

James E. von der Heydt

Cleveland
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Overview

Jim enforces contracts for business plaintiffs and defendants, and fights doggedly for clients' legal rights and commercial interests. A former educator and author, Jim has built expertise in civil procedure, the handling of evidence, and lucid storytelling on behalf of businesses.

Whether defending a class action, navigating a bankruptcy, or pursuing a derelict IP licensee, he maintains focus on the case-management skills that contain costs, looking to prevail at the right moment with overwhelming force using resources proportional to the prize. Jim represents international conglomerates, startups, regional utilities, transportation and logistics firms, buyers and sellers of businesses, and (on a pro bono basis) Cleveland senior citizens - all of them confronting unbusinesslike, unreasonable behavior creating problems that Benesch can solve.

Representative Matters

- Before the Supreme Court of Ohio, as primary advocate on second appeal, prevailed on behalf of public utility to establish new rule of easement interpretation in support of safety programs for high-voltage lines: under Ohio law, ancient easement documents are now presumed to authorize the use of new technology. Corder v. Ohio Edison Co., 2024-Ohio-5432.
- On behalf of sports-management company IMG, won complete defense verdict as principal draftsman and third chair in month-long jury trial, ending eighteen-year litigation over claim of fiduciary breach by family of a professional athlete.
- Currently representing IMG in two litigations against Arnold Palmer Enterprises, to establish that ongoing drink licensing revenue is commissionable under the legendary "handshake" deal between the golfer and his agent.

- Currently representing TKO in federal copyright litigation related to the horns in John Cena's "walkout" song "The Time Is Now."
- Before the newly founded Texas Business Court on behalf of private-equity platform, as defendant in prematurely filed litigation over alleged eight-figure earnout, prevailed in enforcing contract and secured judgment for over a third of a million dollars in attorney fees.
- On behalf of national events management company, asserted antitrust counterclaims in breach-of-contract arbitration against an international trade association. Highly favorable settlement enabled client's continued long-term ownership and operation of business unit.
- Successfully defended Learfield IMG College in federal litigation brought by former Buckeye and NFL commentator Chris Spielman, who asserted a challenge to college-athletics amateurism at The Ohio State University and nationwide.
- Favorably resolved a variety of commercial disputes on behalf of the Cleveland Cavaliers; a fast-growing scrap-metal company; a fiber-optic cable network designer; a software interface designer; and a health-products distributor confronting business misconduct in the face of the pandemic.

Credentials

EDUCATION

- Cleveland State University College of Law, 2013, J.D., *summa cum laude*
  - Ranked first in Class of 2013
  - Co-President, Trial Advocacy Team
  - Submissions Editor, *Cleveland State Law Review*
  - CALI 'High A' Award in 17 courses
- Harvard University, 2003, Ph.D., English; Allston Burr Resident Dean in Winthrop House, 2003-06; Lecturer in History & Literature
- Princeton University, 1996, A.B., *summa cum laude*

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

- Ohio
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio
- U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

Memberships

- Trustee, Cleveland State University Law Alumni Association (since 2024)
- Board Member, The Literacy Cooperative (since 2024)
- Member, William K. Thomas Inn of Court (since 2018)
- Board Member, Princeton Association of Northeast Ohio (since 2009)
- Regional Chair, Princeton Prize in Race Relations (2021-2025)
- Board Member, Edwin's Restaurant and Leadership Institute (2022-2023)
- Assistant Scoutmaster, Lake Erie Council Troop 15G (2019-2022)
- Designated Pro Bono Attorney, Eliza Bryant Village Elder Justice Center (2020-2022)
- Cleveland Bridge Builders Class of 2019

Awards & Recognition

- Listed, *The Best Lawyers in America®* Ones to Watch, Commercial Litigation, 2021-2027
- Listed, Ohio Super Lawyers – Rising Star, 2018-2021, 2023

News & Insights

- Tracking Pixels on Automated Website Held Not to Violate Washington Privacy Act
  October 16, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- 126 Benesch Attorneys Recognized in 2027 Best Lawyers® Rankings
  August 20, 2026 | Press Releases
- The Coming State-Law Litigation Wave of 2026-27: "Subscription Trap" Class Actions
  August 14, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- Law360 Highlights Benesch Attorneys Representing Klutch Sports Group in Trademark Dispute with Ohio Cannabis Company
  May 20, 2026 | Media Mentions
- 129 Benesch Attorneys Recognized in 2026 Best Lawyers® Rankings
  August 21, 2025 | Press Releases
- Know Your Arbitration Clause: What Remains of State Arbitration Statutes under the Ever-Growing FAA
  October 11, 2024 | Client Alerts & Insights
- 132 Benesch Attorneys Recognized in 2025 Best Lawyers® Rankings
  August 14, 2024 | Press Releases

- Noteworthy Biometric Information Updates to the Ever-Changing Legal Landscape
  June 24, 2024 | Client Alerts & Insights
- “Forever Chemicals:” PFAS Litigation Expands In the Consumer Class Action Space
  May 21, 2024 | Client Alerts & Insights
- Illinois Lawmakers Moving Forward with Bill to Cap Penalties for “Per Scan” Violations under BIPA
  May 7, 2024 | Client Alerts & Insights

Speaking & Events

PAST EVENTS

- Don't You Know That You're Toxic? Examples of Everday Chemicals That Trigger TSCA and FIFRA Compliance | James E. von der Heydt
  April 4, 2024 - April 5, 2024 | Speaking Engagement