



COWLES THOMPSON
ATTORNEYS | COUNSELORS



Claire E. James

Shareholder

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Practice Areas

- Commercial/Business Litigation
- Family Law



Practice Emphasis

Shareholder Claire James is a family law attorney who navigates some of life's most personal and high-stakes legal challenges.

She represents clients in a full range of family law matters, including high-asset divorces, divorces with complex property issues, contested custody disputes, and pre- and post-marital agreements. A skilled and effective courtroom advocate, Claire is known for her ability to manage high-conflict cases with professionalism and resolve. While she remains prepared to advocate aggressively in court, Claire is also an experienced and creative negotiator who encourages agreed resolutions whenever possible.

In addition to her family law practice, Claire has a strong background in commercial litigation, representing businesses and individuals in a wide range of disputes including non-compete and restrictive covenant enforcement, breach of contract claims, and collection actions. Claire's business litigation experience provides a distinct advantage in family law matters, especially complex divorces. Drawing on her experience litigating business matters, Claire offers family law clients strategic insight, sharp advocacy, and the ability to effectively navigate intricate evidentiary and procedural issues.

Claire combines strategic advocacy with a compassionate, steady approach, guiding clients with clarity, discretion, and purpose. Clients value Claire's pragmatic advice, transparent communication, and reassuring guidance during emotionally and financially significant transitions. She approaches every matter with the understanding that her clients' families, financial security, and futures are at stake — and she is committed to protecting what matters most to them.

Representative Matters

Divorce

- Obtained summary judgment on enforceability of premarital agreement in complex Dallas County divorce case. 2025
- Negotiated favorable settlement in high-conflict Dallas County divorce/custody case. 2025
- Secured favorable trial ruling in divorce/custody case in Collin County. 2024
- Successfully defended requests for temporary restraining orders against client in high-conflict divorce and custody case in Collin County. 2024
- Obtained summary judgment on separate property claim in Collin County divorce case. 2024

- Prevailed at trial of Collin County common-law marriage case, securing ruling that client was never married to his former girlfriend. 2021
- Negotiated favorable settlement in high-conflict Denton County divorce on behalf of husband. 2021
- Negotiated favorable settlement in high-conflict same-sex Dallas County divorce. 2020
- Prevailed at trial in Collin County common-law marriage case, securing ruling that client was never married to his former girlfriend. 2019

Custody

- Secured temporary ruling in Dallas County case appointing father the parent with the exclusive right to designate the child's primary residence. 2024
- Successfully defended client and negotiated favorable final order in Collin County modification case. 2024
- Successfully defended client in the Dallas Court of Appeals, avoiding reversal of trial court's orders in suit affecting parent-child relationship. 2022-23
- Obtained final order appointing father the parent with the exclusive right to designate the child's primary residence in Collin County modification case. 2023
- Negotiated final order awarding father 50/50 possession of child and ordering no child support in Dallas County case. 2022
- Prevailed at trial of Collin County modification case, securing modified conservatorship, possession, and child support and obtaining attorney's fees on behalf of mother. 2021
- Prevailed after Collin County bench trial in suit affecting parent-child relationship, obtaining sole managing conservatorship on behalf of father. 2021
- Attained sole managing conservatorship of child on behalf of father in Tarrant County. 2020
- Prevailed in seeking primary possession on behalf of father in Tarrant County. 2018
- Acquired modified custody order allowing client to have primary possession of child in Dallas County. 2018
- Secured temporary restraining order and, ultimately, primary possession of child on behalf of father in Tarrant County modification case. 2016
- Obtained emergency relief and, ultimately, a final order giving father primary possession of children in Dallas County. 2013

Other Family Law Matters

- Prepared and negotiated multiple Premarital Agreements. 2025
- Prepared and negotiated Partition or Exchange Agreement and Agreement to Convert Separate Property on behalf of wife. 2024
- Prepared and negotiated multiple Premarital Agreements. 2023
- Prepared and negotiated Partition or Exchange Agreement on behalf of wife. 2023
- Prepared and negotiated Premarital Agreement on behalf of wife. 2021
- Prepared and negotiated Cohabitation Agreement on behalf of unmarried man. 2020
- Secured 2-year protective order on behalf of client in Dallas County. 2020
- Prepared Partition or Exchange Agreement on behalf of wife. 2019

Commercial Litigation

- Negotiated favorable settlement on behalf of landlords in Dallas County landlord-tenant dispute. 2025
- Represented client in Dallas County real estate dispute involving non-marital relationship dissolution. 2023
- Prevailed in Collin County bench trial defending fraudulent transfer claims. 2021
- Obtained partial summary judgment upholding enforceability of non-compete agreement on behalf of regional multi-family flooring company. 2019
- Secured temporary injunctive relief on behalf of multi-family-industry client in non-compete case wherein sales executive left client's employ to work for a competitor (*Tina White v. Impact Floors of Texas, LP*, No. 05-18-00384-CV, 2018 Tex. App. LEXIS 10462 (Tex. App.—Dallas Dec. 18, 2018)). 2018
- Procured temporary injunctive relief, and eventually a favorable settlement, in favor of business-owner client to prevent ex-business partner from jeopardizing value of business. 2017
- Secured summary judgment in favor of commercial landlord in breach of implied warranty of suitability case, which was later upheld on appeal (*Protegga, LLC v. Brandywine Place, Ltd.*, No. 05-16-00957-CV, 2017 (Tex. App.— Dallas May 10, 2017)). 2017
- Acquired temporary injunctive relief against former employee in non-compete case representing multi-family industry client. 2015
- Obtained temporary injunctive relief against former controller in non-compete case representing aviation industry client. 2015
- Served as counsel for anonymous blogger in successful mandamus proceeding before the Texas Supreme Court (*In re Doe (Trooper)*, 444 S.W.3d 603 (Tex. 2014)). 2014

Recent Publications

- ["Is Privacy Dead? Modern Surveillance in Family Litigation,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, Sep. 2026
- ["Untangling a Lifetime: The Unique Challenges of Gray Divorce,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, April 2026
- ["Digital Evidence in Divorce: What Does Your Phone Know?"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, April 2026
- ["Timing Divorce in an Uncertain Economy,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, April 2026
- ["Beyond Standard Parenting Plans -- 5 Key Considerations,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, March 2026
- ["Divorce and Hidden Financial Mistakes,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, March 2026
- ["Dispelling Myths About Prenups in Texas,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson, *Business and Legal Update*, Nov. 2025
- ["Parental Alienation – Part 2,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson, *Business and Legal Update*, Apr. 2025
- ["Parental Alienation – Part 1,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, Feb. 2025
- ["What About Alimony? Spousal Maintenance in Texas,"](#) author Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, Jan. 2025
- ["Marital Property Basics,"](#) author Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, Nov. 2024
- ["Is Your Ex a Narcissist? Parenting with a High-Conflict Ex, part 2,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, June 2024
- ["Is Your Ex a Narcissist? Parenting with a High-Conflict Ex, part 1,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, May 2024
- ["Child Custody Basics in Texas,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, Mar 2024
- ["Pandemic Parenting in Two Homes,"](#) author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, Feb. 2022

- **"Grandparents Rights,"** author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, Sep. 2021
- **"Child Custody Basics,"** author, Cowles and Thompson *Family Law Newsletter*, Jul. 2021
- **"Can I Be Married Without Knowing It? Myths and FAQs on Common-Law Marriage,"** co-author, Cowles Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, Jun. 2021
- **"Dallas Residential Real Estate Trends that Don't Favor Buyers,"** co-author, Cowles and Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, May 2021
- **"Texas House Bill 803 and the Downsides of 'Equal Parenting Time',"** author, Cowles and Thompson *Business and Legal Update*, Apr. 2021
- **"Family Matters: An Overview of Child-Related Issues in Family Law Cases,"** Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Feb. 2021
- **"Co-Parenting in the Age of COVID-19,"** Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Sep. 2020
- **"How Cheating Affects Divorce,"** Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Jan. 2019
- **"Six Pre-Divorce Resolutions,"** Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Jan. 2018
- "Possible Outcomes of the November 29 CPS Hearing Regarding the Sister of Sherin Mathews," Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Nov. 2017
- "No More Unhappy Holidays? Child Custody Basics," Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Nov. 2017
- "Residential Landlord and Tenant Duties After Hurricane Harvey," Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Sep. 2017
- "The ABCs for Back-To-School Co-Parenting," Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Aug. 2017
- "Ninth Court of Appeals Rules Presumption of Parenthood Does Not Apply to Same-Sex Married Couples," Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, May 2017
- "'Alimony' is Strictly Limited by the Texas Family Code," Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Dec. 2016
- "Fort Worth Court of Appeals Considers Parental Rights of Sperm Donor," *Reverse & Render* blog, Dec. 2016
- "The Intersection of the Anonymous Right to Free Speech, The Texas Citizens Participation Act, and Rule 202 Pre-Suit Discovery," *Reverse & Render*, Oct. 2016
- "Show Me the Money – Divorce and Constructive Fraud in Texas," Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Oct. 2016
- "Texas Anti-SLAPP Commercial Speech Exemption Does Not Apply to Blogger's Statements about Wedding Photographer," *Reverse & Render* blog, Aug. 2016
- "Protecting Your Business from Divorce," Cowles & Thompson Newsletter, Dec. 2015
- Writer in Residence for *Ms. JD*, 2015
- "Internet Torts: What are the Limits of Personal Jurisdiction?" *Dallas Bar Association Headnotes*, Aug. 2015
- "Attorney Speech, What Lawyers Can and Can't Say; Handling Bar Grievances and Other Disciplinary Actions; Confidentiality, Loyalty, and the Attorney-Client Privilege," materials for National Business Institute CLE, Dec. 2012

Education

- J.D., *cum laude*, Southern Methodist University, 2012
 - SMU Law Review Association, 2010-2012
- B.S., Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2005

Admissions

- State Bar of Texas, 2012
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas

Memberships

- Texas Bar Association
- Collin County Bar Association
- Dallas Bar Association

Honors

- “One To Watch” -- Family Law, Commercial Litigation, and Litigation – Labor and Employment; *Best Lawyers in America*®; selected for inclusion 2021-2025
- Super Lawyer; Thomson Reuters® *Super Lawyers*®; selected for inclusion 2024-2026
- Rising Star; Thomson Reuters® *Super Lawyers*®; selected for inclusion 2022-2023