HUSCH BLACKWELL



William E. Corum

PARTNER

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OVERVIEW

As a trial lawyer, Bill is sought out by national and global companies for his litigation strategy and direction.

Since ending his federal clerkship in 1996, Bill has prosecuted and defended all types of employment claims (including post-employment restrictive covenant litigation), workplace violence and personal injury cases, commercial/business disputes (including battles over insurance and indemnity obligations), intellectual property rights, transportation and environmental matters, and construction/design issues.

For a quarter century, Bill has acted as national counsel for the nation's largest staffing companies, vitamin and supplement manufacturers, printing companies, and providers of targeted advertising, media, and marketing. In that capacity, he and his team have handled litigation matters for these companies from Seattle to Miami, from Minneapolis to Houston, and from

"The firm does a great job of helping solve complex issues in a very logical way, at a reasonable cost. The results by Bill Corum and his team have been exceptional. Husch has made a significant investment of time to fully understand our business, and this has allowed us to refer work and hit the road running."

— Executive vice president and chief legal officer, consumer packaged goods company

Services

Commercial Litigation

Insurance

Labor & Employment

Litigation & Alternative Dispute Resolution

Non-Competes & Restrictive Covenants

Staffing, Recruiting, and Workforce Solutions

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Portland, Maine to San Diego, California, coordinating an approach tailored to each client's overall litigation tolerances, expectations, and objectives. During that tenure, Bill has appeared in hundreds of state and federal courts in over 40 states; has tried state and federal jury cases, bench trials, and arbitrations from coast to coast; and has argued numerous matters to federal appellate and state courts of appeal and of last resort. Although Bill's objective is always problem solving, when the dispute cannot otherwise be resolved, his team stands ready to tenaciously defend the client's interests at whatever level may be required.

Experience

BUSINESS & COMMERCIAL LITIGATION

- Established extremely favorable case law, from coast to coast, through multi-year, nationwide litigation program impacting contractual indemnity obligations, scope of insurance coverage, joint-employer immunity, the application of vicarious liability, negligent hiring, contractual waivers, and the application of attorneys' fees and costs.
- Successfully and completely defeated numerous product liability claims against national vitamin and supplements manufacturers in jurisdictions throughout the U.S.
- Prosecuted many claims against indemnitors and insurers, recovering millions of dollars in defense and indemnity obligations owed to our clients following the successful resolution of underlying lawsuits.
- Defended $20 million claim (in Florida state and federal courts) relating to serious personal injuries incurred by a worker in a manufacturing facility in Boca Raton, Fla. The four defendants avoided all liability and were awarded in excess of $1 million dollars against the injured plaintiff based upon Florida's offer of judgment statute.
- Defeated all claims of the Canadian National Railway seeking hundreds of thousands of dollars for shipping expenses based upon claims asserted under the Interstate Commerce Act.
- Defended third-party indemnity claims in a federal trademark infringement matter brought by Michael Jordan in Chicago federal court. All claims were dismissed on summary judgment, and client paid nothing to any other party.

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Experience

- Achieved voluntary dismissal of multiyear litigation brought against client by an Israeli company claiming breach of requirements contract and related torts. Israeli company was seeking nearly $10 million, but after dispositive motions were filed, agreed to dismissal of all claims for zero dollars.
- Overcame eight-figure claims of Scotts Lawn Care asserted in Ohio federal court against client based upon breach of contract theories relating to national advertising campaign. Before dispositive motions were filed, Scotts voluntarily dropped all claims for zero dollars.
- Prevailed in litigation brought by TXU Energy Retail Co. LLC (Texas power company) seeking hundreds of thousands of dollars from client based upon alleged “premium” rates applied to electric power supplied to manufacturing facility. Following motion to compel production of documents that TXU did not want to produce, all claims were dismissed for zero dollars.
- Lead counsel in prosecution of arbitration claims for breach of contract, tortious interference, conversion and malicious trespass to property (prevailing on all counts) against a nationally recognized newspaper organization. Client was awarded $2.4 million, including $750,000 in punitive damages.
- Concluded multiyear litigation against Benchmark Design Group Inc., seeking contractual indemnity for children’s personal injury claims occurring at major shopping mall owned by client. Court affirmed client’s indemnity rights, awarded 100 percent of the damages incurred in the underlying personal injury lawsuits, including all client’s defense costs and interest accrued, plus 100 percent of the attorneys’ fees client incurred in seeking to enforce the indemnity. Total award was seven times the original settlement demand.
- Prosecuted client’s claims in excess of $300,000 for printing services provided and defended counterclaims of $140,000 for unjust enrichment. New York Supreme Court entered judgment in favor of client in the amount of $350,000-plus, dismissed opponent’s counterclaims with prejudice and granted request for sanctions against opponent and its counsel for assertion of frivolous counterclaims.

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Experience

- Defended state law claims for misrepresentation, fraud and breach of contract seeking healthcare benefits allegedly promised plaintiff. After removal to federal court, the Los Angeles federal judge granted motion to dismiss the claims as barred by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). After plaintiff failed to timely amend to assert ERISA claims, the court granted the additional request to have all claims dismissed with prejudice.
- Defended national transportation company and driver against personal injury claims asserted by three different plaintiffs following semi-tractor rollover accident. Finding of no liability and complete defense verdict for clients.
- Acquired temporary restraining order (TRO) from New Jersey court, enjoining opponent (Company No. 1) from selling its stock to a third-party (Company No. 2) in violation of client's exercised right of first refusal. Successfully opposed both companies' efforts to undermine client's right to purchase the stock, and client acquired 100 percent of Company No. 1, with Company No. 2's claims being rejected in their entirety.
- Litigated breach-of-contract claim against national sporting goods retailer for improper termination of multiyear services contract in U.S. District Court, District of Colorado. Opponent agreed to return a significant portion of the work to the client, on favorable terms, in exchange for dismissal of the lawsuit.
- Prevailed with a finding of no negligence in wrongful death lawsuit against assisted-living facility following an accidental death.
- Defeated multimillion-dollar alleged intellectual property infringement claims in Missouri and Louisiana federal courts on behalf of national manufacturer of paints and specialty coatings.
- Lead counsel for consolidation and resolution of nearly 100 different claims by trucking carriers and lenders in interpleader action in Johnson County, Kan., including cases pending in U.S. District Courts in Maryland, Minnesota and Oklahoma.

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Experience

EMPLOYMENT LITIGATION

- Acquired, from a federal jury in Atlanta, during COVID, a complete defense verdict on race discrimination claim. Defeated all post-trial motions and successfully argued and convinced the 11th Circuit to affirm the verdict on all counts, including affirmation of the dismissal of FMLA claims on summary judgment.
- Defended employee raiding claim against propane supplier which had hired three dozen of its competitor's employees. All claims were voluntarily dismissed for no dollars.
- Acquired TROs from numerous state and federal courts enjoining former employees from breaching their restrictive covenants owed to clients in the staffing, energy, technology, and other industries.
- Lead trial counsel in defense of age and gender discrimination claims brought in Oklahoma federal court. Seven of plaintiff's eight claims were rejected by the court or jury, and for the only claim on which she prevailed, she was awarded less than 10 percent of her last pretrial demand.
- Lead trial counsel defending claims asserted in Oregon state court against client and newly hired saleswoman for breach of contract, trade secret misappropriation, tortious interference, unfair competition and defamation. Plaintiff's unfair competition and defamation claims were dismissed on summary judgment before trial; both of plaintiff's trade secret claims were dismissed on directed verdict during trial; all three of plaintiff's tortious interference claims were rejected by the jury. The jury did find former employee had breached her nonsolicitation agreement, but awarded plaintiff only 1 percent of the $17.5 million plaintiff's counsel requested.
- Achieved summary judgments and complete dismissals in numerous employment discrimination cases throughout the United States, including California, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Georgia, Tennessee and Indiana.

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Experience

- Achieved victory at Texas Supreme Court for staffing company against temporary workers' claims that they did not electronically execute an arbitration agreement despite comprehensive evidence of the staffing company's onboarding system. The ruling is meaningful for all companies doing business in Texas holding that a claimant's simple denial that they did not electronically execute an agreement is insufficient.

CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN

- Arbitrated construction dispute for nonpayment by general contractor on federal project. Respondent denied all liability and asserted a counterclaim seeking delay damages, interest and attorneys' fees. Arbitrator rejected opponent's claims entirely and awarded 100 percent of the damages sought, interest requested and all of client's attorneys' fees, costs and all related arbitration expenses (including expert costs). Circuit court rejected opponent's request to vacate award, confirmed award in its entirety and added interest. Total award to the client was more than triple the settlement demand before arbitration.
- Lead counsel in month-long arbitration and two related and contemporaneous state court matters on behalf of national construction company relating to dispute over new hotel project involving 30 subcontractors, the project owner, the landlord (municipality), construction lender and others. Project owner was ordered to pay nearly $700,000 and client's attorneys' fees.
- Lead counsel defending construction defects claim, including allegations of deceptive practices and liability for the presence of toxic mold. Following two years of litigation, plaintiffs sought multiple six-figure judgments and claimed to have expended $100,000 in attorneys' fees. Jury awarded plaintiffs nearly $3,100 in damages, and court awarded plaintiffs $1,200 in attorneys' fees.
- Prosecuted on behalf of major metropolitan school district claims involving defective construction of numerous mobile classrooms that had caused fires to randomly occur in the buildings with favorable results. Recovered amount in excess of actual damages.

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Experience

- Spearheaded the collection and recovery of millions of dollars owed to national distributor of construction materials through contract, lien and bond claims in more than 20 states.
- Drafted, revised and/or negotiated numerous multimillion-dollar construction contracts for the construction of schools, churches, detention facilities and other commercial improvements.
- Concluded multiyear representation of construction management firm sued for defective construction of 21 movie theaters from California to Florida during the 1990s. Plaintiff claimed some $60 million in damages and matter was settled for less than 25 percent of what previous counsel had advised the client would be required to pay.

Recognition

- *Benchmark Litigation*, Local Litigation Star, 2015-2026
- *The Best Lawyers in America*®
    - Litigation - Construction, 2024-2027
    - Commercial Litigation, 2025-2027
- Thomson Reuters Stand-out Lawyer, 2023-2025
- BTI Consulting Group, Client Service All-Star, 2009, 2012-2014, 2024

Education

- J.D., University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law
- B.L.A., University of Missouri-Kansas City

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Admissions

- Kansas
- Missouri
- U.S. District Court, District of Colorado
- U.S. District Court, District of Kansas
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of New York
- U.S. District Court, Western District of New York
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. Court of Federal Claims
- U.S. Supreme Court

Clerkship

- The Hon. Elmo B. Hunter, U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri, 1994-1996

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*Contact Bill to set up an in-person consultation by appointment in the Kansas City office.



2026 Benchmark Litigation - Litigation Star

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