

# New Orleans CITY BUSINESS

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COMPANY**

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER OF METRO NEW ORLEANS

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## Stephen Kreller

**CITY BUSINESS** 2012  
**LEADERSHIP**  
in  
**LAW**

**Position:** The Kreller Law Firm managing member

**Age:** 37

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree in marketing, University of South Alabama; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

Stephen Kreller is the lead attorney in Louisiana representing more than 1,000 commercial fishermen who are suing BP, Halliburton and other companies involved in the April 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion that led to the largest oil spill in U.S. history.

"We're seeking economic compensation for our clients for all of the risks BP is asking them to assume in exchange for a release," Kreller said, referring to biological and environmental harm, as well as damage to the seafood market extending far beyond Louisiana.

"There was a time before the oil spill people listed on the menu fresh Gulf seafood with pride," he said. "That's not happening now."

Kreller has teamed with Gerard Nolting, a Minnesota attorney who prevailed in winning more than \$5 billion for fishermen after the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska. The two are leading a group of 15 to 20 attorneys in the case involving 240 federally permitted fisherman, 20,000 acres of leases and more than 650 fishermen who participated in the BP response but were never paid, Kreller said.

The trial to determine damages is expected this summer.

Kreller entered private practice a few years after Hurricane Katrina, focusing on product liability, personal injury, insurance fraud and bad faith, among other areas. He is licensed in Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia and New York, and previously worked with Murphy, Rogers, Sloss and Gambel.

"I didn't want to become a partner at that firm and the only alternative was to open a private firm," Kreller said. "Having my own practice allows me the freedom to pick and choose cases."

After Katrina, Kreller said he enjoyed being able to help those affected by the storm and failed levees.

"I felt that a large number of insurance companies were taking advantage of people. My job was to hold them accountable," he said. "That translated to the BP oil spill. ... What interested me (with BP) was the ability to help people. Most of my clients were already devastated by Katrina. They were just getting back on their feet."

Kreller contributes to the community as an executive mentor at Loyola University, his alma mater. He works with a handful of incoming freshmen each month, teaching them networking skills to help them make connections throughout their careers.

"I kind of view my profession as a service to the community," Kreller said. •

— Diana Chandler

