

Snell & Wilmer



Denise A. Dragoo

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Main Bio

Denise Dragoo's practice focuses on natural resources, coal law, water law, environmental law, mining law, public land law, issues affecting the oil and gas industry, mine safety and health law.

Representative Litigation

- *Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance v. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, et al.*, 620 F.3d 1227 (10th Cir. Sept. 23, 2010) (affirming federal district court decision upholding federal mine permit)
- *Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance*, 163 IBLA 142, GFS (Min) 36 (2004)
- *Jesse H. Knight*, 155 IBLA 104, GFS (Min) 14 (2001)
- *Lodestar Energy, Inc.*, 155 IBLA 286, GFS (Min) 21 (2001)
- *White Oak Mining & Construction Co., Inc. v. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement*, decided December 30, 1998, IBLA 97-239
- *East Jordan Irr. Co. v. Morgan*, 860 P.2d 310 (Utah 1993)
- *Hidden Valley Coal Co. v. Board of Oil, Gas and Mining*, 866 P.2d 564 (Utah Ct. App. 1993)
- *Jensen v. Dinehart*, 645 P.2d 32 (Utah 1982)
- *White Oak Mining and Construction Co., Inc. v. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement*, decided February 4, 1997, 138 IBLA 109
- *Ashley Creek Phosphate Co. v. John D. Archer*, decided November 29, 1995, 134 IBLA 206
- *PacifiCorp, dba PacifiCorp Electric Operations, Utah Power and Light Co., and Energy West Mining Co. v. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement*, decided September 26, 1994, 131 IBLA 17
- *Sunnyside Reclamation and Salvage, Inc.*, decided October 30, 1992, 124 IBLA 238
- *Utah Power and Light Co.*, decided March 6, 1991, 118 IBLA 181
- *Utah Power and Light Co.*, decided August 15, 1990, 115 IBLA 366
- *Kaiser Coal Corp.*, decided August 5, 1988, 103 IBLA 312

Education

- Washington University School of Law (LL.M., Environmental and Land Use Law)
 - Howard Stamper Scholarship

- University of Utah College of Law (J.D.)
 - Utah Bar and Gavel Society
 - Articles Editor, Journal of Contemporary Law
- University of Colorado (B.A., History, with honors)

Professional Memberships & Activities

- Utah Women's Forum, President Elect (2024)
- Alta Club, President (2020)
- State Bar of Utah
 - Judicial Conduct Commission, Past Chair and Member (1992-2002)
 - Natural Resources Section, Distinguished Lawyer (1996)
- Utah Board of Bar Commissioners, Commissioner (1991-2002)
- American Bar Association
 - SEER Section Leadership Council (2010-2016)
 - Public Lands Committee, Chair (1993-2001)
 - Mining Committee, Vice-Chair (1997-2000)
- American Bar Foundation, Fellow (1993-present)
- Women Lawyers of Utah, Inc. (1980-present)
 - Woman Lawyer of the Year (1997)
- Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute
 - President (2012)
- Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation
 - Trustee (1988-2023)
 - Executive Committee (2002-2004)
- National Mining Association, Board Member
- Utah Mining Association, Board Member
- Commercial Real Estate Women Network, Utah Chapter (CREW Utah)

Representative Presentations & Publications

- "[Environment & Climate Change Law 2024](#)," Co-Author, Global Legal Group (March 12, 2024)
- "[Episode 145: Denise Drago](#)," Episode Guest, The Portia Project Podcast (September 18, 2023)
- "Utah Energy Legislation Update – Lunch 'n Learn," Co-Presenter, Women's Energy Network, Utah Chapter (May 19, 2021)
- "[Welcome Reforms in Federal Coal Leasing, Permitting and NEPA Streamlining](#)," Author, Environmental & Natural Resources Law Blog (October 22, 2018)
- "Welcome Reforms in U.S. DOI Coal Leasing, Permitting and NEPA Streamlining," Presenter, Utah State University Coal Symposium (October 18, 2018)
- "[2018 Legislative Session Supports Rural Jobs, Mining and Natural Resource Infrastructure Development](#)," Author, The Enterprise (April 16, 2018)

- "[The International Comparative Legal Guide to Environment & Climate Change Law 2018](#)," Author of United States Chapter (April 2018-present)
- "[Utah's Coal Industry Receives Much Needed Regulatory Relief](#)," Author, Utah Mining Focus (Volume VI, Issue 3)
- "The First 100 Days of the Trump Administration Delivers Much Needed Relief to the Coal Industry," Presenter, Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute Colorado/Utah 2017 Regional Meeting (May 18, 2017)
- "[Infrastructure development: Utah takes a page from Trump policies](#)," Author, The Enterprise – Utah's Business Journal (April 17, 2017)
- "[The International Comparative Legal Guide to: Environment & Climate Change Law 2017](#)," Co-Author of United States Chapter (April 2017)
- "[EPA Must Consider Regulatory Impacts on Coal/Utility Industry Jobs and Plant Closure](#)," Author, Utah Mining Focus (December 2016)
- "New Law Provides Incentives for Energy, Environmental Development," Co-Author, The Enterprise (June 8, 2015)
- "Utah's Infrastructure Tax Credit Should Help Expansion of Mining Projects in Urban and Rural Counties," Co-Author, Mining Focus (Volume IV, Issue 3)
- "[Hydraulic Fracturing on Public Land: States Regulate While Feds Contemplate](#)," Co-Author, Public Land and Resources Committee Newsletter, American Bar Association Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources, Volume 11, Issue 1 (August 2014)
- "[Tighter Regulations Amid the Fracking Fray](#)," Co-Author, The National Law Journal (November 4, 2013)
- "[The Environmental Division](#)," Feature Article, Mountain States Super Lawyers (July 2012)
- "New NEPA Challenges for Project Development on Public Lands," Author, Rocky Mt. Min. L. Fdn., 4B (2009)
- "Coal Mine Closure, Reclamation, and Financial Assurance Under the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, Mine Closure, Financial Assurance, and Final Reclamation," Co-Author, Paper No. 7, Rocky Mt. Min. L. Fdn., 7-1 (2009)

Professional Recognition & Awards

- Lawdragon, Top 500 Energy Lawyers (2023, 2024)
- Utah State Bar Outstanding New Lawyer Training Program Award (2018)
- University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law Alumna of the Year (2016)
- The Best Lawyers in America®, Energy Law, Environmental Law, Environmental Litigation, Government Relations Practice, Mining Law, Natural Resources Law (2006-2024)
 - Salt Lake City Lawyer of the Year, Natural Resources Law (2017 and 2024)
 - Salt Lake City Lawyer of the Year, Mining Law (2015)
 - Salt Lake City Lawyer of the Year, Government Relations Practice (2014)
- Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business®, Energy & Natural Resources (2010-2023)
- Mountain States Super Lawyers®, Energy & Resources (2007-2023)
 - Top 50 Women (2013-2014, 2016-2022)

- Top 40 Women (2007-2011)
- Top 100 (2021)
- Lawdragon Top 3000 Leading Lawyers in America (2010-2011)
- Super Lawyers®, Energy & Resources - Business Edition (2011)
- Super Lawyers®, Energy & Resources - Corporate Counsel Edition (2009-2010)
- Utah's Legal Elite: Energy/Natural Resources (2009-2011, 2013-2019, 2021-2022), Environmental (2012, 2020), Utah Business Magazine

Community Involvement

- University of Utah College of Law, Board of Trustees (2023)
- Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Board of Trustees (2017-2021)
- State Law Resources Board, Chair (2013-2014)
- The Foundation for Natural Resources and Energy Law (formerly known as the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation,) Trustee (1988-2023)
 - Grants Committee, Chair (1990-2020)
 - Special Institutes Committee, Member
 - Site Selection Committee, Member (2023-present)
- Mountain States Legal Foundation
 - Litigation Board, Past Chair, Member
- Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute, Immediate Past President
 - 100th Annual Meeting Program, President (2012)
 - Board Member
- Utah Museum of Natural History, Fundraising Committee
- Utah Law & Justice Center
 - Founding Board Member
- Alta Club, Board of Directors (2012-2015)
- Junior League of Salt Lake City
 - Community Outreach Board of Directors, Member
- Legal Aid Society
 - Board Member (1993-2005)
 - Chair (1999-2001)
 - "And Justice for All," Board Member (1998-2005)
- Salt Lake City Land Use Appeals Board (1996-2005)
- Salt Lake City Futures Commission (1996-1998)

Previous Professional Experience

- Appointed by Governor Gary R. Herbert to serve as a member of the Utah Governor's Energy Advisory Council. This Council provides guidance to the Office of Energy Development (OED) and the Governor regarding the rapidly changing energy landscape in Utah, nationally and abroad. Council members are selected for their comprehensive breadth of experience in the energy sector. Their tasks

include reviewing Utah State's Energy Policy, OED's activities in energy planning (including Utah Energy Infrastructure Authority and the state's new Energy Efficiency and Conservation Plan), as well as OED's incentives, programs and other direct engagements. (2015-2020)

- Van Cott, Bagley, Cornwall and McCarthy, Shareholder, Officer, Director
- Fabian and Clendenin, Shareholder, Director
- State of Utah, Department of Natural Resources, Special Assistant Attorney General

Bar Admissions

- Utah

Court Admissions

- Supreme Court of Utah
- United States Court of Appeals, Federal Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit
- United States District Court