INSLEE BEST

Darby N. DuComb

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Bio

Darby DuComb brings over 30 years of experience as a municipal lawyer, litigator, and trusted advisor to government agencies, private businesses, and nonprofit organizations. Her emphasis includes real property, land use, transportation law, governance, ethics, infrastructure, public works construction, contracts, small businesses, and organizational development. She joins Inslee, Best, Doezie & Ryder after serving as Legal Affairs Manager for the Seattle Department of Transportation. There she built and led compliance programs for claims, investigations, risk management, and Public Records Act obligations — work that saved the City of Seattle $15 million through improved investigation techniques and earned her a Transportation Equity Stewardship Superstar Award.

Darby's extensive public-sector leadership includes seven years as Chief of Staff and Deputy City Attorney for Seattle City Attorney Pete Holmes. In that role she managed a 160-person legal office serving a $5 billion municipal corporation. As part of her work, Darby led the 12-attorney team that negotiated the City's agreements with WSDOT for the landmark SR 99 tunnel project; played a key role in settling the U.S. Department of Justice's civil rights consent decree with the Seattle Police Department; and spearheaded a successful state legislative effort to decriminalize poverty by eliminating certain criminal sanctions for the nonpayment of fines.

In private practice, Darby has counseled municipalities, special purpose districts, business owners, and property owners on transportation, land use, real property, affordable housing, contracts, franchises, interlocal agreements, construction disputes, and risk management. She served as lead counsel for the Seaplanes Environmental Coalition in complex, multi-stakeholder negotiations over emerging airplane technology use on public waterways, and Darby secured regulatory approval for the Northlake Bioswale Project, advancing clean stormwater infrastructure in Seattle. Other representative projects include resolving street conflicts for a condominium building, helping Eastlake neighbors expand Terry Petus Park, obtaining an upper-level sign permit for a hotel in a historical landmark district, and obtaining relief for property owners from onerous permit requirements.

Earlier in her career, Darby litigated land use, environmental, and code enforcement cases for the City of Seattle and represented more than 70 people on appeal in the Court of Appeals Division One, including three arguments before the Washington State Supreme Court.

A trained neutral through the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution at Pepperdine Caruso School of Law and the University of Washington School of Law, Darby brings a collaborative, solutions-oriented approach to every matter she handles. She is an alternative dispute resolution advocate and a third-party neutral.

You will find that Darby listens, plans, sees the big picture, attends to the details, and follows through.

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INSLEE BEST

Education

- J.D., University of Oregon School of Law, 1994 — Associate Editor, Journal of Environmental Law and Litigation
- B.A. in Philosophy, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1990
- Mediating the Litigated Case, Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution, Pepperdine Caruso School of Law, 2018
- Professional Mediation Skills Training Program, University of Washington School of Law, 2009

Bar/Court Admissions

- Admitted, Washington State Bar Association, November 1994
- US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- US District Court for the Western District of Washington
- US District Court for the Eastern District of Washington

Professional & Civic Involvement

- American Bar Association: Alternative Dispute Resolution Section & Section of Real Estate, Trust and Estate Law
- Beacon Business Alliance: Pro Bono Attorney & Volunteer (2020–present)
- Page Ahead Children's Literacy Program: Board of Directors & Volunteer (2005–present)
- SODO Business Improvement Area, Board of Directors & Volunteer (2017–2022)
- CREDA Washington State: Government Affairs Committee & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (2017–2021)
- University of Washington School of Law: Adjunct Professor, Race and the Law (2012–2013)
- Seattle University School of Law Task Force on Race and Criminal Justice (2010–2012)

Honors, Awards & Special Recognition

- Transportation Equity Stewardship Superstar Award, Seattle Department of Transportation
- Race and Social Justice Excellence in Management Award, City of Seattle
- Rainier Valley Community Service Award, Rainier Chamber of Commerce
- Excellence in Management Award, City of Seattle

Personal

Outside the office, Darby enjoys kettlebells, swimming, spinning, travel, and spending time with family, friends, and their dog Jessie. She and her husband Steve live in NE Seattle.

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