



Keith T. Brown

Associate

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A former teacher and performer, Keith T. Brown has held many leadership roles and understands the importance of accessible communication, empathy, and storytelling. These skills and traits are invaluable in Keith's practice at Foster Swift. Keith aids clients in all sorts of municipal matters, such as the METRO Act, constitutional questions, employment matters, the Open Meetings Act, the Freedom of Information Act, zoning, election law, litigation, and a variety of other concerns that leaders may be faced with.

Municipal Law

As a member of Foster Swift's municipal group, Keith works with a team of highly experienced and devoted attorneys that represent municipal clients of all sizes and characteristics throughout Michigan and has likely encountered the same situation you are facing.

Keith brings his experience in the classroom, meeting room, and the performance hall to the practice of law. Keith understands that the keys to success for local leaders is knowing how to fully evaluate the situation at hand, including the applicable rules, processes, and personalities; how to effectively communicate a vision and plan; and how to guide those visions and plans to adoption and implementation. Accordingly, he aims to model these skills and guide elected and appointed officials, at all levels, to be the best representatives of their constituents and leaders of their communities that they can be.

As an educator, Keith understood that his students would reach their goals in their own ways and at their own pace, and he knew that his role was to provide guidance, advice, knowledge, and expertise, but not to make the final decision or chose the specific direction a student took. Keith knows that the role of municipal attorney is quite similar. His role is to help officials work out details while remembering the big picture, and to provide guidance about what is legally required or

PRACTICE AREAS

Administrative Law
Appellate Practice
Municipal & Public Entity Law
Municipal Litigation

EDUCATION

Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School, *magna cum laude* J.D., 2020
Grand Valley State University, B.S., 2012

BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Michigan

CLERKSHIP(s)

Michigan Court of Appeals



permitted in order to aid the officials to make the best decisions for their constituents and communities to lower the legal risk.

Appellate Law

A successful appellate practice requires knowledge of how the appellate system works, how to navigate it, how to apply both old and new law, and how to persuade appellate judges. Keith has worked on all manners of appeals- from municipal law, including zoning, to general civil and administrative appeals to criminal cases.

Before joining the firm, Keith learned each of these things firsthand, working first as a Research Attorney and then as a judicial law to the Honorable Christopher P. Yates at the Michigan Court of Appeals. Keith brings both his experience as an educator and as an attorney with the court to appellate practice. He understands that carefully choosing the issues to appeal and how to present them- and how to present a story of the case- to a panel of appellate judges is a major key to success.

Appeals, like trials, are about storytelling. They are mostly decided on the standard of review (the level of deference the appellate court must give to the trial court's decision) and the briefs, and Keith takes great care to write in the most clear and persuasive manner possible about the most fruitful issues. He also understands what judges expect from oral argument and how to best frame the case to the panel.

A good appellate practitioner speaks the language of appellate courts, and can both translate that language to the client and translate the client's story to the court. Keith understands both sides of that equation and works tirelessly to do both.

Outside of Law

Keith was raised in the most quintessential Michigan way, as the son of an autoworker and school bus driver, growing up in Wayne County. In high school, he was a drum major of his marching band and became an Eagle Scout. Then he attended Grand Valley State University where he was a leader in the marching band and founded and led an award-winning chapter of a student organization. He has lived in West Michigan ever since.

Before joining the legal profession, Keith served as a K-12 educator in districts throughout Michigan, where he taught middle and high school social studies, served as a substitute in a variety of settings, directed an after-school program for disadvantaged students, and for nearly a decade coached high school marching band.

Keith attended Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley law school in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids. There, he served as a teaching assistant, president of the student bar, and as a member of numerous student leadership boards. He won awards for "best brief" and for being the "top advocate" in moot court competitions. He also interned as a law clerk in the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan.



Keith now lives in Allegan, Michigan, with his two Siberian Huskies, Mishka and Mickey. Keith loves to study history and politics, roots for Detroit sports teams (he has a jar of dirt he collected near first base at old Tiger Stadium and autographed baseballs from, among others, Ernie Harwell and Al Kaline), and marches with the Laker Alumni Marching Band at GVSU, of which he is a founder and has served on the leadership team since 2012.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- In *Pegasus Wind LLC v. Tuscola County*, on April 10th, 2024, the Michigan Supreme Court upheld Tuscola County and the Tuscola Area Airport Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) previous decision blocking Pegasus Wind LLC's request to expand a wind farm after evidence showed that additional windmills would have posed a safety risk to aviators at a nearby airport. Brown was part of the team that represented Tuscola County and the ZBA Board and praised the court's decision.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Municipal Case Law Review, *Michigan Township Association (MTA)*, April 22, 2024

Controversial Land Uses, *Michigan Townships Association*, October 4, 2023

PUBLICATIONS

Summary Language Approved for Proposed Ballot Initiative to Repeal Renewable Energy Siting Law, *Municipal Law News E-blast*, January 22, 2024

Carbon Sequestration Wells: A New Land Use to Consider in Zoning Ordinances, *Foster Swift Municipal Law News*, September 19, 2023

The Next Controversial Land Use: Utility-Scale Battery Facilities, *Foster Swift Municipal Law News*, September 18, 2023

What Does Tyler v Hennepin County Mean for Foreclosures in Michigan?, *Foster Swift Municipal Law News*, June 15, 2023

Focus Orders & Tentative Opinions: Ways to Make Oral Argument More Efficient, *Spring 2023 Michigan Appellate Practice Journal*, April 10, 2023

MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

Community Affiliations:

- Grand Valley State University
 - Laker Alumni Marching Band, Board Member
- National Eagle Scout Association
 - Member
- Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity
 - Member



RECENT BLOG POSTS

Michigan Election Law Blog

Michigan Voters Pass Two Election-Related Constitutional Amendments

