



Keola R. Whittaker

OF COUNSEL

Keola advises clients on land use and zoning matters across all islands, helping them navigate Hawai'i's complex entitlement processes. He leverages over fifteen years of transactional and litigation experience practicing in Hawai'i, California, and New York.

📞 Call 808.871.9716 📠 Fax 808.871.6017 ✉️ kwhittaker@ca-des.com

📍 Kahului: 444 Hana Highway, Suite 204, Kahului, HI 96732

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

Overview

Keola advises clients on land use and zoning matters across all islands, helping them navigate Hawai'i's complex entitlement processes. He works extensively with housing developers on land use entitlements, zoning, and permitting, and also brings unique experience advising telecommunications companies on regulatory issues specific to their industry. His practice includes representing clients before planning commissions, zoning boards, and other governmental bodies statewide.

In addition to his land use work, Keola has significant litigation and trial experience, representing clients in high-stakes disputes involving corporate mergers, real estate agreements, and environmental claims. He has also advised clients in the food and beverage industry on a range of legal issues, offering strategic counsel tailored to their business needs.

Before returning home to Hawai'i, Keola worked at leading law firms in New York and Los Angeles. In 2020, he moved to Maui, where he served as Deputy Corporation Counsel, advising Maui's county mayor, council, and other public officials on legal matters.

Practices & Industries

Corporate & Business

- Government Contracts

Environmental

Land Use, Zoning & Entitlements

- Land Use Violations & Disputes

Litigation

- Commercial Disputes

Real Estate

- Real Estate Disputes
- Real Estate Transactions

Noteworthy

Awards

- Listed in *Best Lawyers*®, since 2025
- 2025 Fellow in the HSBA's 17th Annual Leadership Institute
- Top Minority Attorneys in Los Angeles, *Los Angeles Business Journal*, 2020
- 40 Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40, National LGBT Bar Association, 2014

Community Involvement

- Wave of Harmony, Board Member (2024-present)
- First Unitarian Church Of Los Angeles, President, Board of Trustees (2017-2020)

- OutRight International, Member, Board of Directors (2014-2020)
- The Trevor Project, Founder of Trevor NextGen (2008-2012)

Credentials

Education

- J.D. (2007), University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, *cum laude*
- M.A., Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies (2004), Reed College
- B.A., Political Philosophy (2001), Whitman College

Admissions

- Hawai'i State Bar (2019)
- California State Bar (2013)
- New York State Bar (2008)

Membership

- Hawai'i State Bar Association
- California State Bar Association
- New York State Bar Association

Publications

- "Maui's Shifting Shoreline and SMA Rules," Cades Schutte *ke kumu* (Spring/Summer 2024) (Co-Author)
- "Emergency Powers Under Scrutiny: New Uses and Limits of Chapter 127A," *Hawaii Bar Journal* (December 2023) (Author)
- "Changes to Honolulu's Coastal Zone Management," Cades Schutte *ke kumu* (Spring/Summer 2023) (Co-Author)
- "Will Trulia Drive 'Merger Tax' Suits out of Delaware?" *Legal Backgrounder*, Washington Legal Foundation (Co-Author)
- "Seventh Circuit Rejects Disclosure-Only Settlement in Merger Tax Suit, Embracing Delaware Chancery Court's 'Trulia' Decision," *Legal Pulse*, Washington Legal Foundation (Co-Author)
- "Soul Men Ruling Latest to Demonstrate Courts' Shift To Transformative Use Test In Publicity Rights Cases," *Entertainment Law & Finance* (Author)
- "Gay-Straight Alliances and Free Speech: Are Parental Consent Laws Constitutional?" *Berkeley J. Gender L. & Justice* (Author)
- "Trademark Dilution in a Global Age," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Economic Law* (Author)

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)
- “Hawai‘i Land Use Law Updates,” Cades Schutte Corporate Counsel seminar (September 2023) (Speaker)