

AS SEEN IN NATIONAL | 2025 LEGAL LEGACY ISSUE

# ATTORNEY AT LAW

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A photograph of three men in suits standing in front of a building entrance. The man on the left is older, wearing glasses and a red patterned tie. The man in the center is middle-aged, smiling, with his hands clasped in front of him, wearing a light blue tie. The man on the right is younger, with a beard, wearing a yellow patterned tie. They are all wearing dark suits. The background shows a modern building with large windows and a glass door.

## THE HICKS DYNASTY

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**A LEGACY OF  
LEGAL EXCELLENCE**

A photograph of three men in dark grey suits standing in a courtroom. The man on the left is older, wearing glasses and a red patterned tie. The man in the center is middle-aged, with his hands clasped in front of him, wearing a blue patterned tie. The man on the right is younger, wearing a gold and brown striped tie. In the background, there is a wooden panel wall, an American flag, and a Nevada state flag. A circular seal is visible on the wall above the flags.

# THE HICKS DYNASTY

## A LEGACY OF LEGAL EXCELLENCE

BY SUSAN CUSHING

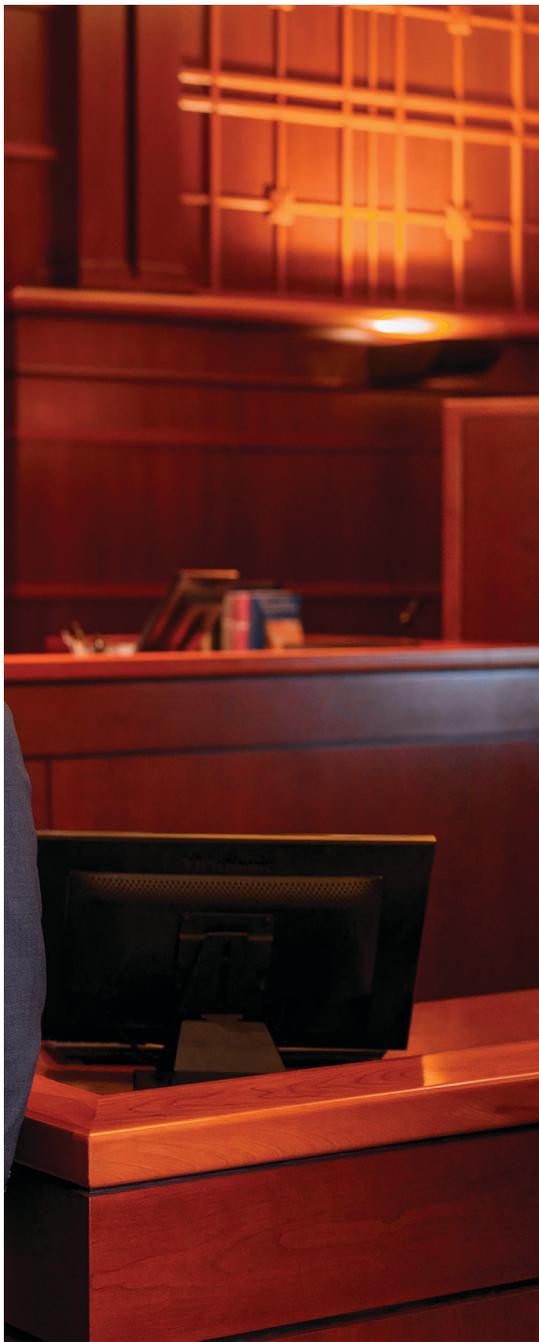
In the realm of law, few families have left a mark as enduring and distinguished as the Hicks family. With proud roots that run five generations deep in Nevada, the name Hicks has long been synonymous with premier legal acumen, an unwavering commitment to justice, and dedication to public service. From McDonald Carano LLP's founding office in Reno—where three of the four family members brought their expertise and honed careers of distinction—to the Washoe County District Attorney's Office, Nevada Attorney General's Office and the U.S. District Court for the Dis-

trict of Nevada, the Hicks family's influence spans Nevada's legal spectrum. Though one member of this quartet is no longer with us, their combined legacy remains a cornerstone of the Hicks family's tradition of esteemed personal character and professional excellence. Together, they represent a dynasty of intellect, integrity and humble service that has both inspired and shaped the legal landscape of their community for generations.

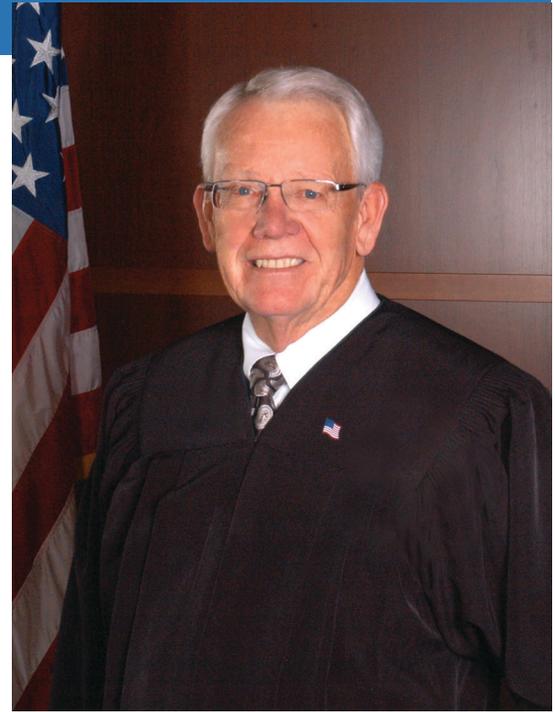
When conversing with any member of this family, one name inevitably comes up – Larry. A revered pillar in Reno's close-knit community, the late

Larry Hicks made an unforgettable impact on Nevada's legal landscape. A true "home-grown" son of Reno, Larry was raised in the heart of the city, where his parents operated the iconic Holiday Hotel and Casino during the 1960s. He attended local schools, graduated from Reno High School, and earned his degree from the University of Nevada in 1965.

Larry's remarkable legal career began after law school when he joined the Washoe County District Attorney's Office as a deputy district attorney. His sharp intellect and committed service to the administration of justice



**OFTEN DESCRIBED AS  
"THE CONSUMMATE  
PROFESSIONAL,"  
LARRY HICKS WAS  
MORE THAN JUST A  
LEGAL GIANT—HE  
WAS A LEADER IN  
HIS COMMUNITY,  
A MENTOR, AND  
AN INSPIRATION  
TO COUNTLESS  
COLLEAGUES AND  
FRIENDS.**



LARRY HICKS

quickly earned him the responsibility of prosecuting some of the region's most high-profile cases. In 1974, he was elected Washoe County district attorney, serving with distinction until 1978.

Following his time in public service, Larry transitioned to private practice joining McDonald Carano LLP in 1979, where he continued building a reputation as one of Nevada's most respected legal minds. His legal expertise and professional integrity caught the attention of national leaders. In 2001, he was appointed to the federal bench as a U.S. District Court judge

by President George W. Bush. For 23 years he served with excellence, going on to earn the Nevada State Bar President's Award for lifetime achievement in 2020.

Often described as "the consummate professional," Larry Hicks was more than just a legal giant—he was a leader in his community, a mentor, and an inspiration to countless colleagues and friends. His influence will endure far beyond his untimely passing in May 2024. Larry left behind a legacy of justice shared by three equally astute and respected family members – his brother, A.J. "Bud," his nephew, Joshua, and his son, Christopher.

"We were numbers six and seven in the law firm," says Bud, referring to his and Larry's positions at McDonald Carano, when they joined as partners in January 1979. As chair of the firm's litigation group, Larry enhanced the firm's commercial and complex litigation experience. Meanwhile, Bud expanded the firm's expertise in gaming law, serving as chair of the firm's gaming and administrative law practice. He was also instrumental in opening McDonald Carano's Las Vegas office.

Reflecting on their early years, Bud recalls working with his bro-

ther. "Larry was two years older than me and already working in the Washoe County District Attorney's Office while I was attending law school. When I graduated, he helped me get a job working as a criminal trial deputy in the District Attorney's Office where I had clerked during law school."

However, in 1973 with the impending retirement of the existing Washoe County district attorney, Larry expressed plans to seek that office. "I saw the writing on the wall," says Bud. "I was certain he would win the election, and I thought it might be awkward for me to remain. I began looking around for other opportunities."

He didn't need to look for long. Given his already distinguished career highlighted by successful prosecutions of several gaming cheating cases, his name and reputation were familiar to Nevada's Attorney General Robert List. "Robert List needed to bring on a full-time deputy for his gaming division," Bud says, "so I was invited to his office for an interview. He offered me the job on the spot."

Shortly after beginning this position, Bud was appointed chief deputy of the attorney general's gaming division. He began his tenure with that



BUD HICKS



JOSH HICKS

office, serving as counsel to the Nevada Gaming Control Board and Nevada Gaming Commission. He attended his first meetings of both in January 1974. With his exposure to the gaming industry from his parents' Holiday Hotel and Casino, the position was the genesis of what would become Bud's long and impressive career in the international gaming industry.

Bud has received myriad awards throughout his career, including the distinguished Senior Statesperson recognition in gaming and licensing law from Chambers USA. And, through his prominent leadership, he co-founded the Nevada-headquartered International Association of Gaming Advisors in 1980 (originally established as the National Association of Gaming Attorneys).

Poised to influence and impact the rapidly changing landscape of gaming in Nevada, Bud not only had a front row seat to witness historical growth and evolution, but also played a key role in numerous instances.

"Nevada's gaming industry was undergoing a remarkable transformation during that period," he says. "My role in the attorney general's gaming division gave me a unique chance to engage with an industry experiencing unprecedented growth—not just within the state, but also on a national and global scale. I often say I was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time, but I also understood that this was an incredible opportunity to establish a dynamic and successful law practice in the specialty area of gaming."

Bud's experience also led to authoring published fictionalized works inspired by real gaming events and characters, including "Fortune's Trail – A Nevada Story" and "The Count Room." Bud currently serves as chairman of the gaming compliance committee of one of America's largest gaming companies.

Larry and Bud aren't the only prominent members of the Hicks legal legends dynasty. Following in the footsteps of his father and uncle, Bud's son, Josh Hicks, joined McDonald

Carano in 2016 as partner to lead the firm's government affairs and advocacy group.

In 2025, Josh received the Lawyer of the Year award in government relations for the Northern Nevada region from The Best Lawyers in America. His thriving practice focuses on four primary areas – government affairs, state and local taxation, real estate and land use, and election and campaign finance.

"Even from childhood I was interested in the law as a profession," he says. "I'm sure that was primarily due to the fact that my father and uncle were both very successful lawyers. We've always been a very close family, spending a lot of time together. My dad and uncle are the two people I've always most admired. Just being around them, around the law firm and around the courtrooms, and seeing how they operated always impressed me. Despite this huge influence, I don't think I actually made a conscious decision to become an attorney until college. During that time, I had many



■ CHRIS HICKS

conversations with my father about the practice of law. I began applying to law schools and never looked back.”

After earning his law degree, Josh began his legal career as a law clerk at the Nevada Supreme Court and the United States District Court.

“Joining the same firm where my father and uncle had been so successful and very happy was definitely something I aspired to. I saw McDonald Carano as an elite team of lawyers. It was a team I always wanted to be part of once I decided to become a lawyer and go to law school,” Josh says. “From seven to 60 attorneys, it’s a much larger firm now than when they began there, but I’m proud to say the same ethics and dedication to clients prevails. McDonald Carano celebrated its 75th Anniversary in 2024 and it was exciting to also celebrate my father’s 45th year at the firm and close to my 10th year.”

Before becoming a part of McDonald Carano, Josh held the roles of general counsel and chief of staff to

former Gov. Jim Gibbons. Earlier in his career, he served as a senior deputy attorney general under former Attorneys General Frankie Sue Del Papa, Brian Sandoval and George Chanos. During this time, he provided legal representation for the Nevada Department of Taxation, the Nevada Tax Commission, and the Nevada Secretary of State.

Josh has also argued cases before Nevada District Courts, the Nevada Supreme Court, the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. A lifelong Raiders fan, in 2016, Josh had the honor of representing the Las Vegas Raiders before the Nevada Legislature and helped bring the Hicks family’s favorite team to their home state.

The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree is a well-worn adage that certainly applies to the Hicks family. And, not surprisingly, cousins Josh and Chris grew up in this close-knit family and share many identical recollections of their childhood and how they admire

the men who set the standards in their family. Now in his 20th year at the Washoe County District Attorney’s Office and 11th year as the district attorney, a position his father once held, Chris also recalls the influence of his father and uncle.

“As far back as I can remember it was always in the back of my mind to be an attorney,” says Chris. “The men I most admired and looked up to – my dad and my uncle – I saw as such successful people. They were (and are) so highly regarded in their respective careers and very involved in the betterment of the legal profession. In addition, they were (and are) both dedicated family men always there for their children and very supportive of their wives. At the same time, both men had (and have) lots of friends and engaging hobbies. Benefiting by growing up with these two amazing role models, it’s inevitable that they would have a tremendous impact. Ultimately, I always knew I wanted to find a way to have a life like theirs.

“I obviously had the wonderful example my father set,” Chris adds. “Like him, I was drawn to being a prosecutor early in my career. I wasn’t positive it would be my career path, but after accepting a prosecutor position with the Carson City District Attorney’s Office in 2002, the scales were for tipped for me. I knew for certain this would be a career I would love.”

Chris joined the Washoe County District Attorney’s Office in 2005 and quickly established himself as a top-notch trial attorney successfully prosecuting some of the region’s most high-profile murder cases. In 2014 he was elected to the position of district attorney. Taking on the lessons in leadership and community service he learned from his father, Chris’ prominent achievements as district attorney include spearheading efforts to pass and implement Nevada’s Victims Bill of Rights – Marsy’s Law; expanding the Washoe County Child Advocacy Center into an award-winning facility; creating a first-of-its-kind



**“I THINK IT’S IMPORTANT TO ADD THAT OUR FATHERS ALSO INSTILLED IN US A TRUE LOVE AND APPRECIATION FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR STATE. WE’RE VERY PROUD OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS THE HICKS FAMILY HAS MADE, AND WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE, IN NEVADA.”**

Specialty Court Diversion Team; and elevating the transparency of the office. He is president of the Nevada District Attorneys Association and vice-chair of Nevada’s Prosecutor Advisory Council, serves on Nevada’s Sentencing Commission, and is an appointed director on the National District Attorneys Association Board of Directors.

Whether consciously or not, from the very start of his career, this young attorney followed in his father’s footsteps with a finesse and ease of an heir apparent. Also born and raised in Reno, Chris attended the University of Nevada and was a member of the

inaugural graduating class of the Boyd School of Law in Las Vegas.

As he had anticipated so many years ago, the career path Chris chose has proven to be not only fulfilling and auspicious, but also one that he reflects on with pride.

It wasn’t only Larry and Bud’s examples as attorneys that Josh and Chris have emulated, but also their roles as community leaders, husbands, and fathers.

“I have always aspired to be the kind of family man my father is,” says Josh, “and I try to replicate his dedication to public service as well.”

“I agree,” offers Chris. “I think it’s important to add that our fathers also instilled in us a true love and appreciation for our community and our state. We’re very proud of the contributions the Hicks family has made, and will continue to make, in Nevada.”

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# HOME MEANS NEVADA

## ★ Nevada State Song ★

Way out in the land of the setting sun,  
Where the wind blows wild and free,  
There's a lovely spot, just the only one,  
That means home sweet home to me.

If you follow the old Kit Carson trail,  
Until desert meets the hills,  
Oh you certainly will agree with me,  
It's the place of a thousand thrills.

Whenever the sun at the close of day,  
Colors all the western sky,  
Oh my heart returns to the desert grey,  
And the mountains tow'ring high.

Where the moonbeams play in shadowed glen,  
With the spotted fawn and doe,  
All the live long night until morning light,  
Is the loveliest place I know.

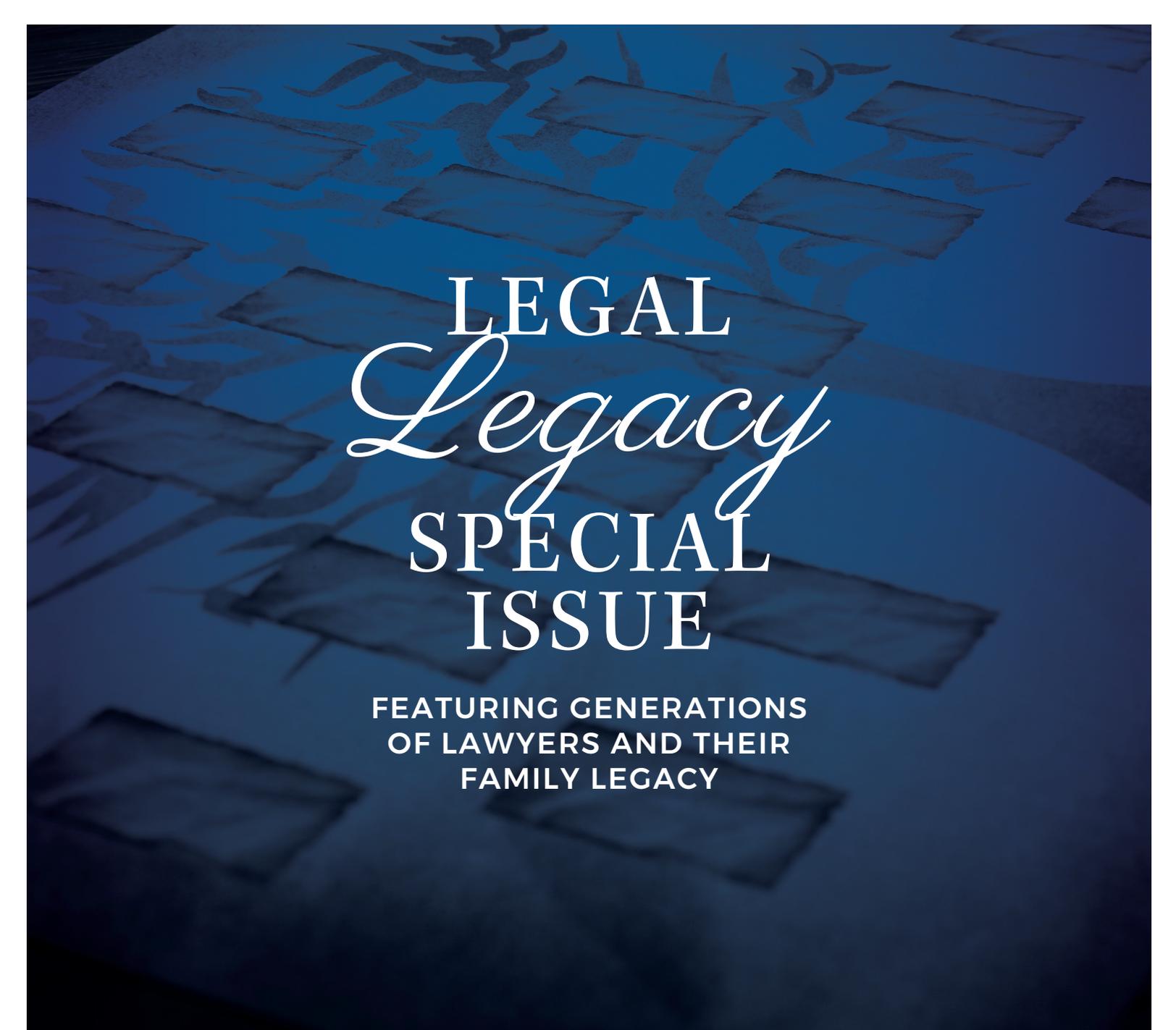
### Chorus

Home means Nevada, Home means the hills,  
Home means the sage and the pines.

Out by the Truckee's silvery rills,  
Out where the sun always shines,  
There is the land that I love the best,  
Fairer than all I can see.

Right in the heart of the golden west,  
Home mean Nevada to me.





LEGAL  
*Legacy*  
SPECIAL  
ISSUE

FEATURING GENERATIONS  
OF LAWYERS AND THEIR  
FAMILY LEGACY

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