



Graham M. Smith

Graham Smith is the current president of the Southwest Colorado Bar Association.

PROFILE

Hometown:

Salina, Kansas

Law School:

University of Colorado

Lives in:

Durango, Colorado

Works at:

Newbold Chapman & Geyer, P.C.

Practice Area(s):

Real Estate, Employment, General Civil Litigation, Some Criminal Defense, Special Prosecutor—Southern Ute Indian Tribe

CBA Member Since:

2002

What is one of the most positive experiences you've had as a lawyer?

As a deputy district attorney and as a special prosecutor for the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, I've worked on several "problem solving courts" and witnessed people overcome incredible obstacles to turn their lives around. I think these courts are doing an amazing job of improving people's lives and making our communities safer at the same time.

What do you like best about your practice area?

The thing I like most is the "area" I practice in—Southwest Colorado. I have personal relationships with the other attorneys in the region, and we are able to represent our clients in a courteous, professional, and effective manner.

What's the best advice you've ever been given?

Never send an email longer than "yes" or "no," if "yes" or "no" will answer the question.

What do you wish you had learned in law school?

I was an appellate attorney for the Wyoming Attorney General's Office. In that position, I argued several cases in the Wyoming Supreme Court—and even one case in the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals—against law students. It would have been an amazing experience to have been able to do that in law school.

Who is your favorite writer and why?

I don't think I could narrow it down to one favorite. But I re-read George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language" every year in an effort to make my own writing more clear; particularly his six rules:

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech that you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.


Outside of the law, what are your hobbies?

Teaching skiing. I've been a fully certified ski instructor for over 20 years.

What is your favorite place to escape to in Colorado?

Silverton.

If you weren't a lawyer, you'd be?

A ski school director or a ski area manager. 

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