

# NEVADA

## Local litigation firms

### Highly recommended

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck

Campbell & Williams

Holland & Hart

Jolley Urga Wirth Woodbury & Standish

Kemp Jones & Coulthard

Lionel Sawyer & Collins

McDonald Carano Wilson

Morris Peterson

Santoro Driggs Walch Kearney Holley & Thompson

### Recommended

Bailey Kennedy

Jones Vargas

Kummer Kaempfer Bonner Renshaw & Ferrario

Laxalt & Nomura

Lewis & Roca

Snell & Wilmer

## Local litigation stars

### Todd Bice

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck  
Commercial Litigation

### Donald Campbell

Campbell & Williams  
Personal Injury

### Cam Ferenbach

Lionel Sawyer & Collins  
Commercial Litigation

### David Frederick

Lionel Sawyer & Collins  
Appellate, Commercial Litigation, Insurance

### Andrew Gordon

McDonald Carano Wilson  
Business Litigation

### Von Heinz

Lewis & Roca  
Commercial Litigation, Insurance, Securities

### Paul Hejmanowski

Lionel Sawyer & Collins  
Complex Commercial Litigation

### Rodney Jean

Lionel Sawyer & Collins  
Bankruptcy Litigation, Commercial Litigation

### Mark Jones

Kemp Jones & Coulthard  
Commercial Litigation, Construction Litigation

### Randall Jones

Kemp Jones & Coulthard  
Commercial Litigation, Construction Litigation

### Will Kemp

Kemp Jones & Coulthard  
Complex Commercial Litigation

### Dennis Kennedy

Bailey Kennedy  
Antitrust, Complex Commercial Litigation

### Steve Lane

Holland & Hart  
Commercial Litigation

### Kirk Lenhard

Jones Vargas  
Commercial Litigation

### Samuel Lionel

Lionel Sawyer & Collins  
Commercial Litigation

### Steve Morris

Morris Peterson  
Antitrust, Complex Commercial Litigation, Insurance,  
Products Liability

### Don Nomura

Laxalt & Nomura  
Business Litigation, Products Liability, Professional  
Malpractice

### George Ogilvie

McDonald Carano Wilson  
Complex Commercial Litigation, Construction  
Litigation

### Steven Peek

Holland & Hart  
Commercial Litigation

### James Pisanelli

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck  
Commercial Litigation

### Patrick Reilly

Holland & Hart  
Commercial Litigation

### Nicholas Santoro

Santoro Driggs Walch Kearney Holley & Thompson  
Civil Litigation, Professional Liability

### Jeffrey Silvestri

McDonald Carano Wilson  
Appellate, Commercial Litigation

### Todd Touton

Lionel Sawyer & Collins  
Commercial Litigation, Construction Litigation

### William Urga

Jolley Urga Wirth Woodbury & Standish  
Business Litigation

### James Whitmire

Santoro Driggs Walch Kearney Holley & Thompson  
Complex Commercial Litigation, Insurance

### J. Colby Williams

Campbell & Williams  
Appellate

## Future stars

Jennifer Craft  
Lewis & Roca

John Delikanakis  
Snell & Wilmer

Todd Kennedy  
Lionel Sawyer & Collins

Jacquelyn Leleu  
McDonald Carano Wilson

Angela Turricano Otto  
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck

Chris Rose  
Jolley Urga Wirth Woodbury & Standish



# Nevada

**The major story in Nevada, especially in the area around Las Vegas, is the collapse of the real estate market. Nevada may have been the first state to feel the impact of the mortgage crisis, and there is fear that the commercial real estate market has yet to hit bottom. Mega-developers have nine-digit master plan communities that have been abandoned as these developers have failed to meet their debt obligations; three or four of these projects are in bankruptcy. There is a plethora of litigation relating to loan defaults, and other banking issues; lawyers are seeing a rush of *pro se* suits brought in order to restructure mortgages.**

## Highly recommended firms

### Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck handles general business litigation. Name partner Frank Schreck began his practice handling regulatory work for the gaming industry, and grew the practice from there. **Todd Bice** concentrates on a range of commercial litigation, which extends to disputes regarding election law and constitutional issues. Bice is also a feared advocate for the gaming community. His clients include several of the state's largest gaming companies, as well as the Nevada Resort Association, which serves the gaming community's lobbying and political needs. He has represented gaming companies in all manner of disputes, including corporate governance contests and commercial litigation.

**James Pisanelli** focuses primarily on commercial litigation, with a specialty in media and First Amendment law, and represents many of the state's largest newspapers and the local affiliate of a national broadcaster on claims of defamation and related issues. He also has a vibrant construction litigation practice, typically working for owners in disputes between hotel owners and general contractors. In the last year, he also represented a Hong Kong businessman in a claim against the Venetian hotel in a case that had implications for gaming laws that reverberated around the globe. After a six week trial, the jury rendered a \$60 million verdict in favour of the plaintiff, agreeing with his *quantum meruit* contract theory. The legal arguments required edification of complex gaming licensing systems in Macau, where the defendant was applying for a license.

### Campbell & Williams

The two-attorney firm of Campbell & Williams continues to impress the local legal community due to the quality of work that the shop churns out. "The conventional wisdom is that **Don Campbell** is the best commercial litigator in the state" according to a litigator familiar with the Nevada market. Campbell has been practicing in the

state for thirty years, and concentrates his practice on representing plaintiffs in personal injury and commercial tort cases. The firm's personal injury work includes wrongful death, products liability, burn cases, and truck and bus collisions. The firm also has a separate practice devoted to nightclub and security liability, which is a major source of litigation for a large segment of Las Vegas' entertainment industry. The firm also handles more general commercial litigation. Past clients include Donald Trump, CNN, Toshiba, and *The Wall Street Journal*. The firm has also handled work for some of the state's leading political figures, and has experience supervising state and federal investigations regarding a wide range of white-collar offenses.

### Holland & Hart

Holland & Hart is a powerful and respected firm around the Rocky Mountain region. The firm is headquartered in Colorado, but has three offices in Nevada, including Carson City, Las Vegas, and Reno locations. The firm's network of offices allows it to handle matters that are filed in multiple jurisdictions, and coordinate its efforts between offices in order to optimize results for the client. In a case that went to trial in February 2009, the firm represented plaintiffs in \$100 million securities fraud case, in which plaintiffs were suing various entities in the U.S., Isle of Man, Liechtenstein, and St. Vincent for violations of the state and federal securities fraud statutes and RICO violations. The case was pending in multiple federal districts before it was consolidated in the District of South Carolina in 2007. After a four week trial, the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiffs in the amount of \$17 million.

**Steve Lane** serves as of counsel in the firm's Las Vegas office. He primarily works with clients in the real estate and development sphere, including shopping centers, title companies, developers, contractors, and investors. **Patrick Reilly** practices commercial and real estate litigation, and has an extensive appellate practice. **Stephen Peek** practices out of the firm's Las Vegas and Reno offices, and represents clients in some of the state's most active industries, including

hotels, casinos, financial institutions, and gaming manufacturers.

### Jolley Urga Wirth Woodbury & Standish

Peers remark on the high quality of estate work that comes out of Jolley Urga Wirth Woodbury & Standish. The firm has two offices in southern Nevada, in Las Vegas and Boulder City. According to peers, "**William Urga** enjoys a very good reputation in the state's business litigation community." He has extensive experience practicing gaming law, and served as a Gaming Commissioner at the Nevada Gaming Commission for six years, beginning in 1991. As one local litigator notes, "as goes the gaming industry, so goes the state." Attorneys with Urga's level of experience in gaming issues will continue to be in high demand as this industry struggles.

### Kemp Jones & Coulthard

The attorneys at Kemp Jones & Coulthard practice litigation exclusively. Since its inception in 1993, the firm has been at the forefront of some of the most active areas in Nevada litigation. The firm has handled an extensive amount of construction defect work, including class actions. The firm is renowned for its work on behalf of plaintiffs in the mass tort arena, and handles a large volume of multidistrict products liability litigation, including cases against the tobacco, prescription drug, and medical device industries.

**Randall Jones** is known for his work in construction defect and personal injury litigation. Partner **Mark Jones** primarily handles real estate litigation, construction litigation and title insurance defense work. **Will Kemp** handles complex commercial litigation, including multidistrict litigation work.

### Lionel Sawyer & Collins

Lionel Sawyer & Collins is the largest firm in Nevada, with offices in Reno, Las Vegas, and Carson City. The firm serves clients across all major industries in Nevada, including banking and financial institutions, construction, education, entertainment, hospitals, gaming, mining, and utilities.

One lawyer in the industry notes that "**Todd Touton** is a talented construction lawyer." His construction work includes lien claims, and his practice expands to include commercial fraud, breach of contract, and judgement collections. The rise in disputes between lenders and holders of mechanic's liens will only continue, given the precipitous drop in the value of commercial property around the state. There is also currently a major battle in the courts over the state of Nevada law with respect to whether or not partial or complete subordination should apply when a lender enters into agreements that subordinate his first lien to later liens. Attorneys like Touton, with extensive knowledge of construction law, will continue

to be in demand in this field. “Samuel Lionel is an institution,” remarks one competitor. Lionel concentrates on all manner of trial and appellate work.

#### **McDonald Carano Wilson**

McDonald Carano Wilson has offices in both Reno and Las Vegas, and employs 50 lawyers between its two locations. **Jeffrey Silvestri** handles commercial and appellate litigation. **Andrew Gordon** practices primarily in litigation and construction disputes. He also handles real estate litigation, including title disputes and landlord/tenant issues. **George Ogilvie** is the managing partner at the firm’s Las Vegas office, and focuses his practice on complex commercial and construction litigation. He appears before state and federal courts in Nevada, as well as municipal boards and government agencies in Southern Nevada, and is primarily involved in public works projects, bonding and lien issues. His work in commercial litigation extends to lending, collateralization, and insurance coverage issues.

#### **Morris Peterson**

The attorneys at Morris Peterson handle commercial litigation exclusively. The firm has five partners and five associates between its offices in Las Vegas and Reno. **Steve Morris** has a healthy litigation practice that spans all areas of complex commercial and tort litigation, including insurance, construction, products liability, and public utility cases. Morris has represented pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, hospitals, and insurers. Specific clients have included the Mirage, Southwest Gas Co., Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority, Merck, and Johnson & Johnson. Fellow name partner William Peterson concentrates his practice on energy law, utilities, and complex torts.

#### **Santoro Driggs Walch Kearney Holley & Thompson**

Santoro Driggs Walch Kearney Holley & Thompson is committed to serving clients in all aspects of commercial litigation, including contract and tort disputes. The firm is a relatively new entrant into the Las Vegas legal market. The firm was established in 1996, and in that time it has used a stable of young but accomplished litigators to propel it into a prominent position in the local litigation arena. The scope of the firm’s litigation services is also vast, including environmental, intellectual property, and real estate litigation.

“**Nicholas Santoro** is very well respected in the Nevada bar,” claims a competitor. Santoro practices exclusively in federal and state court litigation matters. His work includes contract, tort, real estate, and defense of professional liability claims. **James Whitmire** handles employment, insurance, and tort related claims.

### **Recommended firms**

#### **Bailey Kennedy**

Bailey Kennedy excels at commercial litigation, and also handles a fair amount of administrative health care law, including cases of physician’s privilege, and regulatory and licensing issues. The firm’s two name partners, **Dennis Kennedy** and John Bailey, excel at commercial litigation. Dennis Kennedy is currently working on a class action lawsuit involving gaming devices like video poker, in which class representatives are claiming to have been misled and deceived as to the level of randomness that is approximated by the computer chips in these gambling devices. The defense has argued

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against class certification, arguing that people who participate in the same activity, here gambling, for different reasons and with different perceptions and knowledge, cannot qualify as a class of deceived persons. The case involves a narrow but extremely important legal issue regarding the appropriateness of certifying a class of people based on perceptions and beliefs.

#### **Jones Vargas**

Each lawyer at Jones Vargas focuses in discrete practice areas across a broad spectrum of commercial and business litigation. The firm has offices in Las Vegas and Reno, and has extensive experience in both prosecution and defense of medical malpractice cases and as well as the defense of products liability matters. **Kirk Lenhard** handles commercial and real estate litigation. Clients include Clark County, McCarran Airport, and Shuffle Master. Firmwide clients include Citibank, Philip Morris, Wells Fargo, Harrah’s Entertainment, and Newmint Mining Corporation.

#### **Kummer Kaempfer Bonner Renshaw & Ferrario**

Kummer Kaempfer Bonner Renshaw & Ferrario has had to shed some of its workforce over the last year, like so many other law firms around the country. Still, the firm retains a reputable litigation department in each of its three offices in Carson City, Reno, and Las Vegas. The firm litigates a wide range of issues for its clients. Partners at the firm have successfully settled a water rights dispute during a judicial review proceeding, and successfully represented a

publicly traded company in the consumer loan business in litigation involving federal securities laws and Nevada corporate law.

#### **Laxalt & Nomura**

Laxalt & Nomura traditionally focused exclusively on civil litigation, but has since expanded to counsel clients on transactional matters. The firm’s main focus continues to be on providing litigation services to clients that include insurance companies, automobile dealers, design and real estate professionals, developers, retailers, and hospitals.

**Don Nomura** has represented clients in products liability and professional malpractice issues in over seventy trials.

Nomura, along with fellow partner Bruce Laxalt, are former Nevada Assistant District Attorneys. The firm’s clients include Abbott Laboratories, AIG, Courtesy Oldsmobile, Rite-Aid, Sierra Chemical, and Hilton.

#### **Lewis & Roca**

Lewis & Roca has 200 attorneys in offices across the southwest U.S. The firm established itself in Las Vegas in 1999, and has grown to include 50 lawyers in this location. The firm also has an office in Reno. The firm’s most prominent practice areas in the state include its appellate practice, labor and employment, and intellectual property work. The firm also handles issues related to the gaming industry.

“**Von Heinz** is a respected name in the Nevada litigation scene,” notes a competitor. Heinz concentrates in commercial litigation, with an emphasis in securities and insurance litigation. In the securities field, he represents an international brokerage house in a stock trading dispute before FINRA and Nevada state courts.

#### **Snell & Wilmer**

Arizona-based Snell & Wilmer is one of the most prestigious firms practicing across the western U.S. The firm’s Las Vegas office was established in 2001, and its partners handle some of the most pertinent legal issues in the state, including construction, gaming, and public utility matters. In February 2009, the firm opened a new outpost in downtown Los Angeles.