

Darene K. Matsuoka

PARTNER

Darene represents landowners, developers, corporations, family-run businesses, and individuals across several Hawaiian Islands, including O'ahu, Maui, and Moloka'i. Her practice focuses on commercial and real property disputes, water rights regulatory proceedings and litigation, and land use issues.

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Honolulu: 1000 Bishop Street, Suite 1200, Honolulu, HI 96813

Overview

Darene represents landowners, developers, corporations, family-run businesses, and individuals across several Hawaiian Islands, including O'ahu, Maui, and Moloka'i. Her practice focuses on commercial and real property disputes, water rights regulatory proceedings and litigation, and land use issues. She has experience in all aspects of litigation, including pre-litigation negotiations, discovery, motions practice, settlement negotiations, bench and jury trials, and appeals. She has litigated before administrative agencies, state and federal trial courts, and state and federal appellate courts.

Darene earned her law degree from the University of Hawai'i William S. Richardson School of Law. As a law student, Darene was the Executive Editor of the *University of Hawai'i Law Review*, President of the Student Animal Legal Defense Fund, and research assistant to Professor Andrea Freeman. She won a national award for Third Best Oralist as a member of the Native American Moot Court team and received the CALI Excellence for the Future Award in Legal Practice. She served as a judicial extern to the Honorable Mark E. Recktenwald, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Hawai'i, and the Honorable Karl K. Sakamoto, then-Judge of the Circuit Court of the First Circuit. She also clerked at the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, Domestic Violence Felony division.

Darene has been recognized on the *Best Lawyers*® Ones to Watch list since 2023. Born and raised in Hawai'i, Darene is a graduate of St. Andrew's Schools.

Practices & Industries

Construction

Coronavirus Response

Energy

Land Use, Zoning & Entitlements

- Historic Preservation & Native Hawaiian Rights
- Land Use Violations & Disputes

Litigation

- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Commercial Disputes
- Contested Case & Administrative Proceedings

Real Estate

- Real Estate Disputes

Water Resources

Noteworthy

Awards

- *Hawaii Business Magazine* Emerging Legal Stars, 2025
- Listed in *Best Lawyers*® Ones to Watch, since 2023

Credentials

Education

- J.D., William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawai'i
- B.A., Philosophy, University of Hawai'i
- Political Science, Wellesley College

Admissions

- Hawai'i State Bar
- United States District Court for the District of Hawai'i
- United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Membership

- Hawaii State Bar Association
- American Bar Association
- Environment, Energy, and Resources Seminar (EERS), Member

Speaking Engagements

- "Navigating Hawai'i's Evolving Land Use Laws," Building Hawai'i, AEC Industry Trends & Development Insight, Society for Marketing Professional Services (September 5, 2025) (Co-Presenter)
- "Changes and Potential Challenges to Hawaii's Short-Term Rental Laws," Cades Schutte Corporate Counsel In-House Seminar (September 27, 2024) (Co-Presenter)