



2025 Lawyers of the Year: Steve Gurr

MICHAEL RUMMEL | LAW WEEK COLORADO

Steve Gurr was born in Rangely, Colorado, just a few dozen miles away from the Utah border and nearly 100 miles from Grand Junction. The grandson of two World War II veterans, he'd later move to Thornton and graduate from Thornton High School in 1983.

He stayed in Colorado for his bachelor's degree, attending Colorado College on a Boettcher Foundation Scholarship. That degree was in economics, and it was in addition to the Division III football he played for four years, and the construction work he did while in high school and college.

While his experience was broad by the time he graduated college, there was only one thing Gurr wanted to be: a trial attorney.

"Now that I am a construction trial attorney I get to do my favorite things — build cool projects and resolve construction disputes in jury trials and arbitrations," Gurr told Law Week via email.

His experience as an attorney goes back to his licensing in 1990 following his graduation from the University of Colorado School of Law, where he was articles editor of the university's law review.

Marriage followed soon after his licensure. Gurr has been married to his wife, Amanda Gurr, for 33 years, and the couple has two sons together.

Now a shareholder at Polsinelli, Gurr brings over three decades of success in trials, appellate cases and deals to a wide range of practice areas. Jennifer Evans, Polsinelli's Denver office managing partner, told Law Week in her nomination of Gurr that his exceptional skill, integrity and commitment to justice set him apart from others in the field.

"His resilience, creativity and strategic thinking in the courtroom and board room continue to turn client challenges into project and courtroom triumphs," Evans said.

Amy Hansen, the chair of Polsinelli's real estate, construction and environmental practice also testified to Gurr's character and body of work.

"Professionalism is not just a behavior; it's the cornerstone of our practice and a vital component of our reputation. In interactions with clients, opposing counsel and each other, Steve always shows respect and integrity. He is a true professional and a good-natured, thoughtful attorney and friend," Hansen said.

Gurr said that his wide-ranging practice comes from the fortune of having terrific mentors and early experience in depositions and trials on a broad range of issues in the real estate and construction space.

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“At some point my clients began asking me to help them draft their development, design and construction contracts to help them mitigate risks and avoid litigation,” Gurr said. “So I spend much of my time helping put together factory, warehouse, infrastructure, residential and medical construction projects across the country, while at the same time my litigation teams and I are preparing for and conducting one or two trials or arbitrations a year.”

Successes and Precedents to Gurr’s Name

In 2024, Gurr led a Polsinelli trial team in a case involving 13 miles of Colorado highway. Hundreds of millions of dollars were on the line in a trial over the design and construction of a lane expansion on C-470.

The jury trial took four weeks, and Evans told Law Week that Gurr and the Polsinelli team faced significant resistance from formidable opposing counsel. After the marathon trial, the jury unanimously awarded Gurr’s client \$5.25 million and rejected the defendant’s \$260 million in counterclaims.

“The wholesale exoneration of the dedicated engineers we were lucky enough to represent was true justice and everyone on our team was thrilled,” Gurr said.

Just a few weeks ago, Gurr told Law Week that his construction litigation trial team won another multi-week trial for the same client, this time a \$64 million jury verdict in Montana.

In addition to numerous significant verdicts under his belt, Gurr has also been part of two cases that have set precedent in Colorado. One began in 2016, when U-Haul engaged Gurr on an eminent domain case where the Colorado Department of Transportation was trying to condemn a U-Haul property to expand a highway.

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“After digging into the statutes and CDOT records, I discovered that the Colorado Transportation Commission had stopped complying with the state condemnation statute that required a formal resolution by the commission at a public meeting approving the acquisition of the particular properties to be taken,” Gurr said.

“The commission had simply passed a resolution stating that it did not need to pass any more resolutions approving their condemnations, depriving Colorado landowners of a public hearing and the right to look the commissioners in the eyes and protest the taking of their lands,” Gurr explained.

After hearing the arguments, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled in CDOT v. AMERCO and U-Haul that the practice was improper and ordered CDOT and the commission to comply with the statute.

In another original proceeding, Gurr was representing the officers and directors of a Salida-based company that had been sued in a shareholder derivative action for alleged breach of fiduciary duty and negligence in controlling the seepage of toxic chemicals into soils and groundwater.

In his defense of the officers and directors, he brought a motion to the trial court to appoint a special litigation committee, which the trial court denied.

But the state’s high court would ultimately pick up the case, and in its 2001 decision in Curtis v. Nevens, it directed the trial court to appoint the committee that was proposed by the board and to stay the case to allow it to pursue its investigation. That investigation then resulted in the case being dismissed.

“This case was important because it resolved the question of whether Colorado would adopt New York’s approach to judicial deference via the business judgment doctrine that respects core business judgments,” Gurr explained.

While these successes are all feathers on his cap, Gurr is still looking ahead at new cases, construction projects and jury trials.

A Dedication to the Community and Next Generation

Evans told Law Week that Gurr has served as a mentor with new lawyers and that he continuously seeks out opportunities to share development advice to help contribute to the growth of the next generation of legal professionals.

One of Gurr’s mentees is Carter McDonnell, who is a senior associate in the firm’s construction and litigation practice groups.

“Not only is Steve an incredible trial attorney, but he also genuinely cares about his clients and colleagues and is making a difference in our community,” McDonnell said in a submission to Law Week. “He would never give himself due credit for these things. This is part of what makes him such a great role model. He is approachable and humorous, he is professional and he supports new attorneys as they learn the craft and gain confidence.”

Hansen noted Gurr’s humility, even after he’s won major verdicts for clients and received awards from several prestigious organizations.

“He consistently attributes success to teamwork and is always willing to share credit with others,” Hansen said. “This selflessness not only enhances our department’s cohesion but also inspires others to adopt a similar spirit. Steve is a prime example of how humility can coexist with professional excellence.”

Gurr said that his mentoring successes included many talented lawyers who have done great things in courts across the country.

“Training talented trial lawyers requires opportunity and trust and it is the right thing to do for younger lawyers, the firm and the clients,” Gurr said.

Gurr’s efforts to build community in the legal profession extend beyond Polsinelli. Evans said that he’s been engaged and involved with the Colorado Judicial Institute, American Bar Association, Colorado Bar Association and previously the Denver County Court Judicial Nomination Commission. He also currently serves on the Association Advisory Panel for the American Bar Association Litigation and Construction sections.

The greater Denver area is also part of Gurr’s community work. Evans said he’s served for almost a decade on the board of the American Red Cross of Colorado, he’s a part of the Denver Elections Canvassing Board, a founding board member of the Denver Parks Trust and he’s a previous member of the Adams County School District 12-Five Star Schools Foundation.

“I started working with the Red Cross after Hurricane Katrina because it provides immediate help to those of us suffering through true crises. More recently I am very excited to support the Denver Parks Trust and its founder Frank Rowe, who together with his wife Anne Bye Rowe (former [Denver Public Schools] Board of Education Chair) epitomize public service,” Gurr said. “I also take great pride in my service over the past few years as a Canvassing Board Member for Denver Elections as I believe the integrity of the election system is paramount right now.”