



Stephen J. Owens

SENIOR COUNSEL

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OVERVIEW

For 14 years, Steve led the legal department of a large public university system and draws upon that practical knowledge to address his clients' most complex and high-profile challenges.

Having spent 14 years as the general counsel of the University of Missouri System, Steve has a strong track record of developing visionary growth plans, defusing crises, and guiding a major state university system through periods of rapid change that have reshaped American higher education. He is the only person in the university's history to serve as the UM system's general counsel, interim UM System president, and interim MU chancellor at different points during his tenure.

From this uniquely broad perspective, Steve provides clients with bold, big-picture thinking that addresses the legal, operational, regulatory, reputational, and financial challenges faced by today's universities. He has crafted and implemented solutions addressing an array of areas, including crisis management and crisis communications, diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, campus safety and reporting and Title IX issues, athletic department operations and athletic conference realignment, capital projects, litigation, academic medical center operations and governance, intellectual property transfers and transactions, internal investigations, system-wide governance issues, and leadership training, among a score of other vital areas of focus. Steve has also frequently represented parties in civil mediations, and he has completed training as a mediator conducted by the University of Missouri Center for the Study of Dispute Resolution.

Industries

Education
Healthcare

Services

Academic Medicine
Higher Education
Litigation & Alternative Dispute Resolution
Title IX

Steve has always embraced the often-novel nature of challenges faced by institutions of higher education and enjoys thinking through the complexities inherent in each unique situation.

Steve has twice served as a member of the board of directors of the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA) and currently serves as NACUA's Treasurer and on its four-member Executive Committee. He was also the former chair of NACUA's Council on Diversity and Inclusivity.

Before his long tenure with the UM system, Steve was in private practice for 26 years at Stinson LLP, where he served as chair of the litigation department, co-chair of the Environmental Practice Group, and as a member of the firm's Board of Directors and Executive Committee. During this time, he was selected for inclusion in the *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Environmental Law and Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers, Environmental Law.

Recognition

- Designated General Counsel Emeritus, University of Missouri System (UM)
- UM Board of Curators Resolution of Appreciation for service as Interim President
- University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) School of Law Distinguished Non-Alumnus Award
- Presidential Award for Outstanding Service to UM System
- MU Faculty-Alumni Award
- UM Board of Curators Resolution of Appreciation for service as General Counsel
- Martindale-Hubble highest rating for legal ability and ethics
- Selected for law school ABA accreditation site visit teams

Education

- J.D., Wake Forest University School of Law
- B.A., University of Missouri
 - Public Administration

Admissions

- Missouri
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court, District of Kansas
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit

Clerkships

- The Hon. William R. Collinson, U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri

Community Leadership

- Wake Forest School of Law General Counsel Advisory Committee
- Habitat for Humanity
- Great American Basketball League



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