English Lucas Priest & Owsley, LLP



Michael A. Owsley

Partner

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Overview

Sometimes, the best way to prove a case is to show what happened. Mike Owsley uses re-enactments in his work defending businesses and school boards from lawsuits to help judges and juries understand the circumstances of a claim, most often in defense work.

In one case, the family of a deceased boater sued a boat manufacturer. The boater struck an underwater object, flipping the boat over and killing him. Representing the boat manufacturer, Mike reviewed the circumstances of the accident, and believed the boater was much more to blame – given the fact that he was boating at 3 a.m. in an unlit area. So Mike hired a boater to re-enact the route of the boat and hired a video crew to film it. He showed it to the judge presiding over the case, who saw exactly what he did – pitch black. The court ruled in favor of the boating manufacturer.

PRACTICE AREAS

- Education & School Law
- Employment Law
- Business Litigation
- Product Liability
- Mediation & Dispute Resolution
- Public Finance

In another case, a superintendent fired a teacher after her students reported to the school principal that she was drunk. The school principal summoned state police, who tested the teacher's blood alcohol level. It was more than twice the legal limit for intoxication. The teacher protested her firing, saying she had taken a homeopathic remedy that had caused her blood alcohol level to spike. Mike asked his legal assistant, who was about the same weight and height as the fired teacher, if she would take the homeopathic drug and then a blood alcohol test in court. She agreed – and her blood alcohol level was 0.0. The tribunal upheld the teacher's firing.

"Demonstrations are often the best way there is to defend a client against a baseless case," Mike says. "It is often worth the time and trouble to re-enact an event as a way to prove the point. It's the next best thing to having a videotape of the event in question."

Mike has largely become one of the foremost authorities on school district law and policy in Kentucky through his extensive work with school boards. ELPO represents more than 20 districts in Kentucky. For many years, Mike and Regina Jackson, another attorney with ELPO, conducted training for the Office of Leadership and School Improvement of the Kentucky Department of Education. Every new superintendent in the state is required to have this training as part of their requirement to hold their office.

School districts need specialized legal counsel, Mike says, because representing a school district calls for balancing traditional employment law with Kentucky laws that apply to teachers and school administrators exclusively. Mike's challenge is to stay on top of all of those laws, including employment, schools and First Amendment issues that pertain to both the students and staff within a school district.

Mike's work helps school boards meet their duties to educate students and prepare the workforce of the future. "The administrators we work with are trying to do the right thing under difficult circumstances," Mike says. "But this isn't easy. The laws that govern school boards are detailed and ever-changing, as is the case law in this area. We're able to help school districts make sound decisions and avoid costly lawsuits by working with them and helping ensure their decisions are grounded in the law."

Mike has enjoyed watching Bowling Green change and grow around him. He's raised his family in the city, and has long been

involved in many civic causes in the area and also in his profession. He's served as the Past President of the Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce and a Former Director of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. He's been chair of the Leadership Kentucky Foundation and Director of the Kentucky Council on Economic Education. He is currently serving on the Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Fund for KET, Inc.

"As a firm, ELPO has always been actively involved in helping the community meet its industrial objectives," Mike says. "Bowling Green grew and prospered and became the community it is today largely because of the important work of the Chamber and those who have led it over the years."

GOOGLE REVIEWS:

"Mr. Owsley and staff (Maira Gomez) went above and beyond to help me in my legal case. Very quick to respond and very accurate with details and instructions. The respect and service had always been top notch, being an adult and never having legal issues before they both took the time to explain everything in detail and made the unpleasant experience a very easy one. I would absolutely recommend them to anyone they could help."
– Sara Tubolino

Credentials

Education

- University of Louisville Louis D. Brandeis School of Law, J.D., 1968
- Western Kentucky University, Bachelor of Science, 1964

Admission

- Kentucky, 1968
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- U.S. District Courts for the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky

Affiliations

- American and Kentucky bar associations
- Bowling Green-Warren County Bar Association, Past President
- American College of Trial Lawyers
- Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel
- Defense Research Institute
- Kentucky Defense Counsel, Past President
- National School Boards Association, Council of School Board Attorneys

- Kentucky School Boards Association, Council of School Board Attorneys, Past President
- Commonwealth Fund for KET, Inc., Board of Directors

Community Involvement

- Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce, Past President
- Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Past Director
- Leadership Kentucky Foundation, Past Chair
- Kentucky Council on Economic Education, Past Director
- Leadership Kentucky, Graduate

Insights

News

- Fifteen ELPO Law Attorneys Recognized in 2027 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America
- ELPO Law Attorneys Recognized in the 32nd Edition of The Best Lawyers in America©
- ELPO Law Attorneys Recognized by Best Lawyers in America® and Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America.
- Ten ELPO Law Attorneys Recognized in The Best Lawyers in America© 2024; Five Named Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch
- Nine ELPO Law Attorneys Recognized as Best Lawyers 2023; Five Named Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch
- Michael Owsley Joins KET's Commonwealth Fund Board
- Kentucky School Board Insurance Trust Members to Receive $5 Million Disbursement
- Join ELPO to learn what your business needs in an employee handbook
- Kentucky school systems to receive additional $1.8 million in reimbursements
- Employment law attorneys led discussion at SHRM meeting
- ELPO sponsors school principal institute for fifth year
- ELPO wins $9.2 million decision for education client
- Mike Owsley co-authors article for national school board magazine
- Employment law group speaking at Kentucky SHRM conference
- Mike Owsley leading effort to study Kentucky courts
- Mike Owsley offers training for education board
- Mike Owsley to serve on KY Chamber executive committee