



B. Otis Felder

Partner

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Otis Felder is a highly respected trial attorney and legal strategist with more than 30 years of experience in maritime law, insurance coverage, and general liability. He has successfully handled complex litigation in state and federal courts across the West Coast, Hawai'i, and beyond. Certified as an Admiralty & Maritime Law Specialist by the State Bar of California, Otis is a trusted advocate for vessel owners, marine insurers, ports, and terminal operators. His multijurisdictional practice, which includes admissions in California, Hawai'i, Washington, and other key regions, allows him to provide comprehensive representation to clients facing maritime and insurance-related disputes.

Otis is committed to client success, offering clear communication, strategic thinking, and practical resolutions. His blend of courtroom savvy, industry-specific knowledge, and leadership makes him an indispensable resource for clients navigating maritime, insurance, and general liability challenges.

Earlier in his career, Otis served as Deputy City Attorney for Los Angeles, where he gained extensive courtroom experience, conducting 1,000+ hours of advocacy with a 98 percent conviction rate. He has worked with the Los Angeles Police Department, training cadets in courtroom testimony, and served as a Court-Appointed Discovery Referee for the Los Angeles Superior Court, overseeing complex discovery and privilege issues.

Leadership & Industry Presence

Otis is a recognized leader in the legal community:

- Adjunct Lecturer at USC Gould School of Law, teaching legal writing to LL.M. students
- Special Master appointed by Los Angeles Superior Court including public corruption investigations
- Proctor Member of the Maritime Law Association of the United States for more than 25

Services

- Admiralty & Marine
- Cannabis Law
- Complex Tort & General Casualty
- Government Investigations
- Insurance & Reinsurance Coverage
- National Trial Team

years

- Cochair of Wilson Elser's LGBTQIA+ Employee Resource Group, advocating for diversity in the legal profession
- Wellness Ambassador, promoting mental health and well-being in the legal industry.

Admiralty & Maritime Law

Cochair of Wilson Elser's Admiralty & Marine Practice, Otis is a leading authority in admiralty law, an area widely regarded as one of the most complex legal disciplines. His deep knowledge of maritime operations stems from his tenure as corporate counsel for Princess Cruises and Cunard Line, where he managed litigation, regulatory compliance, and risk mitigation. He later served as general counsel for specialty cruise ventures, expanding his credentials in commercial maritime operations.

Otis has successfully defended clients in cases involving passenger and crew injury claims, maritime contractual disputes, marine pollution and environmental matters, vessel arrests and maritime liens, and Limitation of Liability Act proceedings.

Recognized for his thought leadership, Otis is frequently invited to speak at global maritime conferences and has lectured at Udayana University in Bali, Indonesia, as well as industry forums such as Lloyd's Maritime Academy in London. He also has been a featured guest on NPR's *Your Legal Rights*, where he discussed emerging trends in maritime law.

Insurance Coverage & Risk Management

Otis represents London Market insurers and domestic carriers in a broad range of coverage disputes related to maritime, environmental, and casualty claims. His practice encompasses marine insurance disputes, including hull and machinery claims; pollution liability and environmental coverage issues; commercial general liability and property damage claims; and business interruption and professional liability coverage.

Able to interpret complex insurance policies, resolve bad faith claims, and manage high-stakes litigation, Otis is a go-to legal authority in the insurance industry. He has served as editor of the *Litigation Highlights* newsletter, where he reported on key coverage developments to domestic and insurers abroad.

General Liability & Complex Litigation

In addition to his maritime and insurance law practice, Otis maintains an active general liability defense practice. He has successfully defended businesses and individuals in cases involving personal injury, product liability, and mass tort litigation. His focus on early evaluation, risk assessment, and strategic settlements helps clients avoid prolonged legal battles while minimizing financial exposure.

Otis's litigation experience includes high-exposure tort litigation, class action and mass tort defense, workplace injury claims, and catastrophic accident litigation, among others.

Trial & Appellate Experience

A seasoned litigator and esteemed member of Wilson Elser's National Trial Team, Otis

has first-chair trial experience in jury and bench trials across multiple jurisdictions. He has secured significant wins for clients in Limitation of Liability Act proceedings, maritime environmental disputes, and premises liability cases. His appellate work has been instrumental in shaping maritime liability and insurance law, having successfully overturned cases limiting liability waivers in Hawai'i and other jurisdictions for vessel operators.

Education

- Harvard University (M.A. Psychology, 2024)
- University of San Francisco School of Law (J.D., 1994)
 - editor in chief, Maritime Law Journal
- University of San Diego (M.A., 1991)
- University of Michigan (A.B., 1989)
 - Pi Sigma Alpha, Sigma Iota Rho
- United States Naval Academy (Presidential Appointment, 1985)

Bar Admissions

- California
- Hawaii
- District of Columbia
- Alaska
- Washington
- Oregon

Court Admissions

- Supreme Court of the United States
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court, District of Alaska
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court, Central District of California
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of California
- U.S. District Court, District of Hawai'i
- U.S. District Court, District of Oregon
- U.S. District Court, District of Washington

Professional Affiliations

- Maritime Law Association of the United States, Proctor
- Association of Corporate Counsel
- Inter-Pacific Bar Association
- ABA Admiralty & General Maritime Law Committee, Tort, Trial & Insurance Practice Section
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Long Beach Bar Association
- California District Attorneys Association
- California Bar Association Board of Legal Specialization, Commission Chair / Commissioner, 2012–2013
- Los Angeles County Bar Association

Awards & Honors

- Selected for inclusion in The Legal 500 United States in Shipping Litigation & Regulation Tier 3, 2023-2025
- Los Angeles Superior Court, Special Master
- Board Certified Admiralty & Maritime Law Specialist, State Bar of California Board of Legal Specialization
- USF Maritime Law Journal, Board of Advisors, 1994–present
- Selected for inclusion in *Rising Stars, California Super Lawyers*, 2004–2007