

# TEXAS LAWYER

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## Winning Women

**jamie lavergne bryan**  
shareholder  
winstead  
fort worth  
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business, its trade secret information and marketing strategies.

Her interest in oil and gas matters began at an early age. Bryan says she

grew up in Nederland in Southeast Texas, where members of her family worked in the energy industry.

Bryan is involved in litigation against producers in the Barnett Shale, a major natural gas-bearing formation in North Texas. Bryan is co-lead counsel for XTO Energy Inc. of Fort Worth in 29 cases with a total of 278 plaintiffs who allege XTO has engaged in a civil “conspiracy” with a number of other oil and gas producers in the Barnett Shale to stop leasing efforts on mineral properties in Tarrant County. The plaintiffs allege, among other things, breach of contract, promissory estoppel, negligent misrepresentation and antitrust violations.

In 2010, the 67th District Court in Fort Worth granted the defendants’ pleas to the jurisdiction on the plaintiffs’ antitrust claims and granted the defendants’ motions for summary judgment on all the other claims in the first three cases in the Barnett Shale litigation: *Myles v. XTO Energy Inc., et al.*; *Makeham, et al. v. XTO Energy Inc., et al.*; and *Eastern Express LP v. XTO Energy Inc., et al.* Plaintiffs in all three cases filed appeals with the 2nd Court of Appeals in Fort Worth.

Bryan says she knew that she wanted to be a lawyer from the time she was about 8 years old. After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in bioenvironmental science at Texas A&M University, she enrolled in the University of Houston Law Center, graduating in 2000 and obtaining her law license the same year.

“Oil and gas [cases] are about 90 percent of what I do, Bryan says. “I usually have at least one case going on in the background that is not oil and gas that will expand my horizons.”

A case Bryan tried last year offered her an opportunity to learn all about a thrust reverser, which reverses an aircraft’s thrust to slow it down for landing. The ownership of a thrust reverser held pursuant to a leverage lease was at issue in *RPK Capital XVI LLC, et al. v. Wells Fargo Bank Northwest N.A., Not Individually But Solely in Its Corporate Capacity as Owner Trustee*. Bryan, lead counsel for the RPK plaintiffs, won a \$1.4 million judgment for her clients after a three-day bench trial in Dallas’ 14th District Court in the spring of 2010. Wells Fargo appealed the judgment to the 5th Court of Appeals in Dallas, where the case is pending.



Fort Worth litigator Jamie Lavergne Bryan’s knowledge of legal issues that arise from the bottom of a well bore to the burner tip in the oil and gas industry is invaluable to her clients. Educating herself on all facets of the energy industry — as well as what’s happening in other industries in which her clients are involved — is the key to her winning cases, according to Bryan.

“I feel like I’m always preparing and learning,” she says.

Bryan says she constantly keeps tabs on what is going on in the oil and gas industry, not only monitoring current trends and cycles but also looking ahead to determine what might happen in the future. As part of her education process, Bryan says she tries to understand a client’s day-to-day business operations, the economic factors affecting that