

Juan G. Villaseñor

Counsel

jvillasenor@fbtgibbons.com | 303.406.4923

1801 California Street
Suite 4900
Denver, CO 80202

Practice Areas

Business & Commercial Litigation

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Litigation

White Collar & Investigations

Bar Memberships

Colorado

Tennessee

The Hon. Juan G. Villaseñor (Ret.) serves as Counsel for the Business & Commercial Litigation and White Collar & Investigations practice groups at FBT Gibbons. Because of his extensive experience as a District Court Judge and former federal prosecutor, Judge Villaseñor brings valuable insights to FBT Gibbons and its clients facing complex litigation and high-stakes matters.

Before joining the firm, Judge Villaseñor served for eight years as a District Judge in the Eighth Judicial District in Colorado. Appointed by Governor John Hickenlooper in 2018 as the first Latino to serve as a District Court Judge in the Eighth Judicial District, Judge Villaseñor brings over two decades of legal experience to the firm. Throughout his judicial service, he presided over a broad range of complex civil, commercial, criminal, and probate matters. He presided over more than 55 jury trials and thousands of bench trials and evidentiary hearings. Judge Villaseñor also gained expertise in electronic-surveillance and DNA evidence matters, authoring noteworthy opinions on such issues. Judge Villaseñor also presided over the district's highly successful Wellness Court, a multidisciplinary probation court designed to serve individuals with significant mental health illnesses and substance use disorders through evidence-based treatment, accountability, and community support. In that capacity, Judge Villaseñor worked closely with prosecutors, defense counsel, probation officers, treatment providers, law enforcement, and mental health professionals in a collaborative approach that promotes public safety while improving long-term outcomes for participants. His judicial experience reflects a practical understanding of complex legal issues, stakeholder collaboration, and innovative approaches to solving

challenging disputes.

Before his appointment to the bench, Judge Villaseñor was an Assistant United States Attorney in the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado. There, he investigated, prosecuted, and tried matters involving complex issues of trespass on federal property, False Claims Act, commercial and financial claims by the government, employment discrimination, and constitutional law. He also investigated and prosecuted criminal matters.

During his tenure at the Justice Department, Judge Villaseñor worked in the Office of the Pardon Attorney, as part of the Clemency Initiative, where he provided recommendations to the Pardon Attorney, the Deputy Attorney General, and the President of the United States on applications for commutation of sentence submitted by federal prisoners convicted of drug-possession or drug-distribution offenses. His work led to five sentence commutations.

Throughout Judge Villaseñor's career he has handled hundreds of appeals as an attorney and a judicial officer. At the Tennessee Attorney General's Office, for example, he specialized in appellate practice and argued over 60 cases dealing with civil rights, dependency and neglect, child support, and workers' compensation. At the United States Attorney's Office, he also litigated many appeals in the Tenth Circuit. And as a district judge, he presided over appeals over lower courts and administrative boards and commissions.

Judge Villaseñor began his career as the Justice William J. Brennan First Amendment Fellowship Attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union in New York, where he specialized in First Amendment litigation in state and federal courts throughout the United States.

Other Info About Juan

Work History

District Judge – Larimer County, Colorado, 2018 – 2026

Colorado Supreme Court's Evidence Rules Committee, 2019 – Present

Board Member – Colorado Medical Board, Department of Regulatory Agencies, 2017 – 2018

Assistant United States Attorney – United States Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado, 2008 – 2018

Clemency Initiative – U.S. Department of Justice's Office of the Pardon Attorney, 2014 – 2016

Assistant Attorney General – Tennessee Attorney General's Office, 2003 – 2008

Justice William J. Brennan First Amendment Fellowship Attorney – American Civil Liberties Union, 2002 – 2003

Experience

Litigated Cases

- *Tanke v. Chertoff*, 2010 WL 8581733 (D. Mont. 2010): Obtained favorable jury verdict in employment discrimination trial against the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- *Sandoval v. Martinez-Barnish*, No. 09-cv-02434-WJM-MJW (D. Colo. 2009): Obtained favorable jury verdict in a tort case against a U.S. Department of Energy employee.
- *United States v. Konczak*, 2015 WL 4607663 (D. Colo. 2015): Obtained favorable judgment after a bench trial for the Small Business Administration ("SBA") on a breach of contract claim against two individuals who defaulted on their obligation to repay their SBA loan.
- *United States v. St. Clair*, 2015 WL 1476762 (D. Colo. 2015), *affirmed*, 819 F.3d 1254, 1255 (10th Cir. 2016): Obtained favorable judgment after a bench trial on claims of trespass and ejectment against a landowner who wrongly believed to own seven acres of the San Juan National Forest, north of Durango, Colorado.

- *In re Ellis*, 493 B.R. 818 (Bankr. D. Colo. 2013): obtained favorable judgment after bench trial on a claim of bankruptcy discrimination filed against the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- *United States v. Wilhite*, No. 00-cr-504-CMA, 2017 WL 4572321 (D. Colo. 2017), *affirmed*, 774 F. App'x 478 (10th Cir. 2019): Successfully enforced writs of execution after bench trials against defendant who had been convicted of wire fraud and who owed a $1.6 million restitution judgment on the theory that he had fraudulently transferred his interest in a company to his wife.
- *Rezaq v. Nalley*, 677 F.3d 1001 (10th Cir. 2012); *Silverstein v. Fed. Bureau of Prisons*, 559 F. App'x 739 (10th Cir. 2014): successfully defended on appeal favorable judgments on multiple constitutional claims filed by federal prisoners against the government.

Judicial Decisions

- *The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Soc. v. Bd. of Com'rs of Larimer County, Colorado, No. 18 CV 31008,* 2019 WL 4419072 (Colo. Dist. Ct. 2019), *affirmed sub nom. Langer v. Bd. of Commr's of Larimer Cty.*, 462 P.3d 59 (Colo. 2020): I approved the county commissioners' decision to authorize a gravity-driven mountain roller coaster in Estes Park, a decision the Colorado Supreme Court affirmed.
- *In re Court Order for Production of Records to Google, LLC*, No. 2024CV30942, 2024 WL 5314970 (Colo. Dist. Ct. 2024): I granted Google's motion to quash a "reverse-keyboard" search warrant on the ground that it was "unusually voluminous" under the Stored Communications Act.
- *People v. Resch*, No. 2020 CR 139, 2021 WL 1258369 (Colo. Dist. Ct. 2021): I found that search warrants authorizing the search of defendant's cell phones, other electronic devices, and social media accounts were supported by probable cause
- *People v. Jones*, No. 2022CR196, 2022 WL 4486182 (Colo. Dist. Ct. 2022): I granted defendant's Rule 702 motion exclude

evidence of historical cellular, data-based analysis based on the use of Trax software because the software was unreliable.

- *People v. Rivera*, No. 2018CR1139, 2021 WL 1301088 (Colo. Dist. Ct. 2021): I authorized the introduction of DNA evidence, which relied on a novel method of analysis using software called STRmix.

Education

Vanderbilt University Law School, J.D., 2001

Duke University School of Law, LL.M. in Judicial Studies, 2023

St. John's College, Annapolis, A.B., 1997

Clerkships

U.S. District Judge William J. Haynes, Jr., in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, 2001 – 2002

Professional Affiliations

Larimer County Bar Association, Present

Colorado Hispanic Bar Association, Board Member, 2013 – 2015; Chair, Nominations and Endorsements Committee, 2013 – 2014

Faculty of Federal Advocates, Board Member, 2014 – 2018

National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys, 2009 – 2015

Hispanic National Bar Association, 2013 – Present

Rhone Bracket American Inn of Court, 2010 – 2012

Civic Activities

Volunteer Judge, Colorado Bar Association, High School Mock Trial, Northern Colorado Regional Tournament, Present

Mentor, Law School…Yes We Can Mentorship Program, 2014 – 2018

Federal Elections Monitor, U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (In November 2012, he was a monitor in Denver County and in November 2016 in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania)

Translator and attorney, Greeley Legal Night, 2012 – 2018

Interviewer, Vanderbilt University Law School, Alumni Interview Program, 2008 – Present

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