



## Hal J. Wood

Partner

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Hal Wood is an experienced trial lawyer who represents clients in complex commercial and business litigation matters. His practice encompasses a wide range of disputes, including complex contractual matters, fraud and breach of representation claims arising out of mergers and acquisitions and other complex commercial transactions, employment-related issues, restrictive covenant and trade secret misappropriation claims, shareholder, partnership, and other ownership disputes, transaction- and real estate-related fraud, commercial lease disputes, and other high-stakes commercial conflicts. Hal works closely with business leaders and in-house counsel to analyze risk, develop practical litigation strategies, and deliver guidance aligned with each client's business objectives.

Hal regularly serves as lead trial counsel in jury trials, bench trials, and arbitrations, with successful outcomes in matters pending before state and federal courts and private arbitration panels. He is known for his ability to manage complex disputes from early strategic assessment through trial. His experience spans numerous industries, including manufacturing, distribution, professional services, and real estate, giving him a practical understanding of the operational and commercial considerations that often drive litigation strategy.

Hal is an active thought leader in the business litigation space. He has been a featured speaker at seminars focused on negotiating and drafting major business agreements, and he has presented to various bar association committees. Through his advocacy and thought leadership, Hal helps clients and peers navigate evolving legal issues affecting modern business disputes.

### Education

- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (B.A., 1990)
- University of Illinois Chicago School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 1993)

### Admissions

- Illinois
- United States District Court - Northern District of Illinois (Trial Bar)
- United States Court of Appeals - Seventh Circuit

### Services & Industries

- Appellate
- Commercial Litigation
- Employment Litigation & Disputes
- Litigation
- M&A and Private Equity Litigation
- Real Estate Litigation
- Trust & Estate Litigation

# Key Matters

- Acted as lead trial counsel defending an alcohol importer in a trial in the San Diego Superior Court, on claims of tortious interference brought by a former distributor of the alcohol brands at issue. After five days of trial, the court granted a directed judgment in favor of the importer, entering judgement in favor of the importer on all claims.
- Served as lead trial counsel defending a prominent Chicago restaurant owner in a breach of contract claim. During the trial, the court granted a motion for directed finding in favor of the client, resulting in a judgment against the plaintiff and in favor of the client on all claims.
- Served as lead trial and appellate counsel in successfully vacating an arbitration award against the owners of the entity that signed the arbitration agreement. The arbitration related to the repurchase of membership interests of a Houston-area staffing firm. The arbitration award against the owners of the company was vacated after two successful appeals to the First District Court of Appeals for Texas based on the arbitrator's lack of jurisdiction over the non-signatories to the arbitration agreement.
- Lead trial attorney for a 13-day bench trial involving the will contest dispute over control of a multi-million-dollar family-owned business, which resulted in a directed judgment in favor of the client. Served as counsel in the appeal of the directed judgment at the appellate court and the Illinois Supreme Court, each resulting in unanimous decisions affirming the trial court ruling.
- Acted as lead counsel in obtaining summary judgment in favor of the seller of a business in a post-M&A indemnification claim relating to the buyer's allegations of breaches of representations concerning the business's top customers and refusal to pay deferred purchase price amounts to the seller, which resulted in an over \$9 million dollar judgment in favor of the client, which included 100% of the client's attorneys' fees and costs.
- Served as lead trial counsel in defending a majority shareholder in claims in excess of \$70 million for breach of representation and fraud arising from the sale of a business. The case resulted in favorable settlement after the commencement of the trial, and subsequent favorable rulings to enforce the terms of the settlement agreement.
- Served as lead trial counsel in defending the former employees and new employer in a federal court trial on claims of breaches of restrictive covenants, breach of fiduciary duty, misappropriation of trade secrets, and violations of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. The case resulted in a judgment for the defendants on all claims after a six-day trial.
- Acted as lead counsel for the defendants in a staffing industry restrictive covenant case. The case favorably settled following the denial of the plaintiff's motion for a temporary restraining order.
- Lead trial counsel in representing a shareholder of an accounting firm in connection with the breakup of the firm. The judgment by the trial court successfully divided the firm's assets in favor of client.
- Acted as lead counsel in an arbitration representing the defendant in a claim by a consultant seeking a finder's fee in relation to for the sale of a business. The representation resulted in an award in favor of the defendant after a 5-day arbitration hearing, and an award requiring the plaintiff to pay the client's attorneys' fees.
- Represented the majority shareholder sibling owners of a food seasoning and packaging company against the other sibling shareholder relating to a dispute over the ownership and management of the company. Representation resulted in clients successfully obtaining ownership of entire company.
- Served as lead counsel for a wholesale bakery in claims based on a restrictive covenant and claims of misappropriation of trade secrets related to the hiring of an employee from a competitor. The plaintiff dismissed the case after the court denied its motion for a temporary restraining order.
- Served as lead trial counsel for a legal finance company in an interpleader case filed in state court in Houston, Texas. The case was settled after trial by the client receiving funds that were the subject of the interpleader case.
- Acted as lead trial counsel for a financing processor of vehicle service contracts. The plaintiff, who was an administrator of the vehicle service contracts, withdrew its request for a preliminary injunction during the preliminary injunction hearing and then the case settled just prior to the beginning of the trial.

- Lead counsel in an arbitration hearing for a medical doctor in claiming amounts due to him from the medical practice after he left the practice. The arbitration hearing resulted in an award in favor of the client for all amounts he claimed were due him.
- Represented an accountant in claims made by an accounting firm for amounts it claimed were due because of the accountant's departure from the firm. Prevailed on a motion for summary judgment.
- Served as lead trial counsel representing a futures trading firm on churning claims in a jury trial in state court in Las Vegas, Nevada. The jury trial resulted in a verdict in favor of the client on all claims.
- Acted as lead trial counsel for a futures trading firm in a National Futures Association (NFA) arbitration hearing in claims made by a customer relating to the closing out of positions in the customer's account. The hearing resulted in a favorable ruling for the client.
- Served as lead trial counsel in a federal court jury trial in Indianapolis, Indiana, in a fraud and breach of contract claim resulting in the successful defense of the fraud claim brought by a departed executive based on a dispute over a compensation package.
- Lead trial counsel in a jury trial on behalf of a landlord against the departing national retail tenant. The trial resulted in a judgment against former tenant for all amounts claimed by the landlord for unpaid rent and other damages.