GIBSON DUNN

Gibson Dunn Partners Discuss Strategic Growth of Houston Trial Team with Texas Lawyer

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Texas Lawyer

Partners Collin Cox, Sydney Scott, Gregg Costa, Andrea Smith, and Trey Cox recently spoke to *Texas Lawyer* about the strategic growth of our Houston trial team. As Collin told the publication, “The plan was, and is, to build the best litigation department in Houston with the resources of a big firm like Gibson Dunn.”

Gibson Dunn Building Trial Team in Houston With Lawyers Drawn to the Courtroom
After launching its Houston office in 2017 with transactional partners, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher has strategically built a trial team over the last four years.
Law.com | Texas Lawyer
By Brenda Sapino Jeffreys
June 05, 2025

Since the hiring of litigation partner Collin Cox in 2021, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher has strategically built a trial practice within its eight-year-old Houston office, which was launched with a splashy team of Big Law transactional partners.

Cox, who came from trial boutique Yetter Coleman as the first trial partner in the office, made the move with the goal of building a litigation practice on the firm's Big Law platform. In 2022, the firm hired litigation partners Sydney Scott, formerly a partner with Houston's Smyser Kaplan & Veselka, and Gregg Costa, who stepped down from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and joined the Houston team.

"The plan was, and is, to build the best litigation department in Houston with the resources of a big firm like Gibson Dunn," Collin Cox said.

The trial team has grown to four partners—New York partner Andrea Smith recently transferred to the Houston office—and 13 associates, with more on the way in the fall.

Trey Cox, a Dallas partner who is co-chair of the firm’s global litigation practice group, said the plan is to continue to strategically grow the Houston trial team by acquiring "excellent talent at both the top end and at the junior level."

"Look, it's going great. Litigation is continuing to grow. We’ve got all of these companies moving in here. The economy has made the corporate side of things a little more uneven, the uncertainty, but frankly that uncertainty is good for litigation," Trey Cox said.

Trey Cox, who joined Gibson Dunn's office in 2020 from Lynn Pinker Cox & Hurst, said Houston was an outlier among Gibson Dunn offices when it lacked a litigation team. After he joined the firm in Dallas, he started working on recruiting Collin Cox to be the base of the Houston litigation team.

Related People

Collin J. Cox

Sydney Scott

Gregg J. Costa

Trey Cox

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Bolstered by the associates, the team of Cox, Scott and Costa tried seven lawsuits to trial or arbitration in 2024.

And in 2025, a team led by Collin Cox, Costa and Trey Cox won a verdict in state court in North Dakota against environmental organization Greenpeace and affiliates. The jury awarded their clients nearly $667 million, after finding Greenpeace defamed the companies and incited protesters to trespass on their property and disrupt construction efforts.

"We had three first-chair lawyers. That's crazy. I'm not sure who else can put three first-chair lawyers on the floor," Trey Cox said.

"It's a great place in terms of people and quality of work," Collin Cox said.

Scott said when she decided to leave Smyser Kaplan, she figured Gibson Dunn would be a good fit, because the firm has a reputation for getting hired for "landmark cases" and winning them. And, she said, "I love trying cases."

"I didn't think that when I started at Gibson Dunn [that] I would have a year like last year. I tried four cases in a year, which is pretty remarkable," she said.

Her trials included two defending Johnson & Johnson in talcum powder cases — one in Miami that ended in a hung jury, and one with Collin Cox in Dallas that settled during trial.

The number of significant trials shows that Collin Cox's vision for growing the practice has panned out, she said, because they have been busy and getting hired for big lawsuits, some out of state, like the North Dakota litigation for Energy Transfer and the Dakota Access Pipeline.

"Texas has some of the best trial lawyers in the country, but the opportunity for me to take associates to Miami Dade County to try a case has sharpened us all as lawyers [with the] opportunity to argue to other jury pools," Scott said.

Costa said that when he decided to leave the bench, he wanted to practice at a firm where litigation "really matters," and it is roughly 50% of the work at Am Law 100 firm Gibson Dunn. The Houston office was also in a "sweet spot," because it was "effectively launched" in 2017 and has grown.

In his view, the litigation team in Houston is doing what many Big Law firms don't do, which is actually going to trial and also focusing on giving younger lawyers an active role in the trial.

"I gave up the federal bench and I didn't want to go somewhere and shuffle paper," he said.

Collin Cox, co-partner in charge of the Houston office, said the team sees potential for work stemming from the new Texas Business Court, a specialty court launched in 2024 to handle certain commercial disputes.

Costa, global co-chair of the Gibson Dunn trials practice group, said it's not just the number of lawsuits the Houston team has tried, but the variety of litigation, including commercial, oil and gas litigation, and defending Johnson & Johnson in talc cases.

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