

Judge Halbach

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Joseph “Tad” Halbach is a retired District Judge who currently serves as a mediator and arbitrator. He was appointed Judge of the 333rd Civil District Court in October of 1995. He was elected in November of 1996 and then re-elected in each of the next four elections. He retired in December of 2016. During his 21 years on the bench, Judge Halbach served in many capacities, including the Harris County Local Administrative District Judge, the Harris County Civil Administrative Judge, and as a member of both the Harris County Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee and the Harris County Juvenile Board. Since December of 2009 until December of 2016, Judge Halbach was the Silica MDL Judge for the entire state of Texas. In 2013, he was chosen as the Trial Judge of the Year by the Texas Association of Civil Trial and Appellate Specialists.

Prior to taking the bench, Judge Halbach had more than 13 years in an active trial and appellate practice covering a wide range of complex business, commercial, insurance and tort disputes. Judge Halbach is Board Certified in Civil Trial Law and a frequent writer and speaker at various CLE (Continuing Legal Education) programs. He is also a director of the Texas Association of Civil Trial and Appellate Specialists and a member of the College of the State Bar of Texas. In addition, he is member of the Garland Walker Inn of Court. From 2009 through 2016, Judge Halbach was an Adjunct Professor at the University Of Houston School Of Law, teaching Trial Advocacy.

A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin (BA’78, JD’82), Judge Halbach began his career in 1982 as an associate with Bonham, Carrington & Fox, where he stayed until 1986, when he and three other lawyers formed the firm of Wilshire, Scott, Halbach & Dyer. In late 1990, Judge Halbach began a solo practice, concentrating in litigation, but also maintaining a general business practice including corporate, partnership, contract, employment, real estate and financial matters. He also became certified as a mediator and mediated nearly 50 cases prior to becoming a judge.

Throughout his career, Judge Halbach has been dedicated to professional and public service. He is a past president of the Houston Young Lawyers Association and was a charter member of the Pro Bono College of the State Bar of Texas. A member of Leadership Houston Class XII, Judge Halbach was a 1994 Five Outstanding Young Houstonian Finalist. Judge Halbach served as a director for Marywood Children & Family Services, a statewide agency headquartered in Austin, from 1993-1999, and today he is an advisory director for the Aspiring Youth Foundation, a nationwide foundation headquartered in Houston. An Eagle Scout, Judge Halbach is also active in the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), having served as the Troop Committee Chair for Boy Scout Troop 505 and Vice-Chair for Program for the Golden Arrow District of the Sam Houston Area Council. Judge Halbach has been honored with the Silver Beaver Award, the St. George Emblem, and the District Award of Merit for his continued service to youth through the Scouting Program. He served as Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 1812 for the 2005 National Scout Jamboree. In the summer of 2007, he served on the International Service Team for the World Jamboree in London, England. Judge Halbach was also an Assistant Course Director for Wood Badge Course SR-920 and SR-1007, BSA's most advanced adult leadership training. In the summer of 2010, he served on national staff for the National Boy Scout Jamboree. Today, Judge Halbach continues to serve BSA on the national, council and district level. He is also a dedicated volunteer and lifetime member of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, for which he serves on the Grand Entry Committee.

Judge Halbach is 65 years old. He and his wife, Susan (who retired as Assistant General Counsel with Kinder Morgan), have been married for 37 years and are active members of St. Vincent de Paul Church. They have two sons, ages 32 and 30, both of whom are Eagle Scouts. Judge and Mrs. Halbach are also the proud grandparents of two girls, ages 11 and 4.

Judicial Service

Judge – 333rd Civil District Court (1995–2016)

Texas Statewide Silica MDL Judge (2009–2016)

Harris County Local Administrative Judge—Board of District Judges (2008-2011)

Member—Harris County Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee (2009-2011)

Harris County Civil Administrative Judge (2004-2005)

Chair of the Rules Committee—Board of Civil Judges (2001 – 2004)

Chair of Internal Procedures Committee—Board of Civil Judges (1996 – 2000)

Harris County Juvenile Board (2001 – 2002); Master Asbestos Judge (1998-1999)

Chair of the E-Filing and Paperless Technology Committee—(2006-2008)

Legal Practice

Mediation / Arbitration Practice (2017–Present)

Solo Practitioner, Law Offices of Joseph J. Halbach, Jr. (1990-1995)

Founding Shareholder, Wilshire, Scott, Halbach & Dyer (1986-1990)

Associate, Bonham, Carrington & Fox (1982-1986)

Certifications and Training

Board Certified—Civil Trial Law; Texas Board of Legal Specialization

Member—College of the State Bar of Texas

Attorney-Mediators Institute, Inc. (Basic Training 1993) (Advanced Training 1994)

Teaching

Adjunct Law Professor—University of Houston Law Center (2009-2016)

Frequent CLE speaker and writer.

Law Licenses

State of Texas—1982

United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas—1983

United States Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit—1982

United States Supreme Court—1986

Education

University of Texas at Austin—B.A. (with honors) 1978

University of Texas at Austin—Graduate School of Business 1978-79

University of Texas at Austin—J.D. 1982 (Board of Advocates; Tex. Int'l L. Journal).

Professional Associations

Texas Bar Association

Federal Bar Association

Houston Young Lawyers Association; President 1993-1994

Houston Young Lawyers Association; Judicial Liaison 1996-1999

Houston Young Lawyers Association; Co-Chair, Scouting with the HYL A 2005-Present

Houston Young Lawyers Foundation; Board of Trustees 1992-1993

Pro Bono College—State Bar of Texas

Houston Bar Association; Board Member (ex-officio) 1993-1994

Houston Bar Foundation—Fellow; Texas Bar Foundation – Fellow

Association of Women Attorneys—Member

Mexican American Bar Association of Houston—Member

Houston Lawyers Association—Member and Mentorship Volunteer

Texas Association of Civil Trial and Appellate Specialists—Board Member (1999-present)

Member—Garland Walker Inn of Court (American Inns of Court)

Civic Service, Honors and Awards

2013 Judge of the Year—Texas Association of Civil Trial and Appellate Specialists

Houston Bar Association—Presidents Award—Harris County Pro Bono Awards

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo; Volunteer and Lifetime Member (2009-present)

Good Steward Global Initiative—Volunteer (2014–present)

Marywood Children & Family Services; Director (1993–1999)

Aspiring Youth Foundation—Advisory Director (1995–Present)

Leadership Houston—Class XII; Heath & Human Services Committee (1994-1995); Chair—Government Committee (1998-1999); Outside Director (1998–1999)

Five Outstanding Young Houstonian Finalist—1994

Adult Leader, Boy Scouts of America, Sam Houston Area Council (1986-Present);

Eagle Scout Award—1974; Order of the Arrow—Brotherhood Member 1973;

Asst. Cubmaster (1998-2003)

and Religious Awards Chair—Pack 505 (1998–2010)

Troop Committee Chair—Troop 505 (2001—2006)

Council Advancement Committee—Sam Houston Area Council (2011–present)

Heroism Awards Screening Committee—Sam Houston Area Council (2011-present)

Vice-Chair of Program—Golden Arrow District, Sam Houston Area Council (2002-2007)

Silver Beaver Award (2005), St. George Award (2006), District Award of Merit (2004)

Personal

Active Member—St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

Married to Susan T. Halbach (retired Assistant General Counsel at Kinder Morgan);

Two sons, ages 32 and 30 (both Eagle Scouts); two grandchildren.