

## HDBD Attorneys Obtain Successful Jury Verdict in Estate Dispute Trial

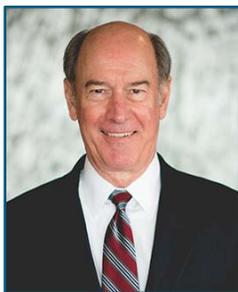
**CORPUS CHRISTI, TX** – Hartline Dacus Barger Dreyer LLP attorneys [Richard Crews](#), [Casey Batchelor](#) and [Amanda Simpson](#) recently obtained a complete jury verdict for the firm’s client in a dispute over a probate estate estimated to be worth in excess of tens of millions of dollars. David Bright, of Sico Hoelscher Harris & Braugh, served as co-counsel.

The case involved a prominent local businessman and philanthropist who, with his new companion, executed a Declaration and Registration of Informal Marriage six months prior to his death in 2016, claiming to have been married since 2010. Our client, the decedent’s children, filed suit in probate court to set aside the marriage after death, claiming incapacity of their father.

After a two week trial, the jury returned a verdict in favor of the children, finding that the decedent lacked the capacity to enter into a marriage at the time of declaration or anytime thereafter. The court also granted the instructed verdict finding that there was no common law marriage at any time prior to the date of declaration. The jury was out for 20 minutes.

The companion in question must repay the \$250,000 “widow’s allowance” previously awarded. She lost all claim to a community interest in the estate, and has no interest in any of the businessman’s entities or companies. She also lost her claim for attorney’s fees. Furthermore, she is now the sole obligator on nearly \$1.4 million in debt she incurred prior to the decedent’s death.

*Hartline Dacus Barger Dreyer LLP is a Texas-based law firm specializing in civil litigation and trials, with offices in Dallas, Corpus Christi and Houston. The firm’s attorneys pride themselves on providing uncompromising excellence to their clients in a variety of areas, including products liability, commercial litigation, class action and multidistrict litigation, intellectual property, personal-injury defense, premises liability, labor and employment, insurance coverage, healthcare, construction, and dealer/franchise litigation. For more information about HDBD, visit [www.hdbdlaw.com](http://www.hdbdlaw.com).*



Richard Crews



Casey Batchelor



Amanda Simpson