

TEXAS LAW



“Why Are Jury Trials Vanishing? Do we care? What can we do?”

a lecture presented by Steve Susman '65

Thursday, March 30 | TNH 2.139 | 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Boxed lunches will be provided on a first come, first served basis

Stephen Susman has long been recognized as one of the most successful plaintiff’s attorneys in the United States. Susman first established his national reputation when he won a landmark victory as a plaintiff’s attorney in 1980 with an award of more than \$550 million to victims of a nationwide price-fixing conspiracy, the largest jury verdict of its time.

A native Houstonian from a highly respected family of lawyers, Susman worked his way through Yale University, graduating magna cum laude. Returning to his home state and the University of Texas Law School, he was Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review and graduated first in his class, with the highest grade point average in the school’s history.

After serving as law clerk to The Honorable John R. Brown of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, Susman clerked for the United States Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black. A biography of Justice Black revealed that Susman was the first law clerk whom Black trusted to draft opinions for him. In his early career path, Susman joined a large Houston firm and became a partner, took a year’s leave of absence to teach law at the University of Texas, and hit on the magic niche that led to a new style of law practice

representing plaintiffs in complex commercial disputes. In 1980, he founded Susman Godfrey, the first firm in this part of the country to limit its specialty to commercial litigation. Susman Godfrey has 90 lawyers in Houston, Dallas, Seattle, Los Angeles, and New York. In 2005, the firm was chosen by the American Lawyer as one of the top two litigation boutiques in the country.

Although the stakes are high and the challenges immense in his private practice, that doesn't stop Susman from tirelessly pursuing issues of justice and reform. Teaching lawyers around the world effective advocacy, instituting reforms in the civil justice system, improving jury comprehension, streamlining class actions, and promoting efficient trials are top priorities in his dedication to law. A board-certified civil trial specialist, Susman serves on the national board of the American Board of Trial Advocates and is co-chair of its Jury Trial Committee. He is on the Advisory Board of the Center on Civil Justice at NYU Law School, the Federal Judicial Evaluation Committee and co-chair of the Judicial Nominations Task Force of the American Constitution Society. He also serves as co-chair of the Aspen Institute’s Justice Circle and the Executive Director of the Civil Jury Project at the New York University School of Law.