



Mechanical Engineering
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

Clifford (Mike) Naeve

Distinguished Mechanical Engineer, 2014

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1970

Partner

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

After earning his BS in mechanical engineering in 1970, Mike Naeve, a native of Haltom City, Texas, decided to pursue his interest in public policy by accepting a position in the first class of the LBJ School of Public Affairs. For the next 14 years, Mike had a series of jobs that involved him in state and federal public policy matters, including working for two Texas governors (Preston Smith and Dolph Briscoe), serving as staff director of the U.S. Senate Transportation Subcommittee and as legislative director for U.S. Senator Lloyd Bentsen.

While working in Washington, Mike attended night law school classes at George Washington University, graduating with highest distinction. Mike joined the New York-based law firm, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, working in their recently-opened Washington office.

Shortly after joining Skadden Arps, Mike was called back to public service by President Ronald Reagan, who appointed Mike to be a commissioner of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. While at FERC, Mike focused on eliminating the layers of federal regulation of the natural gas industry that had been the cause of natural gas shortages and price spikes. Mike also helped pioneer the creation of competitive wholesale markets for electricity. These innovations paved the way for more abundant and lower-cost supplies of natural gas and electricity.

In 1988, Mike attended the Democratic Convention with Senator Bentsen, who had been selected by

Michael Dukakis to be his running mate in the 1988 presidential election. Immediately following the convention, Mike assembled and managed the team that helped prepare Senator Bentsen for his nationally televised debate with the Republican vice presidential candidate, Senator Dan Quayle.

Shortly after resuming his legal career at Skadden Arps, Mike was chosen to head the firm's global energy practice, and later also became the head of the firm's DC office. In addition, Mike was selected to serve on the firm's management committee. Skadden today has approximately 1,700 lawyers in 22 offices worldwide.

For the past 18 years, Mike consistently has been identified by Chambers and Partners (the leading global authority on law firms and lawyers) as the highest-rated U.S. energy lawyer. In 2006, Mike was awarded the Chamber's Award of Excellence as the leading lawyer in his field. Mike frequently has been designated as one of the 500 leading U.S. lawyers in the annual Lawdragon 500 publication, including his designation in the 2014 issue.

Mike has testified before Congress on numerous occasions, has served on the Energy Advisory Board to the U.S. secretary of energy, and has served on the board of directors of the Ontario Independent Electric System Operator. In 2014, the LBJ School Alumni Association awarded Mike its Distinguished Public Service Award.