# 19 O’NEIL CANNON LAWYERS SELECTED AS 2027 BEST LAWYERS; ANOTHER 3 NAMED BEST LAWYERS: ONES TO WATCH

We are pleased to announce that 19 of our lawyers have been included in the 2027 Edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*, and an additional three have been selected as 2027 *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*.

The following are the O’Neil Cannon lawyers named to the 2027 lists:

*Best Lawyers in America*

- Doug Dehler – Litigation – Insurance
- Jim DeJong – Corporate Law, Mergers and Acquisitions Law, and Securities / Capital Markets Law
- Seth Dizard – Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law and Litigation – Bankruptcy
- Pete Faust – Corporate Law and Mergers and Acquisitions Law
- John Gehringer – Commercial Litigation, Construction Law, Corporate Law, and Real Estate Law
- Joseph Gumina – Employment Law – Management and Litigation – Labor and Employment
- Dennis Hollman – Corporate Law and Trusts and Estates
- Grant Killoran – Commercial Litigation and Litigation – Health Care
- JB Koenings – Corporate Law
- Dean Laing – Commercial Litigation, Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants
- Greg Lyons – Commercial Litigation and Litigation – Insurance
- Patrick McBride – Commercial Litigation
- Joe Newbold – Commercial Litigation, Litigation – Real Estate, and Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs
- Chad Richter – Business Organizations (including LLCs and Partnerships) and Corporate Law
- John Schreiber – Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law and Litigation – Bankruptcy
- Jason Scoby – Banking and Finance Law, Business Organizations (including LLCs and Partnerships), and Corporate Law
- Steve Slawinski – Construction Law
- Karen Tidwall – Commercial Litigation and Litigation – Trusts and Estates
- Christa Wittenberg – Commercial Litigation

*Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*

- Maura Falk – Trusts and Estates and Litigation – Trusts and Estates

- Jessica Haskell – Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law
- John “Jack” McNally – Litigation – Construction, Litigation – Real Estate, and Trusts and Estates

**About Best Lawyers**

**Best Lawyers** has published its list for over three decades, earning the respect of the profession, the media, and the public as the most reliable, unbiased source of legal referrals.

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch recognizes associates and other lawyers who are earlier in their careers for their outstanding professional excellence in private practice in the United States.

Lawyers on *The Best Lawyers in America* and *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch* lists are divided by geographic region and practice areas. They are reviewed by their peers on the basis of professional expertise, and they undergo an authentication process to make sure they are in current practice and in good standing.

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# SPRING CLEANING FOR YOUR BUSINESS: CONSIDER YOUR DOCUMENT RETENTION PRACTICES

Spring is the season for cleaning and organization—and it can also be a good time for businesses to revisit their document retention policies. For any combination of paper files, emails, and digital records, having a thoughtful business records management strategy can help reduce risk, control storage costs, and ensure compliance with legal requirements.

As you review what to keep, archive, or dispose of, consider the following key issues.

**Be Mindful of Litigation Holds**

If your business is involved in litigation—or reasonably anticipates litigation—you must preserve documents related to the dispute. This requirement is commonly referred to as a litigation hold.

Implementing a litigation hold often means suspending automatic deletion features on email systems, servers, cloud storage platforms, and backup systems. Courts may impose monetary sanctions or other penalties, including adverse rulings, if a party fails to take reasonable steps to preserve relevant documents or electronic records.

### Understand Record Retention Requirements

Many industries are subject to federal and state record retention requirements. Businesses should ensure their document retention policies comply with any applicable laws and regulations.

For example, lenders must retain certain loan documentation, including closing disclosures, for five years under federal lending regulations. If you are unsure which requirements apply to your business, consulting legal counsel can help ensure compliance and reduce regulatory risk.

In addition to specific industry requirements, certain categories of documents must be kept for minimum periods of time by law. Many organizations (including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce) have assembled lists of laws with document retention periods.

When more than one minimum retention period could apply to a document, the longer period should be used. For example, payroll records must be kept for three years under Wisconsin law, but the IRS requires records of employment taxes to be kept for four years. A document that qualifies as both should be kept for at least four years.

### Balance the Costs and Benefits of Storing Records

A well-designed document retention policy balances the benefits of keeping records with the costs of storing them.

On one hand, maintaining historical records can help resolve disputes, support regulatory compliance, and preserve institutional memory. Quickly locating important documents can save significant time and expense.

On the other hand, document storage—whether physical or electronic—comes with costs. Paper files require office space or off-site storage fees, while digital storage involves its own storage costs and requires secure systems, software, maintenance, and IT support.

### Organization Saves Headaches and Preserves Usefulness

Documents are only helpful if they can be located when needed. Just like a storage room full of unlabeled paper files, digital records that are poorly organized, inconsistently named, or difficult to search provide limited value.

Businesses should implement clear file naming conventions, structured folders, and searchable systems to improve records management efficiency.

Labeling physical and electronic folders with information on when the files can be destroyed

is also a best practice that can save your future self time and effort.

**Consistency Is Key**

The most effective approach for a business is to adopt a formal document retention policy and apply it consistently across the organization.

If a dispute arises in the future, demonstrating that documents were destroyed in accordance with a routine and consistently followed policy can help minimize discovery disputes or allegations of improper document destruction.

**When in Doubt, Seek Legal Guidance**

If you are unsure of the legal implications of keeping or disposing of certain documents, contact an attorney. For more information, contact Christa Wittenberg at 414-276-5000, Christa.Wittenberg@wilaw.com, or any of the attorneys at O'Neil Cannon.

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## O'NEIL CANNON ATTORNEYS RECOGNIZED AS BENCHMARK LITIGATION STARS

O'Neil Cannon is proud to announce that attorneys Doug Dehler, Grant Killoran, Dean Laing, Greg Lyons, Patrick McBride, Joe Newbold, Steve Slawinski, and Christa Wittenberg have been selected as Benchmark Litigation Stars in the 19th edition of Benchmark Litigation.

Based on extensive research and feedback from peers and clients, Benchmark Litigation Stars are recognized as the nation's most respected and accomplished litigation practitioners. Inclusion as a Benchmark Litigation Star reflects each attorney's outstanding reputation, deep litigation experience, and consistent success on behalf of clients.

Benchmark Litigation is a leading guide to the world's foremost litigation firms and lawyers, widely relied upon by in-house counsel and legal professionals nationwide.

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## SUPER LAWYERS RECOGNIZES 28 O'NEIL

# CANNON ATTORNEYS

Each year, *Super Lawyers* surveys the State of Wisconsin's 15,000 attorneys and judges, seeking to recognize the State's top attorneys. Recently, *Super Lawyers* published its lists for 2025, which include the Top 10 Attorneys in Wisconsin, Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin, Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee, Super Lawyers (consisting of the top 5% of attorneys in Wisconsin), and Rising Stars (consisting of attorneys who are 40 years old or younger or who have been in practice for 10 years or less).

*Super Lawyers*, who previously referred to the firm as "the Milwaukee mid-sized powerhouse," recognized twenty-eight of our attorneys.

Those attorneys are the following:

- Dino Antonopoulos:
    - Super Lawyer
- Nick Chmurski:
    - Rising Star
- Doug Dehler:
    - Super Lawyer
- Jim DeJong:
    - Super Lawyer
- Seth Dizard:
    - Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin
    - Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee
    - Super Lawyer
- Maura Falk:
    - Rising Star
- Pete Faust:
    - Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin
    - Super Lawyer
- John Gehringer:
    - Super Lawyer
- Joseph Gumina:
    - Super Lawyer
- Jessica Haskell:
    - Rising Star
- Mike Kennedy:
    - Rising Star
- Grant Killoran:
    - Super Lawyer
    - Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin
    - Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee
- JB Koenings:
    - Super Lawyer

- Dean Laing:
    - Top 10 Attorneys in Wisconsin
    - Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin
    - Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee
    - Super Lawyer
- Trevor Lippman:
    - Rising Star
- Greg Lyons:
    - Super Lawyer
- Patrick McBride:
    - Super Lawyer
- Jason Meehan:
    - Rising Star
- Joe Newbold:
    - Super Lawyer
- Erica Reib:
    - Rising Star
- Chad Richter:
    - Super Lawyer
- Ryan Riebe:
    - Rising Star
- John Schreiber:
    - Super Lawyer
- Jason Scoby:
    - Super Lawyer
- Steve Slawinski:
    - Super Lawyer
- Kelly Spott:
    - Rising Star
- Christa Wittenberg:
    - Rising Star

*Super Lawyers* is a national rating service that rates attorneys in all 50 states. The selection process utilized by *Super Lawyers* is multi-phased and includes independent research, peer nominations, and peer evaluations. One court recently had this to say about *Super Lawyers*:

"[T]he selection procedures employed by [*Super Lawyers*] are very sophisticated, comprehensive, and complex.  It is abundantly clear . . . that [*Super Lawyers* does] not permit a lawyer to buy one's way onto the list, nor is there any requirement for the purchase of any product for inclusion in the lists or any quid pro quo of any kind or nature associated with the evaluation and listing of an attorney or in the subsequent advertising of one's inclusion in the lists."

We are proud to be one of the few firms in Wisconsin with more than 50% of its attorneys recognized by *Super Lawyers.*

# 18 O'NEIL CANNON LAWYERS SELECTED AS 2026 BEST LAWYERS; ANOTHER 5 NAMED BEST LAWYERS: ONES TO WATCH

We are pleased to announce 18 of our lawyers have been included in the 2026 Edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*, and an additional five have been selected as 2026 *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*.

## The following are the O'Neil Cannon lawyers named to the 2026 lists:

### *Best Lawyers in America*

- Doug Dehler – Litigation – Insurance
- Jim DeJong – Corporate Law, Mergers and Acquisitions Law, and Securities / Capital Markets Law
- Seth Dizard – Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law and Litigation – Bankruptcy
- Pete Faust – Corporate Law and Mergers and Acquisitions Law
- John Gehringer – Commercial Litigation, Construction Law, Corporate Law, and Real Estate Law
- Joseph Gumina – Employment Law – Management and Litigation – Labor and Employment
- Dennis Hollman – Corporate Law and Trusts and Estates
- Grant Killoran – Commercial Litigation and Litigation – Health Care
- JB Koenings – Corporate Law
- Dean Laing – Commercial Litigation, Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs, and Product Liability Litigation – Defendants
- Greg Lyons – Commercial Litigation and Litigation – Insurance
- Patrick McBride – Commercial Litigation
- Joe Newbold – Commercial Litigation, Litigation – Real Estate, and Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs
- Chad Richter – Business Organizations (including LLCs and Partnerships) and Corporate Law
- John Schreiber – Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law and Litigation – Bankruptcy
- Jason Scoby – Banking and Finance Law, Business Organizations (including LLCs and Partnerships), and Corporate Law
- Steve Slawinski – Construction Law

*Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*

- Maura Falk – Trusts and Estates
- Trevor Lippman – Litigation – Trusts and Estates
- Kelly Spott – Trusts and Estate
- Christa Wittenberg – Commercial Litigation

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# SUPER LAWYERS RECOGNIZES 30 O'NEIL CANNON ATTORNEYS

Each year, *Super Lawyers* surveys the State of Wisconsin's 15,000 attorneys and judges, seeking the State's top attorneys. Recently, *Super Lawyers* published its lists for 2024, which include the Top 10 Attorneys in Wisconsin, Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin, Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee, Super Lawyers (consisting of the top 5% of attorneys in Wisconsin), and Rising Stars (consisting of attorneys who are 40 years old or younger or who have been in practice for 10 years or less).

Thirty of our attorneys were recognized by *Super Lawyers*, which has referred to the firm as "the Milwaukee mid-sized powerhouse." Those attorneys are the following:

- Emily Behn:
    - Rising Star
- Nick Chmurski:
    - Rising Star
- Doug Dehler:
    - Super Lawyer
- Jim DeJong:

    - Super Lawyer
- Seth Dizard:
    - Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin
    - Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee
    - Super Lawyer
- Pete Faust:
    - Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin
    - Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee
    - Super Lawyer
- John Gehringer:
    - Super Lawyer
- Joseph Gumina:
    - Super Lawyer
- Jessica Haskell:
    - Rising Star
- Mike Kennedy:
    - Rising Star
- Grant Killoran:
    - Super Lawyer
- Dean Laing:
    - Top 10 Attorneys in Wisconsin
    - Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin
    - Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee
    - Super Lawyer
- Trevor Lippman:
    - Rising Star
- Greg Lyons:
    - Super Lawyer
- Patrick McBride:
    - Super Lawyer
- Jason Meehan:
    - Rising Star
- Britany Morrison:
    - Rising Star
- Joe Newbold:
    - Super Lawyer
- Erica Reib:
    - Rising Star
- Chad Richter:
    - Super Lawyer
- Ryan Riebe:
    - Rising Star
- John Schreiber:
    - Super Lawyer
- Jason Scoby:
    - Super Lawyer
- Steve Slawinski:

    - Super Lawyer
- Kelly Spott:
    - Rising Star
- Christa Wittenberg:
    - Rising Star

*Super Lawyers* is a national rating service that rates attorneys in all 50 states. The selection process utilized by *Super Lawyers* is multi-phased and includes independent research, peer nominations, and peer evaluations. One court recently had this to say about *Super Lawyers*:

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We are proud to be one of the few firms in Wisconsin that had more than 50% of its attorneys receive recognition by *Super Lawyers.*

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# WITTENBERG WINS JUDGE TERENCE T. EVANS HUMOR AND CREATIVITY IN LAW COMPETITION, AGAIN!

O'Neil Cannon attorney Christa Wittenberg was recently announced the winner of the 2024 Judge Terence T. Evans Humor and Creativity in Law Competition, sponsored by the Eastern District of Wisconsin Bar Association. The award is given each year to one attorney whose original creative law-related writing piece is selected by the review committee. Wittenberg is honored to be the first repeat winner of the award, having previously won in 2019. The competition honors the memory of the Honorable Terence T. Evans, former judge of the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin, and U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, who was known for his wit and creativity throughout his life and his work. At the EDWBA Annual Meeting in May, Wittenberg happily accepted the traveling trophy and brought it back to her office to display for another year. Her winning article is below.

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**A Point Worth Exclaiming**

I have a secret love, hardly befitting a self-anointed top-notch legal writer: I love the exclamation point! There are few greater joys in life than the jovial enthusiasm conjured by that expressive mark. No wonder legal writers scoff—joviality and enthusiasm have no place in legal prose.

My closet adoration isn't all my fault. As with most of my flaws, I can blame my parents. My father has seldom written a text message or email that was not overflowing with exclamation points. In fact, when his stepmother passed away some years ago, he announced it to my sister and me with the following text message:

> *Girls, I have news!! Grandma Beverly passed this morning!*
>
> *So sad, but we're glad she's no longer in pain! I love you both!!*

That is six too many exclamation points to use to announce someone's death! Yet, outside of death announcements, I also default to the exclamation point in casual writing.

Despite my genetic predisposition toward the exclamation point, I meekly allowed law school and lawyering to beat that penchant out of me. Like one with Stockholm syndrome, I became a militant eradicator of all frivolous punctuation in legal writing. In one of my very first assignments as a young lawyer, fresh out of my federal clerkship and eager to show my legal writing chops, I was asked by a shareholder at my firm to edit a draft brief. I was horrified to see an offending exclamation point in the conclusion of the brief: "The petition must be denied!" I promptly deleted that slender eyesore and put in a modest period. Crisis averted. My colleague narrowly avoided the embarrassment of showing weakness through emphatic punctuation.

Similarly, in professional emails, my legal training and desire to be taken seriously compelled me to banish that beloved bang. Sure, I might want to wish my client a wonderful day, but I sure as hell wouldn't finish it off with such childish punctuation. So, I would sometimes type this: "Have a nice day." And then I would promptly delete it because that period changes everything.

"Have a nice day!" says I sincerely hope your day is happy. In contrast, "Have a nice day." says one of two things: (1) You are my opposing counsel and I know you are going to be filing a copy of this email with the court, so I'd better say something that seems cordial; or (2) I'm a serial killer and you're my next mark. Either way, it's not the message I want to send in most of my emails.

I started to wonder about the source of this shared understanding that exclamation points in legal writing are unprofessional. Was it in a footnote in our legal writing textbooks, amidst the lesson on how not to be funny?[1] Is there really any legitimate authority for this ban anyway? Actually, yes, as it turns out. In a leading legal style manual, The Redbook, the esteemed

Bryan Garner decrees, “An exclamation mark is rarely justified in legal writing except in a direct quotation.”[2] Well, quote this, Mr. Garner: Nobody asked you![3]

After more than a decade of living a double life—exclamation-point-teetotaling by day and exclamation-point-binging by night—I recently took a bold step: I now sometimes use exclamation points in professional emails with people who I know well enough and who have first used an exclamation point in their own emails to me. No doubt, my nomination for the Ruth La Fave Trailblazer Award is forthcoming.

Will I be using an exclamation point in my next brief? Of course not! I’m not a lunatic. But if Judge Easterbrook can whip out an interrobang in a court decision,[4] maybe one day I will find a legal point worth exclaiming.

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[1] Perhaps that footnote said, “Above all, do not use exclamation points!”
[2] Bryan A. Garner, The Redbook: A Manual on Legal Style § 1.76 (3d ed. 2013).
[3] If ever Bryan Garner stumbles upon this piece of writing, this footnote is for him: I’m actually a huge fan and I generally follow all of your advice. I trust you recognize and appreciate humor when you see it.
[4] Elevated in status by Judge Easterbrook’s nonchalant use in the decision in Robert F. Booth Tr. v. Crowley, 687 F.3d 314, 319 (7th Cir. 2012), the interrobang is a nonstandard punctuation mark that overlays an exclamation point and a question mark when just one won’t do. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interrobang. But don’t check Westlaw to see it—the version online swaps in a “!?” instead of a proper interrobang. Isn’t that ridiculous?

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Read Wittenberg’s previous award-winning article from 2019 **here**.

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- Steve Slawinski – Construction Law

*Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*

- Emily Behn – Commercial Litigation
- Trevor Lippman – Litigation – Trusts and Estates
- Erica Reib – Labor and Employment Law – Management and Litigation – Labor and Employment
- Kelly Spott – Trusts and Estates
- Christa Wittenberg – Commercial Litigation

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    - Top 25 Attorneys in Milwaukee
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- Jessica Haskell:
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- Mike Kennedy:

    - Rising Star
- Grant Killoran:
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- Dean Laing:
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    - Top 50 Attorneys in Wisconsin
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    - Super Lawyer
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- Joe Newbold:
    - Super Lawyer
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    - Rising Star
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    - Super Lawyer
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    - Rising Star
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## CHRISTA WITTENBERG FEATURED ON STATE BAR PODCAST

Christa Wittenberg, a shareholder and board member at O'Neil Cannon, was recently a guest on *Bottom Up*, a podcast through the State Bar of Wisconsin focused on the challenges, interests, and opportunities available to lawyers. The podcast is intended to be a resource for attorneys establishing their practice in Wisconsin and beyond. In the podcast episode, Wittenberg discusses her career path, her new role as a director at the firm, the positive work environment and culture at O'Neil Cannon, and her involvement in the community. Listen and enjoy the full podcast here.