

DEBRA L. WITTER

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SENIOR LEGAL EXECUTIVE

Accomplished, experienced senior legal executive with demonstrated track record of success managing a variety of complex, innovative legal transactions in challenging, fast-paced environments. Effective partner to senior management, focused on finding cost-effective, practical solutions to legal challenges. Strong people management and mentoring skills. Superior communication skills.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Advertising and Marketing
- E-commerce
- Outsourcing and Vendor Agreements
- Trademarks and Intellectual Property
- Multi-Unit Retail and Restaurant Operations
- Franchising

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

LAW OFFICE OF DEBRA WITTER, Dallas, TX **March 2009-present**
Sole practitioner with emphasis on business transactions, business formation, and mediation.

BLOCKBUSTER INC., Dallas, TX **2001-2008**
Leading global provider of in-home movie and game entertainment; Fortune 500 company.
Senior Vice President, Legal (2007-2008)
Vice President and Senior Corporate Counsel, Operations and Marketing (2005-2007)
Senior Corporate Counsel (2001-2005)

- As Senior Vice President, managed all non-litigation, non-securities legal functions for all corporately owned BLOCKBUSTER® stores throughout the world, including international, mergers and acquisitions, employment, finance, real estate, treasury, product, franchise and film acquisition, as well as administration of law department.
- Directly responsible for all marketing, advertising, trademark and store operations legal issues for all corporately owned BLOCKBUSTER® stores in the United States and Canada (approximately 5000 stores) as well as for BLOCKBUSTER Online®, an online DVD rental subscription program.
- Lead attorney for development of new concepts and new consumer offerings.

THE MULTIRESTAURANTS GROUP/STAR CONCESSIONS, LTD., Dallas, TX **1996-2001**
Minority-owned startup venture operating franchised restaurants including Chili's, Whataburger, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, Chick-fil-a, Seattle's Best Coffee, bars, retail stores, gas stations, convenience stores and airline hospitality clubs at airports. Joined company as it began operations; at time of departure company had approximately 500 employees and \$25,000,000 annual revenues, with 25 locations.

Vice President of Administration, General Counsel and Secretary

- Managed the company's legal affairs; developed and managed implementation of policies, procedures and federal and state compliance systems.
- Executed a wide variety of legal work, including: Formation of joint ventures, including drafting and negotiation of joint venture agreements with the Dallas Cowboys; review and modification of franchise and license agreements; negotiation of lease/concession agreements with airport authorities; negotiation of loan agreements with the company's primary commercial lender and investment agreements with the company's primary venture capital investor; acquisition of existing restaurant concessions; creation and maintenance of numerous corporate entities; and alcoholic beverage licensing.

- Led team preparing extensive bid/proposal documents for concessions contracts at a variety of public venues.
- Established and managed the human resources function.

COHAN, SIMPSON, COWLISHAW & WULFF, L.L.P., Dallas, TX

1985-1995

Partner (1989-1995)

Associate (1985-1988)

Broad and diverse transactions practice, with involvement in a number of litigation and arbitration matters as well.

- Mergers and Acquisitions: drafted and negotiated documents and supervised or conducted due diligence on a number of mergers and acquisitions, including the merger of four regional electronic funds transfer networks, and several major asset purchase agreements, such as restaurant chains, a nurse placement company, a catering concession, a sign company, and a hardware store.
- Entity Formation and Capitalization: formed and counseled corporations, limited partnerships, general partnerships, joint ventures, limited liability companies, and a purchasing and distribution cooperative for a major national restaurant chain. Also participated in several private placements of securities.
- Intellectual Property: prepared trademark and copyright registrations; counseling on trademark, copyright and trade secret matters; prepared and reviewed software licenses, software escrow agreements, reseller agreements and related contracts; and confidentiality agreements.
- Regulatory: compliance with federal and state regulatory requirements for electronics funds and benefits transfer networks, franchises, securities regulation, alcoholic beverage regulation, and other areas.
- Litigation: extensive participation in research and briefing on several major lawsuits, arbitrations and administrative hearings, including antitrust, breach of contract, and state tax matters.
- Non-Profit: pro bono counsel to an arts company; formed the corporation and obtained a 501(c)(3) determination from the IRS.

ARCO, Dallas, TX

1984-1985

Assistant Tax Counsel

JENKENS & GILCHRIST, Dallas, TX

1982-1984

Associate

- Commercial lending: represented lenders in major commercial lending transactions.
- Entity Formation: formed and counseled corporations.

EDUCATION AND HONORS

Juris Doctor with high honors, University of Texas at Austin School of Law; Member, Texas Law Review; Chancellors (highest academic honor); Order of the Coif

Bachelor of Arts with highest honors and special honors in sociology, University of Texas at Austin; Phi Beta Kappa

Fellow, Texas Bar Foundation