experience in all types of family law matters. Having tried hundreds of cases and mediated or settled hundreds more, Fred is a successful family law attorney that assists clients with divorce, property division and more. He also regularly presents CLE-qualified courses to other family law attorneys throughout the state. Additionally, Fred is named among the Top 100 Super Lawyers in Texas by Thomson Reuters.

With more than 30 attorneys across the state of Texas, KoonsFuller family law and divorce lawyers are able to consult with each other and draw upon their collective experience to deliver results. Working together, as a fully integrated team, there's no case too large or too complex for KoonsFuller to manage. For more information visit **KoonsFuller.com**

DALLAS

1717 McKinney Avenue
Suite 1500
Dallas, Texas 75202
(214) 871-2727
(214) 871-0196 fax

DENTON

320 W. Eagle Drive
Suite 200
Denton, Texas 76201
(940) 442-6677
(940) 442-6671 fax

HOUSTON

109 N. Post Oak Lane
Suite 425
Houston, Texas 77024
(713) 789-5112
(713) 789-5123 fax

PLANO

5700 W. Plano Parkway
Suite 2200
Plano, Texas 75093
(972) 769-2727
(972) 769-0313 fax

SOUTHLAKE

550 Reserve Street
Suite 450
Southlake, Texas 76092
(817) 481-2710
(817) 481-2637 fax

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903.843.5678
403 WEST TYLER
GILMER, TX 75644
WWW.TEFTELLERLAW.COM

Tefteller Law PLLC is an East Texas trial firm representing Texans across the state who have been severely injured or killed in commercial vehicle accidents, oilfield accidents, auto accidents, or through dangerous conditions. In recent years, the firm has demonstrated an impressive level of expertise in brain injury cases.

As explained by Todd Tefteller, the founder of the firm, "My granddaddy taught me that 'a man should never forget where he came from, no matter where he ends up.' This philosophy has allowed our firm to achieve an impressive level of success. Staying true to our East Texas roots and being plugged into our local communities allows us to relate better with jurors anywhere and speak with them as people, friends and neighbors—not talk down to them from some legal ivory tower." The results have been seen in Tefteller Law's ability to go across Texas and obtain substantial settlements and verdicts in tough cases when insurance companies or big corporations refuse to do the right thing.

Tefteller states that "the firm's 'dig in and fight' mentality illustrates why some of our lawyers have been featured in numerous national and international publications, radio and television programs." Tefteller Law attorneys have appeared, provided commentary, or been featured on Fox News, CNBC, ABC's World News Tonight, NBC's Nightly News, and CBS' Nightly News, along with *The New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and National Public Radio, among others.

LEGAL LEADERS



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Lawyer Ratings

TODD TEFTELLER
TOM MCCORKLE



TEXAS HOUSTON

MICHAEL D. SYDOW

Michael Sydow graduated from the University of Texas School of Law, with honors, in 1976. He began his career with the United States Navy, where he tried numerous cases with a 100% success rate.

Mr. Sydow then returned to Texas where he entered private practice with a regional law firm. While at the firm, Mr. Sydow tried cases involving complex business structures and international jurisdictional issues.

In 1984 Mr. Sydow was recruited to join a national law firm based in San Francisco, as a shareholder. For the next 20 years he continued to try cases involving individuals and closely held businesses and their activities, including insurance, finance, securities, commodities, succession, and the effects of divorce on their assets, ownership, control, and structure.

In 2004 Mr. Sydow was asked to become counsel to entertainer Michael Jackson for civil and business matters, including family law issues. Mr. Sydow served in that role until after Mr. Jackson's acquittal on criminal charges in 2006, and during the restructuring of his affairs after acquittal.

In 2010 Mr. Sydow returned to the private practice of law. His practice includes family law, domestic and international child custody and support, complex and multi-jurisdictional property issues, international business transactions and business organizations, international litigation and arbitration.

Mr. Sydow has been Board Certified in Civil Trial Law since 1986.

He has handled cases in state and federal courts in New York, New Jersey, Florida, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Colorado, California, Idaho, and British Columbia.

Mr. Sydow is multi-lingual and speaks English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.



3355 W. Alabama, Suite 444, Houston, Texas 77098
Tel: 713.622.9700 | Fax: 713.552.1949
www.thesydowfirm.com

TEXAS ROCKWALL

BETSY BRANCH

Betsy Branch began practicing law in 1990, becoming Board Certified in Family Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in 2006. Betsy is an AV-rated attorney by Martindale Hubbell in recognition of her ethical and legal ability. A seasoned trial attorney and skilled mediator, Betsy recently completed the requirements as a Parent Facilitator. Betsy Branch maintains a client-focused practice that she describes as holistic. Betsy strives to obtain a unique legal resolution tailored to the goal of the client. When mental health or substance abuse factors into a case, Betsy encourages the client to acknowledge and address the impact of such complications on the case. When a case involves children, Betsy coaches her clients to cultivate positive co-parenting skills.



Betsy opened The Branch Law Firm, PLLC in 2012 and practices with her son, Ryan Branch, a 2016 graduate of the University of Houston Law Center and a 10-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force, and with Valencia K. Campbell, a 2018 graduate of SMU Dedman School of Law whose undergraduate degree is from the University of Texas at Austin. Betsy, Ryan, and Valencia practice primarily in Rockwall County and its surrounding counties.

THE BRANCH LAW FIRM, PLLC

679 Justin Road, Rockwall, TX 75087
Phone: 469.610.2626 | Phone: 469.600.3334 | Fax: 469.453.3340
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Corey R. Chivers is a partner in Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP's Capital Markets practice. He has represented corporations, investment banks, national governments and multinational financial institutions in a wide range of public and private securities offerings, including initial public offerings, major high-yield transactions and investment grade debt offerings.

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