



**Steven M. Stancliff**

Steve leads the firms admiralty and maritime practice group, and concentrates his practice in maritime industry litigation. He is an experienced and creative problem solver who advises and represents commercial ship owners, salvors, ship repairers, dredging and marine construction companies, and their insurers in all aspects of marine operations, commercial transactions, and casualty response. Steve is ready to lead and support casualty responses involving collisions, groundings, marine pollution, marine salvage, machinery failures, governmental investigations, and other incidents and disputes in federal and state courts in Virginia and North Carolina, as well as vessel arrests, attachments, limitation actions, and salvage proceedings.

Steve also assists underwriters by analyzing contracts of marine insurance and providing coverage opinions and bad-faith defense.

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**Practice Areas**

**Admiralty & Maritime Law**  
*Practice Group Chair*

**Autonomous & Unmanned Systems**

**Government Contracting**

**Business & Industries**

Dredging Companies

Vessel Owners and Operators

Vessel Manufacturers

Shipyards and Waterfront Facilities

U.S. and International Marine Insurers

Marina Owners and Operators

Marine Salvage Operators

General Maritime Companies

Industrial Manufacturers

Railroads

**Honors & Awards**

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

Best Lawyers in America® - Admiralty & Maritime Law (2020-2022)

Listed in Virginia *Super Lawyers*, Transportation/Maritime (2013-2022)

**Education**

Case Western Reserve University, J.D.

University of Rhode Island, M.M.A. (Marine Affairs)

United States Coast Guard Academy, B.S. (Marine Engineering)

**Military Service**

United States Coast Guard, Commander (Ret.)

**Bar Admissions**

Virginia State Bar

North Carolina State Bar

Ohio State Bar

**Court Admissions**

United States Supreme Court

United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces

United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia

United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia

United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina

United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio

**Memberships**

Maritime Law Association of the United States (Proctor; Chairman, Committee on Regulation of Vessel Operations, Safety, Security and Navigation, 2020 - present; Committee Officer 2016 - 2020)

Southeastern Admiralty Law Institute (Chairman, 2021 - present; Seminar Chair 2020; Officer, 2018 - present; Editor-in-Chief, 2016 - 2017; Editorial Committee, 2014 - 2017; Chairman, Long Range Planning Committee, 2013 - 2014; Board of Directors, 2010 - 2011)

Virginia Maritime Association

Virginia Bar Association

North Carolina Bar Association

Norfolk & Portsmouth Bar Association

James Kent American Inn of Court

**Community Involvement**

The Propeller Club of Norfolk

Tidewater Arts Outreach (President, 2016-2019; Board Member, 2015-present)

## Representative Experience

- Resolves admiralty and maritime disputes (vessel arrests, Jones Act claims, Suits in Admiralty Act, Federal Tort Claims Act, Shipowners Limitation of Liability Act, contract disputes, maritime torts, fishing vessel operations, licensing and permits, damaged shore structures, personal injuries, and machinery failures.)
- Lectured in the regional and local maritime and legal communities on maritime legal issues relating to vessel arrest, ship-owners limitation of liability actions, marine salvage, vessel collisions, marine casualty investigations and recreational vessels.
- More than 20 years active duty commissioned service in the United States Coast Guard, concluding at the rank of Commander. Legal, shipboard engineering and operational assignments in New York City, Newport, RI, Cleveland, OH, Honolulu, HI, San Francisco, CA, Boston, MA and Portsmouth, VA.
- Legal advisor for Coast Guard and other federal officials regarding urgent maritime operations, regulation of commercial shipping and licensed mariners, environmental compliance, criminal investigations and enforcement, maritime trade, maritime transportation security, investigation of major marine casualties, and international law issues.
- As Trial Attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice, litigated civil claims in Admiralty on behalf of the United States, including ship collisions, groundings, oil spills, contract disputes and law enforcement activities.
- Routinely directed and coordinated complex civil and criminal inter-agency investigations among numerous federal, state and international investigative agencies in maritime domain.
- Special Assistant United States Attorney in the Districts of Maine and Rhode Island investigating and prosecuting allegations of oil pollution, MARPOL violations, and violent crime on the high seas.

## Representative Cases

- *Heritage Pharmaceuticals v. Agility Logistics Corp., et al.*, (Civil No. 2:19-cv-152) E.D. Va. [Marine Cargo]
- *In re: Norfolk Dredging Company*, (Civil No. 2:16-cv-581) E.D. Va. Mar. 25, 2019 [Limitation and Exoneration from Liability]
- *Addax Energy SA v. M/V YASA H MULLA*, (Civil no. 2:17-cv-641) E.D. Va. Nov. 21, 2018 [Rule C arrest and foreclosure of maritime lien]
- *Pridemore v. Hryniewich*, 98 Va. Cir. 113, 127 (Cir. Ct. 2018) [Marine Products Liability Defense]
- *Recovery Limited Partnership v. Wrecked & Abandoned Vessel*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 606 (E.D. Va. 2017) [Salvage]
- *Recovery Limited Partnership v. Wrecked & Abandoned Vessel*, 204 F. Supp. 3d 864 (E.D. Va. 2016) [Salvage]
- *National Union Fire Ins. Co. v. Brickyard Vessels, Inc.*, 2014 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 155887 (E.D. Va. Nov. 4, 2014) [Insurance bad-faith defense]
- *Flame S.A. v. Industrial Carriers*, 2014 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 131981 (E.D. Va. Sept. 19, 2014) [Rule B attachment and judicial sale]
- *Kelly v. United States*, 7:10-CV-172-FL, 2011 WL 3555853 (E.D.N.C. Aug. 11, 2011) [Federal Tort Claims Act]
- *Norfolk and Portsmouth Belt Line Railroad Co. v. M/V MARLIN*, 2009 A.M.C. 2465 (E.D. Va. 2009) [Bridge Allision]
- *Styron v. Norfolk Dredging Co.*, 262 F.R.D. 502, 502 (E.D.N.C. 2009) [Jones Act defense]

## Articles and Presentations

- “Adventures in American Treasure Salvage” presented at the 10th Maritime Salvage & Casualty Response Conference in London England (September 11 & 12, 2019)
- “Adventures in Treasure Salvage,” presented to the Salvage Committee of the Maritime Law Association of the United States (May 2, 2018)
- “Ethical Dilemmas for Maritime Attorneys—And How to Avoid Them,” presented at Southeastern Admiralty Law Institute Seminar (June 25, 2016)
- “10 Useful Things Lawyers Should Know About Admiralty Law,” presented to the Norfolk & Portsmouth Bar Association Seventeenth Annual Bench-Bar Conference (April 21, 2015)
- “Recent Maritime Law Developments in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Circuits and U.S. Supreme Court,” presented at Southeastern Admiralty Law Institute Seminar (June 29, 2012)
- “It’s No Fun Being an (Injured) Illegal Alien (Maritime Worker),” presented at Admiralty Law Institute Seminar Annual Meeting (2010)
- “The Continuing Vitality of the Limitation of Liability Act,” presented at Admiralty Law Institute Seminar Annual Meeting (2009)
- “A Legal Guide to Pleasure Boating” — presented at Norfolk & Portsmouth Bar Association CLE Seminar — covering subjects including: the nautical rules of the road, the legal framework for Coast Guard search and rescue operations, the evolution of government maritime security regimes, laws for the protection of the environment, and law enforcement authorities on the navigable waters of the United States; (May 2008 and 2010)
- State and Federal Cooperation in Maritime Homeland Security Mission; Panelist at National Association of State Boating Law Administrators 45th Annual Conference (2004)
- United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea, Maritime Security, and International Fisheries Law and Management; Defense International Institute of Legal Studies 2003 mission to the archipelagic state of Vanuatu