



Sean Connelly, Sean Connelly Law LLC

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**EDUCATION:**

- Fairfield University; A.B. (1980)
- The Catholic University Law School, Columbus School of Law; J.D. (1983)

**BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS:**

District of Columbia (1983); State of Colorado (2002); United States Supreme Court (1988); United States District Court for the District of Colorado (2002); United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio (2005); U.S. Court of Appeals, First Circuit (1990); U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit (1986); U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit (1988); U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit (1987); U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit (2011); U.S. Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit (2004); U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit (1995); U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit (1990); U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit (1984)

**LEGAL EXPERIENCE:**

- Founder, Connelly Law LLC (2017 - Present)
- Partner in Private Practice (2011-2017)
- Judge, Colorado Court of Appeals (2008 - 2011)
- Partner in Private Practice (2002-2008)

- Federal Prosecutor, U.S. Department of Justice (1990 - 2002)
- Attorney, Private Practice (1984 - 1990)
- Law Clerk, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit (1983 - 1984)

**RECOGNITION:**

- Barrister's Best People's Choice "Best Appellate Law Lawyer," Law Week Colorado (2020-2021)
- Top 10 Colorado Super Lawyers, Super Lawyers Magazine (2017 - 2018, 2020-2021)
- "Bet-the-Company" Litigation, *The Best Lawyers in America*® (2018 – 2022)
- White-Collar Criminal Defense, *The Best Lawyers in America*® (2012 – 2022)
- Appellate Practice, *The Best Lawyers in America*® (2007 – 2022)
- Appellate, Benchmark Litigation - United States (2019)
- General Commercial, Benchmark Litigation - United States (2019)
- White-Collar Crime, Benchmark Litigation - United States (2019)
- "Case of the Year," Colorado Trial Lawyers Association (2019)
- "Team of the Year," Colorado Lawyers Committee (2019)
- Top 100 Colorado Super Lawyers, Super Lawyers Magazine (2014 – present)
- Colorado Super Lawyer, Super Lawyers Magazine (2006 - 2008, 2012 – present)
- Top Lawyers in Appellate Practice, 5280 Magazine (2015 – present)
- "Lawyer of the Year" (Denver Appellate Practice), *The Best Lawyers in America* (2013, 2019)

- Best Litigation: General Commercial (Band 4), Chambers USA (2013 – present)
- Top Litigator (One of Six), Colorado Law Week (2017)
- “Individual/Task Force of the Year,” Colorado Lawyers Committee (2015)
- “State Litigation Star,” Benchmark Litigation (2015)
- “Tenth Circuit Litigation Star,” Benchmark Litigation (2013)
- “Award of Special Recognition,” Colorado Lawyers Committee (2013)
- “Legal Leader in Appellate Law,” The American Lawyer and Corporate Counsel Magazine (2013)
- “Individual of the Year,” Colorado Lawyers Committee (2007)
- “Community Contribution Award,” Colorado Lawyers Committee (2007)
- “Attorney General’s Award for Exceptional Service,” U.S. Department of Justice (1998)
- American Jurisprudence Awards, Catholic University Law School (1983)
- Faculty Award, Catholic University Law School (1983)

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:**

- Member, Colorado Bar Association
- Chair, National Conference of Bar Examiners, Criminal Law Drafting Committee
- Member, Faculty of Federal Advocates
- Adjunct Faculty Member, University of Colorado Law School
- Adjunct Faculty Member, University of Denver Sturm School of Law

- Member, Colorado Lawyers Committee, Mental Health Task Force
- Member, Colorado Lawyers Committee, Homeless ID Task Force

## PUBLICATIONS:

- Subject, "[Twenty-Four Years Later, Turning Heartbreak Into Victory](#)," *Law Week Colorado* (2019)
- Subject, "[Lawyers Argue Tony Cercey Sex Assault Conviction Before Wyoming Supreme Court](#)," *Casper Star Tribune* (2019)
- Subject, "[Wyoming Supreme Court Hears AG, Cercey Attorneys About Sex Assault Conviction](#)," *K2Radio* (2019)
- Interview, "[A Protector of the Court](#)," *Law Week Colorado* (2019)
- Interview, "[Justice Kennedy Retires; Confirmation Frenzy Ensues](#)," *Law Week Colorado* (2018)
- Interview, "[State Supreme Court to Decide Fate of JLWOP Law](#)," *Law Week Colorado* (2018)
- Author, "[To Keep Juveniles Behind Bars for Life, Brauchler Abandons Rule of Law](#)," *The Denver Post* (2018)
- Interview, "[Law Firm defends Fraud Claims Before Supreme Court](#)," *Law Week Colorado* (2018)
- Interview, "[Sweat Lodge Decision Shows Gorsuch's Attention to Religious Liberty](#)," *The Washington Times* (2017)
- Interview, "[Sean Connelly, Experienced on Both Sides of the Bench](#)," *Law Week Colorado* (2017)
- Interview, "[Firm Tells 3rd Circ. it Doesn't Owe Avandia MDL Fee](#)," *Law360* (2016)
- Interview, "[When Good Partnerships Go Bad: Like Marriages, Business Relationships Sometimes Wind Up in Court](#)," *Denver Business Journal* (2016)

- Interview, "[5th Circ. Slams Stubborn Judge, Revives \\$19M FCA Suit Again](#)," *Law360* (2015)
- Interview, "[Amendment 23 School Funding Lawsuit Debated Before Colorado Supreme Court](#)," *The Denver Post* (2015)
- Interview, "[Bobby Maxwell, Fed Whistleblower, Earns \\$7.5 Million in Oil Company Battle](#)," *Westword* (2012)
- Interview, "[Federal Employees Can Bring Qui Tam Suit, 5th Circ. Rules](#)," *Law360* (2012)
- Interview, "[Lawyer in McVeigh Case Says Norway's Horror Similar to Oklahoma City's](#)," *The Denver Post* (2011)
- Interview, "[Judge Sean Connelly to Return to Reilly Pozner and Will Open Firm's New D.C. Office](#)," *Business Wire* (2010)
- Subject, "[Prison Sentence Overturned by Colorado Court of Appeals](#)," *Post Independent* (2009)
- Subject, "[Gentlemen's Agreement' at Issue in Tribune Case](#)," *Deseret News* (2007)
- Interview, "[Sean Connelly Put McVeigh Away](#)," *Super Lawyers Magazine* (2006)
- Interview, "[Hoover Placed in Second-Worst Inmate Class](#)," *Denver Business Journal* (2004)
- Interview, "[Judge Refuses McVeigh's Bid for a Reprieve](#)," *The New York Times* (2001)
- Interview, "[Judge Won't Delay McVeigh Execution](#)," *Washington Post* (2001)

#### **PRESENTATIONS:**

- Panelist, "[Trial Practice from the Perspective of the Judiciary](#)," LawBank Trial Series, August 10, 2020 (Webcast)

#### **REPRESENTATIVE CASES:**

- *State v. Center for Excellence in Higher Education, P.3d* (Colo. App. 2021). Reversal of a multi-million dollar judgment in an Attorney General lawsuit against a proprietary college.
- *Schaden v. DIA Brewing Co., 478 P.3d 1264* (Colo. 2021). Reversal of an order dismissing an amended complaint alleging major bid-rigging at Denver International Airport (DIA).
- *Suydam v. LFI Fort Pierce, Inc., 490 P.3d 930* (Colo.App., 2020). Affirmance of record-setting \$56 million judgment in personal injury case.
- *Cercy v. State, 455 P.3d 678* (Wyo. 2019). Reversal of Wyoming conviction of previously-acquitted defendant, raising double jeopardy issues of first impression.
- *People v. Coleman, 417 P.3d 882* (Colo. App. 2019). Reversal, based on cumulative trial errors, of convictions for felony menacing Boulder police officers.
- *Rocky Mtn. Explor. v. Law Firm, 420 P.3d 223* (Colo. 2018). Affirmance of judgment dismissing non-client's large damages claim against leading law firm.
- *Bay v. Anadarko, 912 F.3d 1249* (10th Cir. 2018). Reversal of a judgment directing verdicts against homeowners challenging oil company drilling.
- *People v. Brooks* (Colorado Supreme Court No. 18SA90). Represented Curtis Brooks who was sentenced to life imprisonment as a juvenile before SB16-181 was passed, making the sentence unconstitutional. The case ended with gubernatorial clemency granted for Brooks.
- *Ghailani v. Sessions, 859 F.3d 1295* (10th Cir. 2017). Represented Muslim inmate at Colorado Supermax in successfully overturning dismissal of religious freedom complaint seeking group prayer rights.
- *AVS Residential Condo Ass'n v. Arrabelle at Vail, 382 P.3d 1275* (Colo. App. 2016). Represented homeowners association in successful appeal against Vail Resort in case raising important issues of first impression regarding rights under common interest ownership law.

- *United States v. Sorensen*, 801 F.3d 1217 (10th Cir. 2015). Writ of coram nobis issued. Reversal through coram nobis of tax fraud convictions previously affirmed by Tenth Circuit.
- *Leone v. Owsley*, 810 F.3d 1149 (10th Cir. 2015). Convinced Tenth Circuit to overturn summary judgment order and then took on lead responsibility in federal jury trial resulting in \$1.9 million verdict for client. Case reported on in feature story in Denver Business Journal.
- *U.S. ex rel. Little v. Shell Oil*, 602 Fed. Appx. 959 (5th Cir. 2015). Successfully represented False Claims Act plaintiffs in overturning summary judgment and ordering case reassigned to new trial judge. Case reported in Law 360.
- Provided pro bono representation to Plaintiff Andrew J. Yellowbear, Jr. in a successful appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals Tenth Circuit under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA). On January 23, 2014, the Tenth Circuit overturned a federal district court opinion that had allowed a Wyoming state prison to deny Mr. Yellowbear's right to participate in the Native American Sacred Sweat Lodge ceremonies. The Tenth Circuit's eloquent opinion sets an important precedent recognizing prison inmates' rights to exercise their religious beliefs.
- *Kaiser v. Bowlen*, 455 F.3d 1197 (10th Cir. 2006). Complete appellate victory, affirming favorable judgment and reversing adverse judgment, in ownership dispute over Denver Broncos' football franchise.