HUSCH BLACKWELL

Darla Gabbitas

PARTNER

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OVERVIEW

Darla draws on her commercial background to help clients resolve fiduciary disputes.

Darla focuses her practice on fiduciary litigation, trust litigation, will contests, and other contested estate and probate disputes, primarily for high-net-worth individuals and families, often those who own businesses. She serves clients that include trust companies, individual trustees, and trust beneficiaries. Darla represents both plaintiffs and defendants in these cases, helping individuals navigate the complexities of fiduciary duties they have accepted or that may be owed to them. Her experience encompasses trust disputes, improper will interpretations, breach of fiduciary duty claims, and guardianship disputes—including one involving the family of a professional athlete.

Darla began her legal career in commercial litigation, handling a wide variety of business disputes. These cases frequently involved fiduciary components, and she developed a focus on fiduciary litigation. Darla's commercial background is deeply beneficial at the intersection of family business, family limited partnerships, and layered family trusts.

A former paralegal who enrolled in law school in her forties out of love for the law, Darla is deeply passionate about her practice. She sees litigation as simply problem solving and knows that in this field, resolution is not always easily achieved. Known for her compassion for those she represents, Darla understands the emotional and highly contentious nature of inter-family disputes. She works closely with clients to help them define the legal resolution they can achiever, serving as both a wise counselor and a committed litigator.

Industry

Financial Services & Capital Markets

Services

Private Wealth

Trust, Estate, & Fiduciary Litigation

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Experience

- Presented and secured decisive motion for summary judgment ruling in $150 million trust dispute dismissing claims of improper decanting and beneficiary impairment regarding a trust merger.
- Successfully represented clients in 15-day mediation of complex guardianship, trust, will and competence disputes.
- Secured multi-million-dollar victory for client on improper will interpretation advanced by self-interested executor.
- Successfully defended agent under power of attorney and trustee of trust securing advantageous settlement regarding breaches of fiduciary duty in guardianship proceeding.
- Tried five-day guardianship dispute for family of former Dallas Cowboy.
- Successfully presented argument to the Texas Second Court of Appeals regarding complex jurisdictional issue.
- Secured complete judgment for client on breach of contract claims in a six-day bankruptcy adversary proceeding.
- Litigated complex licensing dispute through week-long federal court trial as part of a team of attorneys.
- Tried four-day arbitration regarding breach of exclusivity clause of a multi-million-dollar call center service contract.
- Managed complex probate litigation with multiple claims against deceased husband, wife, and their entities.
- Successfully represented clients in commercial disputes including prosecuting and defending claims of breach of fiduciary duties by executors and trustees and guardian and protected persons, challenging personal jurisdiction in courts throughout the United States, defending challenges to real property ownership, and enforcing shareholder rights and contract obligations.

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Recognition

- BL Rankings' *The Best Lawyers In America®*
  - Litigation - Trusts and Estates, 2026 and 2027

Education

- J.D., University of Denver Sturm College of Law
  - Order of St. Ives (now Order of the Coif)
  - *Denver University Law Review*
- B.A., Colorado State University

Admissions

- Colorado
- Texas
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas

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