



Donna J. Yarborough
Shareholder

214-346-0100

DYarborough@cowlesthompson.com

Practice Areas

- Probate Litigation
 - Will Contests
 - Estate Administration
 - Trust Litigation
- Guardianship



Practice Emphasis

Donna Yarborough is a Shareholder with Cowles Thompson. She guides her clients through complicated legal issues related to estate administration, litigation involving will contests, trusts, and guardianships. She has served Texans across the state for 23 years and is certified by the State Bar of Texas to serve as an attorney ad litem in guardianship proceedings.

Estate and Trust Litigation

Donna has extensive experience in a variety of estate and trust litigation matters, including

- Securing Temporary Administrations – to prevent the dissipation of estate assets;
- Removing and defending Executors and Trustees;
- Proving common law spouse and adoption of step-children to claim inheritance;
- Defending and contesting Wills.

In addition, Donna has litigated several unique cases during her career, even some that required exhumation of a body to prove heredity via DNA evidence, obtaining essential photos from the Dallas Police Department and the Dallas Medical Examiner’s Office, persuading a judge to hold a guardianship hearing at the home of the proposed ward and obtaining a temporary restraining order to stop a funeral.

Guardianship

Guardianship is a legal process that is used when an individual is incapacitated and can no longer make sound decisions regarding finances or medical decisions and cannot protect themselves. Donna has handled all aspects of guardianship litigation, including

- Representing applicants;
- Contesting applications;
- Defending proposed wards;
- Obtaining emergency guardianships;
- Obtaining a divorce in a guardianship proceeding;
- Obtaining Temporary Restraining Orders (to protect persons from third parties).

Publications and Speaking Engagements

A frequent author, Donna's articles have been featured in several publications including those of the Texas Trial Lawyer's Association, the Dallas Young Lawyers' Association, the Dallas Bar Association's Probate Section and its monthly *Headnotes* paper.

- Will Contests, presenter, Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program and the J.L. Turner Association, Dec. 2015
- "You've Been Appointed Executor, Now What?" Dallas Bar Association *Headnotes*, Dec. 2015
- "Risks Involved with Witnessing Documents," Dallas Bar Association *Headnotes*, Apr. 2012
- Guardianship speaker, Probate Symposium for the Dallas Young Lawyers Association, Sep. 2011
- "Eight Essentials of Guardianships," author, Dallas Bar Association, *Headnotes*, May 2011
- "Down and Dirty of Guardianship," author and presenter with Judge Nikki DeShazo, Probate Section meeting, Dallas Bar Association, Feb. 2011
- Guardianship speaker, Texas Trial Lawyers Association Annual Meeting, Dec. 2009
- "Guardianships: Is the Proposed Ward Incapacitated?" author, Dallas Bar Association, *Headnotes*, Aug. 2007
- "Obtaining an Emergency Temporary Guardianship for a Client," Dallas Bar Association, *Headnotes*, Mar. 2006
- Video, producer, on behalf of disabled client seeking insurance coverage in a guardianship matter, 2002

Education

- J.D., Loyola University School of Law, 2001
 - Visiting Third-Year student at Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law, 2000-2001
 - Summer abroad, University of Vienna Law School, 1999
- B.A., Political Science, Southern Methodist University, 1991

Admissions

- State Bar of Texas, 2001
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas

Memberships & Activities

- State Bar of Texas
- Dallas Bar Association
 - Real Estate, Probate & Trusts Sections
- Collin County Bar Association
- Probate Bench Bar, Co-Chair, 2020; committee member, 2019

Honors

- Certified by the State Bar of Texas to serve as an attorney ad litem in guardianship proceedings
- *Texas Super Lawyers*®, Thomson Reuters *Super Lawyers*®; selected for inclusion, 2021-2023
- Top Women Attorneys – Texas, *Texas Monthly*, 2023
- Top Attorneys in Texas, *Texas Monthly*, 2022

