

UNRIVALED
HONOREE



Collin Cox

Partner, Co-Partner in
Charge of Houston Office
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher
Houston, TX

GIBSON DUNN

Collin Cox of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher

Lisa Helem, Executive Editor | Andrea Platten, Editor | July 8, 2026

You served as lead trial counsel for the plaintiffs in *Gray Services, LLC & Gray Development Group LLC v. ZOM Holding, Inc.* The Gray real estate development companies and ZOM Holding had an agreement to pursue high-end projects in Arizona. Your clients claimed breach of contract and misuse of confidential business strategies after ZOM allegedly terminated the agreement and began developing the properties through its affiliate. Maricopa County Superior Court jurors unanimously awarded \$592 million in damages, the full amount sought. Tell us about your trial strategy.

We represent Gray Development Group and Gray Services, two Arizona real estate companies with three decades of history. The Gray companies had a pipeline of four high-end projects on the most desirable land in Phoenix and Scottsdale. Then, they brought in another company to help provide the capital to develop those projects. That company, the defendant in our case, ended up with everything.

At trial, it was tempting to tell the story of the Gray companies. And every plaintiff must be worthy, especially when seeking a large damages award. But we really tried to keep our focus on the defendants: We called their two decisionmakers as adverse witnesses in our case; we built out a chronology of “what they said” versus “what they did”; and we centralized the defendants’ promises to our clients. Also, and perhaps just as importantly, we tried to be as efficient as possible. Jurors are smart, especially collectively, and when you present them with a logical framework and let them reach the decisions themselves, those decisions inevitably stick.

Tell us about some of the challenges you faced in the Gray case and how you overcame them.

Real estate cases can be complicated, with special-purpose entities involved and a lot of money at stake. So we focused on things that are easy to understand, beginning with the parties’ written words. We focused on what the parties agreed to do, and we told a story about what the defendants chose to do instead. We made sure jurors had their own individualized copies of the key documents, including the parties’ contract. From the opening statement, we directed them to certain language. I was thrilled when jurors started highlighting and annotating in the first 10 minutes of the 12-day trial. And, for the next three weeks, we used a lot of graphics, pictures, and charts to keep things interesting. Finally, we tried to

pull attention back to the jury questions as much as possible, telling the jurors that we only were going to give them facts that would help answer the questions they would be asked.

Take us back. When did you first know you wanted to be a trial lawyer?

I didn't come from a family of lawyers, but I came from a family of storytellers. I grew up listening to my grandparents, cotton farmers in Oklahoma, tell stories—sometimes hilarious and sometimes heartbreaking—about their communities and friends. They were captivating. In a big family, if your stories weren't entertaining, you'd get washed out pretty fast. I learned quickly that stories, whether told around a kitchen table, from a pulpit, or from an actor playing a lawyer on television, could bring people together. I loved to speak in public and wanted to work in a job where I did that on a regular basis. And I loved to read and research, so law school was a good fit for my few meager talents.

What are the major keys to winning over a jury or a judge?

Juries and (especially) judges are smart. If they think you are stretching a case too far, being too obstreperous with a witness, or fighting unnecessary battles, you risk losing your credibility. And when your credibility is lost, that's the end of the game. It's important never to get too high or too low, and always to focus on the ultimate goal.

What is the best advice you give young trial lawyers?

Be authentic. Most trial lawyers start as mimics, copying things they've seen other lawyers do successfully. But every lawyer—every person—is blessed with individual strengths. Leaning into those, and making the "trial" version of oneself close to the "real" version of oneself, is critical.

Editor's note: Collin Cox worked alongside fellow Gibson Dunn partner and 2026 Unrivaled honoree Trey Cox on the Energy Transfer v. Greenpeace International litigation.