

William R. Bennett III | Partner
Maritime

1271 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
+1.212.885.5152
wbennett@blankrome.com



CO-CHAIR, MARITIME & INTERNATIONAL TRADE PRACTICE GROUP

Bill Bennett is a member of our Maritime Emergency Response Team (“MERT”).

Bill’s clients are predominantly in the global shipping, trade, and energy markets. He has spent his career providing legal assistance on a broad range of international matters. Bill handles contentious and non-contentious matters for a large global client base. He has arbitrated and litigated many significant marine and shore-based disputes, including:

- Complex shipping and international trade disputes
- Large casualties resulting in wrongful death and personal injury
- Collisions, allisions, groundings, and sinkings
- Fire damage
- Insurance coverage disputes

Bill has also served as arbitrator and mediator for marine personal injury and contract disputes.

Bill is a graduate of SUNY Maritime College, sailed as a licensed officer, and holds a degree in Naval Architecture. In connection with his education at SUNY Maritime College, he obtained his Unlimited Third Mate’s license from the United States Coast Guard (“USCG”). He worked aboard various vessels in the capacity of Third Mate, Second Mate (limited tonnage), and Master (limited tonnage), including oil tankers, ocean-going tugs, dredges, and yachts.

Chambers USA notes that a client describes Bill as “very personable, doesn’t deal in legalese, provides succinct and clear advice and provides it quickly.”

Bill is a frequent presenter and has spoken on topics such as:

- “Ethical Issues Arising from Media Involvement in Marine Casualties,” Southeastern Admiralty Law Institute’s (“SEALI”) 2019 Summer Seminar
- “The Staten Island and SeaStreak Ferry Casualties: Pointers on How to Deal with the Press, National Transportation Safety Board, and United States Coast Guard,” for the New York City Bar Association
- “Protecting Maritime Liens in U.S. Bankruptcy Cases,” at the 8th International Conference of Maritime Law
- “Arrest and Foreclosure of Vessels in the United States (incl. Bankruptcy),” at Marine Money 2013

Outside The Firm

Bill enjoys running and has completed three marathons.

Select Engagements

- Represented the interest of the Master of the *El Faro* during USCG Marine Board of Investigation hearings, as well as in litigation.
- Represented the builder of a bridge for a claim in excess of \$100 million resulting from delays caused when a three-tug barge flotilla allided with bridge construction equipment.
- Represented a large commodity trader seeking to recover in excess of \$30 million for losses resulting from fraud.
- Represented a fast ferry operator following an allision that resulted in more than 100 claims of personal injury.
- Obtained a multimillion verdict in the Eastern District of Virginia for a Swiss coal trader against alter ego entities; successfully collected the judgment by selling at auction a capesize bulker owned and operated by one of the alter ego companies.
- Obtained a verdict for a tug operator in the Northern District of Ohio for custodia legis costs exceeding \$350,000.
- Obtained a settlement for a seafood importer in excess of one million dollars against a defendant warehouse for damage to frozen shrimp and avoiding package limitation.
- Represented the master of a commuter passenger ferry following an accident resulting in multiple fatalities and injuries, taking part in successful plea negotiations without incarceration and negotiations with USCG to maintain his license.
- Represented one of the largest Japanese shipowners in Rule B and Rule C proceedings and its subsequent bankruptcy filing; successfully obtaining a release of its vessel and assets.
- Obtained two defense verdicts for two separate vessel owners in claims for

passenger personal injury.

- Represented a coal trader in obtaining a recovery for breach of a forward freight agreement contract against vessel operators by filing a Rule B proceeding against affiliated companies under the theory of alter ego.

Admissions

- New Jersey
- Supreme Court of the United States
- United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Court - New Jersey
- New York
- U.S. District Court - District of Connecticut
- U.S. District Court - Eastern District of New York
- U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

Education

- State University of New York at Maritime College, BE
- St. John's University School of Law, JD

Recognitions

- AV Preeminent®, listed in Martindale-Hubbell®
- 2018–2020, Transportation: Shipping/Maritime: Litigation Law, listed in *Chambers USA*
- 2019, listed in *Legal 500*
- 2013–2019, New York Metro “Super Lawyer” in Transportation & Maritime, listed in *Super Lawyers*