



Stephen C. Ellis

Partner

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Steve Ellis (1947–2026) was a founding partner of Tucker Ellis whose vision and leadership shaped the firm’s growth and culture. His legacy endures through the work of the firm and the colleagues he mentored.

Steve was a business lawyer who provided senior-level counsel across a broad range of business, financial, and transactional matters for privately held companies. He served clients in industries including medical imaging products and services, consumer products, metals, plastics, and automotive, as well as technology-based software and biotechnology. Steve also served as lead counsel in scores of acquisitions and financings ranging in value from \$500,000 to more than \$500,000,000. His 35-plus years as a deal-making business lawyer made him both a trusted business counselor and a highly respected attorney.

Steve served for 10 years as National Managing Partner of the national law firm Arter & Hadden. An honors graduate of Case Western Reserve University School of Law, he was invited to deliver the law school’s [commencement address](#) in 2008, and in 2013 he received the school’s Centennial Award – the highest honor bestowed upon its alumni.

As a founding partner, Steve played a central role in building Tucker Ellis into a national firm known for its collaborative culture and client service. He was widely respected by colleagues and clients alike. In the wake of Steve’s passing, those whose lives he touched shared reflections on the impact he made. Tucker Ellis Managing Partner James Mizgala described Steve as “a consummate professional and an inspiration in so many ways.” Chelsea Mikula, co-chair of the firm’s Business Litigation practice group, recalled, “Steve had a rare combination of sharpness and warmth, seriousness of purpose without self-importance. He was the kind of person who left an impression not just because of how smart he was, but because of how he made people feel.” Chaz Weber, chair of the firm’s Finance practice group, wrote, “What a blessing it is to practice at the firm bearing Steve’s name. I can only hope to be half as good a lawyer and person as he was.” Partner John Slagter added, “Steve’s spirit will live on in this amazing firm that he created.”

Steve was a lifelong Cleveland resident and a valued member of the city's civic and charitable community. Yet for all his professional and civic accomplishments, Steve considered his greatest achievements to be his enduring marriage to his high school sweetheart Jean, his five grandchildren, and a single-digit golf handicap.

Education

- Case Western Reserve University School of Law (J.D.); Order of the Coif
- Denison University (A.B.)

Publications & Events

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- “[Professionalism](#),” Business Law, Case Western Reserve University School of Law (April 2020)
- “Leadership Lessons Learned from the Collapse of Arter & Hadden and the Launch of Tucker Ellis,” Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association Leadership Academy, Cleveland, Ohio (December 2019)

PUBLICATIONS

- “[80/20 Rule Applies in Deals, Too](#),” *Crain's Cleveland Business* (January 2013)

Honors

- The Centennial Medal Award, Case Western Reserve University School of Law (2013)
- ORT America 2013 Jurisprudence Award (Cleveland Region)
- Ohio Super Lawyers® (2004–2016, 2018–2020)
- The Best Lawyers in America© (1995–2021)
 - » 2009 Cleveland Lawyer of the Year (Corporate Law)

In the Community

- Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, Board of Directors
- Greater Cleveland Partnership (formerly Greater Cleveland Growth Association), Secretary and General Counsel
- HealthSpace Cleveland, Trustee and Vice Chair
- Lake Hospital System, Trustee and Chair of Finance Committee
- Lakeland Community College, Trustee
 - » Board Vice Chair
 - » Finance Committee Chair
- Leadership Cleveland, Alumnus
- Kramer Law Clinic, Advisory Committee
- Case Western Reserve University School of Law
 - » Adjunct Professor, Negotiations and Drafting
 - » 2008 Commencement Speaker
 - » Visiting Committee
 - » Society of Benchers, Chair
- Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association
 - » Banking & Corporate Law Section, Former Chair
- Hiram College, Visiting Committee
- Kent State University, Center for Entrepreneurship & Business Innovation (CEBI), Board Member