

Aja Brooks

Aja Nicole Brooks is a native New Mexican, born in Hobbs. She attended Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. (B.A., English and Spanish) and the University of New Mexico School of Law (J.D., 2008). She works as the Director for the Second Judicial District Court's Center for Self-Help and Dispute Resolution in Albuquerque, NM. She is involved with the Committee on Diversity in the Legal Profession, Bridge the Gap Mentorship Program, New Mexico Black Lawyers Association, Region X of the National Bar Association, ACLU of New Mexico, New Mexico Black Central Organizing Committee, and the IOTA XI Omega Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

Rep. Pamela Herndon

Lawyer and nonprofit chief executive Pamela Herndon serves the people of New Mexico as the representative from district 28.

She earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from Howard University, and then attended the University of Texas Law School where she received her J.D. degree. Herndon began her career with a major accounting firm and next was hired by the Internal Revenue Service as a senior litigation attorney. Herndon moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, during her work with the IRS.

She went on to serve as deputy cabinet secretary for New Mexico's General Services Department, overseeing the administration of the government agency that housed the Risk Management, Building Services, Property Control, Transportation Services, and Administrative Services Divisions.

She was then hired by the Southwest Women's Law Center in 2012 to work as their executive director until October 2018. At that time she founded the KWH Law Center for Social Justice and Change and became their president and CEO. Herndon has also taught courses on the main campus and in the law school of the University of New Mexico. Additionally, she helped train paralegals and legal secretaries at Brookline College in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Leon Howard

After graduating from the University of New Mexico School of Law, Leon Howard began his career working as an Assistant District Attorney in the First Judicial District of New Mexico primarily prosecuting DWI and domestic violence cases. After Leon left the district attorney's office, he focused on civil rights as a staff attorney for the ACLU of New Mexico, with special concentration on First and Fourth Amendment cases. After two years with the ACLU of New Mexico, Leon began working in the private sector with the Dan Cron Law Firm where he carried a large criminal defense practice, and then at his own firm, the Law Office of Lucero & Howard, where he continued to focus on civil rights. In January 2018, Leon returned to the ACLU of New Mexico as legal director, where he leads the affiliate's legal department and litigation efforts.

Leon is passionate about advocating for the rights of underrepresented populations and people who are victims of governmental/institutional abuse of power. Leon is a board member of the New Mexico Innocence & Justice Project, Co-Chair of the New Mexico State Bar Committee on Diversity, Part Time

Faculty at the University of New Mexico, and Past Vice President of the New Mexico Black Lawyers Association. Super Lawyers Magazine has named Leon a “Rising Star” in the area of civil rights from 2014 through 2017, and in 2015 he was recognized by Albuquerque Business First Magazine as one New Mexico’s “40 Under 40”.

Randi McGinn

Randi McGinn is one of the country’s leading trial lawyers, having represented thousands of men and women in her 40 years of practice and having tried to verdict over 130 civil and criminal cases – everything from trucking collisions to workplace violence to medical malpractice to products liability lawsuits. She lost only 6 of those trials, giving her a 95% success rate.

Trials are won and cases are settled based on who tells the best story. Having started out as a journalist, Randi McGinn is a consummate storyteller. From the pile of facts that is your case, she reaches in and pulls out the beating heart of your story. She is famous for her creativity in the courtroom and use of both high- and low-tech demonstrative evidence to help the jury see and understand what happened. She has utilized powerful animations, life-size human blowups, persuasive PowerPoint presentations, toy cars and trucks, and three-dimensional models of roadways and a mountain hillside to re-create accidents in the courtroom.

The first woman president of the Inner Circle of Advocates (a group of the 100 best trial lawyers in the U.S.), she is able to reveal the truth through her devastating cross-examinations. Ms. McGinn has destroyed adverse witnesses by leaving a pretentious Beverly Hills doctor standing in front of the jury covered with post-its and clutching a grapefruit to his chest and by grilling a government snitch until he threw up. You can watch her takedown of an expert in this cross-examination of Bill Lewinski.

She recently was appointed as a special prosecutor and tried the first New Mexico criminal case against any police officer. Two Albuquerque police officers faced charges for an on-the-job shooting of a homeless man, James Boyd. The case ended in a hung jury but reduced the number of shootings of citizens by the Albuquerque Police Department.

Ms. McGinn has obtained several of the largest verdicts in New Mexico history. In 2019, she obtained the largest verdict ever against a semi-trailer manufacturer for its decision not to build its trailers with side underride guards that would prevent passenger cars from becoming trapped underneath the trailer.

She started her career with a bang by giving birth to her daughter, Heather, the day before the 3-day bar examination.