

# 2016 Professional Excellence Awards

Texas Lawyer  
September 1, 2016

## LIFETIME ACHIEVERS



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### Richard Mithoff

FOUNDER, MITHOFF LAW,  
HOUSTON

**RICHARD MITHOFF CURRENTLY SITS** as appointed lead counsel for Texas counties suing Volkswagen Group of America and Audi of America, alleging violations of the Texas Clean Air Act.

He and his firm, Mithoff Law, were previously hired by Harris County as part of a team working on a \$100 million lawsuit, charging the automaker rigged diesel-engine vehicles to cheat emission control tests.

That case is pending as multidistrict litigation in Austin. He previously worked on a \$2.2 billion settlement in 1998 against tobacco companies for Texas counties and hospital districts. Mithoff won the first case against silicone breast implant makers in 1977, setting the stage for his firm to reap millions for clients. He and his firm gained verdicts and settlements of more than \$1 million in hundreds of personal injury and commercial cases.

Texas Lawyer named him as one of the top five "Go-To" Personal Injury Lawyers in 2002. This year, Texas Watch named him as a Champion of Justice.

"He's able to communicate with jurors in ways that they understand, that they appreciate," former partner Tommy Jacks said in a tribute video Texas Watch put together for the award.

Mithoff grew up on To Kill a Mockingbird and Perry Mason.

"I wanted to try cases," he said.

With a 1971 degree from the University of Texas School of Law, he clerked for U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice. Mithoff joined forces with Joe Jamail in 1974 in a firm that would become Jamail, Kolius & Mithoff. He started his own firm in 1984, partnered with Jacks from 1986 to 1992, and rebooted his own firm after that. Given the opportunity for a final word about this honor, he thought of Jamail, who died last December.

"I think he would have been very proud," Mithoff said.