

## Q&A With Gardner Haas' Michael Gardner

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Michael S. Gardner is a name partner and co-founder of the Dallas trial law firm Gardner Haas PLLC. He has successfully represented clients in wide-ranging types of disputes and practice areas, including hospitality, fiduciary, bankruptcy, environmental, securities, intellectual property, trade secret, oil and gas, labor and employment, insurance, real estate, antitrust, education, and white-collar criminal defense.



Michael Gardner

He has been named to Texas Super Lawyers for his work in business litigation in 2004 and 2007 to 2014. He was also recognized by D Magazine in 2004 and 2006 as one of “The Best Lawyers Under 40 in Dallas,” and he was named to the list of Texas Rising Stars by Texas Super Lawyers in 2004.

### **Q: What attracted you to international arbitration work?**

A: International arbitration was a natural segue from my national, and increasingly international, litigation practice. The advocacy skills that make for a good trial attorney in the U.S. fit seamlessly in arbitrations, both international and domestic. And, as more clients doing business overseas enter into contracts with alternative dispute resolution provisions, international arbitrations are increasingly common forums.

### **Q: What are two trends you see that are affecting the practice of international arbitration?**

A: A significant trend is the growing popularity of commercial arbitration in international disputes. The number of nation states that are adopting rules and treaties to facilitate arbitration under common rules and procedures has grown rapidly and will continue to do so. This, coupled with the shrinking of the world from a commercial perspective, makes arbitration in cross-border commercial relations an increasingly attractive option for commercial enterprises.

### **Q: What is the most challenging case you’ve worked on and why?**

A: One of the most challenging international arbitration matters I worked on involved a dispute between the owner and manager of an island resort. It was challenging for the same reason it was fun — big dollars, complex facts and law, and interesting application of laws of different states, and the involvement of courts and an arbitration tribunal in different countries. It really was the perfect storm. Of course, conducting witness interviews under a palm tree was not all bad either.

**Q: What advice would you give to an attorney considering a career in international arbitration?**

A: I believe that the skills that make a good litigator make a good practitioner in arbitration. So, I would encourage young lawyers to focus on the fundamentals — research, writing, effective examination and aggressive advocacy. Of course, it's nice to not have to sweat all the evidentiary objections in arbitration that at times occupy too much time in court.

**Q: Outside of your firm, name an attorney who has impressed you and tell us why.**

A: Although I hate to market for the competition, my former law partner, Michael J. Collins, is an impressive attorney. Michael is a talented advocate, particularly before a judge or arbitrator. He's brilliant and quick on his feet, but humble enough to make you want to root for him (unless I'm up against him).

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