

BRETT M. HENNE

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Swanson, Martin & Bell, LLP

Partner

Chicago, IL

November 2010 - Present

- General Counsel to the Board of Trustees for the Libertyville Fire Protection District; Provide strategic legal support and guidance, draft multi-million dollar budget and appropriations ordinance, draft tax levy ordinance, defend tax objection complaints, negotiate insurance contracts, ensure compliance with State and Federal laws and regulations, review and negotiate commercial contracts, annexation agreements, consolidation agreements, and intergovernmental agreements, ensure compliance with all freedom of information requests, and draft District policies and procedures.
- Tried numerous multi-million-dollar jury cases to verdict and attended alternate dispute resolution.
- Independently manage and develop case specific strategies for complex civil litigation involving product liability, complex commercial and business disputes, trademark infringement, contract disputes, employment, construction, medical malpractice, nursing home defense, professional negligence, premises liability, fire and explosion, insurance coverage, insurance defense and commercial property disputes.
- Experienced in all aspects of civil and criminal litigation: motion practice, discovery, depositions, trial preparation, mediation, arbitration, bench and jury trials, post-trial motions, sentencing and appellate practice. Conduct legal research regarding specific legal and regulatory issues.
- Provide risk mitigation strategies to clients regarding their products and goods; Provide legal guidance on employee, transactional, regulatory, policy, commercial and compliance matters.
- Manage associate attorneys, paralegals and staff, prepare litigation budgets, meet various management reporting requirements and manage outside vendors.
- OSHA certified in Public Sector Safety and Health Fundamentals in Construction and General Industry.
- Chair of the Fire & Explosion Practice Group and Vice Chair of the Safety Committee.
- Local Prosecutor for the Villages of Lindenhurst and Antioch, prosecute all misdemeanor traffic and ordinance violations issued by the Lindenhurst and Antioch Police Departments, enforce the building and property maintenance codes to ensure compliance, ensure compliance with all freedom of information requests to the police departments, provide legal training to all members of the police departments, and ensure compliance with all subpoena requests to the police departments.

Lake County State's Attorney's Office

Prosecutor/ Felony Trial Division

Waukegan, IL

June 2003 – November 2010

- Prosecuted criminal cases in every division: traffic, misdemeanor, juvenile, felony review, felony traffic, and felony trial division.
- Conducted criminal hearings, bench and jury trials. Successfully tried hundreds of bench trials and twenty-eight jury trials to verdict.
- Interviewed and prepared witnesses and victims of all ages for trial.
- Provided legal guidance to criminal investigations, issued grand jury subpoenas, presented criminal cases to the Grand Jury and approved arrest warrants.
- Researched and drafted search warrants, arrest warrants, legal memoranda, motions in limine, jury instructions, and post trial motions.
- Instructor for the National Advocacy Center.
- Instructor for in house training programs.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

College of Lake County

Grayslake, IL

Adjunct Instructor

January 2001 – Present

- Teach Fire Administration and the Law and Fire Investigations, concentrating on legal considerations for Fire & Emergency Services with a focus on civil versus criminal law, Tort Claims Act & Immunity, contract law and employment issues, labor law & collective bargaining, employee rights and discrimination, public accountability laws, sexual harassment and employment discrimination and Family Medical Leave. Prepare course content and coordinate course objectives with the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Grayslake Fire Protection District

Grayslake, IL

Fire Marshal/ Firefighter III / Paramedic/ Fire Investigator
Paid on Call Firefighter/Paramedic

March 1989 – April 2017

- Managed fire prevention bureau, fire investigators team and map department.
- Provided fire prevention safety education presentations to civic and community organizations and all public and private schools within the fire protection district boundaries.
- Prepared annual fire prevention bureau budget.
- Ensured compliance with federal, state, county, and local building codes and regulations.
- Reviewed commercial and residential construction plans for compliance.
- Incorporated fire pre-plans into department's policies and procedures.
- Responded to fire and medical emergency calls as a licensed Paramedic and Fire Officer II.
- Elected as Trustee to the pension fund.

EDUCATION

Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Chicago, IL

Juris Doctor

January 2002

Loyola Intrascchool Moot Court Competition, Second Place Best Brief

Northeastern Illinois University

Chicago, IL

Bachelor of Science in Marketing with a focus in
Strategic and Logistics Management

May 1994

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

Admitted to the practice of law in Illinois and Wisconsin.

Admitted to the Supreme Court of the United States.

Admitted to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Admitted to the United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Admitted as a Member of The Society of Trial Lawyers.

Member of the Lake County Bar Association; Illinois and Wisconsin State Bar Association; Illinois Fire Chief's Association; Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts; International Association of Arson Investigators, and the Defense Research Institute.

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

Crain's Chicago Business: Notable Litigators & Trial Attorneys March 2023

2025 Best Lawyers