

EVAN A. NELSON

Partner

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OVERVIEW

Evan Nelson describes himself as a “death and dirt” lawyer. He represents clients in trust and estate disputes, which often come to a head after a family member has died, and in real estate litigation, where clients dispute who owns and controls access to "dirt." Because the two often intersect, as people will gift land (or attempt to do so) via their wills or trusts, Evan’s distinct capabilities prove particularly beneficial.

Trust and estate law is written to balance the interests of fiduciaries and beneficiaries. Evan has significant litigation experience representing both sides, and he enjoys using that experience to craft a successful litigation strategy tailored for either type of client.

Evan also maintains an active pro bono practice, with significant experience in environmental, administrative, and Government Data Practices Act litigation.

Evan is ranked as an Up and Coming attorney in *Chambers High Net Worth Guide* (2026), was named a 2021 Up & Coming Attorney by *Minnesota Lawyer* and was selected for inclusion on the 2021-2026 Minnesota Rising Stars lists from Super Lawyers, a designation given to only 2.5% of Minnesota attorneys each year. He was also selected for inclusion in Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch in 2023-2027.

Evan graduated first in his class from the University of North Dakota School of Law. During law school, he was a judicial extern to the Honorable Kermit E. Bye of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

SELECTED EXPERIENCE

- Represented co-trustees in dispute regarding an estate, multiple trusts, and a proceeding for appointment of guardianship and conservatorship.
- Represented former trustee of a trust that managed multimillion dollar rental properties.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Litigation
- Appeals
- Business Litigation
- Construction & Real Estate Litigation
- Trust & Estate Litigation

Real Estate
- Condemnation & Eminent Domain

BAR ADMISSIONS

Minnesota

U.S. District Court
- Minnesota

U.S. Court of Appeals
- Fifth Circuit
- Eighth Circuit

EDUCATION

University of North Dakota School of Law
J.D., *summa cum laude*
Honors: Order of Barristers; Order of the Coif

University of North Dakota
M.A.; B.A.
English

- Represented owner of large-scale farming operation in a land-use and easement dispute with adjacent large-scale dairy operation.
- Represented major U.S. railroad in various real estate litigation, including condemnation, quiet title, crossing disputes, and utility billing disputes.
- Represented national engineering firm in multi-party, consolidated litigation arising from natural gas explosion that allegedly occurred during the construction of underground utilities.

Pro Bono

- Pro bono litigation, including a major court victory in August 2023, regarding copper-sulfide mining project: Evan serves as lead to team of Maslon lawyers providing pro bono counsel to environmental organizations in several related and complex challenges to a copper-sulfide mine project proposed to be built within the Lake Superior watershed and in close proximity to the Boundary Waters. Representative case: *Matter of ... Proposed NorthMet Project St. Louis County Hoyt Lakes and Babbitt Minnesota*, 993 N.W.2d 627 (Minn. Aug. 2, 2023).
- ABA Pro Bono Death Penalty Representation: *Ex parte* Armstrong (Tex. Crim. App. 2017). Member of team of Maslon lawyers serving as pro bono counsel for Douglas Tyrone Armstrong, a Texas death row inmate convicted of capital murder in 2006. The team successfully secured the vacation of Armstrong's death sentence by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY

- Minnesota State Bar Association: Probates, Trusts and Estates Section, Council Member; Litigation and Dispute Resolution Committee, Co-Chair
- Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness: Board of Directors 2019-2025
- National Association of Railroad Trial Counsel
- Minnesota Eminent Domain Institute (MEDI): Secretary 2019-2026
- Maslon UPLIFT: Legal Institute for Teens: Volunteer Coach
- ABA Death Penalty Representation Project: Pro Bono Attorney Volunteer
- U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota, *Pro Se* Project: Pro Bono Attorney Volunteer
- Volunteer Lawyers Network: Pro Bono Attorney Volunteer
- American Bar Association
- Federal Bar Association – Minnesota Chapter
- Hennepin County Bar Association

SELECTED HONORS

- **Notable Practitioner in Minnesota for Private Wealth Law**, *Chambers High Net Worth (HNW)*, 2026
- **Attorney of the Year**, *Minnesota Lawyer*, 2023
- **Recognized on Minnesota Rising Stars list as part of the Super Lawyers® selection process**, 2021-2026 (*Minnesota Rising Stars is a designation given to only 2.5% of Minnesota attorneys each year, based on a selection process that includes the recommendation of peers in the legal profession.*)
- **Selected for inclusion in Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch**, 2023-2027 (*These awards recognize attorneys, who are earlier in their careers, for outstanding professional excellence in private practice in the United States.*)
- **Up & Coming Attorney**, *Minnesota Lawyer*, 2021
- **Light of Justice Award**, Texas Defender Service, 2018
- **North Star Lawyer**, Minnesota State Bar Association, 2017-2025 *(North Star Lawyer is a designation that recognizes members who provide 50 hours or more of pro bono legal services in a calendar year.)*

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- "A Litigator's Playbook," National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc. (NFPA) Annual Convention, 2026

- “Finding Resolution When at Loggerheads: Family Meetings, Mediation, and Litigation,” moderator, Third Annual Forum on Wealth Management and Litigation, Maslon LLP, 2026
- "Shielding Clients' Legacies: Dynasty Trusts and Fighting Against Financial Elder Abuse," co-presenter, Maslon LLP, 2026
- "Should Contesting Cost Everything? The *Chafoulias* Case and No-Contest Clauses," co-presenter, Probate and Trust Law Section Conference, Minnesota CLE, 2026
- "A Litigator's Playbook," co-presenter, Minnesota Paralegal Association, 2026
- Covering Your Assets: Strategies for Future-Proof Fiduciary Decision-Making
- Location, Location, Location: Strategies for Administering and Litigating Trusts Across State Lines
- "Battles Over Bequests: A Litigator's Playbook," co-presenter, Minnesota Paralegal Association Annual Convention, 2025
- "A Primer on the Types of Trust and Estate Disputes," co-presenter, Trust & Estate Litigation in Minnesota, Minnesota CLE, 2024
- "Hot Topics in Wealth Transfer Litigation," co-presenter, ASCEND Conference, Financial Planning Association of Minnesota, 2024
- Maslon's Inaugural Forum on Wealth Management and Litigation
- "Navigating Diverse Cultural Expectations and Approaches to Wealth Transfer," moderator, Minnesota CLE, 2024
- "Paddling Together: A Pro Bono Coalition Takes on PolyMet," Minnesota Paralegals Association Conference, 2024
- "Litigation and Post-Trial Practice," co-presenter, Hot Topics in Advanced Estate Administration, Minnesota CLE, 2023
- "Trust Construction: In Re Trusteeship Under Agreement with Mayo, In re Trust Under Agreement by Wiedemann, and More," co-presenter, Minnesota CLE, 2023
- "Do I Have to Make a Distribution to the Beneficiary Who's Suing Me? Trust and Estate Administration During Litigation," co-presenter, 2023 Probate and Trust Law Section Conference, Minnesota CLE, 2023
- "Signing Nursing Home Admission Contracts for a Loved One," Minnesota NAELA Chapter, 2021
- "Stopping Polymet," Annual Gathering 2020, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, 2020

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin': Litigation and the Jackson Estate," co-author, *Probate & Property*, 2026
- "Primer on Trust and Estate Disputes," co-author, *Minnesota Trust and Estate Litigation Deskbook*, Minnesota CLE, 2024
- "*In Rem v. In Personam* Trust Proceedings: The Implications of *Swanson v. Wolf*," co-author, MSBA Probate, Trusts, and Estates Section Newsletter, Minnesota State Bar Association, 2023
- "Tilting the Litigation Playing Field Under the Uniform Trust Code: The Availability of Temporary Injunctive Relief in Trustee Removal of Actions," co-author, *Probate & Property*, Vol. 34, No. 3, American Bar Association, 2020
- "Charting a Course into the Future Practice of Law," co-author, Litigation Management: Overcoming the Ocean of Complaint, Trial and Motions – A Concentrated Curriculum for In House Counsel Managing Litigation, the Network of Trial Law Firms, 2018
- Note, "Unacknowledged Legislators: The Contemporary Poetry Community's Quasi-regime of Intellectual Property," 91 *N.D. L. Rev.* 634 (2015)