



MEYER UNKOVIC SCOTT
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



Ronald L. Hicks, Jr.

Partner

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Practice Groups

- Energy, Utilities & Mineral Rights
- Litigation

Education

- J.D., Wake Forest University School of Law, 1987
- B.A. in Pre-Law, Pennsylvania State University, 1984

Bar Admissions

- Pennsylvania

Ronald L. Hicks, Jr. is a Pennsylvania business and oil and gas rights trial lawyer who handles emergency, complex and appellate litigation and other business matters for a variety of clients, including LGBT+ business owners.

For the past 30 years, Ron has handled a variety of business and civil disputes, including claims for:

- Misappropriation of trade secrets and intellectual property;
- Breach of restrictive covenants and unfair competition;
- Estate and fiduciary liability;
- Breach of contract;
- Insurance coverage;
- Fraud and fraudulent transfers;
- Creditors' rights and bankruptcy;
- Real estate and oil and gas title disputes;
- Telemarketing and on-line marketing; and
- Election and political campaign law.

He also counsels clients on various business matters including:

- Entity formation and operation;
- Contract review and drafting (including purchase/sales agreements and employment/independent contractor agreements);
- Creation and implementation of web site and social media policies and practices; and
- Intellectual property matters including trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets, and warranty/privacy issues.

Ron actively appears in State and Federal Courts throughout the Atlantic Coast and Midwest, and he has pursued and defended claims brought before the American Arbitration Association in locales both in and outside of Pittsburgh. Also, he serves as an arbitrator, an early neutral evaluator and a special master for e-discovery disputes for the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Ron is Co-Chair of the firm's Litigation & Dispute Resolution Group and Chair of the Energy, Utilities & Mineral Rights Group. Also, he serves as the Co-chair of the U.S./Canada Litigation Group of Meritas, a global association of select independent law firms. Previously, he has served as a member of the firm's management and compensation committees, as well as other administrative positions.

Representative Matters

- Obtained orders striking a 24-year-old default judgment and dismissing a quiet title action claiming adverse possession of severed oil and gas rights based on such judgment, which orders were affirmed on appeal.
- Obtained, after 30 days of trial in a New Jersey state court, a \$12.8 million verdict against a client's legacy insurance companies for environmental cleanup damages.

- Enforced an employee's restrictive covenants by obtaining, following a 2-day hearing in federal court, a preliminary injunction imposing a 12-month non-compete in the employee's former territory, an 18-month non-solicitation of his former employer's customers and employees, and an indefinite ban on disclosing or using in any manner the client's confidential information or other property.
- Protected a manufacturer's customer information and other trade secrets by obtaining, after a 3-day evidentiary hearing in federal court, 1-year and 10-year injunctions to prevent their misuse by a former salesman and a terminated dealer.
- Obtained, after two 10-day jury trials in federal court, judgments totaling over \$14 million for siblings against their brother/uncle and his wife for misappropriation and fraudulent transfer of family assets, and protecting those judgments by obtaining pre-verdict and post-judgment freeze orders, a declaratory judgment in Florida state court that a condominium was not homestead property, and a declaratory judgment in federal bankruptcy court that the judgment against the wife was not dischargeable.
- Received after a 6-day jury trial in Indiana state court a defense jury verdict in favor of a real estate developer who had been sued for allegedly promising to provide a permanent easement over land that it was only leasing.

Court Admissions

- Supreme Court of the United States
- United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania Supreme Court

Awards/Honors

- AV Preeminent[®] Rating from the Martindale-Hubbell[®] Peer Review Rating Program
- Included in *The Best Lawyers in America*[®] for Commercial, Bankruptcy, Construction, Intellectual Property and Real Estate Litigation
- Selected to the *Pennsylvania Super Lawyers*[®] List
- Included in *Who's Who in American Law*
- Inducted into the Order of the Barristers

Professional/Community Involvement

- Allegheny County Bar Association, Elected to the Board of Governors, 2016
 - ACBA Nominating Committee (2017), Member
 - Civil Litigation Section, Member
 - Diversity & Gender Equality Ad Hoc Committee, Member
 - Appellate Practice Committee, Member
 - LGBT Rights Committee, Member
 - Diversity Collaborative Committee, Member
 - ACBA Court Rules Committee, Member
 - Judiciary Committee, Former Member
- Allegheny County Bar Foundation, Fellow (Class of 2016)
- Academy of Trial Lawyers of Allegheny County, Fellow
- American Bar Association, Member
- Pennsylvania Bar Association, Member
- Western Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association, Member
- Meritas, Co-Chair of Litigation Section, Member
- Republican National Lawyers Association, Board of Governors, Vice President of Communications
- Energy and Mineral Law Foundation, Member

- National LGBT Bar Association, Member
- National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, National Legal Industry Council
- Million Dollar and Multi-Million Dollar Advocates Forum, Life Member
- Penn State University College of the Liberal Arts Alumni Society, Board of Directors
- Penn State Alumni Association, Life Member
- Pennsylvania Society, Member
- Republican State Committee, Deputy Solicitor for Western Pennsylvania
- Republican Committees of Allegheny County and Pittsburgh, Elected Member and County Solicitor
- Commonwealth Club, Member
- Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Past Board Member and President
- Pittsburgh Young Professionals, Past Board Member and President
- South Shore Place Owners' Association, Past Board Member and President

Articles/Speaking Engagements

- Virtual Roundtable Series II, Program 3, "Advanced Contract Drafting Techniques and Tips for Choice of Law and Venue Clauses," ACC Webcasts, November 17, 2016, Pittsburgh.
- "Dealing with 'Rambo' Litigators: How to Counter Unfair Tactics and Intimidation," ALI-CLE Webinar, November 14, 2016, Pittsburgh.
- "Penalty: Holding on the Offense! Everything You Need to Know About Legal Holds," ACC, 2016 Annual Meeting, October 18, 2016, San Francisco.
- "How to Get Your Social Media, Email and Text Evidence Admitted (and Keep Theirs Out)," NBI, August 31, 2016, Pittsburgh.
- "Mock Trial – Provisional Ballot Challenges," RNLA Summer Election School, August 15, 2015, New York.
- "The Rules of Evidence: A Practical Toolkit (Handling Email, Social Media and Other ESI & Ethical Considerations)," NBI, July 31, 2015, Pittsburgh.
- "Being Counsel to a Campaign," RNLA Summer Election School, August 10, 2014, Las Vegas.
- Presented on "Social Media Risk Management," National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, International Business & Leadership Conference, July 30, 2014, Las Vegas.
- "The Interplay Between Indemnification Provisions and Insurance Clauses in Contracts for Goods and Services," co-author, *ACC Docket*, March 2014.
- "Debunking The Myths Surrounding Natural Gas Title Washing: 'How Can One's Title Be Divested If Natural Gas Was Not And Cannot Be the Subject Of A Proper Real Estate Tax Assessment?'" co-author, *Pennsylvania Bar Association Quarterly*, January 2014.
- Presented on "Natural Gas Title Washing," Best of the Oil and Gas Law Colloquium (January 23, 2014, Pittsburgh) and Pennsylvania Bar Institute's 5th Annual Oil & Gas Law Colloquium (September 18, 2013 Pittsburgh).
- Presented on "Combatting Rambo Civil Litigation Tactics," DRI Employment & Labor Committee's Annual Conference, Phoenix, 2013.
- "Business Workshop: 'Title Washing' Causes Disputes Over Subsurface Rights," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* Business Workshop, July 15, 2013.
- Served on a panel that addressed indemnification and insurance clauses in contracts for goods and services at the 2012 ACC Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida.
- In 2012, he served as an "Outside Expert" on litigation for a series of editorial columns published by InsideCounsel.com over a 12-week period.
- Author of an eBook chapter entitled, "Returning Civility to Civil Litigation," published by ExecSense, Inc., available for download at Amazon.com.