



LaJuana S. Wilcher

Partner

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Overview

LaJuana Wilcher is a nationally known environmental attorney who has served in top-level environmental policy positions in federal and state government currently serving as the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Federal Agriculture Mortgage Corporation (Farmer Mac). LaJuana is also a Fellow of the American College of Environmental Lawyers. She has unparalleled knowledge and experience representing clients before environmental administrative agencies and courts throughout the country, including a matter before the U.S. Supreme Court. Regularly pressing cases relating to environmental permitting, compliance and enforcement issues involving wastewater, air, wetlands and hazardous waste, she also counsels clients on the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act.

LaJuana's experience crafting laws and regulations has served her well in her work. She served as the nation's senior

PRACTICE AREAS

- Environmental Law
- Litigation
- Mediation & Dispute Resolution
- Utilities Law
- Appellate Practice

regulatory official for water programs at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from 1989 to 1993. She led EPA's involvement in the Exxon Valdez oil spill litigation negotiations, in which the government reached a settlement of more than \$1 billion with Exxon for the environmental damage sustained because of the Valdez spill. She was also instrumental in launching EPA's watershed protection approach and Clean Water Act section 319 nonpoint source grant program, and in major policy decisions involving federal drinking water, wetlands and stormwater requirements and permitting.

Following her position with EPA, she served as a partner in the Washington, D.C. offices of two large international law firms, working with corporations (including Fortune 100 companies), municipalities, startup firms and not for profit professional and environmental organizations. She left the east coast after 19 years to work at ELPO in 2002, fulfilling a dream to return to her hometown of Bowling Green.

Another opportunity came her way in 2003 that she hadn't expected: public service in her home state of Kentucky. "I had no intention to leave for state government, but I do believe in public service," LaJuana said. "I felt that I had a bit of a debt to pay. The citizens of Kentucky gave me quite an opportunity . . . a great education. I felt it was something I ought to do."

LaJuana served as Secretary of Kentucky's Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet from 2003 to 2006. During her tenure, Ms. Wilcher worked on issues as diverse as mine safety legislation and enforcement, air and water quality issues, broadband deployment, insurance and banking regulations, occupational safety and health initiatives, recycling, wildland arson, new regulations for Kentucky horse racing and the regulation of professional boxing and wrestling in the state, among other things. She served as the Co-chair of the Governor's Energy Policy Task Force and was a member of a number of boards and commissions, including the Kentucky Horse Racing Authority (ex officio), the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority, and the Kentucky State Board on Electric Generation and Transmission Siting.

Focusing her career on environmental issues was born from a simple love of the outdoors and a strong belief in the importance of stewardship. Her grandfather was a logger, spending every day outdoors cutting timber. Her father regularly took LaJuana camping. "Since I was 15 years old, I wanted to do things to help us have a good place to live on the Earth," LaJuana says.

“God has entrusted this Earth to us and we have an obligation to do the best we can. I like to find creative ways to do things that are good for the client and good for the environment.”

LaJuana taught law courses as an adjunct faculty member at Vanderbilt Law School and environmental law and policy during the summers at Vermont Law School, which is top ranked for environmental law. She is frequently asked to speak to groups on environmental law topics, and has spoken at the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs, the Annual Conference on Environmental Law of the American Bar Association’s Section of Environment, Energy and Resources Law, the Kentucky Bar Association Annual Convention and the International Conference on Water and the Environment, among others.

She’s happy to be back home. LaJuana owns and operates Scuffle Hill Farm in Alvaton, KY. “My whole life I had wanted to live in the country and have a farm, and I decided to move home and try a different way of life,” LaJuana said. “Not a single day do I regret it. I’m happy to be where my heart is.”

LaJuana is currently serving on the Board of Directors for the Warren County Conservation District, as Chair of the Energy and Environmental Policy Council for the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, and as Vice Chair for the Federal Agriculture Mortgage Corporation (Farmer Mac).

Credentials

Education

- Western Kentucky University, B.S., magna cum laude, 1977
- Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University, J.D., 1980

Admission

- Kentucky, 1980
- District of Columbia, 1997

Affiliations

Court Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Kentucky

Appointed Federal and State Government Positions

- Secretary, Kentucky Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet, 2003 to 2006
- U.S. National Park System Advisory Board, 2004 to 2006
- U.S. Commission on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2003 to 2009
- Assistant Administrator for Water, U.S. EPA, 1989 to 1993
- Assistant to the Deputy Administrator and Special Assistant to the General Counsel, U.S. EPA, 1983 to 1986
- Special Assistant to the General Counsel, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1983
- Kentucky Horse Racing Authority, 2003 to 2006 (ex-officio)
- Kentucky Infrastructure Authority, 2003 to 2006
- Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission, 2003 to 2006
- Kentucky State Board on Electric Generation and Transmission Siting, 2003 to 2006
- Board of Directors, Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation (Farmer Mac), 2019; Board Chair, 2020; Vice Chair, 2023

Professional Associations

- American, Kentucky and Bowling Green-Warren County Bar Associations
- D.C. Bar Association
- American Water Works Association (Honorary Member)
- Salmon P. Chase College of Law Board of Visitors (2010 to 2018)
- Advisory Board for the Environmental Law and Policy Annual Review (Environmental Law Institute and Vanderbilt University Law School)
- Warren County Conservation District, Board of Supervisors
- Ogden College of Science and Engineering at Western Kentucky University, Advisory Council
- Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors
- Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Energy and Environmental Council, Chair
- Fellow, American College of Environmental Lawyers

Community Involvement

- Friends of Mammoth Cave National Park, Board Member Emeritus

Insights

News

- ELPO Law Attorneys Recognized in the 32nd Edition of The Best Lawyers in America©
- ELPO Law Environmental Attorney Speaks at Federal Issues Summit
- ELPO Law Attorneys Recognized by Best Lawyers in America® and Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America.
- ELPO LAW ATTORNEY LAJUANA WILCHER PARTICIPATES IN ANNUAL WOMEN'S SUMMIT
- Ten ELPO Law Attorneys Recognized in The Best Lawyers in America© 2024; Five Named Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch

- **LEGAL UPDATE: EPA Announces Proposed National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR)**
- **Three ELPO Law Attorneys to Serve as Co-Counsel in Lawsuit Against the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers**
- **Nationally Recognized Attorney LaJuana Wilcher Attends Clean Water Act 50th Anniversary**
- **Nine ELPO Law Attorneys Recognized as Best Lawyers 2023; Five Named Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch**
- **ELPO Law Attorneys Published in American Bar Association's Environmental Law Resource Book**
- **The American College of Environmental Lawyers Announces LaJuana S. Wilcher as Newly-Elected Fellow**
- **Farmer Mac Announces LaJuana S. Wilcher as Board Chair**
- **Farmer Mac Announces LaJuana S. Wilcher as New Presidentially-Appointed Director**
- **Nationally Recognized Attorney LaJuana Wilcher Serves on Clean Water Law & Enforcement Panel**
- **LaJuana Wilcher, Sarah Jarboe, Joye Beth Spinks contribute to ABA year-end review**
- **Sarah Jarboe, LaJuana Wilcher to speak at Environmental Conference**
- **LaJuana Wilcher elected to Kentucky Chamber Board of Directors**
- **Attorney LaJuana Wilcher quoted in Bloomberg news story**
- **Attorney LaJuana Wilcher speaks at national water quality conference**
- **LaJuana Wilcher, Sarah Jarboe contribute to ABA year-end review**
- **Senate Strengthens EPA's Tools to Regulate Toxic Substances**
- **Supreme Court creates new opportunity to challenge Clean Water Act obligations**
- **Atmos Energy chooses ELPO for lobbying**
- **ELPO tops in environmental law**

Presentations

- **LaJuana Wilcher, Sarah Jarboe present to Kentucky Rural Water Association**
- **LaJuana Wilcher presents to Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies**
- **LaJuana Wilcher addresses Southern Legislative Conference on Clean Water Rule**
- **Sarah Jarboe, LaJuana Wilcher presented at Kentucky Water Law Conference**
- **Environmental attorneys address stormwater issues in presentation**
- **Environmental attorneys to present national webinar**
- **LaJuana Wilcher presents EPA update**
- **LaJuana Wilcher presents at Clean Water Conference**