



**James L. Chapman, IV**

Jim focuses his legal practice on representing businesses and individuals in litigation. He is frequently hired in matters involving large loss exposure in injury, death and property damage cases. He also has extensive experience litigating commercial disputes.

Jim has tried over 100 cases to jury verdicts for his clients and formerly taught courses in Trial Practice and Federal Courts 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 Visitors, and was Rector (Chair) 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 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*

**Insurance Defense Litigation**  
*Practice Group Chair*

**Litigation**  
*Practice Group Chair*

**Railroad & Transit Law**  
*Practice Group Chair*

**Admiralty & Maritime Law**

**Business Law**

**Cybersecurity & Data Privacy**

**Employment Law**

**Subrogation**

**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

**Honors & Awards**

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

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

Named the Best Lawyers® 2021 Admiralty & Maritime Law and Commercial Litigation "Lawyer of the Year" in Norfolk

Listed Best Lawyers in America®, Admiralty & Maritime Law (2007-2021)

Listed in Virginia Super Lawyers®, Transportation & Maritime (2006-2020)

Listed in *Virginia Business Legal Elite*®, by *Virginia Business Magazine*, Civil Litigation, (2011, 2014, 2019 and 2020)

Fellow, Virginia Law Foundation

**Education**

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

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

**Military Service**

United States Army, Judge Advocate General's Corps, Captain

**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)

**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

## **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.
- Professor of Practice, Regent University School of Law (2001–2012)

## **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
- Obtained \$600,000 judgment against vessel for damage to historic railroad bridge

## **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

### **TRANSACTIONS**

- 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

## **Articles and Presentations**

- "American Justice: The Intersection of Legal Liability and Autonomous Systems", 2019 Unmanned Systems Symposium, AUVSI (October 2019)
- To Be Forgotten...or Not to Be Forgotten?, Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel Annual Meeting, Debate Panel Moderator (August 2, 2019)
- Mitigating the Cost of Data Breach, Defense Research Institute (DRI), Data and Security Dispatch, Volume 4 Issue 2 (October 4, 2018)
- 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
- Tools, Toys and Torts: What You Need to Know about Aerial Drones in Virginia, sponsored by Norfolk and Portsmouth Bar Association (September 20, 2018)
- 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)
- Deconstructing a Jury Trial, presented to 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)