

# Jackson Walker Elects 10 New Partners

**Jackson Walker** announces the election of 10 attorneys to the firm's partnership. The new partners in each city are:

- Austin – Kimberly Gdula, Ben Rhem, Cassie Ross
- Dallas – Chris Bankler, Steven Dimitt, Jordan Smith
- Fort Worth – Carrie Miller
- Houston – Courtney Carlson, Amanda Shaw-Castro
- San Antonio – Ann Leafstedt

**Chris Bankler**, Dallas, Litigation – Chris Bankler's practice focuses primarily on dispute resolution for businesses and financial institutions. He represents clients in a variety of litigation matters, including general business disputes, fraud claims, breach of fiduciary duty cases, and breach of contract claims. Chris has served as counsel on over 100 cases in state and federal courts as well as FINRA and AAA arbitrations. His distinguished understanding of financial matters has made him a go-to counselor for national banks, community banks, credit unions, and investment and private equity firms. He also represents officers and directors of public and private companies in high-stakes corporate defense cases.

**Courtney Carlson**, Houston, Litigation – Courtney Carlson represents clients in a wide range of business and commercial litigation matters with particular emphasis on the energy and financial industries. While she practices in both state and federal courts, she focuses on litigation within the state of Texas and receives regular requests to give CLE presentations focused on procedure and related state court issues. Courtney is also involved in environmental litigation matters. She has participated in litigation related to site cleanup and remediation projects and advises clients on the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act

(CERCLA).

**Steven Dimitt**, Dallas, Litigation – Steven Dimitt handles both litigation and transactional matters for land use, construction, and business clients. Recently, Steven has focused his practice on representing religious institutions against municipalities regarding violations of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Person's Act (RLUIPA). Highlights of his practice include the successful representation of a church in a federal court lawsuit, which resulted in the church obtaining the necessary zoning approvals that the local municipality had previously refused to provide.

**Kimberly Gdula**, Austin, Litigation – Civil litigator Kimberly Gdula represents a wide range of clients, from Fortune 500 companies to small businesses and trusts. In commercial litigation, she represents clients in several areas, including contract actions, fiduciary litigation, real estate litigation, insurance defense, partnership disputes, and antitrust suits. She also defends health care providers and insurance companies in contract disputes and malpractice claims.

**Ann Leafstedt**, San Antonio, Corporate & Securities – Ann Leafstedt works with family offices and businesses to create and implement strategic plans to achieve their goals. Ann guides clients in entity formation, acquisitions, entity governance, drafting contracts, and other corporate matters. She works with businesses to provide solutions for day-to-day issues and to execute complex corporate transactions. Ann's experience includes succession planning for family offices, negotiating financing transactions, and representing clients in business combinations. She works with multi-disciplinary teams of tax, real estate, IP, and other specialists to help clients navigate all aspects of deals. Ann represents clients in a variety of industries, including energy, construction, heavy equipment, and ranching. She also regularly advises

nonprofit organizations on a pro bono basis.

**Carrie Bowers Miller**, Fort Worth, Finance – Carrie Miller represents a diverse range of clients, including financial institutions, real estate developers, and mining companies in a wide range of business transactions. She helps clients create efficient strategies to achieve their business goals. Her real estate work involves the negotiation, structuring, and documentation of financing, as well as all phases of development, from acquisition to disposition. Her financial experience includes negotiating single-asset and portfolio transactions, multi-state transactions, loan participations, and multi-creditor facilities.

**Ben Rhem**, Austin, Environmental & Legislative – Ben Rhem practices energy and environmental law. He advises power generation, oil and gas and mining companies in state and federal compliance matters. Ben regularly works with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency. He also helps clients with regulatory issues related to FERC, PHMSA, the Railroad Commission of Texas, and MSHA. Ben has assisted in the development and financing of over two dozen wind and solar energy projects, as well as numerous natural gas-fired power plants. He was selected to the *Super Lawyers – Rising Stars* list by Thomson Reuters in 2016.

**Cassie Ross**, Austin, Real Estate – Cassie Ross is a real estate attorney who represents purchasers, sellers, borrowers, developers, landlords, and tenants in a variety of real estate transactions. She advises clients in the acquisition, disposition, financing, development, management, and leasing of retail, industrial, office, single-family residential, multi-family, and mixed-use projects. Her experience also includes the representation of clients in the acquisition, disposition, financing, and development of unimproved land. Cassie was selected to the *Super Lawyers – Rising Stars* list by Thomson Reuters from 2012 – 2016, and was named to the

Legal Rising Stars in Real Estate Law list by *S.A. Scene* magazine from 2012 – 2014.

**Amanda Shaw-Castro**, Houston, Energy – Amanda Shaw-Castro's practice is focused on energy and commercial finance transactions and multi-state real estate portfolio transactions. Amanda routinely helps both borrowers and lenders negotiate, structure, and document complex commercial finance transactions. Amanda assists lenders with all aspects of energy based loans, including revolving line of credit and letter of credit facilities. Amanda's real estate practice includes representing multinational private and public companies in the acquisition of large multi-state portfolios ranging in value from 250 million to 8.1 billion dollars.

**Jordan Smith**, Dallas, Energy – Jordan Smith's practice is focused on energy, natural resources, real estate, and general corporate transactions. In oil and gas, Jordan negotiates agreements related to upstream exploration and production and advises clients on title issues, water rights, horizontal drilling under special field rules, and lease development obligations. Highlights of his career include the representation of private investment funds in negotiating joint venture investments with operators to develop and produce oil and gas assets around the United States. Jordan is a Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation. He was selected to the Rising Stars list by *S.A. Scenemagazine* in 2013 and 2015, and was selected to the "Best S.A. Lawyers" in Energy and Oil and Gas Law list by *S.A. Scene* magazine in 2015.

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