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## Steven M. Brunolli

**Steven M. Brunolli is an appellate attorney at Higgs Fletcher & Mack LLP, where he specializes in civil writs and appeals across a wide range of practice areas, including business litigation, employment, probate, and family law.**

He represents clients in all stages of the appellate process—from issue preservation in the trial court to briefing and oral argument before the California Courts of Appeal and Ninth Circuit.

Steven regularly works alongside trial counsel to identify and preserve appellate issues, ensuring clients are positioned for success whether in pursuing or defending a judgment on appeal. His strategic approach has led to favorable outcomes in published and unpublished opinions, and he is frequently sought after for consultation on complex matters involving unsettled legal questions. Steven also assists on dispositive motions in the trial court, such as motions for summary judgment, and post-trial motions.

Steven is a regular presenter on best practices for issue preservation, navigating the appeals process, and common pitfalls that can jeopardize an appeal. He also serves as a resource for in-house counsel and trial attorneys seeking to ensure their cases are "appeal-ready."

Before joining Higgs Fletcher & Mack, Steven externed for the Honorable Cynthia Bashant in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California and interned with the California Innocence Project.

### PRACTICE AREAS

- Appeals & Writs
- Business Litigation
- Employment Law
- Health Care Law

### EDUCATION

- J.D., California Western School of Law (2019) (Magna Cum Laude)
- B.A., San Diego State University (2009) (Economics)

### ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

- California

### AWARDS & HONORS

- Best Lawyers in America© "Ones to Watch" (2024-2027)
- Rising Stars® 2025
- Rising Stars® 2026

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**Steven's recent and notable published decisions include:**

- Amundson v. Catello (2025) 331 Cal.App.5th 1053 (holding putative heirs lack standing to partition property before resolution of probate).
- Asaro v. Maniscalco (2024) 103 Cal.App.5th 717 (holding probate courts have authority to issue a penalty of double the amount of misdirected trust property, payable directly to the trust beneficiary, in addition to damages to the trust).
- San Diego Unified School Dist. v. Superior Court (2024) 102 Cal.App.5th 383 (holding on a petition for writ of mandate that a trial court's review of a certificate of merit in a childhood sexual assault case does not constitute a "determination of contested fact" for the purposes of a peremptory challenge).
- Vines v. O'Reilly Auto Enterprises, LLC (2024) 101 Cal.App.5th 693 (clarifying the law for when interest begins to accrue on a FEHA attorney's fee award after a reversal of the original award).
- Shenefield v. Shenefield (2022) 75 Cal.App.5th 619 (holding attorneys are subject to sanctions under the Family Code for improper disclosure of a custody evaluation).

**AFFILIATIONS**

- State Bar of California
- San Diego County Bar Association
- Association of Business Trial Lawyers