

LAW WEEK

COLORADO

Colorado ‘Rising Stars’ Offer Insights for New Lawyers

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The [Super Lawyers](#) Rising Stars list recognizes attorneys starting their careers who've received high praise from peers. A Rising Star must go through the same selection process as a Super Lawyer but is only eligible if they are 40 years old or younger or have been in practice for 10 years or less. Thomson Reuters' Rising Star list is only open to 2.5% of a region's lawyers.

Law Week received more than 50 Super Lawyers Rising Stars announcements from local firms and caught up with some of them to hear more about the start of their careers.

Werge Law Group

Greg Corbin, a partner at local boutique firm **Werge Law Group**, was named a 2023 Rising Star for his business and corporate law practice, the firm announced. Corbin is a litigator and transactional attorney working with business clients and has been recognized on the Rising Star list since 2021.

Corbin told Law Week the recognition is a testament to his own dedication and the work of his colleagues for clients. He said in his early years of practice, he's struggled to balance the demands of being an effective advocate for clients while learning the ropes of managing a law practice. He founded Signal Law [which later merged forces](#) with another firm to become Werge Law Group.

"I was able to overcome these challenges by seeking guidance from experienced mentors, staying committed to continued professional development and being disciplined with my time," Corbin told Law Week in an email.

For attorneys who are launching their careers, Corbin recommends creating connections with mentors and colleagues early in your career and staying committed to your craft.

“Embrace learning opportunities, even if they at first feel like losses. Remember, building a successful legal career takes time, so be patient with yourself and stay focused on your long-term goals,” Corbin added.

Robinson Waters & O’Dorisio

Robinson Waters & O’Dorisio announced shareholder **Nicholas Labor** was recognized as a Rising Star for his work as a commercial litigator. Labor works in the Colorado firm’s litigation practice group where he’s worked on business, franchise, antitrust, trademark and real estate litigation.

This is the first year Labor has made Super Lawyers’ Rising Stars list and said the recognition demonstrates respect from the other side of the courtroom.

“It is rewarding to know that a litigation adversary can zealously advocate for their client while maintaining respect and admiration for opposing counsel, such that they nominate them as a Rising Star,” wrote Labor in an email to Law Week.

Labor added learning the ropes of commercial litigation hasn’t always been easy since the practice area is far-reaching and dense. Despite that challenge, Labor wrote “collaborating with other attorneys and focusing on quality over quantity helped me become confident as a litigator.”

For attorneys who are at the start of their careers, Labor recommends working with other attorneys who have high standards and will hold you to them.

Sheridan Ross

Multiple attorneys at Denver-based intellectual property firm **Sheridan Ross** made the Rising Star list this year, the firm announced. Shareholder **Kendria Pearson** and of counsel **Alex Ruge** were both named Rising Starts for their work in intellectual property.

Pearson graduated with a bachelor's and master's degree in engineering before she earned her J.D. in 2012 from the University of Colorado Law School. She works on a wide range of patent and IP matters including advising clients and representing them in disputes. She's been named to the Rising Star list since 2017.

In an email to Law Week, Pearson said the recognition means a lot since it comes from peers in her field.

She said she's faced numerous challenges in her career.

"Sometimes I worked harder or longer to show I was capable and competent, other times I reminded myself to not take things personally and other times I 'played the game,'" wrote Pearson. She said she remembers when someone reminded her that we tend to hope others will give us the benefit of the doubt, but don't always extend it to those around us. "Since then, I have tried to give people the benefit of the doubt in hopes that they will do the same for me," said Pearson.

For lawyers who are kicking off their careers, Pearson recommends fortifying relationships with other attorneys and taking your time with difficult clients or tricky matters.

"Think of the attorneys for whom you work as the 'client' and provide them with the best legal advice you can. Check your email before you send it, and sleep on it if the email involves any underlying emotion. Remember that some clients are great and others are not. You cannot control how your client acts, but you can control if they remain your client," Pearson advised.

BAM Family Law

Denver-based **BAM Family Law** announced three of its attorneys were named 2023 rising stars — shareholders **Kyle McFarlane** and **Steven Visioli** and associate **Allison Derschang**.

Both Visioli and Derschang told Law Week in an email the recognition is meaningful every year they receive it. Visioli has been named a Rising Star since 2020 and Derschang has made the list every year since 2019.

At BAM Family Law, Visioli works on a range of family law matters from high-asset and complex divorces to pet custody. He joined the Colorado Bar in 2016 and told Law Week in the beginning of his career he's faced "countless challenges" but has overcome them by keeping valued colleagues close. "Working hard and keeping a close-knit, intelligent, and effective team on staff have been invaluable in overcoming those challenges," wrote Visioli.

Visioli added for attorneys beginning their careers, gaining experience where you can is invaluable. "Doing more work than you can reasonably bill for will pay off in other ways down the road. Time spent practicing and perfecting your craft is never time wasted," he added.

Derschang joined BAM Family Law in 2021 after starting her career in employment law.

In an email, Derschang explained that figuring out what practice area she wanted to pursue was an early challenge in her career. "I loved the area of practice that I started in because I was passionate about worker's rights but family law feels like where I belong due to how fast paced the practice is," she wrote.

For attorneys who are just starting out, Derschang encourages them to ask questions or ask for help, even if it's intimidating: "It's daunting when you first start out and many attorneys are willing to give advice and support."

Sherman & Howard

Two **Sherman & Howard** Denver office attorneys also made the list, the firm announced. Associate **Kathryn DeVries** practices family law and has been named a Rising Star since 2020 and member **Beth Ann Lennon** practices employment law and was also recognized in 2022.

In an email to Law Week, Lennon wrote she's faced numerous challenges, including practicing during the pandemic, learning the ropes of employment law, working at home with two small children and connecting with colleagues virtually.

But she added the challenges have made her a dynamic attorney and helped her think on her feet.

"Employment law has been a wild ride these last few years and staying on this ride has not always been easy. However, on the other side I know, without a doubt, I can think on my feet and help my clients weather the storm, no matter how big or small. And I can do it whenever, wherever, and however the need arises," wrote Lennon.

For new attorneys, Lennon recommends pushing yourself to learn while also taking care of yourself outside your career. "Remember, the practice of law is just a piece of who you are – foster the whole you and you will be a better attorney for it."

Davis Graham & Stubbs

Regional firm **Davis Graham & Stubbs** announced five of its Colorado attorneys were named as rising stars.

DGS partner **Kyler Burgi** made the list for his work in bankruptcy and creditors' rights. Burgi works in bankruptcy, creditors' rights, complex commercial litigation and mergers and acquisitions at the firm. In an email to Law Week Colorado, Burgi said at the start of his career he's taken on more leadership roles with client matters, which is rewarding but not without challenge.

"It is undoubtedly rewarding and a privilege when clients turn to you, not someone else, for advice and to help solve the most challenging problems. But it's a different pressure when the buck stops with you," wrote Burgi. To meet that challenge, Burgi said he's leaned on mentors and encourages other lawyers who are starting out to do the same. "There's much learning by doing, sure. But the quickest and best way to learn is by finding people that are great at what they do and are willing to let you look over their shoulders."

Associate **Molly Kokesh** (a Law Week Colorado [2021 Up and Coming Lawyer](#)) was recognized as a Rising Star for her work in commercial litigation. At DGS, Kokesh works on litigation and appeals matters. Since she graduated law school in 2017, Kokesh said one of the biggest challenges she faced has been finding her footing in the practice of law when it comes to building relationships, finding mentors and establishing trust.

In an email to Law Week, Kokesh said the relationship-building challenges only grew during COVID-19 when most interactions had to be virtual. "But I committed to showing up as authentically as possible, virtually and later in real life, to all the events I would have engaged in absent the pandemic," she wrote. Trying her best to connect in remote settings has made remote and hybrid work settings easier, she added.

For attorneys who are launching their careers, Kokesh recommends putting effort into finding and building relationships with other attorneys. “Seek mentors in your desired practice area and be an active mentee. Colorado lawyers are remarkably willing to share their expertise if you make yourself available to listen.”

Sam Seiberling, a DGS partner, was also recognized for his work in executive compensation. This is his second year being named as a Rising Star. He said the recognition reflects the work he’s put in at the first leg of his career and recommends attorneys who are starting out, to find a firm where they can grow.

“Find a law firm or company that values you and your growth and will invest in you. Whatever success I have had in my career would not be possible without the support I received from others at Davis Graham,” wrote Seiberling in an email to Law Week.

Ryan Wilcox, an associate with a practice emphasis on commercial real estate transitions, was named a 2023 Rising Star. He’s made the list every year since 2020 and said recognition by other attorneys in Colorado’s tight-knit real estate bar means a lot.

For Wilcox, one of the largest challenges he’s worked through as a young professional has been building confidence in his work.

That first time a client is looking to you, as the expert, to help them resolve an issue, you truly feel the full weight of the profession,” he wrote in an email to Law Week. Wilcox added that close mentorship and putting in the hours have helped him build his practice and confidence. “It’s cliché, but there is no substitute for putting in the work. Reviewing statutes or case law, reading secondary materials, and enhancing your knowledge of the law, will build confidence faster than anything else.”

DGS partner **Jonathan Goldstein**, who works in the firm's real estate practice, was also named a Rising Star for his work with finance and acquisitions.

Law Week Colorado also received the following 2023 Rising Star announcements:

- **Ridley McGreevy Wincour** attorney **Shanelle Kindel**
- **Jones & Keller** associate **Blaine Bengtson** in the environmental law practice area
- **Higgins, Hopkins, McLain & Roswell** attorney **Morgan Simpson** in the construction law practice area
- **Ireland Stapleton Pryor & Pascoe** Denver attorney **James Silvestro** in the land use and zoning practice area
- **Ogborn Mihm** partner **James Fogg** in the business litigation practice area
- **Ogborn Mihm** partner **Amanda Pfeil Hood** in the personal injury plaintiff practice area
- **Ogborn Mihm** associate **Amy Rogers** in the personal injury plaintiff practice area
- **Ogborn Mihm** associate **Kylie Schmidt** in the personal injury plaintiff practice area
- **Ogborn Mihm** associate **Emily Stevens** in the employment and labor practice area
- **Levin Sitcoff Waneka** attorney **Robyn Levin** in the insurance coverage practice area
- **Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie** Denver associate **Abby Harder** in the civil litigation defense practice area
- **Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie** Denver associate **Elizabeth Michaels** in the business litigation practice area
- **Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie** Denver partner **Angela Vichick** in the business litigation practice area
- **Holland & Hart** Denver partner **Michael Dill** in the securities and corporate finance practice area
- **Holland & Hart** Denver partner **Christopher Jackson** in the appellate practice area
- **Holland & Hart** Denver associate **Stuart Knight** in the cannabis law practice area
- **Holland & Hart** Denver of counsel **Juan Obregon** in the employment litigation defense practice area
- **Holland & Hart** Denver partner **Andrew Orr** in the business litigation practice area
- **Holland & Hart** Denver associate **Marika Rietsema Ball** in the banking practice area
- **Holland & Hart** Denver partner **Helen Rogers** in the estate and probate practice area
- **Holland & Hart** Denver partner **Jessica Smith** in the business litigation practice area

- **Holland & Hart** Denver partner **Paul Swanson** in the business litigation practice area
- **Chayet & Danzo** senior attorney **Tamara Trujillo** in the estate and probate practice area
- **Chayet & Danzo** senior attorney **Jenny Vultaggio** in the elder law practice area
- **Gebhardt Emerson Moodie Bonanno, LLC (GEM Family Law)** attorney **Erika Gebhardt** in the family law practice area
- **GEM Family Law** attorney **Ashley Emerson** in the family law practice area
- **GEM Family Law** founding partner **Meagan Moodie** in the family law practice area
- **GEM Family Law** attorney **Elizabeth Bonanno** in the family law practice area
- **GEM Family Law** of counsel **Heather Landauer** in the family law practice area
- **GEM Family Law** attorney **Hannah Taylor** in the family law practice area
- **Parker Lipman** partner **Karen Blau**
- **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck** Denver associate **Marcela Dye** in the business/corporate practice area
- **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck** Denver shareholder **Julian Ellis Jr.** in the appellate practice area
- **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck** Denver associate **Amanda Houseal** in the business litigation practice area
- **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck** Denver shareholder **Carrie Johnson** in the business litigation practice area
- **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck** Denver shareholder **David Meschke** in the legislative and governmental affairs practice area
- **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck** Denver shareholder **Chloe Mickel** in the construction litigation practice area
- **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck** Denver shareholder **Anna-Liisa Mullis** in the business litigation practice area
- **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck** Denver shareholder **Kevin Walsh** in the construction litigation practice area
- **Epstein Patierno** attorney **Lauren Gempel** in the family law practice area
- **Epstein Patierno** associate **Morgan Paterson** in the family law practice area