

SETH HOPKINS



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Writing samples & oral argument videos at: SethHopkins.com



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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Accomplished attorney with 25 years of experience, including five years at an AmLaw 200 firm and five years of senior leadership at a major public firm. Served as lead counsel in 60 high-profile appeals in the United States Supreme Court, Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, Texas Supreme Court, and Louisiana Supreme Court. Successfully litigated the largest single-client Title II Americans with Disabilities Act case in history, secured compensation for the longest-serving wrongfully convicted man in Texas history, and defended a death row wrongful conviction case featured on the Netflix series *The Innocence Files*. Teach appellate advocacy and alternative dispute resolution at two Houston law schools. Developed MyAppealCoach.com, the world's first AI-powered moot court simulator for appellate counsel.

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

HARRIS COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, Houston, Texas

Special Assistant County Attorney

2022 - Present

Serve as appellate litigator in high-profile, complex commercial litigation, civil rights, fraud, and tort cases for the nation's third-largest county. Handle training for 200 attorneys and paralegals and manage the selection and implementation of software to track 110,000 cases and 13.5 TB of sensitive client data. Manage special projects, including developing a \$5.95 million program that was used more than one million times in its first two years to educate court users and make local government more transparent. Serve on Harris County's Joint Technology Committee and Records Management Committee.

Managing Counsel of Defensive Litigation & Real Estate

2021 - 2022

Managed two divisions and 30 attorneys and paralegals responsible for defending all litigation against Harris County and its 20,000 employees (approximately 500 employment, tort, civil rights, and real estate matters). Rebuilt one division after it lost nearly half its staff during the pandemic. Designed office case management applications and conducted training, mentored attorneys, and created office policies, processes, and litigation practice guides to improve morale and quality of representation. Supervised attorneys during jury trials, appeals, hearings, and mediations.

Assistant County Attorney, Litigation Practice Group

2017 - 2020

Served as lead counsel in high-profile litigation for the nation's third-largest sheriff's office, district attorney, medical examiner, district and county clerks, budget management office, public health department, flood control district, judges, commissioners, auditor, and elected officials. Maintained a heavy docket, which included high-profile employment, torts, and civil rights cases, such as:

- **Harris County v. Annab**, 547 S.W.3d 609 (Tex.2018). Obtained unanimous Supreme Court reversal of significant sovereign immunity case. The Texas Solicitor General joined in oral argument as an *amicus curiae*. Oral argument at <https://youtu.be/2aAB7DlcWiE?feature=shared>
- **Brown v. City of Houston**. Represented Harris County in civil proceedings before the federal district court, appellate court, and on a certified question to the Texas Supreme Court following the wrongful conviction of a death-row inmate. The case was featured on Netflix's *Innocence Files*.
- **Election strike team**. Successfully defended the county clerk and voter registrar before the Texas appellate courts and Supreme Court in numerous challenges to the 2020 elections.
- **COVID-19 litigation**. Successfully defended emergency COVID-19 orders affecting 4.8 million residents during eight emergency hearings in the district, appellate, and Texas Supreme Court.
- **Green v. Harris County**. Secured summary judgment in a highly technical case where a jail detainee died from a rare and virulent form of meningitis caused by *Streptococcus sanguinis* bacteria.

RALEY & BOWICK, L.L.P., Houston, Texas

Commercial Litigation Associate

2013 - 2016

Litigated for a boutique firm that recovered \$200 million for its clients in four years.

- **Commercial litigation & insurance**. Represented clients in multi-million-dollar disputes regarding offshore oil platform assets, employment and shareholder litigation, legal malpractice, and a Louisiana legacy oilfield contamination case. Initiated arbitration to recover \$19 million owed by a Kazakhstani company to National Oilwell Varco for offshore oilfield equipment. Drafted appellate briefs filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.
- **Intellectual property**. Assisted in defense and prosecution of oilfield patent litigation for NOV and Peak Completion Technologies and patent prosecution of Kaneka Corporation's proprietary microbe and fermentation process for making Co-Q₁₀, a pharmaceutical enzyme.
- **Civil rights**. Represented the longest-serving exonerated Texas inmate following his release after 31 years in prison. The case resulted in approximately \$5 million in compensation and benefits.
- **Government**. Represented former Houston mayor Roy Hofheinz's family after the University of Houston sought to unilaterally rename the Hofheinz Pavilion in violation of a donor agreement.

THE HOPKINS LAW FIRM, Houston, Texas

Litigation & Transaction Attorney

2009 - 2013

Advised and litigated corporate, wrongful death, civil rights, and contract disputes. Served as lead counsel in a 12-year landmark case argued three times to the Louisiana Supreme Court, resulting in the largest single-client Title II Americans with Disabilities Act recovery in history. The case prompted a U.S. DOJ civil rights investigation, a \$13.8 million injunction to correct 15,000 violations, and systemic changes at eight universities. In awarding \$1.5 million in fees, the appellate court referred to "young Hopkins" as "eloquent," "truly devoted," "gallant," and presenting "a well-orchestrated case worthy of emulation by the most seasoned attorneys" for his "superior performance" in a "rare and exceptional" case. *Covington v. McNeese*, 98 So.3d 414 (La.App. 3 Cir. 9/5/12); "Texas lawyer wins hard-fought fees in bitter disability case", *The National Law Journal* (9/6/2012).

KASOWITZ, BENSON, TORRES & FRIEDMAN, Houston, Texas

Litigation Attorney

2005 - 2009

Assisted in the defense and prosecution of complex litigation for this Am Law 200 national firm. Conducted all facets of trial preparation. Dockets include the defense of significant premises liability cases in Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Massachusetts, and Louisiana, a major New England soil contamination case, a significant international shipping antitrust case, a polyester staples antitrust case, a pipeline construction defect dispute, and a \$65 billion chemical company merger.

THE HONORABLE PATRICIA MINALDI, Federal District Judge, Western District of Louisiana

Federal Judicial Law Clerk

2003 - 2004

Served as a law clerk for the only active Article III judge in a six-parish area with a major federal prison and immigration detention center. Employment began on this newly appointed judge's first day. Helped set up a new federal office, drafted orders, and handled a docket of 450 civil suits, including a \$1 billion telecommunications RICO suit and an international dispute involving the Republic of Venezuela's ownership claims to an offshore research module to be placed along its disputed border with Columbia.

14th JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT OF LOUISIANA, Lake Charles, Louisiana

State Judicial Law Clerk

1999 - 2000

Served as a law clerk for nine judges in civil, criminal, and family matters. Prepared jury charges, orders, and opinions, and responded to post-conviction relief applications. Drafted several landmark opinions relating to the Louisiana tobacco litigation and Louisiana's legalized gaming industry.

U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, Middle District of Louisiana, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Federal Executive Law Clerk

1998 - 1999

Assisted Criminal and Civil Division Assistant U.S. Attorneys in prosecuting defendants and representing the United States. Duties included research, drafting pleadings, and participating with prosecutors and FBI agents in grand jury target and defendant interviews. Areas of law included white collar and drug crimes, bank robbery, forfeiture, tort defense, civil rights, and environmental.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

MY APPEAL COACH

2026 - Present

Developed MyAppealCoach.com, the world's first moot court simulator for appellate counsel. The site's motto is "Never Meet a Hot Bench Cold" and uses Anthropic Claude to allow an attorney to argue a real appeal, out loud, before an AI panel of current and historic Supreme Court justices who interrupt the argument with questions based on their judicial philosophies. The advocate can adjust the panel's heat, the difficulty of the questions, and the percentages of legal, record, and policy questions. The system offers real-time or post-argument suggestions to improve answers and a .pdf transcript at the end of the argument. The site also offers an Appellate Procedure Navigator and Fantasy Moot, where lawyers argue landmark cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Gideon v. Wainwright* and receive critiques of how they compare with the real advocates.

PROFESSORSHIPS, PUBLICATIONS, AND PUBLIC SPEAKING

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON, Houston, Texas

Law Center Professor of Appellate Advocacy & Moot Court Coach **2020 - Present**

Teach Appellate Advocacy as an adjunct professor and coach and judge teams in one of the nation's top advocacy programs.

Hobby School of Public Affairs Administrative Law Professor **2025 - Present**

Teach Administrative Law to graduate students as an adjunct professor.

THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL OF LAW, Houston, Texas

Professor of Alternative Dispute Resolution **2024 - Present**

Developed and teach Alternative Dispute Resolution as an adjunct professor.

CONFERENCE PRESENTER

2017 - Present

Presented CLE courses on legal writing, business law, election law, and other subjects at in-house and external conferences, including the 2023 Texas District & County Attorneys Association.

PURDUE UNIVERSITY GLOBAL, West Lafayette, Indiana

Professor and Course Developer **2008 - 2019**

Developed and taught law courses for undergraduate students. Courses include Constitutional Law, Intellectual Property, Torts, Contracts, Legal Ethics, Trial & Courtroom Presentation.

LOUISIANA STATE BAR JOURNAL

2003 - 2005

Served on the editorial board of the Louisiana Bar Association journal, distributed to nearly 20,000 attorneys six times per year. ("Local Justice: What every lawyer should know about Louisiana's justices of the peace" Parts 1 and 2, Seth B. Hopkins, 52 La. B.J. 16 (2004); "Lee Hargrave's LSU Law: The Louisiana State University Law School from 1906 to 1977", Seth B. Hopkins, 52 La. B.J. 198 (2004)).

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

STATE LICENSES AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Admitted in Texas and Louisiana, the United States Supreme Court, Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, Texas Northern, Southern, and Western Districts, Louisiana Eastern, Middle, and Western Districts, California Northern District, Court of Federal Claims, Tax Court, Court of International Trade, Federal Circuit Court of Appeals, and Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation.

ADDITIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

Member of the Texas Bar College and Texas Bar Foundation, Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Bar Association, Houston Bar Association, Garland Walker American Inn of Court, Texas District and County Attorneys' Association, and Southwest Louisiana Bar Association.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER

Juris Doctor and B.A. in English. Also attended McNeese State University and Harvard University.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR TRIAL ADVOCACY, Boulder, Colorado

Co-instruct in-house NITA trial advocacy courses. Attended NITA National Session and received the highest mock trial jury verdict in 2017.

MEDIATOR, Dallas, Texas

Received 40-hour basic mediation training.

NON-PROFIT AND VOLUNTEER SERVICE

HOUSTON HOSPICE, Houston, Texas

Vice-Chair, Board of Directors

2021 - Present

Serve as vice chair of the board of directors of the largest non-profit hospice in the greater Houston area and serve as chair of the committee selecting its new CEO. Houston Hospice is a member of the Texas Medical Center—the world's largest medical center. It serves 10 counties and has an inpatient unit located on a historic campus. Formerly served as Governance Chair.

EAST DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY & TIRZ 15, Houston, Texas

Board of Directors, Projects Committee, & Communications Committee

2020 - Present

Serve on the board and Projects Committee and Communications Committee of the East Downtown Redevelopment Authority and Tax Increment Reinvestment District 15, a quasi-governmental board responsible for capital improvement and development in East Downtown Houston.

GOVERNOR'S PROGRAM FOR GIFTED CHILDREN, Lake Charles, Louisiana

Board of Directors & Governance Committee

2000 - Present

Serve on the board and Governance Committee of an organization that advises the Governor's Program for Gifted Children, a quasi-public entity that operates the nation's second-oldest residential summer institute for gifted children. The Board advises on legislative and curriculum matters.