

Justice for All:

Stuart Smith, L'86, seeks justice for his clients no matter how great or small

With a philosophy background and a passion for arguing, **Stuart Smith, L'86**, has built a career seeking justice for his clients, while at the same time bringing environmental law into the spotlight.

Stuart's firm, Smith Stag, L.L.C., which he started with **Michael Stag, B'90, G'94, L'94**, is a plaintiff-oriented, environmental, and toxic tort law firm based in New Orleans, La. Stuart and Michael pioneered the field of Technologically Enhanced Radioactive Material (TERM) oilfield waste litigation. TERM is sometimes also referred to as NORM or Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials, or TENORM. TERM and NORM are by-products of oil and gas exploration and production and are radioactive, toxic, and very harmful to human health.

In 1992, Stuart was the first attorney to take an oil company to trial for damages caused from NORM/TERM. The Street Case concerned a pipe yard located in Mississippi which was contaminated with radiation. Chevron vigorously defended the case, during six months of trial, although the case ultimately settled. This was the longest jury trial in Mississippi history. "My career has been focused on suing companies that have poisoned people," Stuart explains.

Since its establishment, Smith Stag has successfully settled or tried dozens of property damage and personal injury cases. The most recent landmark case came in June 2001, when a jury after a six-week trial, returned a verdict of \$1.056 billion dollars against Exxon and in favor of the firm's client. The verdict was listed by *Lawyers Weekly, USA* as the second largest verdict in the United States for 2001. The case continues on appeal.

In addition to the successful prosecution of NORM cases, the firm has also represented thousands of clients injured by toxic chemicals or defective products over the years. It has represented individuals hurt on commercial vessels, cruise ships, and off-shore accidents.

And it is the firm's philosophy, shaped in a fashion by Loyola, that guides it. "Our firm continues its steadfast commitment to seek and find justice for our clients no matter how great or small," says Stuart. "To me, that is what's important."



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