



Trusted Business and Wealth Preservation Counsel



J. Michael Waters, Jr.



Mike focuses his practices in three areas: estate and gift tax planning, corporate transactions, and real estate transactions. Clients ranging from individuals, professional athletes, executive officers of publicly-traded companies, to entire multi-generational families, turn to Mike for counsel in structuring their business/investment ventures, as well as their estates, to ensure that their assets will be properly protected, and ultimately transferred to future generations or charitable organizations in the most tax efficient manner. Mike has over twenty (20) years of experience in helping clients anticipate and manage the tax implications related to estate planning for high-net worth individuals and families, with a view toward asset protection and minimizing the income, gift, and estate taxes through the use of sophisticated planning techniques.

Closely-held business owners also rely on Mike to help them manage significant corporate transactions, and structure business succession plans that will facilitate management continuity following the death of a principal, while at the same time enabling the transfer of wealth to the next generation with the least amount of interruption and financial strain on the business. Mike has also assisted many of his clients with mergers and/or acquisitions related to their closely-held business. His involvement on such matters has included the advance strategic planning and deal-structuring related to managing the tax implications of such sizeable transactions, the negotiation of nondisclosure agreements, expressions of interest, letters of intent, and definitive purchase and sale documents, as well as the oversight and management of the due diligence process on potential acquisition targets. He has also been actively involved in assisting clients in the negotiation of traditional senior-level, mezzanine, and subordinate credit facilities, as well as the raising and negotiation of private equity investment with both strategic and financial investors.

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Because many of Mike's estate planning and closely-held business clients are real estate developers, builders, and/or have significant real estate investment holdings, Mike spends a significant portion of his practice working with clients on a wide array of real estate transactions, including the sale and acquisition of commercial real estate, commercial/residential development projects, builder arrangements (including land acquisition, planning and zoning approvals, lot takedowns, preparation of deed restrictions, easements, cross-access agreements, and property owner associations), like-kind exchanges, commercial lease transactions (including ground leases, commercial office leases, manufacturing leases, industrial leases, and retail shopping center leases), and condominium development. Mike's substantial real estate experience, coupled with the endorsement of his peers, has enabled him to become Board Certified in both Commercial Real Estate Law and Residential Real Estate Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Board Certification is a mark of excellence, and a distinguishing accomplishment that is shared by less than ten percent of all attorneys licensed to practice in the State of Texas. Additionally, he has been rated "AV"- Preeminent (5.0 out of 5.0) by his peers in the Martindale Hubbell Legal Directory.

Mike is a member of the Tarrant County Bar Association (Trusts and Estate Planning Section), the Dallas Bar Association (Real Estate Trusts, Probate, and Estates Section), the State Bar of Texas (Real Estate, Probate, and Trusts, and Business Law Sections), the American Bar Association, the Texas Land Title Association, and the American Land Title Association. He is also a member of the State Bar College of Texas.

Mike received his B.B.A. from the University of Oklahoma in 1989, and he graduated *cum laude* from South Texas College of Law in Houston, Texas in 1993, where he was the Lead Articles Editor for *Currents*, the International Trade Law Journal, and where he received the American Jurisprudence Awards in Contracts, Civil Procedure, Legal Research and Writing, and Professional Ethics.

