

Thomas H. Belknap Jr. | Partner
Maritime

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Tom Belknap is a member of our Maritime Emergency Response Team (“MERT”) and is co-chair of Blank Rome’s Maritime Industry Team.

Tom Belknap concentrates his practice on international commercial and insurance litigation and arbitration, with particular emphasis on the maritime industry. He also focuses on offshore construction, casualty, and insurance issues. Tom has been involved in a wide variety of domestic and international maritime, commercial, and insurance matters, including:

- marine casualty and collision cases and vessel limitation of liability actions
- maritime bankruptcy matters, advising debtors, secured and unsecured creditors, and unsecured creditors’ committees
- marine insurance coverage disputes, including protection and indemnity, general commercial liability, marine liability, hull and machinery, cargo, and war-risk insurance coverage issues
- international and domestic commercial contract disputes, including arbitrations under AAA, ICC, SMA, and *ad hoc* arbitration terms
- charterparty disputes, including arbitrations under SMA, MAA, and *ad hoc* arbitration terms
- COGSA and multi-modal cargo damage claims
- offshore pipeline installation and construction projects and related insurance issues
- maritime commercial and “treasure” salvage and general average disputes
- maritime attachment (Rule B) and vessel arrest (Rule C) actions
- recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitration awards and judgments

Tom is a co-author of *Time Charters* (7th ed. 2014), and he co-authors the annual

update to *Benedict on Admiralty, Vol. 3A: The Law of Salvage*. He is also the editor of *Mainbrace*, Blank Rome's quarterly maritime newsletter.

Tom has been recognized by *Chambers USA* every year since 2009 as a leading shipping litigation attorney. *Chambers* has stated, "Thomas Belknap is praised for his 'thoughtful and thorough approach.' He has expertise across a range of matters including contracts and charter party disputes, casualty litigation and insurance coverage." *Chambers* further noted that he is "fantastic when it comes to the details of a claim, where you have to go through a complaint, take it to pieces and put it back together again," and he is "always prepared, articulate, knowledgeable and practical in his approach to running cases." He is "a rising force—he is hard-working, with a good understanding of the law, particularly cargo matters." *Chambers* particularly highlighted his "really good connections in the Asian shipping arena."

Outside The Firm

Tom is an avid sailor, racing one design boats in Connecticut throughout the year, and also enjoys playing guitar in his band, Small Craft Warning.

Select Engagements

- A tanker owner, in connection with collision with U.S. Navy destroyer off Singapore in August 2017.
- A vessel charterer, in defense of \$39 million wrongful cancellation claim in arbitration and related fraud and RICO litigation against charterer's corporate affiliates and directors.
- A natural gas utility, in defending two separate claims for damage to major electric transmission cables crossing the Long Island Sound during a marine construction project, and related insurance coverage litigation as an "additional assured" under the contractor's policies.
- A foreign jack-up barge operator, in negotiations to provide installation services for a U.S. East Coast offshore wind farm installation project.
- A large U.S.-based marine bunker supplier, in connection with a New York litigation arising out of O.W. Bunker bankruptcy.
- The unsecured creditors committee, in respect of maritime issues relating to a U.S. Chapter 11 bankruptcy action.
- Numerous debtors, in maritime issues relating to a U.S. Chapter 15 action seeking recognition of foreign bankruptcy proceedings.
- A foreign offshore ice breaking company, on corporate organization and limitation of liability issues.
- A cargo vessel owner, in a collision with a U.S. Navy nuclear submarine.
- A war-risk insurer, in a coverage dispute with a member concerning the alleged bombing of a vessel in Sri Lanka.
- Sellers and buyers of coal and other bulk commodities, in an arbitration of disputes under sales contracts (ICC and AAA arbitration).

- A commodities trading company, in defense of claims for “poaching” a trading team from a competitor.
- Numerous Rule B and Rule C matters, both in obtaining and opposing attachments and arrests.
- Numerous matters seeking recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitration awards and judgments.

Admissions

- Connecticut
- New York
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit

Memberships

- Association Internationale des Jeunes Avocats
- Connecticut Maritime Association
- International Bar Association
- Maritime Law Association of the United States
- New York City Bar Association

Education

- Tufts University, BA
- Emory University School of Law, JD, with distinction

Recognitions

- 2019–2020, Admiralty and Maritime Law in New York, listed in *Best Lawyers in America*®
- 2009–2019, Transportation: Shipping/Maritime: Litigation Law, listed in *Chambers USA*
- 2018–2019, listed in *Legal 500*
- 2018, listed in Euromoney’s *Shipping* and *Best of the Best USA Expert Guides*
- 2013–2019, New York Metro “Super Lawyer” in Transportation & Maritime, listed in *Super Lawyers*
- 2015–2018, listed in *Who’s Who Legal – Shipping*
- Listed in the *Guide to the World’s Leading Shipping and Maritime Lawyers*

Professional Activities

Tom is a member of the International Bar Association, the United States Maritime Law Association, and the Connecticut Maritime Association.