



## James M. Morris Counsel

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### Practice Areas

Complex Business Litigation | Food & Agriculture | Food & Agriculture Litigation

For nearly five decades Jim Morris has represented clients, from manufacturers to farmers, in virtually every phase of California agribusiness, blending his knowledge of agriculture with his trial skills.

Jim Morris has spent his entire career successfully representing clients in agriculture and business litigation and transactions. He is a skilled litigator with an extensive knowledge of agribusiness and complex business transactions.

His vigorous representation includes plaintiffs and defendants involved in all aspects of farming, small and large businesses, international enterprises, and individuals. He has extensive experience in the area of negotiation and drafting of agreements for small and large companies, including professional practices, and advises companies with respect to corporate governance.

Jim's expertise is recognized by his peers, as he is called upon to mediate and arbitrate business and agricultural disputes.

In addition to his legal work, Jim has devoted significant time to community, political, and nonprofit activities, often in a leadership role. Recognizing that the welfare of the entire Central Valley can be affected by the outcomes of certain cases, he is a passionate advocate for his clients and an equally ardent supporter of his community.

## Experience

- Obtained a judgment in excess of \$450,000 against an almond growing company that failed to pay for its irrigation system and claimed damages for the death of its almond orchard.
- Successfully defended aerial applicators throughout the Central Valley against claims of negligence and strict liability relating to the application of agricultural chemicals.
- Obtained a jury verdict of \$1,217,000, of which \$1 million was punitive damages, plus costs and attorneys' fees.

fees in an action for breach of contract, conversion, and fraudulent transfer of assets.

- Tried and received a breach of contract judgment for more than \$800,000 in a case involving the sale of corporate stock.
- Represented one of three plaintiffs who obtained a multimillion-dollar jury verdict arising from damage to more than 100 aircraft as the result of contaminated aviation fuel.
- Successfully represented a buyer of a walnut orchard in a fraud action against the seller who concealed the existence of disease in the orchard.
- Obtained a judgment in plaintiff's favor in *Burroughs v. Board of Trustees of Pension Trust Fund for Operating Engineers*, 398 F.Supp. 168, which was affirmed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and which the United States Supreme Court refused to review. The issue was whether the Pension Trust Fund could deny an operating engineer a disability pension. The plaintiff had become disabled after working in the heavy equipment industry all his adult life. He was denied a disability pension because of the break in service rules contained in the collective bargaining agreement negotiated between the Operating Engineers Union and the Association of General Contractors. Jim successfully argued that definition of disability employed by the Pension Trust Fund was arbitrary and capricious and thus violated federal law. Trial judge William Orrick found in plaintiff's favor. The case established new law.

## Professional & Community Service

- Stockton Symphony Association, Board Member 2016-present; Chair, Development Committee, 2016-2018; Co-President, 2016-2019; President 2019-present
- San Joaquin County Bar Association; Board of Governors, 2015-2017; President 2016
- Children's Home of Stockton, Board Member 2005-2014; VP Finance, 2013-2014
- Founding Board Member and Counsel, Children's Museum of Stockton
- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Volunteer Advocate
- Foundation Fund of Temple Israel, President and Board Member
- Temple Israel of Stockton, President and Board Member

## Education

- J.D., Santa Clara University School of Law, 1970
- B.A., University of California at Davis, 1967

## Honors & Rankings

- Martindale-Hubbell® Rated AV Preeminent® for Thirty Years, 1989-2019
- American Board of Trial Advocates, 2016-present