

Jay Rutherford

Jackson Walker LLP

Attorney Jay Rutherford credits certain high school courses for sparking his interest in the legal profession. "In high school, I became very involved in debate and public speaking," he said. "I've always enjoyed being a contrarian and finding ways to make a compelling argument. Debate was a natural fit, and that is what eventually set me on the path toward becoming a lawyer."

Even though Rutherford, 48, grew up in the small West Texas town of Knox City, he never let that hold him back from pursuing his goals. "Although I grew up in a small town and was the first in my family to attend college, I have never viewed those factors as limitations," said Rutherford. "I always had the motivation and desire to succeed in the field of law."

Rutherford graduated magna cum laude from Texas Tech University with a bachelor of science degree in agricultural economics in 1985. He received his law degree from the University of Texas School of Law in 1988.

Rutherford is a partner with Jackson Walker LLP. His practice consists primarily of representing management in labor issues, employment discrimination, wrongful termination, sexual harassment, civil rights and all types of employment litigation.

In Rutherford's almost 22 years in the legal profession, one case in particular stands out. "Probably the most high-profile case I have worked on was a consumer arbitration matter that went to the Texas Supreme Court," he explained. "The issue was essentially whether the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act [a consumer protection statute] prohibits companies from enforcing binding arbitration agreements made with consumers at the point of purchase. Interpretation of the law had been contested in courts around the country, so it was a hot-button issue and became a very important case for us. In the end, we successfully argued that our client had the right to enforce the agreement that was made with the consumer, and thus we were able to deliver a significant victory for our client."

Rutherford is evidently willing to go to great lengths for his clients, and many of them have taken notice. "No one ever wants to need an attorney," said nominator Eric V. Fox, director of customer relations for Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. "However, when you do, you want one who is at the top of their game, steady, smart, cost effective, and above all, makes you feel comfortable with the vision, strategy and the path forward. Jay Rutherford is all of those in one attorney."

— Alyse Corbett



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