



Melissa J. Pegram
Of Counsel

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Practice Areas:

- Commercial Transactions
- Corporate and Business Organizations
- Employment Law
- Estate Planning, Wills and Probate
- Hospitality and Lodging
- Landlord/Tenant
- Real Estate



Practice Emphasis

Melissa J. Pegram is Of Counsel with Cowles and Thompson and a member of the firm's Corporate and Business Law Practice and Labor and Employment Law Practice groups.

Business Law

Melissa focuses on the representation of businesses in the area of commercial law and in dealing with all types of employment law issues commonly encountered by businesses. As a part of her representation of businesses, Melissa supervises and directs the handling of complex employment and commercial litigation matters, successfully negotiates and documents complex "business divorces," structures and documents business acquisitions and sales, drafts all documents relating to the formation of business entities and reviews and negotiates all types of business transactions, such as lease agreements and commercial loan transactions, and provides general counsel advice and services necessary for the day-to-day operation of businesses.

Employment Law

In the employment context, Melissa prepares employer responses to employment-related complaints filed with the Department of Labor, the EEOC, and other administrative agencies; conducts investigations into allegations of executive and employee misconduct; prepares employment policies and handbooks, all types of employment-related contracts, confidentiality agreements, covenants not to compete/restrictive covenants, and separation/severance agreements. Melissa regularly advises corporate counsel and corporate human resources/personnel directors regarding litigation avoidance measures and the handling of employment-related situations and decisions.

Probate and Trusts

In her many years of experience, Melissa has successfully handled numerous complicated estate probate and trust matters, working through difficult, hard-fought issues to reach favorable results for her clients.

Representative Matters

- Successfully resolved a \$2 million investment fraud case for clients (investors, officers, shareholders, and members of the Board of Directors) of a defrauded corporation. The lawsuit alleged the president of the defrauded corporation had misappropriated corporate funds, breached fiduciary duties, participated in “self-dealing”, and conspired with a national banking institution to usurp all ownership rights in the defrauded corporation in a “quid pro quo” arrangement of favorable loans to the president in exchange for alleged bribery payments to the national banking institution. In a favorable settlement, clients received the return of more than \$1.5 million dollars, representing approximately 75% of their initial investment of \$2 million dollars. Ms. Pegram analyzed various documents and transactions that were a part of this arrangement and also prepared the settlement documents, including the Settlement Agreement, the Promissory Note, a Pledge Agreement, utilizing stock in several corporations as security for payment of settlement obligations, corporate resolutions and consents, and Deeds of Trust to secure performance of obligations under the terms of the settlement documents. 2009
- Represented tenant in negotiation and documentation of second largest commercial lease transaction of 500,000+ square feet in DFW Metroplex for the year, 2006.
- Resolved complex \$27 million partnership dispute involving the control, management, and transfer of ownership interests in six hotels branded by three international hotel companies.
- Part of team that closed a \$60,000,000 acquisition of four multi-tiered hotels located in Texas. Participated by assisting in handling the purchase and sale documentation.
- Handled the sale, acquisition, and financing for \$15 million independent, privately-owned business in Dallas in 2008.
- Serves as employment law counsel for national healthcare firm, national logistics firm, etc., providing daily employment counsel for clients throughout the nation.
- General Counsel employment advice for service providers including healthcare services, logistics, warehousing, accounting firms, computer software, billing services for healthcare providers, human resource software providers.
- Provides employment law representation for municipalities.

Speaking Engagements

Melissa is a frequent speaker at educational seminars on a wide range of commercial and employment law-related topics. She is an adjunct professor in the Paralegal Studies Program of the Dallas County Community College District. She is the author of numerous articles on various commercial and employment topics.

Education

- J.D., Baylor University School of Law, 1981
- B.A., University of Texas at Arlington, 1972

Admissions

- State Bar of Texas, 1981
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas

Memberships

- State Bar of Texas
- Dallas Bar Association

Honors

- AV Rated AV Preeminent® by Martindale-Hubbell®, the facilitator of a peer review rating process. Ratings reflect the anonymous opinions of members of the bar and the judiciary.