



Richard Murray

Polsinelli Attorney Receives
2020 Richard Marden Davis Award

BY HALEY HEMEN

Involvement as he is in the Denver community, Richard Murray has long been aware of the Davis Award. The award is given annually to an individual under 40 who “combines excellence as a lawyer with creative civic, cultural, educational, and charitable leadership as to best exemplify the character and promise of Richard Marden Davis at that stage in his career.” Murray says, “I have always been in awe of the accomplishments of those who have been honored with this award. Upon hearing the news that I was receiving the Davis Award, I was overwhelmed with joy and humbled to be included in such a group of distinguished attorneys.”

Path to a Fulfilling Career in Colorado

Murray’s early draw to the legislative and political arenas paved a path to the law. “As a high school student entering college, I had a strong interest in the political arena and the legislative process for lawmaking. I went on to major in political science and philosophy (topical in law and society) at the University of Colorado at Boulder and interned at the US House of Representatives and the Colorado House of Representatives. Our society’s structure around the rule of law has always been something I marvel at, and my trajectory as a student naturally took me to law school.” During his time at CU, Murray served as student body president of the

30,000-student Boulder campus, overseeing a nearly \$30 million student government budget.

Born and raised in Southern California, Murray had moved to Colorado for college. When the opportunity arose to attend CU Law School, he didn’t hesitate; he knew Colorado was where he wanted to establish his roots. He enrolled at CU Law and set his sights on a career as a transactional attorney. “I structured my coursework for the first couple of years going down that path,” he says. However, in his third year, he had the opportunity to intern for Colorado Court of Appeals Judge David Furman and Colorado Supreme Court Justice Allison Eid. “My love for research, writing, and advocacy grew through those out-of-the-classroom experiences, and I shifted my focus to litigation.”

Colorado offered much to Murray as he began his career. “In my first year following law school, I had the privilege of clerking for Justice Nathan B. Coats on the Colorado Supreme Court. It was an experience of a lifetime and the mentorship, skills, and experiences from that one year immensely helped the transition from student to attorney. Following the clerkship, I became an associate at the former firm of Kennedy Childs & Fogg, P.C., and worked directly with Mark Fogg. Mark taught me the importance of how, as an attorney, we have the ability to help people at some of the most difficult points in the lives, and the laudable nature of a profession of putting someone else’s interests ahead of your own.”

Community Engagement

Murray credits his mentor Fogg as one of the people who motivated him to become more involved with and to give back to the Denver community. Fogg, who was president of the Denver Bar Association (DBA) at the time, encouraged Murray to join local bar associations. “The balance between work and community involvement has been a central part of my career and life over the past dozen or so years,” says Murray. Over the years, Murray has served as the president of Continuing Legal Education in Colorado, Inc. (CBA-CLE) and on the CBA Board of Governors, and at different times has been both first and second vice president of the

DBA. Currently, he serves as the immediate past chair of the CU Law Alumni Board and the elected secretary of the Colorado Access to Justice Commission, which is by appointment of the Colorado Senate. He is also a fellow of the American Bar Foundation and the Colorado Bar Foundation. In 2018, Murray received the DBA Young Lawyer of the Year Award.

"I initially became a board member of CBA-CLE as a DBA appointee," Murray says. "I went on to serve two years as president of the organization. As the nonprofit educational arm of the CBA and DBA, CBA-CLE plays an important role in the ongoing educational development and practice of our state's attorneys, and it was a pleasure to be able to serve our legal community this way. During my time as president, CBA-CLE's financial position made a remarkable comeback and the organization moved into new office space, together with the CBA and DBA. I am proud of the accomplishments of the organization during that time."

Murray recently ran for CU Regent in Colorado's sixth congressional district, making it to the general election after a 30-point primary election victory. In 2020, in the midst of the campaign, he completed a term as the chair of CU Law School's Law Alumni Board. Murray's decision to join the Law Alumni Board was inspired as a way "to give back and contribute to my alma mater and the next generation of attorneys. I frequently said during my campaign for CU Regent this year that I am everything I am because of the University of Colorado—the education it provided me, the experiences it gave, and the people I met. As a former chair of the Law Alumni Board, I am proud of the strong work being done to increase the diversity and inclusiveness of the law school, the legal community, and the bench."

Murray was a member of the Thompson G. Marsh American Inn of Court from 2007 to 2016 and served on its executive committee from 2012 to 2013. Murray was introduced to the Marsh Inn of Court while clerking for Justice Nathan B. Coats at the Colorado Supreme Court. "I began attending meetings and very much enjoyed the group and programs," says Murray.

Of course, Murray's engagement is not limited to Denver's legal community. Murray



Rich with wife Elizabeth, son Cayden, and daughter Olivia.

previously served for several years on the board of trustees for Historic Denver, Inc., an organization dedicated to the preservation of Denver's rich history, as well as on its governance and outreach committees. He also served on the board of the Bacchanalian Society of Denver, a nonprofit organization that hosted wine tasting fundraising and awareness events for numerous local charitable organizations; the board of directors of the University Club of Denver; and the board of directors of the Lincoln Club of

Colorado. In addition, he has participated in the Colorado Chamber of Commerce's EXECs Advocacy Program and the Emerging Leaders Build for Habitat for Humanity.

Current Practice

Murray joined his current firm, Polsinelli, in the summer of 2012. "My mentor, Mark Fogg, at my old firm had left about a year earlier to become general counsel of COPIC and it seemed to be the right time in my career to make a

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shift,” recalls Murray. “As an undergraduate, I earned a minor in business administration, and in law school, I had largely prepared for a business-type of law practice. An opening for a commercial litigation associate position at Polsinelli was first brought to my attention by Michael Dulin at Polsinelli, whom I knew from my Inn of Court. I joined Polsinelli in August 2012 as an associate and have been a shareholder at the firm since November 2016.”

Murray counts himself lucky to have benefited from wise and generous mentors throughout his career. It is something he values highly even now as he has gained a good deal of wisdom and experience for himself. “Relationships with mentors are not isolated to a point in time,” he says. “For me, they have lasted and grown over the years. The law has long been a profession based on mentorship, whether it be the old times of an apprenticeship type of relationship to the modern partner/associate relationship at a firm. Young lawyers succeed and grow exponentially in their professionalism and abilities with the steady hand and guidance of willing and engaged mentors throughout their careers. At Polsinelli, we have a strong mentorship program that I am proud to participate in.”

Taking It All in Stride

Despite the challenges this year has brought, Murray seems to be taking the changes in stride.

“Since March, I have largely worked remotely from home. For the past several years, domestic and international travel for work was common and frequent. The pandemic has shifted that nature of my work dramatically, with hearings, mediations, and meetings going virtual.”

The same goes for his family. Murray and his wife, Elizabeth—a Colorado native, CU Boulder alum, and former preschool teacher—have been supervising their kids, Cayden, 8, and Olivia, 5, as they attend school virtually. “Our dining room has turned into their classroom,” says Murray. Murray and his wife just celebrated 10 years together on December 29. They got engaged while snowshoeing in Rocky Mountain National Park near Bear Lake in February 2010.

Murray enjoys the time he spends with his family and looks forward to a time when things get back to normal so he can once again cheer on his kids—Cayden plays baseball, basketball, and soccer; Olivia plays soccer and does ballet—as well as participate with Cayden in the Cub Scouts, go camping, and attend CU Buffs football and basketball games.

Richly Deserved

As we look ahead to a brighter 2021, please join the Denver Bar Foundation, Davis Graham and Stubbs, and the Davis family in congratulating 2020 Davis Award recipient Richard Murray. His achievements are sure to inspire future generations of Colorado lawyers. **CL**