



Stephen S. Kent

OF COUNSEL

Reno

775.324.9800

skent@grsm.com

RELATED SERVICES

- Commercial Litigation
- Business Transactions
- Trucking
- Aviation
- Real Estate
- Insurance
- Professional Liability Defense
- Transportation

OFFICES

- Reno

OVERVIEW

Stephen S. Kent is a member of the Business Litigation, Real Estate, Business Transactions, Insurance, Trucking, Transportation and Professional Liability practice groups.

Stephen has handled a wide variety of matters throughout Reno, Las Vegas and rural Nevada. Over his 40 years of practice, Stephen's experience includes business litigation, corporate and partnership disputes, real estate litigation, personal injury defense, auto, truck, and bus injury claims, aviation crash and accident litigation, premises liability, insurance coverage opinions and litigation, corporate control/ shareholder disputes, debt collection, construction defect claims, licensing, administrative and regulatory law disputes, realtor/broker liability, professional engineer liability, and real estate sales and financing transactions. Stephen has also been appointed arbitrator in 49 cases in the Nevada Arbitration Program.

With 35 years as a trial lawyer, Stephen has tried many cases obtaining defense verdicts for his clients including a million-dollar verdict. One of his most challenging cases was defending an employee of the Papoose Palace in 66 civil suits wherein it was alleged the client sexually abused over 70 children at a day care school. Stephen has been involved in several other civil sexual abuse cases, including the Montessori case where he was involved in insurance coverage for those claims. He was also selected as local counsel to defend the Reno Air Racing Association as a result of the crash of an aircraft the resulted in 10 spectators' deaths.

During his time at one of Nevada's largest law firms, Stephen began working on aviation litigation. Over the years, Stephen developed an expertise handling aviation cases and is currently one of the top aviation defense attorneys in Nevada. He has also handled over seventeen appeals to the Nevada Supreme Court and Ninth Circuit Court.

Stephen has been married to his wife Mayla for more than 40 years and they have three adult children. His hobbies include boating on Lake Tahoe, driving sports cars, and snow skiing.

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Representative Experience

- *Beach v. Walmart*: Plaintiff claimed she slipped and fell on water adjacent to a frozen food freezer that had been caused by Defendant's associates working in the area. The entire accident scene was recorded on video surveillance. Employees documented that there was water on the floor after plaintiff fell. One of the key issues involved whether or not Defendant had notice of the water on the floor prior to plaintiff's fall. Stephen introduced evidence showing the significant efforts undertaken by Defendant to inspect and maintain its floors. Also in dispute was the cause of plaintiff's left and right knee injuries. Stephen called orthopedic surgeon Stephen Dow MD, who testified that some of the injuries were inconsistent with plaintiff's mechanism of injury. The jury returned a defense verdict in favor of his client.
- *Monroe v. Pella Corp.*: Stephen represented Defendant when they were sued by plaintiffs under Nevada's construction defect statute, Chapter 40. Plaintiffs claimed that windows installed by the Defendant in their 7,000 square foot home were defective, necessitating replacement of all of the windows in their home at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars. The lengthy trial involved numerous expert witnesses. Stephen brought working windows into Court to show that the windows performed properly. The jury returned a defense verdict and subsequently the Court awarded over \$100,000 in fees and costs to his client.

- *Distinctive Homes International v. Carreau*: In a lengthy and complex trial, Stephen represented Plaintiff who had acted as real estate broker for the owners of the Tahoe Keys Marina. Plaintiff had found a buyer for the property and a contract of sale was executed, but one of the sellers refused to go forward with the transaction. The buyer brought an action for specific performance. Plaintiff brought an action for recovery of its \$1 million commission, the reluctant seller counterclaimed for fraud and breach of duties. The jury returned a verdict, awarding the \$1 million commission to his client. Subsequently, the Court awarded an additional \$300,000 in fees and costs.
- *Camara v. Winco*: Plaintiff claimed to have sustained serious injury at Defendant location when a long row of nested shopping carts bumped her. The prime issue was whether such a minor impact could cause serious injury. Stephen called biomechanical expert Dr. Aaron Souza and University of Nevada Reno medical school professor Dr. John Peacock, who testified that the impact would only cause minor discomfort. The jury returned a verdict of \$2,458, which was less than the Defendant's \$3,000 offer. The Court subsequently awarded Defendant a portion of its fees and costs.
- *Trapletti v. Sparks Nugget*: Plaintiff claimed Defendant negligently left a highchair in a walking path that resulted in her falling and sustaining serious injury. Stephen reconstructed the accident scene in the courtroom to show that the highchair was visible and that it was Plaintiff's failure to pay attention that resulted in her fall. The jury returned a defense verdict in favor of Mr. Kent's client and the Court subsequently awarded over \$50,000 in fees and costs in favor of his client.
- *Corrigan v. Sam's Club / Walmart*: Plaintiff was hit in the eye when one checker threw a set of keys to another checker. Plaintiff claimed a serious injury to her eye, including glaucoma. In a battle of medical experts, Stephen's experts testified that any injury was minor and did not cause glaucoma. Plaintiff sought over one hundred thousand dollars. The jury awarded \$23,500 to plaintiff, which was less than the \$30,000 offer made by Defendant.
- *Herb v. TA Operating Corp.*: In this case the plaintiff claimed to have slipped and fallen in the diesel refueling lane of Defendant's Sparks, Nevada truck stop. Plaintiff sought over one million dollars in damages due to a fractured wrist and alleged she was unable to return to work as a truck driver. The trial involved disputes about the adequacy of the lighting, the cause of the diesel fuel spill, the condition of the concrete and plaintiff's contributory negligence. The jury returned a defense verdict for his client.

- *Minette v. Samproni*: In this case, Plaintiff claimed that she slipped and fell sustaining a broken leg when the RV park's sprinklers came on during the winter. The plaintiff had water meter usage records establishing a significant amount of water use at the RV park. By searching other trailer parks in the area, Stephen found witnesses who testified they had been approached by the plaintiff and asked to testify to the water sprinklers running in the winter in exchange for monetary compensation. The jury returned a verdict in favor of his client.
- *Shoemaker v. Winco*: In this case, Stephen represented the Defendant against claims of false arrest, false imprisonment, slander and punitive damages. The plaintiff claimed that she was falsely detained for shoplifting. The employee who had stopped the plaintiff had been deployed to Europe in the military and was not available for the criminal trial, so the charges were dismissed. An arbitrator in the Court's mandatory non-binding arbitration program had found in favor of plaintiff and the results of that arbitration were read to the jury. In a heated trial, Stephen argued that in fact the plaintiff had shoplifted a bottle of Excedrin and that Defendant's actions were justified. The jury agreed and returned a defense verdict. Defendant had made a statutory offer and therefore they were awarded their attorney's fees and costs.
- *Brown v. Walmart*: This trial occurred in Elko, Nevada. Plaintiff claimed to have slipped and fallen on liquid near the Defendant's check stands. Stephen called all of the present and former cashiers to establish that they were watching the area but did not see any water and thus had no notice of a dangerous condition. Also in issue was the cause of Plaintiff's knee injury. The jury returned a defense verdict.
- *Arreygue v. Walmart*: In this case, Plaintiff claimed to have sustained injuries when plastic containers fell from a high shelf in Defendant store. During the trial Stephen argued that the containers fell when she attempted to reach them by standing on a lower shelf and trying to nudge them off the shelf. The jury returned a defense verdict in his client's favor.
- *Padilla v. Wal-Mart*: In this case, plaintiff was hit by a pole in the garden center of the Defendant's Carson City store. Plaintiff claimed years of chiropractic treatment through a chiropractor that she worked for, but could not produce records reflecting that treatment. The jury awarded a small amount which was less than the settlement offer made by the defense, which resulted in an award of attorney's fees and costs in Defendant's favor.
- *Northrup v. Sierra Nevada Stage Lines*: In this case, Plaintiff was claiming personal injuries following a bus accident. At trial Stephen established that most of the plaintiff's treatment was related to his work in a tire shop as opposed to the bus accident. The jury awarded \$273, which was significantly less than the settlement offer from Stephen's client. Plaintiff agreed to dismiss the case in exchange for his client not seeking fees and costs against him.

- *Hammons v. Richards Manufacturing*: In this case Stephen and Duffy Buchannan represented the Defendant, who manufactures medical bone fixation devices, against a claim that the device was defective and resulted in additional injury to Plaintiff when it broke necessitating additional surgery. Stephen and Mr. Buchannan established the device broke due to excessive weight being placed on it by the physician allowing weight bearing too early. The jury returned a defense verdict.
- *Smith v. Helms Construction*: In this jury trial, Stephen represented the Defendant against claims of personal injuries after a water pipe installed underground burst while the Plaintiff, a contractor, was excavating around it. The jury returned a defense verdict for his client.
- *Grouse v. Helms Construction*: In this jury trial, Stephen and Mick Iglesias represented the Defendant who faced claims they caused gravel on the road which caused Plaintiff's motorcycle to skid off the road causing serious injuries. During the trial, a witness was discovered who testified that Plaintiff was speeding and excessive speed caused the accident. Stephen and Mr. Iglesias obtained a defense verdict for their client and an award of attorney's fees and costs.

PRESENTATIONS

- *Exclusionary Clauses in Aviation Insurance Policies*, DRI Covered Events, April, 2004

CREDENTIALS

Admissions

- Nevada

Memberships

- Certified Civil Trial Advocate – National Board of Trial Attorneys
- Litigation Counsel of America, Fellow
- Washoe County Bar Association
- American Bar Association
 - Litigation Section, Tort and Insurance Practice Sections, Committees on Trial Techniques, Insurance Coverage and Business Torts
- State Bar of Nevada, Member
 - Disciplinary Committee
- Northern California-Nevada Association of Defense Counsel
- Defense Research Institute
- International Association of Defense Counsel, Member
 - Committees on: Aviation, Life, Health and Accident Insurance, Casualty Insurance, Medical Malpractice

Community Involvement

- Reno Rotary
- Reno Rodeo Association

EDUCATION

- J.D., University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law
– Second Place – McGeorge Moot Court Competition
- B.A., University of Nevada Reno

HONORS

- America's Top 100 High Stakes Litigators for Nevada (2019-2021)
- *Best Lawyers in America*® distinction in Insurance Law (2015-2025)
- Recognized by *Nevada Super Lawyers* (2007-2024)