



RK ALUMNI CONNECT

NEWSLETTER

ABOUT RK ALUMNI CONNECT

[RK Alumni Connect](#) is a networking group for current and former Robins Kaplan attorneys. We provide forums for learning and professional development, an alumni website, CLE opportunities, development and training, community service activities, diversity & inclusion programming, pro bono opportunities, and networking and social events.

Visit us on [LinkedIn](#) or our [RK Alumni Connect](#) web page to stay current on updates from Robins Kaplan, get news about former colleagues, and receive information on a variety of legal developments, as we continue to build years of friendships.

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

We got a chance to catch up with former Robins Kaplan attorneys A.L. Brown and Scott Kranz to see what they are up to now. Read on to check out their current endeavors and accomplishments!



A.L. BROWN

Capitol City Law Group, LLC
Robins Kaplan Associate 2004 - 2006

Where are you working now? How long have you worked there?

I currently work at Capitol City Law Group, LLC. I have worked here since 2013. I also work part-time as in-house counsel for Educational Credit Management Group. I have worked there, in one capacity or another, since 2006.

What made you decide to take this career path?

I always wanted to be a great trial lawyer. I designed a career that would put me in the courtroom (trial or appellate) as often as possible. Civil cases rarely go to trial. I have found that if you want regular trial practice, it is more likely to happen in the criminal cases. So I often represent indigent clients as a court-appointed attorney. That said, I also really enjoy helping individual clients in employment, health care privacy, and civil rights claims (in no particular order).

What does a typical workday include for you?

I don't have a typical workday! Every day is a full blend of civil and criminal matters. It would not be odd for me to have a contested hearing in a criminal matter in the morning and a summary judgment hearing on an employment matter in the afternoon. That is why I love it; variety!

What is the most fulfilling part of your job?

Each job makes my work meaningful in different ways but the thread going through all my practice areas is holding bullies accountable. Sometimes the bully is a government actor, sometimes it's the judicial system, and sometimes it's a client's employer. I take great joy in standing in between my clients and any given bully.

Is there anything in particular you learned while working at Robins Kaplan that is useful to you in your current role?

I was drawn to Robins because it was known as the big firm that stood up for the little guy; while there I learned that you could provide excellent representation for the underdog while creating a greater social good. In short, I learned that the law is a tool that can be used to make the lives of others better.

If you could create a new law or policy, what would it be?

I would open the courtrooms to cameras. It would increase the public's knowledge of its third branch of government and maybe inspire some kid to dream of being a lawyer. Inertia is the only real argument against it.





SCOTT KRANZ

Scott Kranz LLC

Robins Kaplan Associate 2010 - 2013

Where are you working now? How long have you worked there?

I am a self-employed freelance photographer, specializing in outdoor adventure and outdoor lifestyle imagery and video. After moving from Minnesota to Washington State in 2013, and following some additional legal practice in Seattle, I took my leap from the law to photography in early 2015 and I have yet to look back. I am now in my seventh year as a full-time creative.

What made you decide to take this career path?

Before moving to the Pacific Northwest, I had no idea how the outdoor scene here would change my worldview. The mountains here, especially the North Cascades, quickly made an indelible impression on me. What started as a simple day hike turned into frequent treks, backpacks, and climbs, and within two years, it became clear to me that I needed to make the outdoors part of my day-to-day.

What does a typical workday include for you?

Although I work with a wide range of clients across several industries, much of my work is for commercial brands in the outdoor industry shooting photo assignments, licensing imagery or video, and partnering on marketing campaigns. What that looks like on any given day can vary widely. Many days I'm out in "the field," which can mean the alpine, a forest, a desert, or the coast, either shooting or scouting. Other days I'm at my home or office in Seattle editing images or video, emailing with clients, planning an upcoming outing, or brainstorming my next project.

What is the most fulfilling part of your job?

Simply being outdoors. I found my passion in the mountains shortly after moving to Washington State, and that motivation hasn't dwindled in the least. It's truly a privilege to visit these outdoor spaces, create imagery of what I experience there, and to share those visuals with others.

Is there anything in particular you learned while working at Robins Kaplan that is useful to you in your current role?

Working in the commercial litigation group at Robins Kaplan, I frequently analyzed complex contracts. That skill set has been directly transferable to my review, negotiation, and execution of written contracts as a freelancer, namely professional-service and license agreements. As you can imagine, contract analysis is not common among professional creatives, and so I've been able to distinguish myself in these types of dealings, all while protecting my rights as a service provider and a copyright holder.

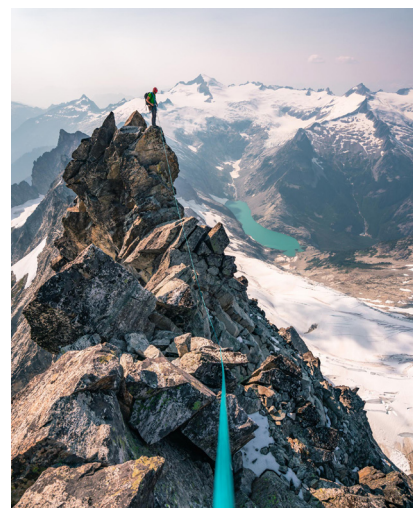
Share some information about your favorite hobbies or interests that fill your free time.

As a freelance outdoor photographer, the line between work and life is blurred – but in the best of ways. My favorite hobbies and interests that fill my free time are often those activities that I document when working: hiking, rock climbing, mountaineering, ski touring, and paddling. Beyond the outdoors, I love playing my acoustic guitar, visiting a local winery with my wife, or learning how to mix a classic cocktail as an amateur bartender for fun.

Visit <https://www.scott-kranz.com/> to enjoy more of Scott's photography.



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THREE ROBINS KAPLAN PARTNERS SELECTED TO RECEIVE 2021 MINNESOTA ICON AWARD

Robins Kaplan LLP is pleased to announce that [Craig Wildfang](#), [Teresa Fariss McClain](#) and [Robert Bennett](#) have been selected to receive the 2021 Minnesota ICON award by *Finance & Commerce* and *Minnesota Lawyer*. The award recognizes attorneys or business leaders who have exhibited distinctive excellence that puts them at the top of Minnesota's legal and business communities.

Wildfang is the co-chair of Robins Kaplan's Antitrust and Trade Regulation Group. For more than thirty years, he has represented parties in many private civil antitrust actions in industries ranging from insurance to agricultural commodities. Wildfang has also counselled clients on a wide variety of antitrust and trade regulation issues, from mergers and joint ventures to marketing and sales programs. From 1993 to 1996, Wildfang served as Special Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust in the United States Department of Justice.

Teresa Fariss McClain has devoted her career to advocating for individuals, first as a registered nurse and now as a partner seeking justice for those who have been harmed by medical errors or medical negligence. A leader in the legal community, Teresa serves as secretary of the Minnesota ABOTA Chapter, is past president of Minnesota Women Lawyers and Minnesota Women Lawyers Foundation, and is a member of numerous boards and professional organizations.

Over the past four decades, Robert Bennett has spearheaded many of the state's most important police misconduct, civil rights law, jail suicide, and wrongful death matters, including the Abbey Taylor pool case. In May of 2019, Robert and his team negotiated the \$20 million "transformational" settlement in the wrongful death case involving the murder of Justine Ruszcyk by Minneapolis Police officer Mohamed Noor.

This year's Minnesota ICON award honorees will be celebrated at an event at The Hyatt Regency Minneapolis on Thursday, December 9.

2021 MINNESOTA ICON HONORS HONOREE



**CRAIG
WILDFANG**



**TERESA FARISS
MCCLAIN**



**ROBERT
BENNETT**



WANT TO RAISE YOUR PROFILE? WRITE AN ARTICLE

TAYLOR P. PENTELOVITCH

Communications and Brand Manager, Robins Kaplan

If you are looking for an opportunity to raise your profile and catch the attention of clients, potential clients, and leaders in your field, consider writing an article to appear in a relevant publication, like *Minnesota Lawyer*, *Bloomberg Law*, or the *National Law Journal*. Publishing is one of the best ways to demonstrate your knowledge and insight on specific legal matters. Clients are increasingly looking for specialized experience, and writing an article sends a clear message to the legal market: “Not only am I familiar with that issue, I wrote an article about it!”

WHAT SHOULD I WRITE ABOUT?

Start by considering the following when selecting your topic:

- What is keeping your clients awake at night?
- What new threats of enforcement or litigation are looming in your practice area or focus industry?
- What new issues are creating conflicts in the courts?
- How can you help solve those problems?

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Begin by identifying your topic and the audience you would like to target. Do you want to reach other attorneys? Business leaders? General Counsel?

Once you narrow your target audience, identify publications that reach that audience. Consider mainstream legal outlets like *Bloomberg Law* or *Law360*, professional journals like the *American Bar Association Journal*, or more targeted publications like *IPWatchdog* or *Antitrust Magazine*. A quick search on the publication’s website should tell you if they accept article contributions from outside authors. Many also list their editorial guidelines and the contact information to use when sending your article “pitch.”

THE PITCH:

Most publications that accept submissions approve the idea before the article. Therefore, a best practice is to have your topic accepted by the editor, before writing the article. Having your topic approved first will save the trouble of having to rewrite the article to the publication’s guidelines after it has been accepted for publication.

A good pitch does the following:

1

DESCRIBES
YOUR CHOSEN
ISSUE

2

EXPLAINS
WHY IT IS
IMPORTANT

3

SUMMARIZES
WHAT YOU PLAN
TO SAY ABOUT IT



WANT TO RAISE YOUR PROFILE? WRITE AN ARTICLE

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A quick search of the targeted publication's website will help ensure that it has not recently published an article on the same topic. You want to provide a value-add through new and unique analysis on your topic. If you do find an article on a similar topic, make sure to explain in your pitch how your angle will differ.

You should also include a short author bio in your pitch that describes your practice area or experience that makes you qualified to write about your chosen topic.

CONSIDER INVOLVING CO-AUTHORS TO INCREASE THE CHANCE THE ARTICLE WILL BE ACCEPTED

Consider partnering with another attorney to co-author an article. Whether it is another attorney in your organization, outside counsel that you have worked with or hope to work with in the future, or another professional colleague, co-authoring an article offers the opportunity to get added insight on your chosen topic. It also helps divide the work of research and writing, which can help to get your article done in a timely fashion.

MAXIMIZING VISIBILITY:

The last and arguably most important step in the process comes once your article has been written and published: share, share, share!

In addition to ensuring that your firm or company shares your article on their website and social media channels, make sure you do the same. You can also ask your colleagues if they would be willing to share on their social media platforms. That helps to ensure you reach not only the publication's audience but an even wider group of legal and business professionals.

You should also consider sending the article to your clients or contacts you work with on other cases, as well as businesses that align with the topic of your article. It is a nice touchpoint for engagement and can lead to a conversation about the topic or potentially more work.



APPEALS COURT UPHOLDS RULING ON TRIBAL TREATY RIGHTS



TIM PURDON



BRENDAN JOHNSON

We are pleased to announce that Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on August 25, 2021 that the U.S. government has a Treaty duty to provide competent healthcare to the firm's pro bono client, the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

In 2016, a Robins Kaplan team led by Brendan Johnson and Tim Purdon sued the federal government on behalf of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe after the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services closed the only emergency room on the Rosebud Reservation. The firm won a U.S. District Court ruling finding that Indian Health Services (IHS) had violated its treaty responsibility to provide the Tribe with adequate health care services.

A 2-1 decision by the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld that ruling. This decision will empower the Rosebud Sioux Tribe to go to Congress and demand increased funding for their healthcare system.

"This decision is an important acknowledgment of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe's Treaty Rights as well as every other Tribe that signed on to the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868," said Rosebud Sioux Tribe President Rodney Bordeaux. "As the Court noted, the federal government must do better."

"This is a great victory for the tribe," said Brendan Johnson, partner and co-chair of the Robins Kaplan American Indian Law and Policy Group. "My hope is that the decision also assists our congressional delegation in their efforts to improve Indian Health Service."

Partner and group co-chair Tim Purdon added: "Having the Eighth Circuit hold the United States to the promises it made in the Fort Laramie Treaty is an important step in working to ensure adequate healthcare services on the Reservations in the Great Plains."

Johnson and Purdon are the former United States Attorneys for South Dakota and North Dakota, respectively.

Robins Kaplan's pro bono program has a long-standing commitment to representing American Indian Tribes across the United States. The firm's work on behalf of Tribes includes an important North Dakota Voting Rights case for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Spirit Lake Nation. Robins Kaplan's pro bono work has earned the firm recognition on the National Law Journal's Pro Bono Hot List.

Robins Kaplan LLP worked with co-counsel from the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) on the Eighth Circuit appeal of this case.

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES, TRAININGS & CLINICS

These opportunities are suitable for licensed attorneys in any setting. If you have questions about these, or would like to collaborate with a Robins Kaplan attorney on any of these opportunities, please contact Pro Bono Counsel Lindsey Hanson at LHanson@RobinsKaplan.com.

CALIFORNIA

Disaster Relief Project - Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles

Help low-income clients affected by disasters appeal denial of disaster relief assistance and/or provide legal advice to victims of disasters. Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles (NLSLA) is looking to build its roster of attorneys trained to provide disaster related legal assistance. There are two trainings to participate in (both trainings below provide CLE credit):

Training on Disaster Relief and FEMA Appeals: This is a 2.5-hour training. When you access the website you will see seven separate training segments. Once you are trained, when the next emergency hits, you can volunteer for a three hour FEMA Clinic where you will interview and advise clients and help them prepare paperwork to appeal the denial of disaster assistance. Clinic volunteers will receive additional training and mentorship from NLSLA staff prior to the clinic.

Training on Providing Legal Assistance in the Aftermath of Disaster: This is a seven hour training. Once you are trained, when there is a disaster, you will be able to volunteer to staff a disaster relief hotline to provide legal advice to callers and/or to staff a disaster recovery center to provide legal information and advice to disaster survivors. Mentorship and guidance from NLSLA staff and experienced volunteers are also available for this work.

After you take the training, e-mail [Skip Koenig](mailto:Skip.Koenig) or [sign up here](#) so that you receive e-mails when the FEMA clinic needs volunteers.

MASSACHUSETTS

Project Citizenship On-Demand Training: Through Project Citizenship you can volunteer to represent immigrants with disabilities who are applying for citizenship at their immigration interviews. Project Citizenship has an on demand training video for this work.

Contact volunteer@projectcitizenship.org to volunteer and request access to the training.

MINNESOTA

Children's Law Center On-Demand Training:
[CLE Trainings - Children's Law Center of Minnesota \(clcmn.org\)](http://clcmn.org)

Tubman Safety Project On-Demand Training: [Tubman : Give Help : Volunteer/Intern : Volunteer Attorneys : Tubman Safety Project : Pro Bono Safety Project](#)

NEW YORK

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts Orientation for New Volunteers
Date and Time: Dec. 2, 2021 - via Zoom webinar at 5:00-5:30 PM.

This training is also available [on demand](#). Through Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts you can help artists with a variety of legal needs including patent, contract, copyright, and trademark issues. You can see a [list of available cases here](#).

[REGISTER HERE](#)





VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

UPLIFT is a Twin Cities pipeline organization that focuses on creating opportunities for BIPOC students to learn about the law, and to develop long term academic vision. UPLIFT is entirely staffed by volunteers, and they need volunteer mock trial coaches for 2022. Coaches meet with their teams after school once each week and attend an intramural mock trial competition. The total commitment is approximately 10 weeks. UPLIFT assigns 3-5 volunteer coaches to each mock trial team, so that when professional conflicts arise for a coach, their coaching team can cover for them. [Check out this flyer](#) for upcoming volunteer opportunities and more information!

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION



Mansfield Rule™
Certified *Plus* 2021 Powered by DIVERSITYLAB

Robins Kaplan achieved Mansfield 4.0 Certification again, and for the first time achieved Plus status for 2021. The Plus status indicates that, in addition to meeting or exceeding the baseline diversity certification requirements, the firm reached at least 30 percent underrepresented lawyer representation in a notable number of current leadership roles. “We are proud to once again achieve Mansfield Certification,” said Robins Kaplan Managing Partner Steve Schumeister. “In a year filled with ongoing challenges, we have shown that our steadfast commitment to diversity and inclusion doesn’t waiver and we continue to raise the bar for ourselves with the addition of the ‘Plus’ status.”

The Mansfield Rule was launched in 2017 by Diversity Lab in collaboration with Bloomberg Law and Stanford Law School. It was named for Arabella Mansfield, the first woman admitted to the practice of law in the United States. The initiative was inspired by the NFL’s Rooney Rule, which requires every NFL team to interview at least one person of color for head coach vacancies. In the years following its implementation, the league doubled the number of head coaches of color hired.



EVENTS

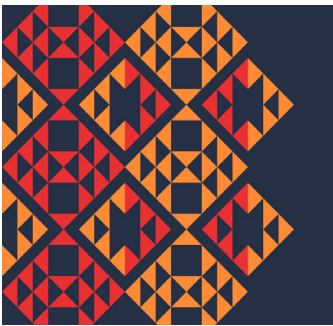
RECENT EVENT

WHAT IS THE PAGE AMENDMENT AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR MINNESOTA?

With the introduction of the Page Amendment, the proposal to make a quality public education a fundamental right for all children in Minnesota, the conversation includes the legal system's role in education policy. WILD (Wanton Injustice Legal Detail, a group of attorneys brought together by Twin Cities Diversity in Practice) presented a deep dive into the landmark *Skeen v. State* case and its long-standing implications for public education in Minnesota.

Justice Page (ret.) and former Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Eric Magnuson, who argued for an intervenor school district in the *Skeen* case, share their reflections nearly three decades later and how we can use the law and a constitutional amendment to help move Minnesota's public school system forward. [Watch the recording here!](#)

UPCOMING EVENT



CELEBRATING NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH: CURRENT ISSUES IN AMERICAN INDIAN LAW & POLICY

November 29, 2021

Details and registration:

<https://www.robinskaplan.com/resources/events/2021/11/celebrating-native-american-heritage-month>

CURRENT JOB OPENINGS

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATE

Full Time | Minneapolis, MN

BUSINESS LITIGATION ASSOCIATE

Full Time | Los Angeles, CA

JUDICIAL CLERKS

Full Time | Minneapolis, MN

BUSINESS LITIGATION ASSOCIATE

Full Time | New York, NY

Robins Kaplan LLP is an equal opportunity employer committed to building a diverse workforce. Candidates should apply on-line at www.RobinsKaplan.com/Careers



TIPS FROM OUR BITS* TECH TEAM

DO YOUR PART. #BECYBERSMART

Keep your electronic information safe and focus on the basics of general cyber hygiene. Remember these tips from the National CyberSecurity Alliance:

- Create strong passwords
 - Length trumps complexity; passwords should be at least 12 characters long
- Use multi-factor authentication whenever it is offered
- Back up your data
 - Keep all software on internet connected devices (personal computers, smartphones, tablets) current to reduce the risk of infection from ransomware and malware
- Use extreme caution and be skeptical before opening any attachments or using links in e-mail, tweets, text messages, posts, social media and online advertising. These downloads and links are the easiest way for cyber criminals to access your sensitive information.
- Own your online presence
 - Configure online security settings for all on-line accounts and apps you use to align with your comfort level. Review security settings at least annually.
- Share personal information with care. Limit access to information about yourself to a small network of relatives, friends and colleagues.
- Use caution with WIFI Hotspots. Public wireless networks and hotspots are not secure, meaning anyone can potentially see what you are doing on your laptop or smartphone when connected.

See the complete list of tips here:

[Own Your Role in Cybersecurity: Start with the Basics \(staysafeonline.org\)](https://staysafeonline.org)

*Business Innovation and Technology Services



RK ALUMNI CONTACT INFO

Please feel free to contact Martha if you'd like to share released publications, job postings at your place of business, or if you'd like to be featured in our Alumni Spotlight.



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