

## Robert D. Brower

MEMBER

Grand Rapids

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Bob Brower is a Member of the firm and has been practicing law since 1972. His practice is focused on representing a wide range of closely held business owners and executives, their families, fiduciaries, and other individuals in matters involving business and estate planning, probate and trust administration, and contested estate matters.

### **Contested Trust, Estate and Fiduciary Matters**

Mr. Brower has extensive experience in representing individual and corporate personal representatives, trustees, and other fiduciaries, and charities and individuals seeking to remove fiduciaries in contested will, trust, and estate matters. He has represented clients in these types of cases in courts throughout Michigan.

Many of the cases for which Mr. Brower is retained involve complex family disputes or situations where caregivers or others have exercised undue influence or absconded with estate assets. As an example, he represented adopted siblings in a multi-million dollar estate dispute with their adopting parents' biological children that extended over four different states and jurisdictions. In other matters, Mr. Brower has been

### **Practice Areas**

- [Business and Corporate](#)
- [Entrepreneurial](#)
- [Probate](#)
- [Corporate Taxation](#)
- [Personal Taxation](#)
- [Property Taxation](#)
- [Nonprofit and Tax Exempt Organizations](#)
- [Estate Planning](#)
- [Guardianships and Conservatorships](#)
- [Private Client](#)
- [Wills and Trusts Disputes](#)

### **Education**

- University of Wisconsin Law School
- J.D., University of Michigan Law School, 1972
- B.A., Albion College, 1969

### **Bar Admissions**

- Michigan, 1972

retained to represent charities, family members, and fiduciaries in situations involving the exercise of undue influence where the challenge has been to return removed assets back to an estate or trust. Additionally, Mr. Brower has represented beneficiaries in a number of cases where a trustee or other fiduciary has acted outside of their prescribed role, including acts of self dealing or charging excessive fees, and has sought to remove such trustees/fiduciaries in trial and appellate court. Individual and corporate fiduciaries have retained Mr. Brower to defend against such claims in court or negotiations. Further, Mr. Brower has played a lead role in numerous actions seeking to construe or interpret testamentary documents. Finally, Mr. Brower has served as an expert witness in numerous cases concerning fiduciary conduct and estate administration matters.

### **Succession/Transition Planning**



Mr. Brower has significant experience counseling owners and family members of closely held companies in matters relating to transitioning business assets for wealth preservation and estate planning. This counsel includes developing succession plans that minimize tax impacts and transition wealth to lower generation family members or others taking over the business. His work has involved many types of business entities, including manufacturers, service providers, and automobile dealerships and distributorships. In one particularly complicated matter, Mr. Brower assisted in the negotiation of a multi-million dollar sale of an automobile distributorship, with multiple owners, back to the manufacturer. The transaction involved a number of complex planning and taxation issues.

### **Estate Planning**

Mr. Brower has an extensive estate planning practice that involves developing estate plans, setting up trusts, counseling clients on estate and gift taxation and charitable giving, and handling probate and trust administration matters.

### **Professional Affiliations, Activities and Honors**

Mr. Brower currently serves on The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel's Fiduciary Litigation Committee. He has been active with the State Bar of Michigan Probate and Estate Planning Section and has held several other positions over the years including as the Ex Officio Chair. He served as a director of Meritas, an international law firm alliance. Further, he serves on the boards of several closely held businesses.

Mr. Brower is a member of the American Bar



Association, State Bar of Michigan, Grand Rapids Bar Association, and the West Michigan Planned Giving Association. Mr. Brower has also held board level positions for the Western Michigan Estate Planning Council. Additionally, Mr. Brower is a former Managing Member of the law firm having served from 1992 -2000.

Mr. Brower is a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel as well as the Michigan State Bar Foundation. He is listed in “The Best Lawyers in America®” for trusts and estates, litigation – trusts and estates and tax law and has been named as *Best Lawyers* 2013 Grand Rapids Trusts and Estates Lawyer of the Year. Mr. Brower is named a Michigan “Super Lawyer” recognized for estates and trust litigation, the Top 50 Michigan Consumer Super Lawyer list and is on the Michigan Top 100 list. In 2013, Mr. Brower was recognized by *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* as one of 30 “Leaders in the Law” for Michigan.

### **Articles and Presentations**

Mr. Brower is a frequent speaker on legal and tax aspects of estate planning and probate administration topics for both lawyer and business related audiences. He has conducted estate planning programming for the Institute of Continuing Legal Education and has chaired and lectured at the annual probate and trust seminars sponsored by the State Bar of Michigan Probate and Estate Planning Section, in addition to the Section’s annual update on “Estate Planning, Probate and Trust State of the Law.” In addition, Mr. Brower has authored articles for the Michigan Probate and Estate Planning Journal on various planning and taxation topics.



## **Education**

Mr. Brower received his law degree from the University of Michigan in 1972 and his undergraduate degree in 1969 from Albion College. He is admitted to practice in all Michigan state and appellate courts.

