



McKINLEY IRVIN

FAMILY LAW

DAVID STARKS

PARTNER



BEST LAWYERS IN AMERICA® 2026

BEST LAWYERS "LAWYER OF THE YEAR" IN FAMILY LAW 2024

CHAMBERS HIGH NET WORTH GUIDE 2025

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Difficult Custody and Divorce
- Complex Divorce (cases involving business interests, complex financial issues, or asset values of \$1 million or more)
- Hague Convention cases
- International Divorce and Child Custody
- International and Local Relocation
- Parenting Plan Modifications

CONTACT DAVID

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Possessing a wide smile, engaging demeanor, quick wit, and a laser-sharp legal mind, David Starks is, as one colleague recently put it, Larger Than Life.

That personality has served him well over the years as he continues to carve out an impressive legal career rarely matched by attorneys twice his age: Diplomate, American College of Family Trial Lawyers; Fellow, International Academy of Family Lawyers; Top 100 Attorneys in Washington State; The Best Lawyers in America; Washington Super Lawyers, and most recently, Best Lawyers 2024 "Lawyer of the Year" for family law in the Seattle Metro Area.

Public rankings and recognitions aside, David is a strategic thinker, a gifted advocate, and a warm "people person" who insists that "law, even as an imperfect human creation, is capable of great things." He proves that every day, representing clients in a wide range of divorce cases involving the protection, valuation, and distribution of significant assets or business interests, as well as other cutting-edge family law matters, including international divorce and child custody.

"Practicing family law is emotionally satisfying for me. I much prefer the personal connection that comes with protecting the rights of my clients and their families to the impersonal process of representing corporations. And I've done both."

Whether at the negotiating table or in the courtroom, David says he will "go the distance" to resolve each case in his clients' interests. And he will do so with compassion and respect.

Admired around the office for his innate ability to connect with clients and for his willingness to share his expertise with younger lawyers, David Starks is the kind of professional who can handle with aplomb the toughest cases that come in the door.

"You wake up a little earlier than the other guy. You work a little later," he explains. "And you make sure you've done everything you can to ensure the best possible outcomes. That's what exceptional lawyering is all about. And that's the standard we have set for ourselves at McKinley Irvin."

"Mr. Starks has that rare combination of a deep, practical knowledge of the law as it is practiced, as well as a personality that makes you feel comfortable and valued."

– FORMER CLIENT, SEATTLE, WA



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EDUCATION

J.D., Seattle University School of Law, *cum laude*
B.A., English, University of Southern Indiana, *cum laude*

DISTINCTIONS

Fellow, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML)
Fellow, International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL)
Diplomate, American College of Family Trial Lawyers (ACFTL)
“Lawyer of the Year” by *Best Lawyers*® in the field of Family Law, 2022, 2024
Ranked Band 1 in Chambers High Net Worth Guide for Family/Matrimonial in Washington State, 2021–2025
The Lawdragon 500 Leading U.S. Family Lawyers Guide, 2024–2025
The Best Lawyers in America® in the field of Family Law, 2012–2026
Top 100 Attorneys in Washington State by Super Lawyers®, 2012, 2014–2024
Leading Family, Matrimonial & Divorce Lawyers (Seattle) by Doyle’s Guide, 2025–2026
Washington Super Lawyer by Super Lawyers®, 2010–2025

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

- National Liaison, Washington State Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML)
- Faculty, National Family Law Trial Institute, 2021–present
- Past President, Washington State Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML), 2017–2018
- Past Newsletter Ex Officio, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML)
- Executive Committee, International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL)
- Section Advisor of the American Bar Association to the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws’ Drafting Committee on the Implementation of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children
- Past Co-Chair, American Bar Association, International Law Section Family Law Committee, 2010–2011

MEMBERSHIPS

American Bar Association, Washington State Bar Association, State Bar of Texas, Oregon State Bar, King County Bar Association, Domestic Relations Attorneys of Washington (DRAW)
King County Bar Association Judicial Screening Committee
Washington State Bar Association Professionalism Committee

RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Panelist, “Family Assessments: From Errors to Excellence,” Washington AFCC 9th Annual Conference, April 2024
- Co-author, Chapter 71: *International Family Law, Washington Family Law Deskbook*, WSBA Continuing Legal Education, 2022 (with Marguerite C. Smith)

“David is a rockstar attorney. If you need a smart, wise, responsive, attorney for a tough case, David is definitely it. I felt connected, informed throughout a hard and long divorce and educated on process and next steps when I needed to be. I’m convinced that my divorce would have taken a different path without his wisdom and clear but fair approach.”

– FORMER CLIENT, SEATTLE, WA

ABOUT MCKINLEY IRVIN

McKinley Irvin is the Pacific Northwest’s premier law firm dedicated exclusively to family law. For over thirty years, our attorneys have been recognized for their leadership in a wide range of traditional and innovative family law matters, including high-conflict divorces, complex property division, collaborative law, contested child custody, international family law, military family issues, and LGBTQ+ family law.



Super Lawyers®

