WILLIAM R. PATERSON

Attorney, Shareholder



William Paterson is an experienced trial lawyer who represents individuals and businesses facing complex business disputes. Will uses his perspective and immense knowledge of business law, business concepts, and financial data to craft creative legal strategies for clients in a broad range of industries.

Will represents clients in shareholder disputes as well as matters involving breach of contract, employment, restrictive covenant and intellectual property, and breaches of fiduciary duty. No matter the type of commercial litigation, Will channels his competitive drive and business background to balance his clients' operational and legal objectives in pursuit of the best strategies for success.

EDUCATION

J.D., magna cum laude, Order of the Coif, University of Minnesota Law School
B.A., summa cum laude, University of St. Thomas

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Member, Minnesota State Bar Association
Member, Hennepin County Bar Association

PUBLICATIONS

- What Happens When Everyone Starts Relying on AI? Does that Make it Reasonable?, Minnesota Lawyer / Finance & Commerce – Partner Content, September 2026
- Three Years Later, Minnesota's Predominant Purpose Analysis is Still Unclear, Minnesota Lawyer / Finance & Commerce – Partner Content, May 2025
- There Isn't a Nationwide Non-Compete Ban… Yet, Minnesota Lawyer – Partner Content, November 2023; Finance & Commerce Partner Content, September 2024
- Square Peg (Blockchain) – Round Holes (MN Law): Tokenholder Rights and Obligations in an Ownership Dispute Minnesota Lawyer and Finance & Commerce Partner Content, August 2023
- In re Polaris, Inc. – Predominantly Clear or Unclear?
  Minnesota Lawyer and Finance & Commerce Partner Content, January 2022
- Remembering Justice Ginsburg's Impact on Business, Minnesota Lawyer and Finance & Commerce Partner Content, October 2020
- COVID-19, Commercial Leases, and Force Majeure
  , Minnesota Lawyer and Finance & Commerce Partner Content, July 2020

RESULTS

CLINTSMAN ET AL. V. GERVAIS ET AL.(2021): LLC MEMBER OPPRESSION AND BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY
Will represented two siblings in a family–owned business with a total of seven sibling members. The siblings collectively owned six LLCs, which in turn owned over 100 pieces of real estate in various states. The case was largely litigated during the COVID-19 pandemic, with numerous depositions and motion hearings. The court granted summary judgment in favor of our clients on their oppression and breach of fiduciary duty claims and granted their motion for a fair value buyout. No trial was necessary. It is believed that this is the first decision in which a court has granted a fair value buyout award, on motion, to a member of an LLC under Minnesota's Revised Limited Liability Company Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 322C.

HOLMES ET AL. V. O'CONNOR AND TACO JOHN'S INTERNATIONAL ET AL. (2021): SHAREHOLDER OPPRESSION AND BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY
Will represented three owners in the family–owned Taco John's business, which is the largest privately–owned company in the state of Wyoming. The Anthony Ostlund team commenced an action in Wyoming state court against the companies and certain other shareholders and directors for shareholder

CONTACT

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AWARDS & HONORS

- Recognized in "Ones to Watch" list by Best Lawyers, 2027
- Named an "Up & Coming Attorney" by Minnesota Lawyer, 2025
- Selected to the "Minnesota Rising Stars" list by Super Lawyers, 2024–2026

oppression and breach of fiduciary duty. After extensive litigation, a resolution was negotiated that resulted in a buyout and business divorce of our clients from the Taco John's enterprise.

SHAREHOLDER OPPRESSION/BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY/UNIFORM VOIDABLE TRANSACTIONS ACT

Will was retained by two minority owners in the middle of a dispute over a business transaction gone wrong. At the time, the other side was demanding over $1 million from Will's clients. Through his in-depth knowledge of the law and strategic thinking, however, Will was able to turn the tables in his clients' favor almost immediately. After strategic and aggressive litigation maneuvers, Will's clients controlled the litigation. Will successfully had all of the claims against his clients dismissed, and he received permission from the Court to seek punitive damages against the wrongdoers. Once Will had repositioned the case in his clients' favor and after the opposing parties changed counsel—multiple times—to try to match Will's litigation skills, the other side came to Will seeking to settle. In the end, Will was able to obtain a favorable settlement for his clients.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Fiduciary Duties in Closely Held MN Companies, Advising the Closely Held Business, Minnesota CLE, October 2026
- Legacy or Litigation? Steering Private Companies Through Succession Conflicts, Estate and Succession Planning for Business Owners, Minnesota CLE, February 2026
- 6 Hypotheticals to Illustrate Fiduciary Duties in LLCs, The Minnesota LLC Toolkit, Minnesota CLE, November 2025
- Stealing Secrets – The New Frontier in Post-Employment Disputes, Lying, Cheating & Stealing Seminar 2025, October 2025
- Do Not Be the Last to Know: Key Developments During the Pandemic, Ownership Disputes in Closely-Held Businesses: Preventing, Managing, and Resolving, Minnesota CLE, March 6, 2023. Co-presenter, with Janel Dressen
- Attorney Client Privilege in Minnesota Post-In Re Polaris, Minnesota State Bar Association, June 2022