Knox McLaughlin Gornall & Sennett, P.C.
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Philip J. Seaver-Hall

Associate



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Philip focuses his practice on appellate, constitutional, commercial, and civil-rights litigation. He has argued before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania, the Superior Court of Pennsylvania, and numerous trial courts throughout Pennsylvania. Philip is a member of the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE)'s Legal Network, a nonpartisan group of attorneys who litigate cases in defense of the fundamental rights of expression, association, and conscience.

Philip graduated with Woolsack Society honors from Pennsylvania State University's Dickinson School of Law, where he now serves as Adjunct Professor of Law. Before law school, Philip was an accomplished classical musician who routinely worked with Grammy Award- and Juno Award-winning musicians. He has performed in hundreds of concerts throughout the United States—including at Carnegie Hall—as well as in Canada and Italy.

In 2025, Governor Josh Shapiro appointed Philip to serve on the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania, the state agency responsible for investigating complaints of misconduct against members of Pennsylvania's judiciary.

Philip's mission is to advise and advocate for his clients expertly, efficiently, ethically, and empathetically in all stages of a case, from pretrial to appeal.

Practice Areas

- Governmental Practice
- Litigation

Education

- Pennsylvania State University, Dickinson School of Law, J.D.
  Certificate in Litigation and Dispute Resolution; Woolsack Honor Society; The Order of Barristers; Associate Editor of Jus Gentium, The Journal of International Legal History; Moot Court Board; Class Representative for Women's Law Caucus; Research Assistant to Emeritus Dean Gary S. Gildin (specialization: qualified immunity from constitutional tort liability)

- Mercer University, B.A.
  cum laude; McDuffie Center Presidential Scholar; National Political Science Honor Society; Vice President of Women's and Gender Studies Honor Society; Vice President of Pre-Law Society; Mock Trial Team; Principal Violist with Mercer University Orchestra

Admissions

- Pennsylvania
- Michigan
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

Representative Experience

- Obtained favorable decision from Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court for two school district clients, regarding mask mandates during COVID-19 pandemic – the first of its kind on this topic
- Obtained $5.3 million judgment in favor of corporate client in commercial breach-of-contract action
- Obtained unanimous reversal from the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court in favor of landowner client
- Obtained dismissal, with prejudice, of key claims in federal non-competition/non-solicitation lawsuit against franchisee client
- Argued before Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court in governmental easement dispute
- Obtained dismissal, with prejudice, of Sunshine Act lawsuit against municipal client
- Obtained dismissal, with prejudice, of lawsuit seeking writ of mandamus against township client
- Obtained compulsory nonsuit for municipal client in eminent-domain trial
- Obtained dismissal with prejudice of two anti-mask lawsuits seeking judicial removal of Millcreek and North East School Boards
- Litigated complex federal appeal concerning alleged contempt of court in client's environmental case
- Obtained judgment in favor of landlord client following over $20,000 worth of property damage to rental unit caused by tenant
- Obtained favorable settlement after resting case in federal civil-rights trial on behalf of prisoner
- Obtained discovery sanctions against government-affiliated defendants for the government's destruction of relevant evidence
- Obtained favorable settlement on behalf of homeowner in lawsuit against construction contractor

Honors

- Included in Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch, Commercial Litigation, 2026-2027
- Selected as one of 2024 Erie's 40 Under 40, *Erie Reader*
- Pro Bono Award, Pennsylvania Bar Association, 2023
- Pro Bono Award, Erie County Bar Association, 2023
- Included in Pennsylvania Super Lawyers® Rising Stars, 2023-2026



- Honored Listee in Marquis Who's Who, 2025



- CALI Excellence for the Future Awards (Federal Courts; First Amendment; Sales Law; Wills, Trusts & Estates; Conflict of Laws; Legal Argument & Factual Persuasion), Penn State University Dickinson School of Law
- "Best Brief" Award and Semifinalist - ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition, Brooklyn Regional
- #1 Best Defense Advocate Award - Intra-School Mock Trial Competition, Penn State University Dickinson School of Law

Community and Professional Service

Professional Affiliations

- Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania, *Appointed Member (2025-present)*
- Erie County Bar Association, *Local Rules Subcommittee Member (2022-present); Judicial Evaluation Committee (2022-present)*
- Pennsylvania Bar Association, *Legal Academics Committee (2021-present); Bar Admission Issues Subcommittee (2023-present); Judicial Administration Committee (2025-present); Appellate Advocacy Committee (2025-present); and Civility in the Profession Committee (2025-present)*
- Pennsylvania Bar Association Young Lawyers' Division: *Liaison to Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee Member (2023-present); Liaison to Legal Academics Committee Member (2023-present); and Co-Chair for Zone 7 (2025-present)*
- American Bar Association, *Member*
- Bar Association of the Third Federal Circuit, *Member*

Community and Professional Service

- Pennsylvania State University’s Dickinson School of Law, *Adjunct Professor of Law - Advanced Legal Writing, Spring 2025*
- Erie Philharmonic, *Executive Vice President (2025-present); Board of Governors (2022-present); Former Chair (2024-2025) and Vice Chair (2023-2024)*
- Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park (LEAF), *Board Member (2022-2024)*
- Dickinson Law Moot Court Team, *Coach (2022-present)*

Presentations

Speaking Engagements

- Pennsylvania Provincial Conference: Erie Town Hall, hosted by Jefferson Educational Society, Panelist, April 2026
- Junior Achievement Career Talk, July 2025
- Pennsylvania Association for Justice Webinar, July 2024: Improving Your Legal Writing: A Crashcourse
- Firm's Annual Municipal Law Symposium, 2024: "Tell It To the Judge" panelist
- Firm's Annual Municipal Law Symposium, 2023: (1) Legal Tips Panel, tips on multi-district litigation (MDL) and (2) Special Education topic: Navigating Manifestation Determinations and Reducing Liability Through Regulatory Compliance

Articles and Publications

- U.S. Supreme Court Sides with Transgender School Athlete, Upholds Preliminary Injunction Permitting Team Participation

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About Knox Law

Knox McLaughlin Gornall & Sennett, P.C. is a full service law firm that has provided practical solutions to businesses, families, public entities, and nonprofits for over 65 years. Our practice areas include ADR Services, Bankruptcy & Creditors' Rights, Business & Tax, Business Succession, Construction Law, Elder Law, Employee Benefits, Environmental Law, Estate Planning & Administration, Governmental Practice, Health Law, Intellectual Property & Technology, Labor & Employment, Litigation, Mergers & Acquisitions, Public Finance & Bonds, Real Estate, and Workers' Compensation.