



Blake

William "Blake" Bennett

Shareholder, New Orleans
Business Practice Group
Leader
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Overview

William "Blake" Bennett is an experienced business lawyer based in New Orleans, helping corporate clients with a focus on sophisticated banking and finance-related issues and transactions. Blake represents businesses with interests in Louisiana and the Gulf coast in the following areas of law, such as:

- Bank and private equity funding, domestic and foreign
- Real estate
- General corporate advice on entity formation, operations and dissolutions
- Commercial, oil and gas and energy lending
- Ship construction and documentation
- Marine financing
- Mergers and acquisitions
- Distributorship and sales representative agreements
- Gaming law

His clients often combine maritime interests and the energy service sector. He has, for example, handled shipbuilding, vessel support and ownership issues for clients that touch on Jones Act regulations and other protective legislation governing national security. In addition, Blake often represents non-energy businesses -such as fisheries -in financing requirements and regulations for ownership, including oversight by the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD), an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Clients include large domestic fleets, lift boats and service vessels on the Gulf and inland waterways.

A consummate deal lawyer, Blake sees tremendous variety - from gaming and hospitality businesses, grocery distributorships, sports franchises, newspaper publishers and oil and gas companies, in addition to his core finance work for financial institutions and business owners.

Blake notes, "The assets vary widely. The common thread is that businesses and organizations -marine and otherwise -need help with complicated ownership and financing requirements and government regulations."

Practice Areas

Business Law
Energy & Natural Resources Law
Maritime, Oilfield & Insurance Business Law
Real Estate
Construction

Bar Admissions

Louisiana, 1982

Education

Louisiana State University, B.S., *magna cum laude*, 1979
Paul M. Hebert Law Center, Louisiana State University, J.D., 1982

- Order of the Coif
- *Louisiana Law Review*, Associate Editor, 1981 - 1982

Clerkship

Law Clerk to the Honorable Luther F. Cole, Judge, First Circuit Court of Appeal, Louisiana, 1982 - 1983

Blake leads the New Orleans office business law practice group and formerly served on the firm's board of directors.

Experience

Blake is known for being open, friendly, accessible and responsive. He has a reputation as a go-to lawyer for important transactions and issues across a variety of industries and businesses, including the following:

Oil and Gas

- Energy exploration and production companies in acquisitions of oil and gas properties located on the outer continental shelf in the Gulf of Mexico
- Oil and gas company in an acquisition and financing of onshore oil and gas assets
- Counsel to a non-profit association of E&P companies with respect to governance issues

General Commercial and Contractual

- Newspaper publisher in the formation of a company and in an acquisition of South Louisiana's largest daily newspaper
- Chemical company in negotiations for a multi-year requirements contract for feedstock material
- Owners of new business in the formation of a company and in an acquisition of the largest liftboat fleet operating in the Gulf of Mexico
- Offshore vessel supply company in the sale of its fleet of vessels
- Lead counsel to the majority owner of an NBA franchise in the sale of the team
- Local counsel to publicly traded gaming company in an acquisition of company licensed to conduct riverboat gaming operations in Louisiana and the creation of Louisiana subsidiary used for the acquisition

Financing and Investment

- Grocery distributorship in acquisitions of other grocery distributors and in the financings required for such acquisitions
- Lead counsel on a syndicated loan to a company wetlands mitigation credit banking company
- Lenders in analyzing intercreditor obligations, bank collateral position and alternatives in handling troubled credit facilities, and in workouts and redocumentation of troubled credit facilities
- Offshore supply vessel operator in refinancing of fleet and related corporate and vessel documentation matters
- Private equity firm for possible investment in a new chemical plant project in Louisiana
- Numerous financial institutions in various asset-based loan transactions, including financing vessel and real estate acquisitions and in loan transactions with producing oil and gas properties and pipelines as collateral
- Administrative agent as pipeline counsel in collateralizing a syndicated credit facility to pipeline operator
- Chemical company in the purchase and carveout of a portion of existing chemical plant
- National bank in the revision of lending forms for use in Louisiana
- Company engaged in fisheries operations with Jones Act and American Fisheries Act compliance matters and financing requirements

Involvement

Professional

- Louisiana Bankers Association - Bank Counsel Section - Member
- International Association of Gaming Advisors - Member
- Association of Commercial Finance Attorneys - Member
- Association of Corporate Growth, Louisiana Chapter - Member

- American Bar Association - Business Law Section, Commercial Financial Services Committee - Member
- New Orleans, Louisiana State, and American Bar Associations - Member
- Greater New Orleans Barge Fleeting Association, Inc. - Advisory Board Member and Legal Advisor, 2010 to date
- Law Clerk to the Honorable Luther F. Cole, Judge, First Circuit Court of Appeal, Louisiana, 1982 – 1983

Community

- St. Catherine of Siena Parish - Finance and Public Relations Committees of the School Board; Endowment Fund Committee, Past Member
- Jesuit High School - Past Member, Athletic Board

Recognition

- *Best Lawyers'* Banking and Finance Law "Lawyer of the Year," 2020
- *New Orleans Magazine's* List of "Top Lawyers," 2015-2019
- *Chambers USA* – Banking & Finance; Banking & Finance: Marine Finance, 2005–2020, Band 1
- *The Best Lawyers in America*, 2005–2021
- *Louisiana Super Lawyers*, 2008–2018

Wm. Blake Bennett

Presentations

- "Marine Finance Basics," Houston Commercial Finance Lawyer's Forum, March 2016, Houston, Texas
- "Of Purchase Agreements, Options to Purchase, Rights of First Refusal, Buy/Sell Agreements, and Related Issues," Louisiana State Bar Association Summer School, June 2010, Sandestin, Florida, and 22nd Annual Summer School Revisited, December 2010, New Orleans, Louisiana
- "Vessel Financings," Louisiana Bankers Association, 2007 Bank Counsel Seminar, November 2007
- "Vessel Sales and Financing," Greater New Orleans Barge Fleeting Association River and Marine Industry Seminar, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 2006
- "Significance of the Title Policy Standard Exceptions," Bank One Title Insurance Seminar, 1999
- "How to Conduct a Successful Commercial Closing: Conveyancing of Real Estate, Adoption of Uniform Electronic Transactions Act in Louisiana, Recommended Title Insurance Endorsements for Lenders and Survey Issues in Loan Transactions," Lorman Education Services Seminar, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 2001

- “Risky Business: Conflicts of Interests and Transactions Between Client and Lawyer,” Petroleum Landmen Association of New Orleans Eighth Annual Oil and Gas Seminar, Beaver Creek, Colorado, January 1997
- “Riverboat Gaming,” American Bar Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1994

Publications

- "Airspace Rights in Louisiana," Liskow & Lewis E-Newsletter, January 2017
- "Consequences of the Louisiana Public Records Doctrine Exception," Liskow & Lewis E-Newsletter, August 2014
- “Louisiana Gaming Developments” (with Janine V. Hodges), *The Gaming Lawyer*, Winter 2002 and Spring 2003
- “Waterborne Woes: Legal Difficulties of Riverboat Gaming in Emerging Jurisdictions,” *Nev. Law.*, Volume 3, Number 2, February 1995, pp. 19-24

After Hours

"I'm a golfer, hunter, and avid reader."

News/Insights

NEWS

8.20.20

Sixty-Two Attorneys Recognized in The Best Lawyers in America, BL Rankings, LLC, 2021 Edition

NEWS

4.23.20

Eighteen Liskow Lawyers, Eight Practice Areas Recognized in Chambers USA

NEWS

11.7.19

Forty-Two New Orleans Liskow Lawyers Named “Top Lawyer” by New Orleans Magazine

NEWS

8.15.19

Fifty-Seven Attorneys Recognized in The Best Lawyers in America, BL Rankings, LLC, 2020 Edition

NEWS

4.25.19

Sixteen Liskow Lawyers, Nine Practice Areas Recognized in Chambers USA

NEWS

11.9.18

Thirty-Eight New Orleans Liskow Lawyers Named “Top Lawyer” by New Orleans Magazine

NEWS

8.15.18

Eight Liskow Attorneys named *Best Lawyers* “Lawyer of the Year” and Fifty-Two Attorneys Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*, BL Rankings, LLC, 2019

NEWS

5.3.18

Fifteen Liskow Lawyers, Eight Practice Areas Recognized in Chambers USA

NEWS

12.27.17

Forty-Four Liskow Lawyers Selected to 2018 *Louisiana Super Lawyers*, Thomson Reuters

NEWS

11.3.17

Forty Liskow Lawyers Named "Top Lawyer" by *New Orleans Magazine*

NEWS

8.16.17

Seven Liskow Attorneys Named *Best Lawyers* "Lawyer of the Year" and Forty-Nine Attorneys Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*, Woodward White, Inc. 2018

NEWS

5.26.17

Twenty Liskow Lawyers, Seven Practice Areas Recognized in Chambers USA

INSIGHTS

1.11.17

Airspace Rights in Louisiana

NEWS

12.29.16

Forty-One Liskow Lawyers Selected to *Louisiana Super Lawyers*, Thomson Reuters 2017

NEWS

11.10.16

Forty-Four Liskow Lawyers Named "Top Lawyer" by New Orleans Magazine

NEWS

8.15.16

Eight Liskow Attorneys named *Best Lawyers* "Lawyer of the Year" and Fifty-One Attorneys Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*, Woodward White, Inc.

NEWS

5.27.16

Twenty Liskow Lawyers, Seven Practice Areas Recognized in Chambers USA

NEWS

8.28.15

Forty Liskow Attorneys Named "Top Lawyer" by New Orleans Magazine

NEWS

8.17.15

Fifty Attorneys Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*, Woodward White, Inc.

NEWS

5.27.15

Twenty-One Attorneys, Seven Practice Areas Recognized in Chambers USA

NEWS

1.9.15

Liskow & Lewis Attorneys Named to *Louisiana Super Lawyers*, Thomson Reuters 2015

NEWS

8.11.14

Consequences of the Louisiana Public Records Doctrine Exception