

Kenneth B. Bell

Of Counsel

Tallahassee
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Practice & Industry Areas

- Business Litigation
- Eminent Domain & Property Rights
- Appellate Law

Education

- Florida State College of Law, J.D., with honors, 1982
- Davidson College, B.A., History, 1978

Bar & Court Admissions

- Florida Bar, 1982
- All Florida State Courts
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeal for the Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court
 - Northern District of Florida
 - Middle District of Florida
 - Southern District of Florida

Overview

Ken Bell focuses his practice on civil appeals and trial support. He currently co-chairs Gunster's firmwide Appellate practice.

Ken is a former Florida Supreme Court Justice, serving from 2002-2008. Prior to serving on Florida's highest court, Ken was as a circuit judge in Florida's First Judicial Circuit from 1991-2002. In 1991, he became the youngest Circuit Judge in the history of the First Circuit. During his twelve years on the circuit court bench, Ken handled more than 27,500 cases as a general jurisdiction judge, and was actively involved in seeking to improve the judicial system. Preceding his elevation to the judiciary, Ken was Pensacola's first board certified real estate attorney.

Ken's approach to delivering effective advocacy is to consistently strive to represent each client with both strength and precision of position. Honed over decades of practice, Ken remains dedicated to delivering the highest quality and most effective written and oral arguments designed to obtain optimal advantage for his clients. Having served as a judge himself, Ken understands how judges think and analyze cases throughout the trial and appellate process. Ken's experience in the judiciary and private practice strengthens his ability to develop and execute multi-dimensional strategies at trial or on appeal.

In addition to serving as appellate counsel, Ken is also called upon to serve as an arbitrator in civil and appellate matters. His personal commitment to problem-solving and dispute resolution is marked by a steadfast focus on delivering a balanced and fair assessment of each party's position.

Representative Matters

(Available upon request)

Honors

- AV Rated as independently determined by Martindale-Hubbell
- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Appellate Practice, 2023
- *Florida Trend*, "Legal Elite," Appellate Law, 2009-22; Hall of Fame, 2021-22
- Florida *Super Lawyers*, Appellate Law, 2012-2020
- "Dedication to Public Interest Law," Public Interest Law Student Association, FSU College of Law, 2004
- Judicial Distinguished Service Award, Florida Council on Crime and Delinquency, Chapter VI, 2000
- "Certificate of Appreciation," Waterfront Rescue Mission, for four years of service as board president, during which services doubled for homeless and drug addicted men and women
- "God in Government Award," Cantonment-Ensley Ministerial Association, presented "to an elected official who has demonstrated a measure of moral and spiritual excellence in office," 1996
- "Above and Beyond Award," SED Network (Multi-Agency Network for Severely Emotionally Disturbed Children) for "dedication and commitment in service to severely emotionally disturbed children and their families," May 1995
- "Certificate of Appreciation" from the Florida Association of School Resource Officers and the Santa Rosa County Sheriff for "continuous assistance and support to Santa Rosa County's School Resource and Dare Officers," for the years 1994 and 1995

Publications & Presentations

- “Discretionary Jurisdiction in the Practicing Before the Florida Supreme Court Seminar,” Appellate Practice Section and Government Lawyer Section, 2016
- “Whose side are you on: Superman’s or the ‘Elites’,” Ethics presentation, 1st Judicial Cir. Legal Community Conference, October 2012
- “No Courts-No Justice-No Freedom,” 2012 Law Day Luncheon, Okaloosa-Walton Bar Association
- “Persuasive Brief Writing” presentation at Appellate Practice Seminar, March 2012
- “Can’t We All Just Get Along: Tips for a Successful Eminent Domain Mediation,” ALI/ABA Eminent Domain and Land Valuation
- Litigation/Condemnation 101: Making the Complex Simple in Eminent Domain, February 2011
- “From Time to Time: Avoiding Regrets When Administering a Title Claim,” Florida Land Title Association’s 2010 Round Table, April 2010
- “That Mean Mean High Water Mark: The Stop the Beach Renourishment Decision,” Florida Land Title Association’s 2009 Round Table, April 2009
- “Florida’s Judicial Branch: Something to Cherish,” Panhandle Tiger Bay Club, March 2009
- “Legacy: A Raccoon Syndrome Therapy Session,” The Leadership Academy of Sacred Heart Health System, January 2009
- “Pray For Those In Authority,” Community Prayer Breakfast, October 2008
- Presenter, First Circuit Bench & Bar Professionalism Seminar, May 2008
- Keynote speaker, Judicial Appreciation Luncheon, the Collier County Women’s Bar Association, October 2008
- “Professionalism Before the Supreme Court,” Practicing Before the Supreme Court Seminar, June 2008
- Keynote speaker, Lake County Law Day, May 2008
- “Appellate Practice,” American Inns of Court-Pensacola Chapter, November 2007
- Keynote speaker, Crystal River Annual Law Day Luncheon, May 2007
- “In Derogation of Common Law: A Flawed Doctrine,” Federalist Society, May 2007
- Keynote speaker, Dedication of the Historic Clay County Courthouse, April 2006
- “The Dibble: Finding Direction in Times of Doubt or Despair,” Jacksonville Chapter of CLS, April 2005
- Commencement speaker, Florida State University, Spring 2005
- Presenter/Facilitator in Criminal, Civil and Family portions of Fifth Judicial Circuit’s Annual Professionalism Conference, Spring 2004-06
- “A View from the Bench: Professionalism in Appellate Practice,” Advanced Capital Cases Seminar, October 2004
- Keynote speaker on Professionalism, Jacksonville Bar Annual Luncheon, October 2004
- “Our Common Cause: Preserving Our Democracy by Assuring a Healthy Independent Judiciary,” Business Law Section Annual Luncheon, the Florida Bar Annual Meeting,

Summer 2004

- Prayer for National Leaders, Annual Florida Leadership Prayer Breakfast, March 2004
- Keynote speech on Judiciary, National Day of Prayer, Washington, D.C., May 2004
- “Honoring Those in Authority,” 28th Annual Governmental Prayer Breakfast, February 2004
- “More Than a Conviction: Seeking Justice,” Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association, September 2003
- “Ambassadors of Justice; Servants of the Law,” Issues Forum, Florida Coastal School of Law, September 2003
- “State of the Judiciary,” RPPTL Section’s Annual Legislative and Recent Case Law Update, Summer 2003-08
- “The Future of Your Courts: The Impact of Revision 7 on Civil Actions,” Florida Retail Federation Annual Meeting, Summer 2003
- “Revision 7 to Article V and Its Impact,” RPPTL Section Annual Meeting, May 2003
- “Independent Courts Protect Our Liberties,” Law Day Speech, Escambia-Santa Rosa Bar Association, May 2003
- “Fathers: Legacy Matters,” Father Initiative Annual Banquet, April 2003
- “Principles of Effective Advocacy,” FSU College of Law Moot Court Annual Banquet, April 2003
- “A Charge to Judge Ronald V. Swanson,” Investiture Speech, May 2003
- “The Relationship Between the Trial and Appellate Courts,” Florida District Court of Appeals
- Annual Education Conference, Pointe Vedre, Florida, September 2002
- Inner City Youth Rally speech encouraging a unified stance against gang activity, drug abuse, teen sex/pregnancy and STDs, 2000
- “Our Youth At Risk: Today’s Child From Where I Sit,” Santa Rosa County Association of School Administrators, April 1998
- “Drugs, Gangs and Juvenile Court,” Drug Awareness Seminar, Santa Rosa County
- “The Juvenile Justice System: Its Strengths and Weaknesses,” a series of speeches to service clubs across the First Judicial Circuit
- “Ruminations of a Circuit Judge,” Alabama Hereford Association, June 1994
- “Family Law and Domestic Relations,” Guardian Ad Litem Training Course, 1991-99
- “Criminal Justice – A System in Crisis,” Kiwanis, Rotary, Christian Businessmen Club and other social organizations throughout First Judicial Circuit, Spring 1991
- Lecture on “Tenancies” at the Annual RPPTL Real Estate Certification Course, 1990
- Lectures on the “First Amendment Free Exercise Clause and Public Schools” to school administrators seeking Masters in School Administration, UWF, 1998-99
- Lectures on Evidence, Business Law and Real Estate Closings, Pensacola Junior College’s Legal Studies Program, late 1980’s
- Lectures to Realtors and Homebuilders on real estate contracts, leasing, closings, mechanic’s lien law and professional liability, Escambia-Santa Rosa Counties, 1984-90

Professional Associations & Memberships

- The Florida Supreme Court
 - Workgroup on Improved Resolution of Civil Cases, the Judicial Management Council
- American Bar Association
 - Litigation: Appellate Practice Section, 2009-18
- Florida Bar
 - Appellate Law Section, 2009-present
 - Executive Council
 - RPPTL Section, liaison
 - Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section, 1982-present
 - Amicus Coordination Committee
- Escambia-Santa Rosa Bar Association
 - ESRBA Foundation board member, 2007-14

Civic & Community Service

- Chief Justice appointee to Florida Supreme Court, *Workgroup on Improved Resolution of Civil Cases*, 2021-22
- Florida Tax Watch
 - Center for Smart Justice, advisory board chair
 - Center for Government Efficiency, advisory board member
 - Florida Tax Watch's Board of Trustees, trustee
- Florida, state of
 - Government Efficiency Task Force, appointed by Gov. Scott (2015-16)
- Waterfront Rescue Mission,
 - Board vice-president, 2014
 - Board president, 1995-1999
 - Board of directors, 1990-present
- Escambia County Consolidation Study Commission, chair, 2009-10
- Rules of Judicial Administration Committee, the Trial Court Budget Commission, the District Court Budget Commission, the Small Claims Rules Committee, and the RPPTL Section of the Florida Bar, Supreme Court liaison, 2003-08
- Florida Legal Services, Inc., nomination committee, 2003-08
- Supreme Court's Circuit Committee on Professionalism- First Circuit, 2000-02
- Florida Conference of Circuit Judges, 1991-2002
- Delphi Study Commission-Judges Committee, 1999
- Pensacola Area Chamber of Commerce, 2008-2014
- Justice Fellowship, board of directors, vice president and executive committee, 1991-2001

- Escambia County 4-H Foundation, board of directors, 2000-02
- Northeast Pensacola Sertoma Club, board of directors and vice president, 1983-86
- Leadership Pensacola, Class of 1986
- Sacred Heart Foundation, Inc., board of directors, 1986-89
- Friends of Children's Hospital at Sacred Heart, Inc., founding president and board of directors, 1985-86
- Pensacola Board of Realtors, Continuing Education Committee, lecturer, 1984-90
- Homebuilders Association of West Florida – Land Use Committee, lecturer, 1984-90
- Attorney's Title Insurance Fund, 1982-90
- Yan-Bian University of Science & Technology, founding president and board member (then known as Yan-Bian Chinese-Korean Technical University), 1989-91