



## Stephen H. Leonhardt Biography

Stephen H. Leonhardt concentrates his practice on water law, related governmental and environmental issues, and litigation. Mr. Leonhardt counsels clients on the establishment, protection, and modification of water rights throughout Colorado. He represents clients in judicial and administrative proceedings and transactions concerning rights to use both surface water and groundwater.

Mr. Leonhardt is admitted to practice in the State of Colorado, the United States District Court for the District of Colorado, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. Before joining Burns, Figa & Will, P.C., Mr. Leonhardt practiced law with Fairfield and Woods, P.C., from 1985 to 2002.

Mr. Leonhardt is an active member of the Denver Bar Association, the Colorado Bar Association, and the American Bar Association. He is also a member of the Christian Legal Society (recently having served on the national Board of Directors), and the Colorado Water Congress. Mr. Leonhardt served on the Ethics Committee of the Colorado Bar Association from 1988 to 1996. He is a frequent lecturer on legal ethics, ballot initiatives, and issues related to water law.

Mr. Leonhardt was born in Santa Monica, California, and grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He enjoys playing piano, hiking, fishing, travel, history and baseball.

## Curriculum Vitae

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2002 to Present

Burns, Figa & Will, P.C., Greenwood Village, Colorado.

Private practice of water, environmental and governmental law and related litigation and appeals.

1985 – 2002

Fairfield and Woods, P.C., Denver, Colorado.

Private practice of water, environmental and governmental law, litigation and appeals.

Steve represents the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District and various other public agencies and private parties on a variety of water and governmental matters. He has been involved in hundreds of Water Court cases. He is experienced in drafting and negotiating complex water rights transactions and settlement agreements. His environmental experience includes state and federal water quality and Endangered Species Act matters.

### EDUCATION:

**Legal:** Stanford University Law School, Stanford, California  
J.D., 1985

**Undergraduate:** Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri  
B.S.C.E. with honors, 1982

### ADMISSION TO PRACTICE:

Colorado 1985

## **MEMBERSHIPS:**

**Member:** American Bar Association; Colorado Bar Association (Water Law Section, Ethics Committee 1988-1996); Colorado Water Congress (State Affairs Committee); Christian Legal Society (Board of Directors 2000-2003)

**LEGAL RATINGS:** Martindale-Hubbell – AV (highest rating)  
Best Lawyers in America, Water Law 2010-2011

## **PUBLICATIONS AND SPEECHES:**

Colorado Water Congress – Workshop on Legal Ethics in Water and Environmental Law – “Professional Conduct: Rules, Values and Obligations” (annually from December 2002 – December 2010)

CLE International – Colorado Water Law Conference - “Surface Water Irrigation Improvements Rules in Water Division 2: Implications for Colorado Water Users and Administration”  
(May 2010)

Colorado Bar Association CLE – Water Rights and Resources of the Arkansas River Basin – “Water Importations to the Arkansas River Basin” (March 2010)

CLE International – Water Marketing: Transfer of Rights from All Perspectives – “Ethics: Considerations for Lawyers’ Roles” (December 2009)

CLE International – Colorado Water Law Conference - “Speculation and Changes of Water Rights” (with Scott A. Clark, Esq.) (January 2006)

Colorado Bar Association CLE – Trial and Appellate Advocacy for Water Lawyers – “Ethics of Advocacy and Advising the Client in Water Litigation and Appeals” (October 2005)

Colorado Bar Association CLE – Expert Witnesses in Water Cases – “Ethics for Lawyers Working with Expert Witnesses in Water Cases” (October 2008)

Lorman Educational Services – Water Rights Sales and Transfers – “Protecting Interests of Other Parties in Water Transfers” (March 2005 and March 2007)

Colorado Water Congress, Colorado Water Law Seminar – “Legal Ethics in Water Law Practice” (September 2001, 2002 and 2004)

Colorado Water Congress, Workshop on Initiatives – “Title Board Action, Supreme Court Review and the Single Subject Requirement” (November 2002 and October 2000)

CLE International, Colorado Wetlands Seminar – “Ethics Considerations: Counseling and Representing Clients on Wetlands Issues” (November 2001 and September 2000)

Stephen H. Leonhardt & Brent A. Waite, *The Public Trust Doctrine: What It Is, Where It Came From, and Why Colorado Doesn't (and Shouldn't) Have One*, COLO. WATER RESOURCES RES. INST., INFO. SERIES NO. 78, 190, 205-07 (1995).

Continuing Legal Education in Colorado – Advanced Real Estate Seminar – “Current Ethical Issues in Real Estate Transactions” (November 1997)

*Colorado Water Rights* (Colorado Water Congress) – “Court Rejects Public Trust Initiative” (Summer 1995)

Colorado Water Congress, 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention – Debate with Prof. David Getches on “*The Public Trust Doctrine – What It is – Is It Headed For Colorado?*” (January 1995)

“Abandonment of Water Rights: Is ‘Use It or Lose It’ the Law?” – *The Colorado Lawyer* (November 1989)

#### **REPORTED CASES:**

*High Plains A & M v. Southeastern Colo. Water Conservancy Dist.*, 120 P.3d 710 (Colo. 2005)

*In re Title, Ballot Title and Submission Clause for #17 (2007-08)*, 177 P.3d 871 (Colo. 2007)

*MacRavey v. Hamilton (Public Rights in Waters II)*, 898 P.2d 1076 (Colo. 1995)

*Frontier Ditch Co. v. Southeastern Colo. Water Conservancy Dist.*, 761 P.2d 1117 (Colo. 1988)

*Southeastern Colo. Water Conservancy Dist. v. Twin Lakes Associates*, 770 P.2d 1231 (Colo. 1989)