



McKINLEY IRVIN

FAMILY LAW

DAVID STARKS

PARTNER



BEST LAWYERS IN AMERICA® 2027

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

CHAMBERS HIGH NET WORTH GUIDE 2026

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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David Starks is a preeminent family law practitioner whose practice is exclusively focused on high-net-worth matrimonial matters. His cases involve complex dissolution proceedings, the protection, valuation, and division of significant assets and business interests, and cross-border disputes governed by international treaty frameworks, including the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children

His standing in the field is reflected in a record of recognition that is, by any measure, exceptional. He holds Band 1 status in the *Chambers High Net Worth Guide* for Family/Matrimonial in Washington State, has been named "Lawyer of the Year" by Best Lawyers in his practice area twice, and has appeared continuously in *The Best Lawyers in America*® since 2012 and in *Washington Super Lawyers*® since 2010.

David is among a select group of practitioners nationwide who hold all three of the discipline's most rigorous peer-elected distinctions: Fellow and Certified Mediator of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers, and Diplomate of the American College of Family Trial Lawyers.

Beyond his own practice, David has contributed meaningfully to the development of the field as a faculty member of the National Family Law Trial Institute, a member of the Executive Committee of the International Academy of Family Lawyers, and a Section Advisor to the American Bar Association's representation on the Drafting Committee for the Implementation of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children. He served as President of the AAML Washington Chapter and continues to serve as its National Liaison.

That record of achievement serves something David considers far more important: the people who trust him with the most difficult matters of their lives. He is known among clients for being as attentive as he is accomplished and as clear in his communication as he is sophisticated in his legal thinking. At every stage of a representation, his clients know where they stand, what to expect, and that their lawyer is fully in their corner. For David, that commitment to the client informs the thoroughness of his preparation, the clarity of his strategy, and the judgment to know when to press a case hard and when a negotiated resolution best serves those he represents.

"You wake up a little earlier than the other guy. You work a little later. And you make sure you've done everything you can to ensure the best possible outcomes. That's what exceptional lawyering is all about."

"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, 2021–2026
The Lawdragon 500 Leading U.S. Family Lawyers Guide, 2024–2026
The Best Lawyers in America® in the field of Family Law, 2012–2027
Top 100 Attorneys in Washington State by Super Lawyers®, 2012, 2014–2026
Leading Family, Matrimonial & Divorce Lawyers (Seattle) by Doyle’s Guide, 2025–2026
Washington Super Lawyer by Super Lawyers®, 2010–2026

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

