

Phillip R. Maples

Partner

Overview

Phil has more than 20 years of experience assisting individuals with estate, wealth, and business succession planning, and helping businesses with corporate and real estate matters.

As an estate planner, Phil knows that transferring wealth effectively requires the preservation of family relationship. When advising clients and their families, he devotes significant time to communicating with members of each generation. He strives to develop practical plans that carry out his clients' wishes and minimize taxes, while also providing the flexibility needed to address unforeseen circumstances.

Phil has developed a number of areas of expertise where he and Michael Best team differentiate themselves. Among these include: significant experience in domicile planning associated with his clients who split time among various tax jurisdictions; addressing the unique family succession interests in family vacation properties, and managing their shared ownership and transfer successfully; and issues facing agricultural clients, whose ownership of farming operations and land often represents a complex combination of business issues, family heritage, succession and transfer challenges, and regulatory complexity. Understanding the unique way of life of those in agriculture requires an appreciation of their traditional, dynamic, and continuing importance to Wisconsin.

Phil also counsels business clients in the manufacturing, retail, and service industries. A former in-house counsel, he has a deep understanding of manufacturing companies, enabling him to offer pragmatic advice, especially during a sale or acquisition, or when addressing business problems that are outside the norm.

Bridging the gap between business representation and wealth transfer planning lies business succession planning. Phil has a wealth of experience with the challenges faced by business owners in addressing the movement of their company to another generation.

Prior to joining Michael Best, Phil worked concurrently as general counsel for a manufacturer and retained a limited law practice in the areas of business, trusts and



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Industries

Agribusiness

Food & Beverage

Practices

Corporate

Wealth Planning

estates, elder law, and real estate. He also spent 13 years at a full-service business law firm, serving as managing shareholder of the firm's Manitowoc office.

He has frequently published and presented on topics relating to estate planning, real estate and business succession. He has also served as a guest lecturer at the University of Wisconsin Law School.

Experience

Significant matters include:

- Acted as outside general counsel for a number of manufacturing companies, and retailers successfully addressing the larger issues faced by the companies, and managing the specific legal needs and delivery of legal services in the many specialty areas of law including environmental, labor, intellectual property, zoning, and mergers and acquisitions.
- Handled the probate of a sizable estate where the deceased left no will and no close heirs. The process included the determinations of unknown heirs numbering in the hundreds with differing degrees of kinship to the deceased. It also required lengthy administration, effective mass communications, significant research and efficient use of staffing and research resources to effectively administer the estate.
- Assisted in the successful sale of a distribution company to a distributor in a different territory. The transaction required the assignment of numerous agreements, the development of complex non-compete provisions, and the handling of various employment and labor issues. Phil assisted the seller in locating a target buyer, handled initial negotiations with the buyer, and provided counsel through to post-closing requirements.
- Working with a retired executive to effectively manage his estate. Planning has included the creation of irrevocable insurance trusts, a qualified personal residence trust, marital deduction planning trusts, and general revocable trusts. It also demanded the successful handling of multi-state issues and challenges to trust funding.
- Acted as long-standing counsel to a commercial real estate developer working in complex acquisition and development, regulatory matters, governmental affairs, corporate organization and structuring and associated tax planning matters. In conjunction with this developed master leasing documents and procedures.

Honors & Recognitions

- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Trusts and Estates, 2018-present
- *The Midwest's Best Lawyers*®, Trusts and Estates, 2021

Professional Activities

- Member, Manitowoc County Bar Association

Education

- University of Wisconsin Law School, Juris Doctor (J.D.), 1992

- University of Wisconsin-Madison, Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), 1988; with distinction

Admissions

- Wisconsin
- United States District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- Supreme Court Wisconsin

Community Involvement

Phil has been involved with many community organizations, including the following former roles:

- Board Member, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Manitowoc County
- Executive Board Member, Boy Scouts of America Bay Lakes Council
- Board Member, Holiday Motel Management, LLC
- Board Member, Manitowoc Symphony Orchestra
- Board Member, University of Wisconsin Manitowoc Foundation

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