



Kenneth O. Corley

Partner

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About

Managing partner of Kelley Drye's Houston office, Kenny Corley is a skilled and seasoned litigator with first-chair trial experience. Kenny brings more than 20 years of deep and varied litigation experience to his representation of private companies and government entities in environmental, business and energy disputes. His nationwide practice in federal and state courts is both broad-based and intensely focused, with his advocacy equally effective in contentious commercial disputes and highly technical environmental cases. Kenny's clients include state governments and agencies, ports, railroads, various energy sector companies, waste management companies, landowners, real estate developers, royalty owners and businesses across diverse industries ranging from large multinational companies to start-ups and early-stage enterprises.

In his environmental litigation practice, Kenny represents governments and industry clients dealing with challenges resulting from releases of hazardous substances, including PCBs and PFAS groundwater contamination. He has served as lead litigation counsel for multiple states and governmental agencies in connection with environmental contamination and natural resource damages, resulting in favorable court rulings and multimillion-dollar settlements.

Kenny's extensive commercial litigation experience includes actions involving a myriad of complex contract disputes, energy-related litigation and royalty disputes, fraudulent transfer and alter ego claims, negligence, personal injury, fraud, tortious interference, defamation, trade secret and noncompetition disputes, partnership disputes, director and officer liability and real estate disputes—including jury verdicts. He is known for bringing clarity, command, and strategic judgment to disputes involving complicated facts, high financial stakes, and significant business risk. Whether trying cases to verdict or negotiating the resolution of critical commercial disputes, Kenny pairs persuasive advocacy with sound business judgment. That combination has produced a stellar record of success in the courtroom and at the negotiation table.

Kenny has particular experience representing ports, railroads and other industrial clients in disputes involving property rights, easements, leases, pipeline agreements, personal-injury defense, employment claims, environmental liabilities, and operations. He also has significant proficiency in energy litigation, including royalty disputes and complex commercial arrangements in the oil and gas sector. Across these matters, Kenny has earned a strong record of success by combining industry-specific knowledge, first-chair litigation experience, disciplined negotiation, and practical business judgment. Clients rely on him to protect vital rights and assets, resolve high-stakes

conflicts, preserve operational flexibility, and identify strategic solutions to intractable problems.

Consistently recognized by his peers for his professional accomplishments, integrity, and work ethic, Kenny remains active in his community, volunteering his time and efforts to religious and charitable organizations.

Experience

Obtained a multimillion-dollar arbitration award for publicly traded company in a royalty dispute involving improper deduction of post-production costs by a major oil and gas entity.

Obtained a unanimous defense jury verdict in favor of a real estate developer after two-week trial and successfully achieved dismissal of appeal.

Served as lead trial counsel against petrochemical conglomerate for PCB contamination of San Diego Bay, successfully resolved in connection with \$550 million class action settlement.

Serves as lead trial counsel for the State of North Carolina in litigation against DuPont and Chemours for PFAS contamination of the Cape Fear River.

Negotiated a favorable resolution of a multimillion-dollar dispute involving a port client's easement and contractual involving third-party pipelines.

Served as lead counsel for a port client in a complex municipal and real-estate lawsuit resulting in a favorable settlement and preservation of industrial and development rights.

Led the State of Montana's claims against a mining company, resulting in a multimillion-dollar natural resource damages and financial assurance settlement.

Served as lead counsel for a railroad client in defending Federal Railroad Safety Act whistleblower-retaliation claims, resulting in OSHA's dismissal of the complaint and settlement.

Obtained a unanimous jury verdict in a breach of contract and fraud trial preserving company ownership.

Led the defense of a railroad client in indemnity and personal-injury litigation arising from a railroad-crossing incident.

Led the defense of a railroad client in chemical-exposure personal-injury litigation, accomplishing early nuisance-value resolution.

Successfully defended CERCLA cost-recovery claims against a railroad, resulting in the dismissal of all claims on summary judgment.

Defended several petrochemical industry clients against an EPA RCRA enforcement action and advised the companies regarding compliance protocols.

Defended numerous CERCLA potentially responsible parties and defendants against contribution claims in connection with a contaminated oil recovery site.

Served on a team representing the state of New Jersey in historic litigation concerning the dioxin contamination of the Passaic River, resulting in one of the most significant cost-recovery and damages settlements ever obtained.

Represented a public entity in fraudulent transfer, alter ego and corporate misconduct claims against various multinational entities involving complex international finance and accounting transactions.

Represented a major energy client in a hotly contested fraud, breach of contract, theft and business disparagement lawsuit.

Obtained several injunctions and restraining orders preventing diminution or transfer of assets in several fraudulent transfer, fraud and theft liability lawsuits.

Represented local and multinational entities, including railroads and ports, in numerous personal injury and wrongful death lawsuits.

Honors

Ranked as one of the leading practitioners in the Environmental area by *Chambers USA* in 2026.

Recommended in *US Legal 500* for his work in the Environment Litigation area, 2020-2025.

Recognized as a Rising Star by Thomson Reuters for Texas *Super Lawyers* since 2010.

Affiliations

The Arbor School (arbor.org), board of trustees, 2015-2017

Related Services

Commercial Litigation
Environmental
Energy
Ports
Railroads
Environmental Litigation
Environmental Regulation
Public Sector and Government Entities
Land Use
Condemnation and Eminent Domain
Natural Resource Damages
PFAS and Emerging Contaminants
Real Estate

Education

South Texas College of Law Houston, J.D., 2004

- cum laude
- South Texas Law Review, Dean's Outstanding Student Advocate Award, ABA and ATLA Moot Court National Champion and Best Oral Advocate

University of Arizona, B.A., 1998

Admissions

Texas, 2005

Arizona, 2006

Courts

U.S. District Court–Southern District of Texas

U.S. District Court–Eastern District of Texas

U.S. District Court–District of Arizona