

Kathy Odle Bio



Some ancient history: Kathleen Odle received her undergrad degree in Accounting from Regis College in 1982. After a couple of years in the service industry (ok, bartending), Kathy started at Sherman & Howard as a paralegal in the employee benefits department in 1984, spending her time preparing Form 5300 packages (remember those?) and drafting uniform defined contribution plan documents (remember those?). She attended law school while working full time and graduated from the University of Denver Law School (now known as the Sturm College of Law) in 1988, and continued at Sherman & Howard as an Associate. Kathy credits Mike Sanchez (a long-time fixture in the Denver ERISA community) with instilling

in her the love of (and sometimes disdain for) ERISA and its complexities, and with mentoring her for 38 years.

Kathy herself has mentored many ERISA nerd fledglings, some of whom have continued to practice in the employee benefits area after that experience. Kathy served in many management roles at Sherman & Howard and managed (with the help of the best paralegal of all time, Lisa Green) the firms' five retirement plans for decades before her retirement, thereby providing evidence of the advisability of fiduciary liability insurance.

Kathy became a partner at Sherman & Howard in 1995 and retired from the firm at the end of 2022. If you are counting, that is 38 years at the same law firm.

During her career, Kathy has represented for-profit companies, and tax-exempt and governmental entities, has drafted literally thousands of plan documents, and has defended many dozens of IRS and DOL audits. While she was only 16 when ERISA was passed, Kathy has seen the enactment of TEFRA, DEFRA, TAMRA, REA, COBRA, ADEA, HIPAA, and other acronyms that she hopes to forget soon.

For reasons that Kathy still doesn't understand, she has been recognized in the following ways:

- Recognized in The Best Lawyers in America for Employee Benefits, 2006-2022.
- Recognized as a Super Lawyer in the area of Employee Benefits, 2009 -2022.
- Ranked #1 in Chambers USA for Employee Benefits Law
- Best Lawyers in America's 2012 Employee Benefits Lawyer of the Year, Denver, CO

Kathy has been happily married to Gary Kortz for 26 years, whose patience is admirable.

Kathy is already enjoying her retirement, spending winters in Scottsdale, Arizona, trying to improve her golf game, playing cards, reading non-legal literature, traveling, and wondering how she ever had time to work.