



Jess G. Webster

 Partner

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“I am committed to helping our clients succeed in their endeavors, whether in the pursuit of successful and rewarding business transactions or the efficient resolution of their business disputes. I truly enjoy the practice of law and my clients benefit from my depth of experience, specialized knowledge, integrity, and dedication.”

Jess Webster’s primary practice has focused on maritime affairs. He is an experienced maritime and business attorney who serves a full spectrum of maritime and marine-related industries, including shipping, freight forwarding, logistics, towing, fisheries, aquaculture, petroleum, lending, insurance, ship construction and repair, yacht construction and repair, marinas, and suppliers of necessities. Jess joined Miller Nash after working at a specialized admiralty and maritime law firm where he addressed clients’ transactional and litigation needs.

He regularly represents parties in a wide range of maritime related transactions, including acquisition and sale of maritime businesses; marine financing transactions; vessel/yacht purchase, sale and charters; regulatory compliance; fisheries regulation; fishing rights transactions; Jones Act compliance; contracts of carriage, towing agreements and vessel charters; and maritime employment agreements.

As a proctor in admiralty, Jess has litigated all manners of admiralty and maritime claims in the federal courts of the western United States, including maritime lien and mortgage foreclosures, maritime attachments, vessel construction and repair disputes, charter disputes, marine insurance coverage litigation, defense of fisheries and environmental regulatory violations, and maritime employment disputes.

Adjunct to his business practice, Jess has litigated a wide variety of business disputes in the state and federal courts of Alaska, Washington, and Oregon. Jess also advises an array of businesses in entity formation, corporate governance, finance, and employment practices.

Professional Activities

- North Seattle Industrial Association, Member
- The Propeller Club, Port of Seattle Chapter, Board of Governors

Education

J.D., University of Puget Sound School of Law, *cum laude*, 1980

B.A., University of Washington, oceanography, 1977

Bar Admissions

Oregon, 2015
Alaska, 1984
Washington, 1981

Court Admissions

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

U.S. District Court, Western District of Washington

U.S. District Court, District of Alaska

U.S. District Court, District of Oregon

U.S. District Court, Northern District of California

- Virginia V Foundation, Board of Directors
- Northwest Fisheries Association, Member
- Maritime Law Association of the United States, Member

Representative Experience

Litigation

- Represented international fuel supplier in all ports of western United States for arrests of ocean-going vessels to enforce maritime liens for necessities and recover accounts due.
- Represented commercial lender in bringing multi-district foreclosure action against fleet of commercial fishing vessels and appurtenant fishing rights, followed by collaborative sales of assets with full resolution of secured debt.
- Represented commercial lender in foreclosure of preferred mortgage of vessel and security interests in tangible and intangible property.
- Represented charterer of commercial vessel in defense of claims for breach of charter and alleged elder financial abuse.
- Represented uninsured owner of sunken yacht in negotiations and subsequent litigation resulting from sinking.
- Represented a vessel owner with issues on grounding, break-up, and loss of a large seafood processing ship on a remote island in Alaska. Representation included OPA 90 oil spill response; salvage efforts; defense of vessel owner in action by State and native corporation for wreck removal and damages; and prosecution of insurance coverage claims against delinquent London underwriters for loss and wreck removal.
- Represented vessel owner in all aspects of sinking of saturation dive support vessel in a Singapore shipyard. Representation included immediate sinking response activities, presentation and resolution of insurance claims for hull loss and liabilities arising from sinking, and pursuit of claims against shipyard for sinking of vessel. Resulted in successful resolution of all claims through mediation in London, England. This matter involved close coordination with affiliate counsel in Singapore and London.
- Team defense of manager of refit for superyacht/oceanographic research vessel. Claims exceeded \$11 million for mismanagement and resulted in defense judgment in favor of manager, recovery of management fees due, and all costs, expenses, and attorney fees.
- Prosecution of claims for breach of warranty on purchase of deep water construction vessel before Society of Maritime Arbitrators, Inc., NY, NY.
- Represented yacht owner in arbitration of claims for multiple defects in construction of yacht and resulted in successful arbitration award against successive owners of yacht manufacturer and individual owner for full amounts claimed, plus all costs, expenses, and attorney fees.
- Representation of vessel owner in litigation with shipyard arising from conversion of vessel from oil industry support vessel to factory trawler, resulting in judgment for owner for costs of repairs, costs, and attorney's fees.

Transactional

- Represented estate in negotiation and sale of large yacht construction business.
- Represented early investor/employee of cannabis processing business in negotiated resolution of claim for stock initially denied to employee due to mischaracterization of status of employee in plan of merger.
- Represented multiple marina operators in addressing delinquent moorage accounts and derelict or abandoned vessels.
- Advised multiple commercial fishing businesses with respect to acquisitions, sales, chartering, fishing rights transactions, and employment issues.
- Represented owner and operator of assisted living facility HUD refinancing.

- Represented owners and charterers in negotiations and drafting of time, voyage and demise charters; master services agreements for oil industry vessel employees; and vessel management, manning, and services agreements.
- Represented numerous commercial lenders in negotiation and preparation of marine loan documentation.
- Representation of foreign investor in acquiring control of U.S. transportation company in compliance with Jones Act U.S. citizenship requirements.
- Represented vessel owners and builders in negotiation and drafting of agreements for new construction and repair of commercial vessels and yachts. Representation of vessel owners and shipyards in multiple vessel construction and repair disputes in multiple jurisdictions, including Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and jurisdictions bordering the Gulf of Mexico.

Publications

- “Washington’s New BUI Laws: Now Alcohol and Water Really Do Not Mix,” Graham & Dunn, *Northwest Maritime Law* (May 2013)
- “All Ties Go To Seamen: Washington Supreme Court Confirms Summary Judgment Standard Inappropriate on Seaman’s Motion,” Graham & Dunn, *Northwest Maritime Law* (May 2013)
- “Pebble Mine: EPA Issues Revised Draft Assessment,” Graham & Dunn, *Northwest Maritime Law* (May 2013)

Presentations

- “Enforcement of Maritime and Preferred Mortgage Liens Against General Intangibles,” Washington State Bar Association, Current Issues in Maritime Law 2023 CLE (Sept. 2023)
- “Not a Puny Concern: The Pursuit and Defense of Punitive Damages Claims in Maritime Actions – From the Practical to Predictions,” Washington State Bar Association, Annual Maritime Law CLE (May 2018)
- “Maritime Attachment,” Washington State Bar Association, Current Issues in Maritime Law CLE (Nov. 2013)

Recognition & Honors

- Selected as a Top Admiralty and Maritime Lawyer, *Seattle Metropolitan* magazine, 2010
- Rated of AV[®] Preeminent[™] by Martindale-Hubbell[®]

Personal Activities

Jess enjoys skiing on powder days, biking, fly fishing, walking the fields and hills with his dog, and enjoying the company of his family.