



## Jesse J. Smith

**Member**

Direct: (808) 540-4545

Jesse Smith is a civil trial attorney who serves as the head of the firm's commercial litigation department, where he focuses his practice on a diverse client group involved in local, international, and cross-border disputes. Jesse was selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America© 2021 in the practice area of Commercial Litigation and Super Lawyers: Hawaii Rising Stars from 2014 through 2020. Formerly a partner at one of Hawaii's largest litigation law firms, Jesse has scored important victories for his clients, whether through motions practice, settlement, or a trial on the merits. Examples of his experience include:

- Obtained early dismissal on behalf of two large energy companies in an unfair method of competition case filed in state court which alleged price-fixing in the avgas market at the Honolulu international airport.
- Successfully defended an internationally acclaimed architect through a jury-waived trial that resulted in a judgment for \$1.00 in nominal damages pursuant to California law.
- Served as lead trial counsel and obtained a large six-figure judgment for damages in Honolulu district court following successful summary possession proceedings involving a national pizza chain restaurant.
- Negotiated substantial settlements on behalf of Japanese clients embroiled in an ownership dispute over a popular Waikiki hotel after defeating numerous dispositive motions in parallel federal court and state court proceedings following approximately four years of contentious litigation.
- After winning several rounds of dispositive motions and following intensive expert discovery, negotiated large contingency fee settlement prior to trial in complex medical malpractice lawsuit on behalf of injured parties.
- Represented the interests of international clientele in a commercial arbitration involving a shuttered resort on one of the neighbor islands.
- Following appointment as appellate counsel in a state court action involving a slip and fall at a popular nightclub, prepared and successfully argued a motion for a new trial setting aside a \$2.3M jury verdict, which made local headlines.

Born and raised in the snowy Northeast, Jesse obtained his B.A. with honors from Hamilton College, where he wrote an award-winning paper on the Bakumatsu period of Japanese history. Prior to moving to Hawaii to attend law school at the William S. Richardson School of Law, he lived in Japan for four years, and was a participant in the Japan Exchange Teaching Program, earning certificates in Japanese language and interpretation. While in law school, Jesse served as an Editor-in-Chief of the Asian Pacific Law and Policy Journal, studied international arbitration law with a former member of the World Trade Organization's Appellate Body, and was an award-winning member of the law school's Native American Moot Court team. Upon his graduation, Jesse clerked for the Honorable Lisa M. Ginoza, (now) Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals, State of Hawaii.

### Areas of Practice

- Commercial Litigation
- Foreclosure
- Intellectual Property
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Environmental
- Products Liability
- Personal Injury and Insurance Defense
- Professional Liability
- Medical Malpractice
- Healthcare litigation

### Bar Admissions

- State of Hawaii
- U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit, 2013
- U.S. District Court, District of Hawaii, 2010
- Hawaii, 2010

### Education

- J.D. (2010) University of Hawaii, William S. Richardson School of Law, *cum laude*, Pacific Asian Legal Studies Certificate, Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal - Co- Editor-in-Chief
- B.A. (2000) East Asian Studies, Minor in History, Hamilton College

### Affiliations

- Hawaii State Bar Association
- Federal Bar Association
- American Bar Association
- Screen Actors Guild (SAG/AFTRA)