

UTAH LEADERS IN LAW

Parker + McConkie

For nearly 50 years, **Parker & McConkie** has fought for victims injured by others' recklessness, achieving some of the most consequential victories in the Intermountain West.



Time and again, Parker & McConkie has taken on Goliath-sized defendants to see justice done for its clients.

Parker & McConkie previously obtained the largest wrongful death judgment in Utah history, and, in 2020, the firm achieved another record wrongful death settlement against The University of Utah for the death of Lauren McCluskey. Three years later, in 2023, it reached another monumental settlement with The University of Utah for the death of Zhifan Dong. In the same year, it earned the largest personal injury settlement ever paid by Salt Lake County for the death of an inmate caused by the county's negligence. In 2018, Parker & McConkie prevailed in an appeal after a nursing facility claimed it was not liable for the death of a patient because its nurse failed to inform anyone that she had mistakenly administered a fatal dose of narcotics. In 2012, the firm prevailed in an appeal that required automobile insurers to provide reasonable explanations of the purpose of underinsured motorist benefits before securing waivers of those benefits from their insureds. Currently, Parker & McConkie represents the families of Gabby Petito and Amanda Mayne in lawsuits against the City of Moab and Salt Lake City, respectively,

for negligently failing to perform a proper lethality assessment, which would have prevented Gabby's death at the hands of her fiancé and Amanda's death at the hands of her ex-husband.

Accidents Can Happen to Anyone

Accidents strike without warning, leaving their victims to deal with debilitating debt and injuries. Unfortunately, few wrongdoers will do what is right simply because it is right. Instead, they must be compelled to compensate individuals and families fairly.

In the summer of 2018, a mother was driving her 9-year-old daughter to school. The drive seemed routine, as mother and daughter spent the time enjoying one another's company. But, before reaching their destination, a semitruck suddenly slammed into the back of their vehicle. The force of the impact caused by the 20,000-pound truck made the mother's seat buckle, launching her backwards into her daughter's head. The resulting trauma left her daughter with a severe traumatic brain injury.



Facing mounting medical bills and an uncertain future, the mother turned to her family attorney for help. This attorney was eager to settle their case quickly and presented a settlement offer that was far too low to compensate the family for their losses. Fortunately, the mother trusted her intuition and asked the lawyers of Parker & McConkie to dig deeper.

Reflecting on this case, Brian C. Stewart, litigation attorney, says, "Families should never settle without understanding the long-term impacts of an accident. In this case, the settlement offered by the insurance company would have paid the medical bills and the lawyer, but very little would have been left for the injured girl. We always ask ourselves, beyond compensation, what will be the victim's quality of life going forward, and what can be done to improve it?"

The team went to work on the case. Suspecting a defect in the seat that buckled during the collision, they drew on their considerable experience to invest the time and resources needed to prepare for a long and difficult fight in court with the manufacturer of the vehicle. Their investment paid off.

"Once the manufacturer realized that our firm would fight for our clients as long as necessary, they paid nearly 10 times what they had been previously told to settle for—a settlement of millions of dollars, which assured our young client's family that they would be able to care for her and help her lead a more normal life. Being able to provide for clients, like this little girl, who truly rely on us to fight for them is incredibly satisfying—it's our motivation and our passion," says Stewart.

World-Class Service

Parker & McConkie's reputation for legal excellence is matched by its superior service to clients. The firm limits the number of cases it handles to give clients the attention they deserve. Its practice model emphasizes an engaged, hands-on approach with senior litigation counsel working collaboratively with each member of the team—from discovery through

settlement or trial. An uncommon benefit the firm offers: Clients are partners in their case, not bystanders.

"Our No. 1 goal is to achieve the best results possible for our clients," says Steven Jensen, litigator. "That's why we spend a lot of time in the early stages talking with them to make certain that we understand every aspect of their case, their individual concerns, and what is in their best interest long term. Their active involvement ensures they always understand their options and know the status of the case. We want to hear from them about immediate needs. For example, are they able to get proper medical care, remain in their home, and pay their bills?"

Criteria, Impact

Parker & McConkie has a simple rule when determining which cases it will accept: Can we make a significant difference in the life of the victim or make a meaningful impact to benefit our community by seeking justice and accountability?

"Client impact is our foremost concern, regardless of the complexity or monetary value of the case," says Stewart. "Some cases have little chance for a large financial award, but justice must be still be served."

The team's commitment to justice brings tremendous peace of mind to families and creates an important advantage in negotiations and before juries. Insurance companies, opposing attorneys, and judges know that if Parker & McConkie accepts a case, the firm believes the cause is just. The team won't stop fighting until every avenue and option is explored, including jury trials and appellate court hearings.

Parker & McConkie attorneys work diligently with accident reconstruction specialists, physicians, and other expert witnesses to expose details in a case that other attorneys might overlook. Most cases are won or lost during discovery. Parker & McConkie ensures it wins during discovery by preparing for trial from the start of each case, developing defense rebuttals and creative strategies for court.

"The average family involved in one of these cases rarely has the necessary resources," says Jensen. "We do, and we put our clients on an even playing field."

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McConkie

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Championing the Underdog

The powerhouse firm of Parker & McConkie is one of the oldest personal injury law firms in Utah and among the most successful in the Rocky Mountains. Founded by attorneys Jim McConkie and Brad Parker in 1978, the firm has defended the rights of catastrophically injured victims and survivors for nearly 50 years. Over the years, Parker and McConkie have also successfully taken on many cases and causes to protect the civil rights and religious liberty of vulnerable people whose constitutional rights have been violated.

Coming from a family of lawyers, Parker learned early in life that good attorneys must be problem-solvers. He has dedicated his career to helping victims of negligence, improper conduct, deceit, or abuse of power.



As Utah's Assistant U.S. Attorney in the 1970s, McConkie prosecuted federal criminal cases and represented the United States in civil litigation. He also taught constitutional law as an adjunct professor at Westminster College.

Together, Parker and McConkie have been a force for good, bringing about important changes in the region. They were among the founders of the Citizens Against Nuclear Waste in Utah, a bipartisan group opposing the storage of radioactive waste in the state's west desert of Tooele County. In 2017 the pair formed the Refugee Justice League, a nonprofit organization of attorneys and other professionals—now over 800 strong—offering pro bono legal help to refugees who have experienced discrimination because of their religion, ethnicity, or national origin.