



James L. Chapman, IV

Jim focuses his legal practice on representing businesses and individuals in litigation. He is frequently hired to defend cases involving large loss exposure in injury and death cases resulting from product defects, fires, electrocution, workplace accidents, drowning, amputation, toxic poisoning and other serious casualties.

He also has extensive experience litigating major commercial disputes. Jim has tried over 100 cases to jury verdicts for his clients and formerly taught trial practice as an Adjunct Professor at Regent University School of Law. Jim speaks and writes on select topics of interest to the insurance, maritime and unmanned systems industries.

Apart from the practice of law, Jim is most proud of his service to his alma mater, Virginia Tech. From 2013 – 2017, he served on the governing board of Virginia Tech, and was chair (Rector) of the board in 2016 - 2017. Virginia Tech is a leading public research university with an annual budget in excess of 1.6 billion, enrolling over 30,000 students annually. The University's motto is Ut Prosim, Latin for "That I May Serve," which is Jim's passion for both Virginia Tech 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

Banks, Financial Institutions and Lenders

Manufacturers

Railroad and Trucking Companies

Municipalities and Housing Authorities

Vessel Owners/Operators

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)

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

Fellow, Virginia Law Foundation

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 individuals in casualty litigation arising from injury, death, property damage and other torts.
- Vessel arrests and attachments to obtain security for maritime liens.
- Maritime salvage disputes, including treasure salvage.
- Lecturer on insurance and other topics of interest to the maritime industry.
- Adjunct Professor of Law, Regent University School of Law (2001–2011)
- 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.

TRIALS

- Obtained defense jury verdict in \$10,000,000 railroad worker asbestosis case
- Obtained judgment of exoneration for a leading aggregate supplier arising from vessel casualty
- Successfully defended marine equipment manufacturer in product liability defect case involving widespread structural failure claims
- 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
- 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
- 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

ADR

- Favorably resolved wrongful death claim by estates of three families collectively seeking \$25,000,000 for drowning deaths at marina
- Favorably resolved \$10,000,000 claim for traumatic lower extremity amputation
- Favorably resolved \$20,000,000 claim for catastrophic brain injury to maritime worker
- Successfully settled \$20,000,000 marina fire loss claim for consortium of insurers following favorable liability ruling on summary judgment
- Obtained favorable recovery on behalf of insurer in mass tort carbon monoxide poisoning and death cases against gas hot water system installer
- Favorably resolved \$2,000,000 dissident shareholder claim on behalf of majority shareholders of privately held mortgage brokerage without litigation
- Obtained \$600,000 judgment against vessel for damage to historic railroad bridge

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)