

JUDICIAL PROFILE:



HON. CONNIE STEINHEIMER

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Working as a juvenile probation officer right out of college, Judge Connie Steinheimer found herself drawn to the courtroom setting; she realized that if you wanted to have a voice in that courtroom you needed to be an attorney – so she decided to enroll in law school. More than three decades later, Steinheimer definitely made her voice heard in the courtroom, both as an attorney and a judge. “[Being a probation officer] has influenced my perception of attorneys. It encouraged me to listen to people in the courtroom,” Steinheimer said.

Steinheimer began practicing in Nevada in 1980 and started her career in private practice, taking on both civil and criminal cases. She was elected to the bench in 1992 and has been a judge for the second judicial district ever since.

Keep it Civil

The courtroom is a formal place in Steinheimer’s eyes, but there are many attorneys who do not observe basic rules of etiquette in the courtroom. Attorneys in her court should be “carrying yourself ... so everyone knows the courtroom is a formal place.” Swearing is definitely out of the question, but basic formalities,

such as not using first names, listening without interrupting and standing when addressing the court also make a good impression on Steinheimer. She said there are some who are not formal naturally, but all need to make an effort to show respect in the courtroom.

One of the hallmarks of a good attorney, according to Steinheimer, is being ready for your day in court. “Truly gifted attorneys know there is no substitute for preparation,” Steinheimer says. Also showing a little candor in the courtroom also helps.

Most Memorable Cases

Steinheimer said that during her time on the bench she has been fortunate enough to preside over many influential and interesting cases, including the Dow Chemical breast implant case and the Sparks Tank Farm case. The Dow case drew national media attention, particularly when the jury awarded the plaintiff (a woman who had implants put in after a double mastectomy) \$14 million in damages.

Surviving the Economy

When Steinheimer began her four-year term as Chief Judge in 2008, the economy was a menacing challenge. “I felt personally responsible for employees and their families,” she said. 2009 and 2010 in particular were difficult, but she worked the problem, finding ways to cut spending by freezing hiring and moving folks around departments (instead of hiring a new person) to keep them working for the court. “It was like moving chess pieces,” she said about the challenge.

Time to Travel

When her children were younger, Steinheimer enjoyed taking part in their activities, coaching softball if the girls played, joining the PTA and being an active parent. Now that her children are grown, Steinheimer enjoys traveling, reading and philanthropic efforts. ■