



**James L. Chapman, IV**

Jim is Chairman of the firm’s Litigation Practice Group. His primary practice areas include admiralty, business, cybersecurity, data privacy, railroad, and unmanned systems. Jim has tried over 100 cases to jury verdicts for clients involving a broad range of legal disputes.

As an extension of his litigation practice, Jim is often engaged to advise governing boards, executive leaders and excess insurers regarding risks and resolution strategies in high-profile cases. His service as general counsel to companies, and as a director and officer of several non-profit organizations, helps clients resolve difficult challenges and plan strategically.

From 2013 - 2017, Jim served on the governing board of Virginia Tech, and was chair (Rector) of the board in 2016 - 2017. Virginia Tech is a leading research university with an annual budget of \$1.5 billion, serving over 30,000 students. The University’s motto is Ut Prosim, Latin for “That I May Serve,” which is Jim’s passion for both his alma mater and his clients.

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**Practice Areas**

**Autonomous and Unmanned Systems**  
*Practice Group Chair*

**Litigation**  
*Practice Group Chair*

**Railroad Law**  
*Practice Group Chair*

**Subrogation**  
*Practice Group Chair*

**Admiralty & Maritime Law**

**Business Law**

**Cybersecurity & Data Privacy**

**Business & Industries**

Technology Companies

Financial Institutions, Banks, Lenders

Vessel Owners/Operators

Marine Dredging and Salvage Companies

Railroads and Trucking Companies

Municipalities and Housing Authorities

Cargo and Shipping Interests

U.S. and International Insurers

**Bar/Court Admissions**

Virginia State Bar

North Carolina State Bar

U.S. Supreme Court

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

U.S. District Court for the Eastern and Western Districts of Virginia

U.S. District Court for the Eastern, Middle and Western Districts of North Carolina

**Education**

Washington & Lee University School of Law, J.D., 1982

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, B.A., magna cum laude, 1979

**Community Involvement**

Board of Visitors, Virginia Tech (2013-2017; Rector, 2016-2017)

Future of Hampton Roads, Inc. (President, 2000-2001)

Greater Norfolk Corporation (Director)

Navy League of the United States (Director; National Judge Advocate, 2005-2009)

Rotary International, Norfolk Sunrise Club (President, 2013-2014)

**Professional Memberships**

Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel

Defense Research Institute

Maritime Law Association of the United States, Proctor

Southeastern Admiralty Law Institute (Chairman, 1997)

National Association of Railroad Trial Counsel

Housing Authority Defense Attorneys

Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International

National Association of Subrogation Professionals

American Bar Association

Virginia Bar Association

I'Anson-Hoffman American Inn of Court (President, 2010-2011)

**Honors & Awards**

AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rating by LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell

Top Rated Lawyer in Transportation by American Lawyer Media and Martindale-Hubbell, 2013

Best Lawyers in America® - Admiralty & Maritime Law, Commercial Litigation

Virginia Super Lawyers® - Transportation/ Maritime

Virginia's Legal Elite®, by Virginia Business Magazine, Civil Litigation, 2011, 2014

Virginia Law Foundation (Fellow, 2016)

Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission Award

## **Representative Experience**

- Federal and state court litigation in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Maryland, New Mexico and California.
- Defend businesses and insureds in casualty litigation arising from injury, death, property damage and other torts.
- Represent business clients in a range of disputes, including contracts, intellectual property rights, tortious interference, defamation and other matters.
- Vessel arrests and attachments to obtain security for maritime liens.
- Treasure salvage matters.
- Represents lenders, borrowers, buyers and sellers of vessels requiring perfection of preferred ship mortgages and other security interests.
- Defense of EPA/USCG investigations involving Oil Pollution Act and other environmental law violations.
- Limitation of Liability actions on behalf of vessel owners.
- General counsel to businesses advising on issues including governance, finance, regulatory compliance, employment, enterprise risk, insurance and strategic planning.
- Lecturer on insurance and other topics of interest to the maritime industry.
- Adjunct Professor of Law, Regent University School of Law.
- Captain, United States Army, Judge Advocate General's Corps (Active Duty 1982-1986).

## **Representative Matters**

CASE RESULTS DEPEND ON A VARIETY OF FACTORS UNIQUE TO EACH CASE. THE FOLLOWING CASE RESULTS DO NOT GUARANTEE OR PREDICT A SIMILAR RESULT IN FUTURE MATTERS.

- Obtained \$48,000,000 maritime salvage award of gold treasure and \$2,000,000 of other historic artifacts recovered from the 1857 wreck of the S.S. Central America
- Obtained \$16,000,000 jury verdict for bank defrauded in loan participation scheme
- Borrower's counsel for closely held commercial fishing business in complex \$15,000,000 multi-vessel fleet refinancing transaction
- Obtained defense jury verdict in favor of raw materials supplier sued by manufacturer for \$1,500,000 on claim of supplying contaminated product; jury awarded \$900,000 to client on counterclaim against manufacturer
- Favorably resolved wrongful death claim by estates of three families collectively seeking \$25,000,000 for drowning deaths at marina
- Seller's counsel for closely-held alcohol beverage distribution business in multi-phased \$30,000,000 purchase
- Represented company officer in federal criminal prosecution alleging violation of occupational safety laws resulting in multiple workplace deaths from industrial explosion; negotiated no jail time plea agreement

## **Representative Matters, continued**

- Favorably resolved \$10,000,000 claim for traumatic lower extremity amputation
- Obtained \$600,000 judgment against vessel for damage to historic railroad bridge
- Advised national vessel manufacturer in connection with regulatory and product liability law compliance matters applicable to entire product line
- Obtained favorable recovery on behalf of insurer in mass tort carbon monoxide poisoning and death cases against gas hot water system installer
- Successfully defended marine equipment manufacturer in product liability defect case involving widespread structural failure claims
- Retained to defend high-profile racial discrimination case after it had been tried three times by another law firm, with two adverse verdicts against client; after reversal on appeal, tried case fourth time resulting in hung jury; case settled favorably during preparation for fifth trial
- Obtained defense jury verdict in \$10,000,000 railroad worker asbestosis case
- Favorably resolved \$2,000,000 dissident shareholder claim on behalf of majority shareholders of privately held mortgage brokerage without litigation
- Favorably resolved \$20,000,000 claim for catastrophic brain injury to maritime worker
- Advised closely held construction company in connection with establishing captive offshore self-insurance entity
- Secured judgment of exoneration for a leading aggregate supplier arising from vessel casualty
- Successfully settled \$20,000,000 marina fire loss claim for consortium of insurers following favorable liability ruling on summary judgment

## **Articles and Presentations**

- American Justice: At the Intersection of Legal Liability and Autonomous Systems, Presented at the 2nd Annual Unmanned Systems Conference (October 9-10, 2018), Sponsored by the AUVSI Ridge & Valley Chapter, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia
- CLE Program: Tools, Toys and Torts: What You Need to Know about Aerial Drones in Virginia, sponsored by Norfolk and Portsmouth Bar Association (September 20, 2018)
- CE Program: FRA-Mandated Conductor Training Programs: Don't Let Yours Become a Train Wreck, sponsored by Virginia Railroad Association (October 2, 2017 Annual Meeting)
- Shipping and Maritime Law 2014, Roundtable Panel, presented by Corporate Live Wire (October 2014)
- CLE Program: Deconstructing a Jury Trial, sponsored by Norfolk and Portsmouth Bar Association (2011)
- Red Letter Clauses in Marina Slip Leases, presented at SEALI Annual Meeting (2008)
- Marine Insurance Claims and Practice, presented at Lorman Marine Insurance Seminar (2007)
- Ten Tempting (But Improper) Closing Arguments, presented at SEALI Annual Meeting (2004)
- Cargo Litigation: A Primer on Cargo Claims and Review of Recent Developments, 6 U.S.F. Mar. L.J. 1 (Spring 2004)
- Treasure Salvage: Is it Finders-Keepers?, presented at SEALI Annual Meeting (1991)