GRAYROBINSON



Phillip A. Buhler

Of Counsel

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Focus

- Admiralty and Maritime
- Transportation and Logistics
- International
- Environmental and Sustainability Law
- Administrative and Regulatory

Navigating complex transactions and litigation with global perspective and precision. Four decades of experience in the maritime industry. Board-certified by The Florida Bar in Admiralty and Maritime Law and International Law.

Phillip Buhler brings more than three decades of sophisticated legal experience to firm clients. His work spans maritime law, intermodal transportation, international commercial litigation, and regulatory matters affecting businesses operating across borders. He advises and represents clients in transportation, shipping, international trade, environmental compliance, and government contracting in both federal and state courts, as well as before a wide range of administrative bodies.

Phillip's work has taken him around the globe, representing a diverse mix of U.S. and foreign clients across the maritime industry and commercial sectors. He is active in thought leadership and policy through national and international legal organizations and has lectured abroad, including at the Universities of Hamburg and Cologne, on maritime law, intermodal transportation, and U.S. civil procedure. His commitment to public service is reflected in his leadership of several nonprofit and civic organizations and his ongoing academic research in maritime regulatory enforcement.

Notable Work

- Led the defense of a roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) carrier after an onboard vehicle's electrical fire caused vessel damage and cargo losses; prepared for recovery against the vehicle manufacturer in German arbitration and coordinated parallel U.S. and foreign regulatory inquiries.
- Defended a U.S. Military Sealift Command vessel following an allision with a major highway bridge, addressing civil claims, casualty investigations, and prolonged closure/repair impacts.
- Defended against significant environmental damage claims after a tug-and-barge grounding on a coral reef within a U.S. national park, engaging federal and state trustees.
- Litigated claims over damage and loss to pharmaceutical cargo moved in intermodal transport between the U.S. and France, navigating competing liability regimes.
- Managed parallel federal actions in two states arising from a tug-and-barge allision with a Gulf of Mexico oil rig, involving the rig's loss and major damage to oilfield-equipment cargo.

- Orchestrated multi-forum proceedings in a complex yacht-sale dispute, with simultaneous actions in the Tokyo Commercial Court, Florida circuit court, and London arbitration.
- Drafted and negotiated global transportation and logistics contracts for a Fortune 500 manufacturer covering ocean, air, and inland carriage.

Recognition

- *Best Lawyers in America*, 2010-2027
    - Admiralty and Maritime Law
        - Lawyer of the Year, 2022
- *Martindale-Hubbell*, AV® Preeminent Rating
- Florida *Super Lawyers*, 2006-2025
    - Transportation and Maritime

Insights

- "Risk, Responsibility and Who Actually Carries It," Panelist, Arctic Shipping Summit, November 19, 2026
- "Polar Shipping," 2026 Comité Maritime International (CMI) Rio Colloquium, May 12-15, 2026
- "Regulation and Liability – Preparing for the Next Wave of Policy Shifts," 19th Arctic Shipping Summit, November 19, 2025
- "The Rights and Obligations of Coastal States to Provide and Maintain Navigational Aids in the Arctic Ocean," Co-author, Comité Maritime International Polar Committee, Polar Shipping International Working Group Special Subcommittee on Navigational Aids, Comité Maritime International Conference, Tokyo, May 2025
- "Emerging Prospects for Governance of Shipping in the International Waters of the High Arctic," 18th Arctic Shipping Summit, Active Communications International (ACI), October 2024
- "New Technologies and New Environmental Goals – the Advent of a New Maritime Regulatory Paradigm?" Tulane Admiralty Law Institute, March 2024
- "Treaties and Related Documents," Editor, *Benedict on Admiralty: Vols. 6-6B and 6F*, 2021-2023
- "Goal-Based Standards, Meta-regulation and Tripartism in Arctic Shipping: What Prospects in Canadian Waters?" in Shipping in Inuit Nunangat, Brill, 2023
- "Prospects for the Next Generation of Regulation and Governance in the Arctic," 17th Arctic Shipping Summit, Active Communications International (ACI), November 2023
- "Passenger Vessel Operations in Polar Regions – Overview of Current Status of Regulation," Maritime Law Association Meeting, October 2022
- "Overview of Regulatory Regimes and Current Issues for Commercial Vessel Operations in Polar Regions," *The MLA Report, Doc. 839*, Fall 2020
- "U.S. Polar Policy and Implementation and Interpretation of the Polar Code: Background, Practice and Prognosis," *Journal of International Maritime Law, Vol. 24, Issue 6*, November-December 2018
- "The Application of International Maritime Law in the United States: An Overview with Emphasis on Jurisdictional and Procedural Considerations," *U.S. Law for Civil Lawyers: A Practitioner's Guide*, De Gruyter, 2017

- "Promotion of the Concept of the Rule of Law Through the Implementation of the Central America Free Trade Agreement," *International Law Quarterly Vol. XXIII, No.1*, Inter-American Bar Association Law Review, Vol. 5, 2007
- "Promotion of the Concept of the Rule of Law Through the Implementation of the Central America Free Trade Agreement," Inter-American Bar Association Conference, San Salvador, El Salvador, June 2006
- "The United States as Foreign Asset Haven: Is Prejudgment Security Available in the United States for Non-United States Litigation?" Inter-American Bar Association Conference, Bolivia, June 2002
- "New Struggle With an Old Menace: Toward a Revised Definition of Maritime Piracy," *Currents International Trade Law Journal*, 1999
- "Forum Selection and Choice of Law Clauses in International Contracts: A United States Viewpoint with Particular Reference to Maritime Contracts and Bills of Lading," *Inter-American Law Review, Vol. 27, No. 1*, Fall 1995
- "The Oder-Neisse Line: A Reappraisal Under International Law" *Columbia University Press/East European Monographs*, 1990

Media

- "GrayRobinson expands admiralty and maritime practice," *Jax Daily Record*, October 14, 2025
- "GrayRobinson promotes 13 attorneys and advisors in Florida, including shareholders and associates," *Brevard Business News Vo. 43 No. 38*, September 22, 2025
- "GrayRobinson law firm builds fleet with new maritime and transportation law hires," *Florida Politics*, September 16, 2025
- "GrayRobinson Adds 7-Maritime Atty Team From Closed Firm," *Law360*, September 15, 2025
- "GrayRobinson Lands 7-Attorney Maritime Law Team in Jacksonville," *Law.com*, September 15, 2025
- "Jacksonville Marks Three Years Since Ukraine Invasion," *Here Jacksonville*, February 25, 2025
- "Jacksonville attorney delivering ambulances to war-torn Ukraine," *Jacksonville Daily Record*, June 20, 2024
- "American Military Historical Society brings military history and veterans' experiences to life," *American Military News*, April 13, 2023

Affiliations

- Comité Maritime International
  - Titulary Member
  - Polar Shipping International Working Group, Chair
- Federal Bar Association, Jacksonville Chapter
  - President, 2003-2004
  - Board of Directors, 1998-2003
- The Florida Bar
  - International Law Section, Executive Council
- Hispanic Bar Association of Northeast Florida
  - President, 2006-2007

    - Founding Board Member, 2004-2006
- Inter-American Bar Association
    - Council Member, 2002-2021
    - International Law Committee, President, 2006-2010
    - Treasurer and Executive Council member, 2008-2010
- Maritime Law Association of the United States
    - Proctor Member
    - Nominations Committee
    - Board of Directors, 2016-2019
    - International Organizations, Conventions and Standards Committee, Chair, 2012-2016
    - International Law of the Sea Committee, Secretary, 2000-2004
- Middle District of Florida
    - Bench and Bar Standing Committee, Chief Judge Appointment, 2004-2005
- Southeastern Admiralty Law Institute
    - Port Director, 1995-1997, 1998-2000
- Universität Hamburg, Dozent/Lecturer, 2018-2019
    - Maritime Law
- Universität zu Koeln, Cologne, Germany, Dozent/Lecturer, 2017-2018; 2021-present
    - Intermodal Transportation Law
    - U.S. Civil Procedure
- American Military Historical Society of Florida, Inc
    - Founding Board Member and Vice-Chair
- Associated Industries of Florida
    - Maritime Industries Council, Chair and Founding Member, 2006-2014
- Daniel Memorial
    - Board of Trustees, Chair
    - Board Member
- The International Propeller Club – Port of Jacksonville
    - President, 2002-2003
    - Board Member, 1998-2002
- Jacksonville Maritime Museum
    - Board of Trustees, Chair, 1996-2000
    - Board Member, 1993-1996
- Ukraine Focus
    - Board
        - Chairman
        - Founding Member

Credentials

- Ph.D. Candidate, Dalhousie University Schulich School of Law
- LL.M., Admiralty, Tulane University School of Law, 1988
- J.D., University of Miami School of Law, 1987
- B.A., The College of William and Mary, 1984

- Board-certified by The Florida Bar in Admiralty and Maritime Law
- Board-certified by The Florida Bar in International Law

Admissions

- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Louisiana
- U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia
- U.S. District Court for the Southern, Middle, and Northern Districts of Florida
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern and Middle Districts of Louisiana
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th and 11th Circuits
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit
- U.S. Court of Federal Claims
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of International Trade