



Stephen Demik

Managing Attorney

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Overview

Life's Work

Ever since I was a young boy growing up in East Tennessee, I knew that I wanted to contribute to the community by helping those who were less fortunate. My mother was a trailblazer and actively involved in starting the local League of Women Voters branch, starting an office across the way from my elementary school. I have fond memories of doing my homework amid the buzz of activism and community involvement, and it had a profound impact on who I am and why I became a lawyer.

I volunteered in college and taught third grade in Anacostia, in Southeast Washington, D.C. after I graduated. It took a little time for me to realize that, coming from a long genealogy of attorneys, lawyering was in my blood. I realized that my talents as an advocate were the tools that I had to contribute to society and make a change for those of us facing injustice.

Once I graduated law school, I began my career as a lawyer in 2002, representing defendants on death row at San Quentin. While that was a humbling experience and helped me understand the criminal justice system, I knew deep down that I wanted to be, or rather I had to be, a trial attorney. That began a long road of training, trial lawyering, and learning from some of the best trial attorneys in the country. I am like a sponge when it comes to trial lawyering, constantly working to learn and improve with every case and every trial.

No matter what the courtroom, whether a federal court in Los Angeles or a tribal court in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, I pride myself in being a voice for the voiceless and doing everything I can to ensure that every person I represent is treated with respect, gets their rights honored, and gets their story heard in (and out of) court. I have represented people from Guantanamo detainees to Native American activists.

Focus Areas

Most of my early legal career, I practiced in the realm of criminal defense. However, I have trained civil attorneys since 2009 at the Trial Lawyers College and began doing more extensive civil work in 2018 when I opened my own firm. I believe that my criminal justice background serves me well in the civil arena, especially when it comes to civil rights and police misconduct cases.

I met Scott Hendler at the Trial Lawyers College and found out that, even though we practiced in different areas, we were both lawyers who shared similar values and work ethic. I have a tremendous amount of respect for Scott and the work that our firm does. Since joining the firm, like Scott, I have decided to focus my legal practice on life-changing injuries and wrongful death cases that resulted from misconduct or negligence.

Family-focused, Community-minded

While I live, eat, and breathe trials and trial work, I spend the remainder of my time with my two children. Before having children, I volunteered at Big Brothers/Big Sisters, with Amnesty International, and various other organizations in the communities where I've lived.

In 2005, I received the E. Stanley Conant Award for the "Unselfish Devotion to Protecting the Rights of the Indigent Accused." I am a graduate of the National Criminal Defense College, Trial Practice Institute. I have authored several published articles, including for the Trial Lawyer's College publication "The Warrior" and the South Dakota Trial Lawyers Association's "Barrister" magazine. I have also presented on several topics, from "Education Not Incarceration" to "Detention, the Constitution, and Off-Shore Dealings: Detainees and Federal Habeas Corpus." I

have served as a Tribal Court Judge for the Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribal courts, an Administrative Law judge for the same, as well as in tribal court for the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Court. I have taught as faculty at TLC since 2009, exclusively training lawyers who share my values and only represent people.

I am proficient in Spanish and French, and an avid traveler who seeks out new cultures and languages. I also enjoy hiking, film, art, and literature.

Education

University of California Hastings College of Law, Doctorate of Jurisprudence

Activities & Honors:

- Public Interest Law Scholar
- Immigrants' Rights Clinic VP

Tulane University (New Orleans, LA)

B.A. in English Literature with Minor in Portuguese

Professional Memberships & Honors

Bar Admissions:

- United States Courts of Appeal (Eight Circuit, Ninth Circuit)
- United States District Courts (Southern and Central Districts of California, District of South Dakota)
- Supreme Court of California
- Supreme Court of South Dakota

Experience:

- **Law Office of Stephen Demik**, Senior Trial Attorney (2018 - Present)
- **Office of the Federal Public Defender**, Assistant Federal Public Defender (2013 - 2017)
- **Office of the Federal Public Defender**, Deputy Federal Public Defender (2009 - 2013, 2017 - 2018)
- **Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc.**, Trial Attorney (2004 - 2008)
- **California Appellate Project**, Staff Attorney/Equal Justice Works Fellow (2002 - 2004)

Honors:

- **E. Stanley Conant Award Recipient**, For the Unselfish Devotion to Protecting the Rights of the Indigent Accused (2009)