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## THE DEFENDERS

Top **business-defense** lawyers in the D-FW Metroplex

The Dallas Business Journal presents an elite crew of 15 attorneys called The Defenders. The selections were made solely by the editorial department, after interviewing lawyers, judges and general counsels across town. They considered reputation, recent successes and other professional qualifications.

### attorney vignettes



#### Eric Gambrell

*Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP*

In late September 1835, as tensions between Mexico and Texian rebels were mounting, the Mexican military sent six soldiers to retrieve a cannon from Texian colonists at Gonzalez.

The Texians let the Mexican soldiers know they were keeping the cannon — and kept the Mexican soldiers, too.

Mexico responded with its army. On Oct. 2, 1835, the armed and garrisoned Texians pointed to the cannon 200 yards behind their battle line and mockingly yelled, “There it is — come and take it.” The first shot of the Texas Revolution rang out at the Battle of Gonzalez.

#### Battle cry

I keep a replica of the Gonzalez flag — bearing the “Come and Take It” motto — on my office wall.

For businesses finding themselves in Texas courts in this increasingly hostile legal environment, having a Texas trial lawyer who wakes up every morning with that come-and-take-it attitude can be extremely valuable.

Smart businesspeople constantly look for leverage to sweeten the deal.

When embroiled in a legal battle, they need extremely creative and aggressive lawyers who will do a whole lot more than go through the motions of sending out rote discovery, dusting off deposition outlines, and cutting and pasting pre-used legal briefs.

Ferretting out the particular and unique pressures and sensitivities of the other side — whether directly related to the claims at hand or not — and applying that collateral leverage can be extremely useful in obtaining the desired end-game.

#### Expertise counts

A law school professor once told me that in most cases the quality of the lawyers won’t change the outcome.

My experience is exactly the opposite: Many of my most gratifying victories have come from taking on “salvage operations” from fired lawyers — pulling the case out of the ditch.

The best legal relationships are those that last far beyond just one fight.

Businesses should have a lawyer who invests the time to learn the clients’ business and culture.

A lawyer who merely reacts to problems isn’t all that useful.

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