



G.CRAIG SMITH

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PRACTICE AREAS:

Appellate Practice
Civil Rights
General Torts
Police Liability Defense
Premises Liability Defense
Public Entity Defense

EDUCATION:

University of California State, Long Beach (B.S. 2006)
Whittier Law School (J.D. 2009, cum laude)

BAR ADMISSIONS:

State Bar of California
Central District of California
Southern District of California
Eastern District of California
Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

HONOR SOCIETIES:

Law Review at Whittier Law School. Graduated *Cum Laude*

AWARDS:

California Criminal Justice Award

SEMINARS:

Orange County Sheriff's Department Training- Supervisory Course: MCLE Program Civil Litigation

EXPERIENCE:

Mr. Smith has been a civil litigator since 2009. Mr. Smith started his career at the Law Offices of James C. Bechler in the practice areas of business litigation, family law and criminal law. Mr. Smith then opened his own firm in 2012 until 2015 where he represented several business entities and conducted family law divorce trials. In 2015, Mr. Smith joined Ferguson Praet and Sherman (FPS) where he developed his passion for the defense of public entities, including, the handling of civil rights jury trials, personnel board hearings in the employment setting and defense of wrongful condition cases. In 2017, Mr. Smith joined Manning and Kass to continue his practice in the area of public entity defense, where he made partner in 2022. Mr. Smith has now joined Lynberg and Watkins as a lateral partner effective May 20, 2024.





Mr. Smith's practice encompasses all areas of civil and complex civil litigation relating to the defense of California public entities, including POBRA employment disputes and negotiations, wrongful termination and retaliation suits, civil rights/police liability, general negligence, wrongful death, premises and personal injury liability, workplace investigations, and appellate litigation. Mr. Smith has extensive experience in all phases of civil litigation, including, advising clients at the inception of incidents; rolling out to officer involved shootings to advise command staff and in house attorneys; settling claims prior to suit; responding to complaints; preparing and responding to written discovery; drafting and arguing discovery and dispositive motions in court; settlement negotiations; taking and defending depositions; assisting in trial preparation; arguing motions, lead and second chair trial counsel; researching and preparing post-trial motions; appellate briefing and arguing before appellate courts.

By way of illustration, Mr. Smith has represented over a dozen California public entities in civil litigation, including City of Azusa, County of Riverside, County of San Bernardino, County of Orange, City of Orange, City of Redondo Beach, City of West Covina, City of Covina, Baldwin Park, Fresno, City of Clovis, City of Tulare, City of Anaheim, City of Newport Beach, City of Huntington Beach, and City of Santa Barbara. In 2016, Mr. Smith was lead trial counsel in an excessive force case brought in Federal Court against City of Clovis police officers, which resulted in a defense verdict. Then, in 2018 Mr. Smith was co-lead trial counsel in an officer involved shooting case brought against County of Riverside deputies in which he likewise obtained a defense verdict. In 2019 Mr. Smith was second chair in a wrongful termination/employment trial in Santa Barbara that resulted in a plaintiff's verdict around the amount of the final demand made by plaintiff. Mr. Smith also handled personnel board hearings and has argued several appellate matters, including the published decision of SAPOA vs. City of Santa Ana, 13 Cal.App.5th 317 (Cal. Ct. App. 2017)

Mr. Smith conducts regular MCLE training of attorneys in civil discovery litigation tactics, and while with Manning and Kass was an instructor for the supervisory course of sergeants and supervisors at the Orange County Sheriff's Academy.