



Royal F. Oakes

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Royal Oakes has extensive trial and appellate practice in the fields of insurance, employment and general business law. He has litigated hundreds of cases in the areas of bad faith law and unfair business practices.

Mr. Oakes is a well-known television and radio legal commentator. Nationally, he is an ABC News legal analyst, regularly appears on the television program "Inside Edition" and fills in as guest host for "The Dennis Miller Radio Program," nationally syndicated by Westwood One. In Los Angeles he is legal analyst for NBC4 television and KNX all-news radio, and fills in as guest host on KABC Radio.

Professional Background

Mr. Oakes became a partner at Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP in October 2014 as a result of the merger of Hinshaw and the Los Angeles-based firm of Barger & Wolen LLP.

Professional Affiliations

- Lawyers' Mutual Insurance Company, Member, Board of Directors, 2014
- Radio & Television News Association, General Counsel (1996–Present)
- Association of Business Trial Lawyers, Member, Board of Directors, (2003–2005)
- Conference of Insurance Counsel, President, (2001–2002)

Honors & Awards

- Selected by his peers for inclusion in "The Best Lawyers in America®" since 2006 for Insurance Law and Litigation - Insurance
- Host, ABC News' "Guilt or Innocence" (2005-2007)
- Freedom of Information Award, Radio & Television News Association (2005)
- Golden Mike, "Rodney King Trial Coverage" (1993)

Service Areas

Appellate
Consumer and Class Action
Defense
Insurance & Reinsurance
Insurance Coverage
Labor & Employment
Life, Health, Disability & ERISA
Litigation

Education

J.D., University of California,
Los Angeles School of Law,
1977

B.A., University of California at
Los Angeles, 1974

Admissions

California
U.S. Court of Appeals for the
Ninth Circuit
U.S. District Court for the
Central District of California
U.S. District Court for the
Eastern District of California
U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of California
U.S. District Court for the
Southern District of California



Representative Matters

Mr. Oakes has extensive experience in the employment law field, and in recent years has achieved numerous victories regarding the classification of independent contractors and employees. Mr. Oakes was lead counsel for the prevailing party on this issue at the appellate level in the case of **Beaumont-Jacques v. Farmers Group, Inc.**, 217 Cal. App. 4th 1138 (2013), and at the trial court level in the case of *Pexa v. Farmers Group, Inc.* (Sacramento Superior Court, 2012).

Mr. Oakes' trial experience includes victories both in the field of life-health litigation, as well as property-casualty litigation. Among his wins include prevailing in:

- A bench trial involving a \$1.5 million life insurance claim submitted by the heirs of an insured murder victim
- A jury trial involving a putative class action that alleged an automobile insurer's "direct repair program" violated the rights of policyholders
- A jury trial against a disability claimant who claimed his fear of AIDS rendered him unable to provide professional services to patients

Mr. Oakes has served as lead counsel in numerous appellate cases in the fields of insurance, employment and administrative law, including victories in the California Supreme Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He was lead counsel in **Farmers Insurance Exchange v. Superior Court**, 2 Cal. 4th 377 (1992), in which the California Supreme Court established the doctrine of primary jurisdiction.

Presentations

In addition to his national television and radio presence, Mr. Oakes also speaks to organizations and at conferences. His presentations include

- "Misclassification: Employee or Independent Contractor? The Risks of Getting It Wrong," national webinar, Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, October 2015.
- "Unfair Competition Law Developments in California," for the American Conference Institute.

Publications

Mr. Oakes is a prolific author. His articles have appeared nationally in such publications as **USA Today**, the **Chicago Tribune**, the **Dallas Morning News** and the **San Francisco Chronicle**. In Los Angeles his op-ed pieces have appeared in the **Los Angeles Daily Journal** and the **Los Angeles Times**. For five years Mr. Oakes was the business litigation columnist for the **Los Angeles Daily Journal**. He was interviewed for and was the focus of a *Law360* Q&A article in 2013. Mr. Oakes has been interviewed and quoted in many publications, including PlanSponsor Magazine, Claims Journal and Business Insurance. Mr. Oakes was a co-editor of Barger's employment law blog.

A sample of his publications includes:

- "Life Insurance Contract," Chapter 21 (Revised), "California Insurance Law and Practice," LexisNexis Matthew Bender
- "High Noon at Home Plate for McCourts," *Los Angeles Daily News*, December 5, 2010
- "Claims Processing and Investigation," Chapter 12 (Revised), "California Insurance Law and Practice," LexisNexis Matthew Bender, June 2010
- "Making Millionaires from Class Suits," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, December 28, 1999
- "The Money Hook," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, July 21, 1999
- "Open Up the Books on Jackson-type settlements," *USA Today*, January 27, 1994
- "Courting Real Life Instead of Oprah," *Pasadena Star-News*, May 9, 1992
- "To Stay out of the Malpractice Doghouse," *Lawyers' Mutual Insurance Company Bulletin*, January 9, 1992



- "Avoid These Common Law-and-Motion Pitfalls," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, October 11, 1990
- "When Justice Runs out of Gas," *Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1989
- "Remembrance of a Trial Past," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, February 9, 1989
- "*Voir Dire*: Something to Savor," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, December 15, 1988
- "Some Suggestions for the 'Not Ready for Prime Time' Litigator," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, July 13, 1988
- "These 5 Principles May Help Improve Your Final Arguments," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, January 13, 1988
- "Litigation Consultants Try to Transform an Art into a Science," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, August 11, 1987
- "Don't Make Insurance a Scapegoat," *USA Today*, April 14, 1986
- "'Mini-Trials' Can Benefit Lawyer and Soon-to-Be Grateful Client Alike," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, April 9, 1986
- "Discharging Employees — Good News for Nervous Employers," *Los Angeles Lawyer*, Volume 8, No. 2, March 1985
- "The Health and Disability Insurance Contract," "California Insurance Law and Practice," Matthew Bender, 1996

Personal

Mr. Oakes is a lifelong resident of the Los Angeles area, enjoys playing golf and straight pool, and persists in believing in the myth of the Freeway Series.

Community/Civic Activities

- Los Angeles County Economy & Efficiency Commission, Commissioner (2001–Present)
- Insurance Council of the City of Hope, Co–Chair (1996)
- Chancery Club, Member (2012–Present)