

# STARN • O'TOOLE • MARCUS & FISHER

A LAW CORPORATION



**Director**

tbrown@starnlaw.com  
(808) 537-6100

**Education**

**Yale Law School**

J.D. (1990), *Yale Law Journal*

**Christian Heritage College**

B.S., *Counseling/ Psychology* (1987)  
Valedictorian, *Summa Cum Laude*

**U.S. Court of Appeals Clerkship:**

*United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit*  
Law Clerk to the Honorable Herbert Y.C. Choy  
(1990-91)

**Areas of Practice:**

*Real Estate, Corporate and Trust Litigation and Transactions; Secured Financing*

**Professional Activities:**

*Licensed in Hawaii, California, Arizona & the District of Columbia*

*Director, Christian Legal Society of Hawaii*

**Presentation/ Articles:**

["Selected Issues in Church Governance", "](#)  
[Perfection And The Importance Of A Name"](#)

Since 2013

## TREVOR A. BROWN

Trevor A. Brown represents clients in both litigation and transactions. His real estate experience ranges from resort acquisition and development to acting as trial counsel to establish beach access rights based on Kingdom of Hawaii land use. Mr. Brown's corporate experience ranges from negotiating corporate restructurings to acting as trial counsel to force the break-up of related land development corporations. He holds *Martindale-Hubbell's* highest possible professional rating (AV) for both his skill and integrity. Mr. Brown is recognized in *Best Lawyers in America* in ten categories: Business Organization (including LLC's and Partnerships), Closely Held Companies and Family Businesses Law, Commercial Transactions/UCC Law, Corporate Law, Real Estate Law, Commercial Litigation, Securities Litigation, Trusts & Estates Litigation, Mortgage Banking Foreclosure Law and Real Estate Litigation. Mr. Brown has been named by *Best Lawyers in America, 2017 "Lawyer of the Year"* in Honolulu, in the practice area of Mortgage Banking Foreclosure Law, and *Best Lawyers in America, 2019 "Lawyer of the Year"* in Honolulu, in the practice area of Closely Held Companies & Family Business.

Mr. Brown has been selected to the *Hawaii Super Lawyers* list since 2013, and named to the *2015 and 2018 Top 25* list, *Business Litigation*. Mr. Brown is recognized by *Chambers and Partners USA Leading Lawyers for Business* in the practice area of *General Commercial/Litigation*. Mr. Brown is also recognized by *Benchmark Litigation (Litigation Star)* for his litigation expertise, and is a former Chair of the Litigation Section of the Hawaii State Bar Association. *Chambers and Partners USA High Net Worth Guide* has recognized Mr. Brown in the practice area of *Private Wealth Law (2017, 2018)*. Mr. Brown was among the first Hawaii lawyers to be reviewed by the guide, and the firm is one of 4 firms recognized in the State of Hawaii.

Trevor A. Brown has acted as special counsel to provide legal opinions in complex financing transactions. He served as a Co-Reporter for the Opinion Committee of the Real Property and Financial Services Section of the Hawaii State Bar Association. The Committee's *Hawaii 2000 Report on Lawyer's Opinion Letters in Mortgage Loan Transactions* is published at 22 U. Haw. L. Rev. 347 (2000). Mr. Brown has also served on subsequent bar committees addressing lawyers' opinion letters. Mr. Brown lives in Kaimuki

with his wife and three children.

## **What People Say About Mr. Brown:**

*Trevor Brown is characterized by peers as having "an analytical mind that is on a different level." Clients echo this praise, calling Brown "meticulous" and "extremely quick with his response time."*

*Benchmark Litigation Comment*

*Trevor Brown is popular with clients, with one commenting: "He is the most detailed, organized attorney I have ever used. You know he is giving you 100% when working on your case." He is notably experienced in trustee compensation and shareholder disputes. A source notes: "He is one of the most talented strategic thinkers I've met in years, and stands out in a room of the local elite. He routinely comes up with thoughts that are the next step."*

*Chambers and Partners USA, Leading Lawyers for Business Comment*

*Trevor Brown handles a wide range of transactional and disputes work, including a significant caseload of trusts litigation matters. "He is a very cerebral lawyer and a tireless advocate for his clients," enthuses one source, adding: "He is extremely creative in arriving at legal solutions and thinks outside of the box. He will wake up at 2am with a brainwave and have solved the case. What a hero! His tireless effort and non-stop work is amazing. He is a tremendous talent."*

*Chambers and Partners USA, High Net Worth Guide Comment*

*"My experience with Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher has been very satisfying for several reasons: 1) they have high ethical standards; 2) they network with a wide range of highly regarded attorneys and other professionals; 3) they are responsive and communicate well; 4) they manage legal fees well."*

*Calvin Takara, Associate Pastor, Kaimuki Christian Church*

**Chambers and Partners High Net Worth Guide** included Hawaii in their research for the first time in 2017. The firm and Mr. Brown were recognized in the practice area of *Private Wealth Law*. In 2018, Mr. Brown was again recognized by the respected guide as one of 10 lawyers ranked, and the firm was among 4 firms recognized in the State of Hawaii.

*"Trevor Brown handles a wide range of transactional and disputes work, including a significant caseload of trusts litigation matters. "He is a very cerebral lawyer and a tireless advocate for his clients," enthuses one source, adding: "He is extremely creative in arriving at legal solutions and thinks outside of the box. He will wake up at 2am with a brainwave and have solved the case. What a hero! His tireless effort and non-stop work is amazing. He is a tremendous talent."*

*Chambers and Partners, High Net Worth Guide, 2017*

*Trevor Brown is best known for trusts litigation. "He is strategic-minded and thoughtful," says an interviewee; "he is very approachable and enjoys discussing matters with clients and counsel." Another source enthuses: "He is creative and dogged in his determination. His case theory is impeccable; he doesn't leave a stone unturned. His strategic thinking is one of his strengths. If he is on the other side we think, 'son of a gun, we're going to have to work hard'. He's a force to be reckoned with." Chambers and Partners, High Net Worth Guide, 2018*

**Some examples of Mr. Brown's work include:**

**Real Estate Litigation.** Acting as trial counsel to establish easement rights for beach access, including presenting testimony and arguments related to use of property dating back to the Kingdom of Hawaii. Cancelling a fraudulent deed arising out of an international murder and theft scheme that was the subject of national press coverage.

**Complex Contract/Corporate Litigation.** Acting as trial counsel to enforce contracts, obtain control, and ultimately force the break-up of a group of related corporations in the land subdivision business.

**Trust Litigation/Advice.** Defending a trustee of a large land-holding trust from claims of alleged self-dealing and misconduct. Serving as lead litigation counsel in probate and circuit court to take control of a trust and related corporate entities. Garnishing assets held in a trust and obtaining court rulings disregarding the trust as a barrier to collection. Representing beneficiaries and trustees in separate cases involving the distribution of assets, violation of a health and maintenance clause, and competency. Advising a trustee regarding trust real estate and business operations, and obtaining court direction and approval as needed.

**Fraudulent Transfer Litigation.** In separate cases, both prosecuting and defending fraudulent transfer claims involving multi-million dollar international transactions, including seizing local and foreign assets.

**Development Litigation.** Defending development rights against constitutional and statutory challenges to allow the construction of a large Waikiki Hotel. Presenting lay and expert testimony in a contested proceeding before a neighbor island Planning Commission to restrict shopping center development with adverse effects on client's existing center. Challenging permitting protocols for waterfront property as the product of illegal administrative rule making.

**Debt/Property Acquisitions:** Acquiring notes and mortgages as a means of obtaining control of real property assets (golf courses, undeveloped land, and residential properties) and then obtaining control of the assets through enforcement of the debt instruments.

**Secured Transactions:** Acting as lead local counsel in a variety of complex secured transactions including the assignment of a billion dollar attorney fee award and a \$100 million asset management fee income stream. Acting

as lead litigation counsel to establish the priority of a judgment creditor's claim over a secured creditor based on financing statement defects.

**Communication Facilities:** Serving as lead local counsel for a national company which acquires, constructs, and maintains towers for mobile phone antennas, addressing land use, zoning, leasing, and regulatory issues.

**Real Estate Development/Transactions:** Representing landowners developing resorts and mixed use commercial developments, including negotiating development agreements, construction contracts and leases. Representing clients in a variety of real property acquisitions, including developed properties, raw land and leased fees.

**Corporate Transactions.** Restructuring the relationship between majority and minority shareholders in a closely held corporation, negotiating the sale of a closely held corporation, and structuring the buy-out of a minority shareholder.

**Lease Litigation:** Representing landowners and lessees in matters related to interpretation and enforcement of leases and rent reset provisions.

**Securities Litigation.** Representing a national brokerage house and obtaining summary judgment disposing of claims of alleged securities law violations.

**Mediation.** Mediating disputes related to the dissolution of a law partnership including the division of large contingent fees.

**Environmental Litigation.** Litigating cost recovery claims related to environmental contamination.