



Ruben A. Smith

Partner

rsmith@fbtgibbons.com | 714.852.6812

1 MacArthur Place
Suite 200
Santa Ana, CA 92707

620 Newport Center Drive
Suite 1400
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Industries

Manufacturing
Consumable Goods
Energy
Oil, Gas & Minerals
Utilities

Practice Areas

Real Estate
Corporate Law
International Services
Latin America Desk
Outside General Counsel
Services

Bar Memberships

California

Languages

English
Spanish

Ruben A. Smith is Partner-in-Charge of FBT Gibbons' Newport Beach and Orange County offices, where he advises corporate clients, private companies, and public entities—including school districts, water agencies, and redevelopment authorities—on complex legal and business challenges. His work spans redevelopment, transportation, affordable housing, water and wastewater systems, commercial disputes, and public-private partnerships.

For nearly 20 years, Ruben served as outside counsel to a developer that built two master-planned communities in South Orange County. He also guided one of California's largest school districts through a critical high school project, helping secure \$180 million in funding through legislative changes and settlement negotiations when federal law changes threatened the project.

Ruben is also a trusted advisor to multiple Southern California water districts, providing legal strategy on litigation, annexations, and water management. His practice extends internationally, covering corporate, financial, and real estate transactions. Earlier in his career, Ruben worked in the White House Office of Hispanic Affairs, contributing to federal policy initiatives.

As office Partner-in-Charge, he leads a diverse team of attorneys committed to advancing client objectives with efficiency and foresight.

Other Info About Ruben

Experience

Represented two global oil and gas companies in transactions exceeding \$4 billion, including the sale of multiple refineries and thousands of service stations across California and Washington

Advised Orange County community college districts on governance, property acquisitions, and campus development

Counseled major Hispanic business and civic organizations on governance restructuring, board management, and compliance

Education

Yale Law School, J.D., 1984

University of Southern California, M.P.A., 1982

University of Southern California, B.S., Intergovernmental Management, 1980

Recognition

Selected for inclusion in *Southern California Super Lawyers*®, 2022–2025

The Best Lawyers in America®, Real Estate Law, 2022–2027

Law Firm Leadership Award, Hispanic National Bar Foundation, 2024

Legacy Award, USC Latino Alumni Association, 2017

Professional Affiliations

Genesis Bank, Board of Directors

Latino Food Industry Association, Chair

Orange County Bar Association, Member

Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Advisory Board Member; former President

Rancho Santiago Community College District, General Counsel

State Bar of California, Member

Assistant City Attorney, former

California Housing Finance Agency, former Board Member

Cerritos College Board of Trustees, former General Counsel

City National Bank Latin Advisory Board, former Member

Hispanic Bar Association of Orange County, former President

Latino Coalition, former Board Member

Merrill Lynch Smith Barney Advisory Board, former Member

OC Fair & Event Center (32nd District Agricultural Association),
former Board Member

Orange County Business Council, former Board Member

SoCal Minority Business Development Council, former Board
Member

U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, former General Counsel

Civic Activities

Hispanic Education Endowment Fund, Founder

St. Joseph Hospital Board of Trustees, Member

University of California, Irvine, Foundation Board of Directors,
Trustee

Automobile Club of Southern California, former Board Member

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, former Board Member

James Irvine Foundation Leadership Awards Committee, former
Board Member

Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, former Board
Member

Tiger Woods Learning Center, former Board Member

USC Latino Alumni Association Corporate Advisory Council, former
Chair

Firm Committees

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Committee, Co-Chair

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