

BASSFORD REMELE

Aram V. Desteian

SHAREHOLDER | GENERAL
COUNSEL



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Practice Groups

Business & Commercial Litigation
Professional Liability

Overview

Aram Desteian represents businesses in complex commercial litigation, and also counsels and defends other lawyers against a spectrum of professional liability claims.

Aram's commercial litigation practice includes representing businesses in a wide range of business disputes. As a professional liability attorney, he regularly helps other lawyers prevent and navigate lawsuits, investigations, board proceedings, and hearings involving legal ethics, legal malpractice, and other areas relating to the law of lawyering. Aram has developed a reputation as one of Minnesota's go-to "lawyer's lawyers," serving as outside ethics and risk management counsel to law firms large and small throughout the state.

Aram graduated *magna cum laude* from William Mitchell College of Law. Prior to entering law school, Aram served as Deputy Finance Director to an incumbent U.S. Senator's reelection campaign, as well as PAC and Political Director to a national advocacy organization with offices in Washington D.C. and Minneapolis.

Aram is chair of the Minnesota State Bar Association Professionalism & Ethics Section and serves as Bassford Remele's General Counsel.

Education & Admissions

Education

- William Mitchell College of Law, J.D., *magna cum laude*, 2014
 - Dean's List
 - William Mitchell Merit Scholarship
 - CALI Award Recipient, Professional Responsibility; Agency, Partnerships, and LLCs; Introduction to Tribal Law and Constitutional Criminal Procedure Award for Excellence in the Study of Employment Law, Minnesota State Bar Association, Labor & Employment Law Section, 2014
 - St. Olaf College, B.A., *cum laude*, 2005

Bar Admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit

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- U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin
- Minnesota
- Tribal Court of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community

Judicial Clerkships

- Fourth Judicial District, The Honorable Regina M. Chu, Judicial Extern, 2013

Experience

Publications

- *PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ACTIONS: Ethical Obligations for Lawyers Advising in an Evolving Legal Landscape*, co-author, Attorney at Law Magazine, Vol. 14, No. 2, February 2025
- *Minnesota Trust Administration Deskbook with eFormbook, 5th Edition*, author, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education, Ch. 2, Professional Responsibility, January 2025
- *The Role of Generative AI in Law Firms: Navigating Ethical and Regulatory Challenges*, author, Attorney at Law Magazine, Vol. 13, No. 8, August 2024
- *Tips for Minimizing the Risk of a Law Firm Data Breach*, author, Attorney at Law Magazine, Vol. 12, No. 8, August 2023
- *Elements of Privilege: Made in Confidence*, co-author, Attorney-Client Privilege Deskbook, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education, 2023 Update
- *The Flat Fee Fable: A Cautionary Tale of a Flat Fee Fail*, author, Attorney at Law Magazine, Vol. 12, No. 7, July 2023
- *Don't Panic: First Steps to Take if Faced With an Ethics Complaint*, author, Attorney at Law Magazine, Vol. 12, No. 4, April 2023
- *Four Things Closely Held Shareholders Should Know*, author, Upsize, September 2022
- *Getting paid with Crypto*, author, Bench & Bar of Minnesota, September 2022
- *Elements of Privilege: Made in Confidence*, author, Attorney-Client Privilege: What Every Attorney Needs to Know Seminar, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education, 2019 Update
- *New Developments in Ethics and Professional Responsibility*, co-author with K.P. Hickey, The Litigator's Annual Short Course, Minnesota State Bar Association, February 2018

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- *Legal Malpractice/Professional Responsibility Update*, co-author with K.P. Hickey, The Litigator's Annual Short Course, Minnesota State Bar Association, February 2017
- *The Close Corporation Privilege Trap: The Troubled Legacy of Evans v. Blesi and the Minnesota Courts*, co-author with C.D. Marshall, Bench and Bar of Minnesota, November 2015
- *How to Leave Your Law Firm and Live to Tell the Tale*, co-author with C.E. Lundberg, Bench and Bar of MN, September 2015
- [*The Tide Has Turned: An Update Regarding the Evolution of the Intra-Firm Attorney-Client Privilege*](#), co-author with C.E. Lundberg, International Association of Defense Counsel Professional Liability Newsletter, February 2015
- *Update on the In-Firm Privilege*, with lead author, C.E. Lundberg, Minnesota Lawyering – Legal Ethics Blog, December 4, 2014
- *New Developments in the Law Governing Privilege for Communications with Firm Counsel*, co-author with C.E. Lundberg, Minnesota Lawyering, November 1, 2013

Seminars

- *Viva Lost Values: Defending Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*, presenter, Professional Liability Defense Federation Annual Meeting, September 18, 2025
- *Ethics: Representing Clients with Diminished Capacity*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education, July 22, 2025
- *2025 Civil and Criminal Ethics*, presenter with Susan Humiston, Director OLPR, Minnesota Counties Attorney's Association, May 21, 2025
- *Professional Responsibility*, co-presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Minnesota Trust Administration Deskbook Seminar, January 30, 2025
- *Ethical Considerations for Multi-Jurisdictional Practice: A Guide for Today's Employee Benefits Practitioner*, co-presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education 2025 Advanced Employee Benefits Workshop, January 29, 2025
- *Ethical Challenges for In-House Counsel in Transactions*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education 2024 In-House Counsel Crash Course, November 14, 2024
- *Risky Business: Common Ethical Issues in Representing Closely Held Businesses*, presenter, Lying, Cheating & Stealing Seminar, Secrets and Solutions for Handling Messy Business Disputes, October 9, 2024

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- *Using Technology Safely and Responsibly in a Legal Setting: Understanding Key Ethics Rules, Avoiding Misuse*, presenter, Strafford Webinar, August 30, 2024
- *Exploring the Ethical Labyrinth: Navigating AI's Pitfalls and Promises in Your Practice*, panelist, Bassford Remele's Annual Ethics Seminar. August 20, 2024
- *How to Manage Conflicts and Confidentiality Issues in Probate and Trust Matters*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Seminar, July 9, 2024
- *Putting the "E" (Ethics) in ADR*, presenter, Powerhouse Mediation, June 4, 2024
- *Ethics: Conflicts of Interest in Representing Closely-Held Businesses*, co-presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education 2024 Business Law Institute, May 6, 2024
- *When the Client's License is on the Line – Defending Attorney Disciplinary Complaints*, panelist, American Bar Association National Legal Malpractice Conference, New Orleans, LA, April 4, 2024
- *Complying with New Developments in Ethics and Professional Responsibility*, co-presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Civil Litigator's Annual Update, April 27, 2023 and March 12, 2024
- *The Ethics Compass – Guiding Principles for New Lawyers*, presenter, Minnesota State Bar Association New Lawyers Seminar, November 3, 2023
- *Security Training Awareness*, co-presenter with Element Technologies, October 3, 2023 and November 1, 2022
- *How to Avoid Common Ethical Mistakes Made by Criminal Attorneys*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education 2023 Criminal Justice Institute, August 24, 2023
- *Pleadings – How to Manage the Rules, Keep Track of the Timelines and Tell Your Client's Story*, co-presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education How to Navigate Your First (or Next) Civil Case in Minnesota State Court, August 21, 2023
- *The Client File and Responding to Subpoenas*, presenter, Minnesota State Bar Association Professionalism and Ethics Section, July 25, 2023
- *Ethics: Representing Clients with Diminished Capacity*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Probate and Trust Law Section Conference, July 18, 2023
- *Ethical Considerations of Multijurisdictional Practice*, presenter, Lorman Education Services, June 29, 2023

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- *Ethics: Who Do I Represent? The Close Corporation Attorney-Client Privilege Trap*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Ownership Disputes in Closely-Held Businesses: Preventing, Managing, and Resolving Seminar, March 6, 2023
- *Legal Ethics: New Developments in Multijurisdictional Practice and Law Firm Cyberattacks*, presenter, 2023 Midwest Legal Conference on Data Privacy and Cybersecurity, February 7, 2023
- *Navigating Workplace Well-Being*, presenter, Minnesota State Bar Association, February 2, 2023
- *Hot Topics and Common Ethical Issues in Estate Planning*, co-presenter with Amy Morris Hess, Bassford Remele A Loss of Trust: What Trust and Estate Litigators Think Estate Planners Need to Know, January 24, 2023
- *Hot Topics and Common Ethical Issues in Estate Planning*, co-presenter with Kathleen Buck of Minnesota Lawyers Mutual, Bassford Remele Mom Always Liked You Best: Tips from Experienced Trust Litigators for Estate Planners and Trustees, January 24, 2023
- *Legal Ethics Topics for Labor & Employment Lawyers*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education 2022 Employment Law Seminar, November 15, 2022
- *How Truly Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Panel Counsel Positively Impacts Your Case*, presenter, Professional Liability Defense Federation, Chicago, Ill., September 16, 2022
- *The Impact of Technology on Legal Malpractice Claims and Lawsuits*, presenter, Professional Liability Defense Federation, Chicago, Ill., September 15, 2022
- *The Legal and Ethical Implications of the Close Corporation Attorney-Client Privilege Trap*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education 2022 Business Law Institute, May 9, 2022
- *The Ethical Implications of Accepting Cryptocurrency for Legal Fees, Ransomware, and Other Technology-Related Issues in Legal Ethics*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Workers' Compensation Institute, April 26, 2022
- *Ethical Implications of Accepting Cryptocurrency as Payment for Legal Services*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Banking Law Institute, April 21, 2022
- *Law and Ethics Update*, presenter, Torts, Litigation, and Ethics XI, September 17, 2021
- *Recovery of Attorneys' Fees*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Remedies & Damages in Commercial Litigation, July 30, 2021

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- *Lessons Learned: Utilizing the Pandemic Experience to Avoid Legal Pitfalls and Cyber Security Risks as We Move to a Hybrid Workforce*, panelist, Bassford Remele Ethics Seminar, June 23, 2021
- *Legal Ethics Updates and Hot Topics*, presenter, Hennepin County Bar Association Ethics and Professionalism Section, February 12, 2021
- *Ethics: Who Do I Represent? The Close Corporation Attorney-Client Privilege Trap, Shareholder Disputes in Closely-Held Businesses*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education, January 25, 2021
- *New Developments in Ethics and Professional Responsibility*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education 2021 Civil Litigator Half-Day Seminars, January 26, 2021
- *Law and Ethics Update*, presenter, Torts, Litigation, and Ethics XI, August 28, 2020
- *New Developments in Ethics and Professional Responsibility*, co-presenter with K.P. Hickey, Minnesota State Bar Association The Litigator's Annual Short Course, February 2020
- *Elements of Privilege: Made in Confidence*, presenter, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Attorney-Client Privilege: What Every Attorney Needs to Know Seminar, December 11, 2019
- *Ethical Obligations of Listening to (or Ignoring) Client Requests*, presenter, Lorman Education Services, October 2, 2019
- *What if You Get Hit By a Truck? aka Succession Planning is for Everyone*, presenter, Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company Defense Panel Seminar, August 6, 2019
- *Ethics, Technology, and You: Lawyer Ethical Obligations Relating to Technology and Cyber Security*, panelist, Bassford Remele Ethics Seminar, June 18, 2019
- *Law and Ethics: Legal Ethics Update*, presenter, Torts, Litigation, and Ethics X, April 12, 2019
- *Choice of Law & Causes of Action Against 3M Under Minnesota Law*, presenter, 3M CAEv2 Earplugs Seminar, February 26, 2019
- *New Developments in Ethics and Professional Responsibility*, co-presenter with K.P. Hickey, Minnesota State Bar Association The Litigator's Annual Short Course, February 2019
- *Elements of Privilege: Made in Confidence*, presenter, Attorney-Client Privilege, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education What Every Attorney Needs to Know Seminar, August 30, 2018
- *Ethical Issues for In-House Counsel and The Lawyers They Hire (Including Ethical Conflicts)*, presenter, June 20, 2018

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- *Hot Topics in Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility - Torts, Litigation and Ethics VII*, presenter, Eighth Annual Litigation and Ethics Seminar, April 6, 2018
- *New Developments in Ethics and Professional Responsibility*, co-presenter with K.P. Hickey, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Civil Litigator's Annual Short Course, February 2018
- *Fair Debt: Ethics in Consumer Collection Litigation*, presenter, The National Creditors Bar Association Fall Conference, Washington, D.C., October 14, 2017
- *Hot Topics in Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility*, presenter, Seventh Annual Litigation and Ethics Seminar, April 7, 2017
- *Common Ethical Pitfalls Facing New Lawyers*, presenter, Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association New Lawyers Section, April 6, 2017
- *New Developments in Ethics and Professional Responsibility*, co-presenter with K.P. Hickey, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education Civil Litigator's Annual Short Course, February 2017
- *The Ethics of Lawyer Mobility: How to Leave Your Law Firm and Live to Tell the Tale*, co-presenter with C.E. Lundberg, Hennepin County Bar Association webinar, January 8, 2016

Professional & Civic

Professional Achievements

- Douglas K. Amdahl Inn of Court, Master

Bar Associations

- American Bar Association
- Minnesota State Bar Association
 - Professionalism & Ethics Section, Member, 2015-present; Chair, 2022-present
 - Rules of Professional Regulation, f/k/a Rules of Professional Conduct Committee, 2016-present
- Hennepin County Bar Association
 - Awards Committee, 2021-2022

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Professional Associations

- Professional Liability Defense Federation
 - Lawyers Professional Liability Claims, Vice Chair, 2022-present
- Association of Professional Responsibility Lawyers

Civic Involvement

- Minneapolis Club
 - Board of Governors, 2023-present
 - President, 2024-present
- St. Paul Academy and Summit School, Alumni Council, Former Council Member
- Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota, Board of Directors, 2018-2024
- Volunteer Lawyers Network, 2014-2018

Accolades

Honors & Awards

- Top Lawyer list, *Minnesota Monthly*, Commercial Litigation and Legal Malpractice Law, 2024-2025
- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Commercial Litigation, 2026
- Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch, Commercial Litigation and Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions, 2022-2025, Legal Malpractice Law, 2024-2025
- Up & Coming Attorney, *Minnesota Lawyer*, 2021
- Attorney of the Year, as part of the *Syngenta* Legal Team, *Minnesota Lawyer*, 2017
- Minnesota Super Lawyers list, *Super Lawyers*, 2025
- Minnesota Rising Stars list, *Super Lawyers*, 2018-2024