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BEST CIVIL LAWYER

Richard Mithoff

It's tough for any lawyer to specialize in personal-injury or medical-malpractice cases without facing a barrage of criticism for being an ambulance-chasing, contingency-fee-grabbing exploiter of both people's pain and the country's justice system. Richard Mithoff has somehow managed to stay above the fray while becoming one of the city's richest plaintiffs' attorneys. Critics may grumble that he overdoes the soft-spoken, mumbling humility shtick, but the fact remains that even though he regularly racks up multimillion-dollar verdicts — and has even been a key player in the national breast-implant litigation that has regularly careened toward a feeding frenzy — Mithoff is just as likely to hit the newspapers for his charitable works as his big cases. A former associate of the flamboyant Joe Jamail, Mithoff and his partner, Tommy Jacks of Austin, have earned a reputation for honesty and forthrightness with clients, judges and the media. Mithoff recently garnered a \$10 million payday representing Harris County in the massive litigation against tobacco companies; that might be enough to make another lawyer slow down and smell the roses. Expect Mithoff to be back in the courtroom soon, though, dazzling his opposition with pretrial maneuvers and connecting emotionally with any juror he needs.

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