

# BROWN | STREZA



## PAUL SCHMITT

ATTORNEY

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## PRACTICE AREAS

Religious Institutions  
Nonprofit Organizations

Educational Organizations  
Higher Education

## ABOUT

Paul is an attorney with the Orange County, California law firm Brown & Streza LLP. His practice focuses on serving the unique needs of churches, religious institutions, and other tax-exempt organizations. Paul uses his experience as a First Amendment litigator to help churches and other religious institutions navigate the challenges they face by providing outside general counsel services. Paul also helps philanthropists and non-profit leaders launch world-changing organizations and keep them compliant with federal, state, and local laws.

Prior to joining Brown & Streza, Paul served as litigator with Alliance Defending Freedom, where he advocated for the religious freedom of churches, religious schools, and other ministries. Paul served his clients as lead counsel in cases in federal district and appellate courts. One victory at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ended more than two-decades of discrimination against Vermont families who send their children to religious schools. Another win in Maryland's federal district court restored scholarships for low-income students who attended a Christian elementary school.

Paul clerked for the Honorable Michael S. Kanne on the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and litigated as an associate attorney at Ice Miller LLP in Indianapolis. He also served as an officer in the United States Air Force for more than four years, working in military satellite communications.

Paul received his law degree magna cum laude from the University of Illinois College of Law in 2017. During law school, Paul externed with the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family in Rome. He received his Bachelor of the Arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2009, and was elected to serve the Urbana campus on the University's Board of Trustees. Paul is admitted to the state bars of Illinois and Indiana, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Second, Seventh, and Eleventh Circuits, and multiple federal district courts.

In his free time, Paul likes to ski, golf, teach religious education, and throw dinner parties.

## PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Brown & Streza LLP, Irvine, California  
Attorney, 2022 - Present

**Alliance Defending Freedom**, Washington, D.C.

Legal Counsel, 2019-2022

**United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit**, Lafayette, Indiana

Law Clerk to the Honorable Michael S. Kanne, 2018-2019

**Ice Miller LLP**, Indianapolis, Indiana

Litigation Associate, 2017-2018

Summer Law Clerk, Summer 2016

**United States Air Force**, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Captain, 2009-2013

Juris Doctor, magna cum laude, **University of Illinois College of Law**, 2017

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**, 2009

Licensed to practice law in Illinois, Indiana, and the District of Columbia. Admitted to multiple federal district and circuit courts.

## **SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

Napa Legal Institute Nonprofit Summit, Napa, California, July 24, 2024

- Panelist, Building on Solid Ground: Mission, Culture, & Leadership

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

The Public Interest Foundation – Antonin Scalia Fellow

Blackstone Legal Fellowship – Fellow

Napa Legal Institute – Good Counselor Fellow

James Wilson Institute – Fellow