

About Us

Overview

Crain Caton & James provides legal counseling and client-focused solutions locally and around the world. Our attorneys are recognized for their contributions to the legal community, their practical expertise, and their legal scholarship by contributing to standard legal texts and presenting papers and speeches to lay and legal audiences. Founded in 1912 as Kennerly & Warnken, Crain Caton & James has grown into a stable law firm of over 40 lawyers and their highly-qualified support staff without a merger. Today, our clients turn to us for legal counsel on: business transactions involving: land; commercial; industrial and residential real estate, and the development thereof; minerals in place; upstream, midstream and downstream energy assets, including liquefaction and export facilities; entity formation, capitalization and governance; tax planning; advice and compliance; merger, acquisition, consolidation and disposition of going concerns; and estate planning for transition of family-owned businesses; estate planning and marital property matters; probate, guardianship, and trust matters; conduct of those in fiduciary positions, such as business directors, trust administrators, guardians and executors, particularly in connection with claims of malfeasance; environmental law, compliance, investigation, remediation, and management of environmental risks; financial services, lending, compliance, and regulation of banks and other lending entities; bankruptcy and creditors' rights; non-profit entity operations; intellectual property matters, including patent prosecution and litigation, registration and protection of trademarks, tradenames, proprietary information, trade secrets, and franchising; and litigation services, involving all of the practice areas, and including employer/employee relations, insurance coverage and claims, construction claims and disputes, hospital management, and risk management.

Industries we serve

Our clients are found in various industries, including: Chemical Construction Energy Financial Services Franchising Healthcare Manufacturing & Industrial Midstream and Downstream Private Clients Real Estate Restaurant, Food and Beverage Software

Our History

Founded in 1912 Thomas M. Kennerly and Charles A. Warnken established the Houston firm Kennerly & Warnken in 1912. Initially named for its founders, the Firm name changed over the years to include new shareholders. In 1985, the Firm institutionalized the name of Crain Caton & James. Thomas M. Kennerly received no formal legal education, but taught himself the law by reading numerous law books. He apprenticed for a judge in Giddings, Texas before passing the Texas state bar exam at 19. In 1931, he was appointed United States District Judge, affecting Texas jurisprudence for generations to come. The Houston Oil Company kept attorneys busy with land law in the East Texas oil fields in the early years of the Firm. During the early 1900s, the Houston Oil Company owned or controlled about 800,000 acres of timberland in East Texas and Louisiana. As a result, the Firm played a key role in shaping the modern-day interpretation of real estate and energy law in Texas. Although the Firm eventually branched into other areas of law, these early years began a strong tradition of oil, gas, and real estate law that continues at Crain Caton & James today. Leading in 2017. In addition to the traditional areas of oil, gas, and real-estate law, Crain Caton & James provides legal services in several other areas. Those areas include: administrative, appellate, banking and financial services, bankruptcy and creditors' rights, business planning and taxation, commercial litigation, employment and labor law, energy, environmental, estate planning, fiduciary litigation, insurance and personal injury, intellectual property, international business transactions, probate, trust and guardianship, real estate, and securities. Several firm attorneys are considered by colleagues to be especially experienced in their fields, including Sarah Patel Pacheco, who co-authored the textbook Texas Probate Practice Guide, and Robert R. Wisner, who wrote the text Usury and the Texas Credit Code. The firm's attorneys are graduates of prestigious law schools and universities. Over 10 attorneys affiliated with the firm are jurists on both the federal and state benches. Four members of the firm have served as president of the Houston Bar Association.