

# Michael P. Darden

## Partner

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T: +1 346.718.6789

Houston

Michael P. Darden is a partner in the Houston office of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher. Mr. Darden is chair of the firm's Oil & Gas Practice Group, a member of the firm's Energy and Infrastructure, and Mergers and Acquisitions Practice Groups, and previously served as partner in charge of the Houston office.

His practice focuses on:

- International and U.S. oil and gas ventures (including LNG, deep-water and unconventional resource development projects)
- International and U.S. infrastructure projects
- Asset acquisitions and divestitures
- Energy-based financings (including project financings, reserve-based loans and production payments)
- Carbon capture, utilization and sequestration projects

Before joining Gibson Dunn, Mr. Darden served as the global chair of the oil and gas transactions practice and co-chair of the global oil and gas industry team at Latham & Watkins as well as the firmwide chair of the global oil and gas practice at Baker Botts. Prior to Baker Botts, Mr. Darden was Vice President, Business Development, for Nuevo Energy Company, with responsibility for U.S. and international business development, international new ventures, international legal and negotiations matters, international mergers and acquisitions, as well as real estate portfolio management and land matters in the United States. He has also worked in the international legal and/or negotiations areas for Tenneco Oil Company, BHP Petroleum and Hunt Oil Company.

Mr. Darden has been recognized in the following publications:

- *Texas Super Lawyers Magazine* – Energy & Natural Resources – Super Lawyer, 2024
- *Chambers USA – America's Leading Lawyers for Business* in Energy: Oil & Gas (Transactional), 2005-2024
- *The Legal 500*–Hall of Fame in Energy Transactions–Oil and Gas, 2021-2023 ; *The Legal 500*–Tier 1 leading lawyers in the U.S. in the practice of Energy: Transactions – Oil & Gas, 2015-2020; *The Legal 500*, 2012–2014
- *The Best Lawyers in America*©, 2007–2025
- *Who's Who Legal Oil & Gas*, 2010–2024; *Who's Who Legal Oil & Gas* – Thought Leader, 2023-2024
- *Chambers Global*, 2011-2024



### Capabilities

Oil and Gas  
Energy and Infrastructure  
Mergers and Acquisitions  
Power and Renewables

### Credentials

#### Education

Rice University - 2002 MBA  
University of Houston - 1986 Juris Doctor  
University of Texas - 1980 B.A. Business Administration

#### Admissions

Texas Bar

- *Law360 Energy MVP*, 2012, 2018, 2019, 2021
- *Law & Politics* as a "Texas Super Lawyer," 2003–2004, 2006–2023; Top 100 "Houston Super Lawyers List," 2018-2019
- *Who's Who Legal Project Finance*, 2012–2014, 2017-2023
- The *Houston Business Journal* Who's Who in Energy, 2012, 2014

Mr. Darden is a member of the Association of International Petroleum Negotiators, in which he has served as an officer, director and committee chairman and was co-chair of the committee that developed the model form international farmout agreement. Mr. Darden is Board Certified in Oil and Gas Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization and a member of the Houston Bar Association.

### **Representative Matters\***

#### ***Domestic U.S.***

- Representation of Pioneer Natural Resources in its US\$64.5 billion merger with ExxonMobil
- Representation of Chief E&D Holdings, LP and Tug Hill, Inc. in the US\$2.65 billion acquisition by Chesapeake Energy Corporation of Chief E&D Holdings and associated interests held by affiliates of Tug Hill
- Representation of Pioneer Natural Resources Company in its US\$7.6 billion acquisition of Parsley Energy, Inc.
- Representation of Pioneer Natural Resources in US\$6.4 billion bolt-on acquisition of DoublePoint Energy
- Representation of Callon Petroleum Company in connection with acquisition of the leasehold interests and related oil, gas, and infrastructure assets of Primexx Energy Partners in the Delaware Basin
- Representation of Occidental Petroleum in a US\$3 billion joint venture with Ecopetrol to develop almost 100,000 net acres of Midland Basin properties in the Permian Basin
- Representation of Murphy Oil Company in a US\$3 billion joint venture with Petrobras America for ownership and development of deep water Gulf of Mexico assets
- Representation of EnerVest in connection with its US\$2.66 billion sale of its Eagle Ford and Austin Chalk assets to TPG Pace Energy Holdings (TPGE)
- Representation of Concho Resources in its US\$9.5 billion merger with RSP Permian
- Representation of seller in divestiture of 63,000 net acres of productive and exploratory leasehold in the Wolfcamp Shale of the Permian Basin, along with seller's interest in certain mid-stream gathering assets, for US\$2.5 billion
- Representation of purchaser of 12,000 net acres of productive Spraberry and Wolfcamp leasehold in the Permian Basin for \$600 million
- Representation of seller in divestiture of Spraberry and Wolfcamp leasehold in the Permian Basin for \$980 million
- Representation of purchaser of 36,860 net acres of Wolfcamp leasehold in the Permian Basin for \$855 million
- Representation of buyer in its US\$2 billion investment in exchange for 30% of seller's interest in approximately 650,000 net acres in the Cline shale and the Midland-Wolfcamp Shale of the Permian Basin
- Representation of seller in divestiture of Eagle Ford Shale-focused midstream company for \$2.15 billion

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- Representation of seller in divestiture of 120,000 net acres of productive and exploratory leasehold in the Eagle Ford Shale formation in South Texas, along with the seller's interest in certain mid-stream gathering assets, for US\$1.45 billion
- Representation of largest seller in multi-company divestiture of approximately 32,000 gross acres in the Bakken Shale formation of North Dakota for US\$1.4 billion
- Conveyance of US\$5 billion of onshore exploration and production assets in relation to spin-off of exploration and production company from regulated utility
- Representation of producer (gas owner) in terminaling agreement for counterparty to store and transport producer's natural gas stream to producer's terminal and to process the natural gas stream to produce and deliver ethane to producer's ships at the terminal for overseas delivery
- Representation of buyer in acquisition of interests in producing deepwater Gulf of Mexico leases, along with associated capacity rights in offshore infrastructure and interests in related contracts, for \$2.15 billion
- Representation of buyer in acquisition of interests in 28 deep-water Gulf of Mexico leases and structuring, negotiating and implementing (i) Participation Agreement calling for a minimum expenditure of US\$600 million and (ii) Management Services Agreement
- Representation of buyer in acquisition of several producing deepwater Gulf of Mexico fields (23 leases encompassing five field areas), along with associated capacity rights in offshore infrastructure and interests in related contracts, for US\$5.55 billion

### **International**

- Extensive work on petroleum exploration, development and/or production projects in all regions of the world, including several LNG projects. Involvement at all stages of petroleum projects, working with governments, industry participants, partners, contractors, suppliers, lenders and insurers
- Drafting and negotiation of production sharing contracts (and other host government contracts), licenses, LNG project agreements, technical evaluation agreements, confidentiality agreements, joint bidding agreements, joint venture agreements, development agreements, company organization, structuring and operating documents, farmout agreements, purchase and sale agreements, joint operating agreements, EPC contracts, drilling contracts and service contracts for exploration, development and production activities in more than 60 countries
- Countries, by region, include: Canada; Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Venezuela; Albania, France, Kazakhstan, Portugal, Russia, Turkey and the United Kingdom; Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Tunisia and Yemen; Angola, Benin, Congo, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sudan and Zambia; Australia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Tonga and Vietnam

### **Education**

Mr. Darden received his law degree from the University of Houston Law Center, an M.B.A. from Rice University and a B.B.A. in Petroleum Land Management from The University of Texas.

*\* Includes matters handled prior to joining Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher*