Mark H. Reeves

Partner

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Services

Appellate Litigation

Complex Commercial Litigation

Native American

Native American Litigation

Mark Reeves focuses his practice on trial and appellate litigation, predominantly on behalf of Indian tribes. He has represented and advised tribes in a broad range of litigation in federal, state, and tribal courts and before federal administrative agencies, including a number of cases before federal appellate courts and the Interior Board of Indian Appeals. Mark has significant experience litigating issues relating to tribal sovereignty and immunity, the acquisition, development, and protection of tribal land and water rights, the taxation of Indian lands and property, litigation over easements, rights-of-way, and trespasses on Indian lands, the application of federal and state laws to Indian tribes and tribal enterprises, and the enforcement of the United States' trust responsibilities to tribes.

Mark has also assisted and advised tribes in numerous non-litigation contexts, including the drafting, interpretation, and application of tribal legal codes, fee-into-trust land acquisitions, right-of-way and easement negotiations, the establishment and structure of tribal business enterprises, the negotiation of self-governance compacts and funding agreements, the acquisition of Johnson O'Malley Act funds for Indian education programs, and the protection of tribal intellectual property.

In addition to his work on behalf of Native American clients, Mark has substantial experience in representing business clients in civil litigation, including commercial contract disputes and products liability matters. He also has represented numerous medical providers in the defense of medical malpractice lawsuits.

Mark was recognized in 2027 and the seven years immediately preceding by *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Native American Law and Commercial Litigation. He was recognized by the Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce as a "Top 10 in 10 Young Professional" in 2014. He was also recognized as a Georgia "Rising Star" in the area of Native American Law by *Super Lawyers* magazine each year from 2015-2018 and included on *Benchmark Litigation*'s "40 & Under Hot List" for Appellate and Native American Law in 2018. In 2020, the firm received the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs Outstanding Achievement Award for Exceptional Commitment to Civil Rights and Justice in recognition of Mark's work on behalf on an individual Native American client who was a victim of unlawful workplace discrimination.

Experience

Lead counsel for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in response to a suit by the State of Alabama seeking to enjoin the Tribe's gaming activity. The State alleged that the Tribe's gaming was either a public nuisance under state law or in violation of criminal provisions of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. Removed case from state to federal court, then successfully moved for dismissal of all of the State's claims, including *Carcieri*-based arguments attacking the status of the Tribe's land. Also served as lead counsel in the Tribe's successful defense of the trial court's ruling before the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

Counsel for the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians in its case against California water districts seeking a declaration and quantification of the Tribe's federally reserved rights to groundwater. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the Tribe, holding that it has a federally reserved right to groundwater. The matter subsequently reached a favorable settlement, and federal legislation implementing the settlement is pending.

Lead counsel for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in a lawsuit against a county tax assessor who sought to assess taxes on Tribe's trust lands based on a *Carcieri*-style argument. The United States District Court for the Southern District of Alabama issued a preliminary injunction against the tax assessor, which was affirmed by the Eleventh Circuit after oral argument. Based on the Eleventh Circuit ruling, the tax assessor submitted to a permanent injunction against any further efforts to assess tribal trust property.

Litigation counsel for Island Mountain Development Group, the economic development arm of the Fort Belknap Indian Community, in multiple matters in federal district and appellate courts.

Successfully represented a tribe and over 1,000 allottees in a complex class action trespass claim against the United States regarding an expired transmission line right-of-way. The matter involved obtaining favorable rulings from both the United States Court of Federal Claims and the District Court for the District of Arizona.

Represented the Poarch Band of Creek Indians before the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals when a former employee appealed the trial court's dismissal of an Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) claim against the Tribe. The Eleventh Circuit affirmed dismissal of the claim after oral argument, and the United States Supreme Court denied certiorari.

Represented a nationally known premium consumer products company in major federal court litigation against a key brand licensee.

Represented a Georgia hospital in numerous cases alleging professional malpractice against hospital employees and contractors.

Represented multiple tribes in the successful settlement of lawsuits against the United States based on mismanagement of tribal trust assets.

Pro bono work on behalf of the Phinizy Center for Water Sciences, a non-profit entity using groundbreaking research and public education initiatives to promote responsible stewardship of fresh water resources and environmentally sustainable economic development in the Savannah River watershed and beyond.

Education

Vanderbilt University Law School J.D. (2004) *Order of the Coif*, *Vanderbilt Law Review*, *John W. Wade Scholar*

University of Georgia B.A. (2001) *summa cum laude*, *First Honor Graduate*

Admissions

Georgia (2005)

District of Columbia (2016)

Court Admissions

Georgia Court of Appeals (2009)

Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribal Court (2012)

Supreme Court of Georgia (2009)

United States Supreme Court (2017)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit (2005)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit (2019)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (2015)

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (2024)

U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia (2019)

U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia (2005)

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia (2009)

U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia (2007)

Clerkships

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Professional & Community Activities

State Bar of Georgia, 2008 Young Lawyers' Division Leadership Academy

Law360, Native American Editorial Board (2021)

Augusta Bar Association, Treasurer (2014-2015)

Augusta Bar Foundation, Board Member (2014-2015)

Young Lawyers of Augusta, President (2011)

Sacred Heart Cultural Center, Board Member (2006-2011)

Phinizy Center for Water Sciences (f/k/a Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy), Secretary & Board Member (2008-2017)

Tri My Best Triathlon, Volunteer

Insights

News Releases

Kilpatrick Attorneys Once Again Earn Outstanding Recognitions in 2027 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America®

August 20, 2026

News Releases

Kilpatrick Breaks Record for Number of Attorneys Recognized in 2025 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America®

August 16, 2024

News Releases

Kilpatrick Townsend Earns Record-Breaking Recognition in 2024 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America®

August 17, 2023

News Releases

Kilpatrick Townsend Earns Top Recognitions in 2023 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America®

August 18, 2022

News Releases

Kilpatrick Townsend Attorneys Honored in the 2022 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America

August 19, 2021