



Celebrating 27 years in practice in 2025, Leon has established a distinguished reputation in intellectual property and entertainment law. His expertise spans **trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets, media and entertainment law, sponsorship and sweepstakes law, franchise law, convention and trade show matters, podcasts, right of publicity/name and likeness matters, and start-ups, business, and contract law.** He also has extensive experience in **litigation** within these areas.

For 17 years, Leon was a of counsel at **Taft Stettinius & Hollister, LLP**, a prestigious 130-year-old AmLaw top-50 law firm with over 1,000 attorneys nationwide. Recognized by **Chambers USA** as a leading firm in 21 practice areas—including intellectual property and litigation—Taft provided the foundation for Leon’s deep legal acumen. In 2025, he launched his own practice, continuing to serve businesses of all sizes with high-caliber counsel.

Leon’s **intellectual property practice** is robust, covering both traditional IP matters and entertainment law. He advises on IP strategy, litigation, and business transactions, working with clients ranging from Fortune 500 companies to small businesses, entrepreneurs, and creative professionals. His client portfolio includes entertainment companies, concert promoters, festivals, filmmakers, podcasts, authors, artists, record labels, and musicians. He also serves as an expert witness and mediator in copyright, trademark, and entertainment litigation, and he regularly practices before the **United States Patent and Trademark and Copyright Offices.**

His **experience** includes significant trademark and copyright prosecution, including copyright office and TTAB appeals and adversarial proceedings, and copyright and trademark (USPTO / TTAB) appeals and inter parties/adversarial proceedings, including cancellations and oppositions, representing clients in complex copyright, trademark, and IP disputes, as well as drafting and negotiating agreements in the IP and entertainment sectors. His work encompasses licensing, recording and publishing deals, music venue and festival agreements, and contracts for managers and agents. He is also regularly involved in IP transactional matters, including registration, prosecution, searches and due diligence, as well as entertainment and IP deals, including contracts, licenses, mergers, assignments, and due diligence, as well as right of publicity matters. Leon has significant experience in the entertainment industry, most notably, music, film/TV, photography, literary publishing, and software. His experience also extends to general commercial business counseling on IP and related issues, including transactions, protection, enforcement, and litigation issues.

Beyond his legal career, Leon served as an **Adjunct Professor at Otterbein University**, where he taught a course on copyright, trademark, and business law in the music and entertainment industries. Leon is also an active musician and a member of the Columbus-based band **Grassinine**, which frequently performs at local charity events. He is also the co-founder of the annual **“Music in the Round”** benefit concert, supporting the **Marafiki AIDS Orphanage in Kenya.**

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2012 – 2025: Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP, Attorney (Of Counsel) Taft is a highly recognized, full service premier national law firm founded in 1885 with more than 1000 attorneys. Taft has received a “Tier 1” ranking by US News Media Group “Best Law Firms” and is top ranked by Chambers USA as a leading firm in 21 practice areas—including intellectual property and litigation.

2010–2015: Adjunct Professor, Otterbein University Instructor of Music & Art Law course. Extensive coverage of copyright law, trademark law, contract law as well as music industry legal & business issues applicable to recording, publishing and touring.

1998 - 2012: Private Practice Attorney

- Founded and cultivated successful boutique law firm from the ground up. Developed progressive marketing strategies and business management processes. Developed a loyal client base. Served as “of counsel” to other firms.
- Named “Rising Star” in intellectual property by Law and Politics Magazine, 2010, 2011.
- Wrote and published numerous articles on copyright, trademark, and related areas.
- Regular speaker and presenter on practice area concentrations.
- **Of Counsel, Chester Willcox & Saxbe, LLP (2009 – 2012):** an AV rated, 40+ attorney full service law firm with a 125-year history and stellar reputation as a premier litigation and general business law firm. The firm has a rich history of prestigious attorneys, many of whom have held public office, and some even reaching the highest offices such as US and Ohio Attorney General, US and Ohio Senator and Representative, the Ohio Supreme Court and Ohio Lieutenant Governor.
- **Of Counsel to Rich Crites & Dittmer, LLC (2004 – 2008):** an AV rated, 16 attorney full service law firm with over 50 years of service. The firm’s core practice groups include real estate tax and appeals, municipal law, business transactions, white collar crime, collections, and civil litigation.

Attorney Representative Clients:

Leon has represented a diverse range of clients, from multi-billion-dollar corporations to small businesses, across various industries, including **intellectual property, entertainment, retail, real estate, and business law**. His clientele spans the **music, entertainment, real estate, software** sectors, working with **concert venues, record labels, publishing companies, promoters, booking agents, managers, artists, bands, writers, photographers, models, actors, podcasts, software companies, marketing and advertising agencies, film producers, construction firms, and real estate developers**.

Representative Cases and Matters:

- Achieved successful federal court enforcement of copyright infringement for Academy Award winning film *Dallas Buyer's Club*.
- Defense of pop music star and actress in copyright infringement matter involving hit song (summary judgement granted in favor of client).
- Defense of pop star Barry Manilow, the Judy Garland Heirs Trust and manager/agency in large scale copyright infringement case for use of video clips during an arena concert tour.
- Counsel to Legend Valley, a large concert and festival venue, and defense of contract dispute and other matters,

- Represented international sporting goods company in securing a fraudulent USPTO trademark registration cancellation, injunction, and a more than \$220,000 judgment.
- Representation of national restaurant franchise in litigation and trademark
- Represented software company in a federal trademark case against Zillow
- Representation of Columbus Brewing Company in large-scale trademark infringement matter.
- Representation in defense of concert promoter in trademark infringement matter.
- Representation of defendant in a federal suit over a national radiology practice management firm's use of a consulting company's similar name
- Defense of trademark infringement and USPTO opposition proceedings brought by large corporation in federal district court (Texas) against local business client.
- Obtained judgment in favor of client invalidating Plaintiff's long owned and well-known industry specific registered trademark, receiving national trade press.
- Obtained dismissal in defense of multi-million dollar breach of concert promotion agreement for U.S. national "Rock Never Stops" tour, featuring Quiet Riot, Ted Nugent, Night Ranger and Slaughter.
- Defended multiple lawsuits for copyright infringement and breach of contract by national recording artist against our record label client.
- Represented a large concert venue in a civil fraud case.
- Leon has achieved successful federal court enforcement of thousands of uses of photography studio's photographs outside of invoice terms against 1-800 Flowers
- Served as expert witness in copyright and trademark cases against Microsoft and for another software company.

Prior Legal Experience:

- **Ohio Attorney General**, Columbus, OH, July 1996-April 1997
- **Dean Nancy Rogers**, Ohio State University College of Law, May-August 1996
- **Rhino Records, Legal and Business Affairs**, Los Angeles, CA, May-August 1997
- **Famous Music Publishing Company, Legal Affairs**, Los Angeles, CA, May-August 1997
- **MCI WorldCom Advanced Networks, Legal Affairs**, Hilliard, OH, Sept.-Oct. 1998

EDUCATION

- **The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law**, Columbus, OH: Juris Doctor, May 1998
- **Michigan State University**, East Lansing, MI: Bachelor of Arts with Honor, July 1995
 - Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science with Business Cognate and Additional Major in Psychology

BAR ADMISSIONS

- **Ohio** (1998)
- **US Virgin Islands** (2009)
- **United States District Court, Southern and Northern District of Ohio** (1998, 2011 respectively)
- **Federal District Court in Houston, TX and San Diego, CA** (Admitted Pro Hoc Vice) (2009-2010)

AWARDS, SPEECHES and PUBLICATIONS

- **Super Lawyer, Rising Star, 2010, 2011** (Cincinnati Magazine)
- **Top Attorney, 2015, 2016** (Columbus CEO Magazine)
- **Top Attorney/rated Excellent, 2018** (AVVO)
- **People to Know in Law** (Columbus Business First)
- **Legal Elite, 2016** (CorpAmerica)
- **Ones to Watch, 2018** (AI)
- **Law Firm of the Year, Corporate INTL Magazine**
- **Editor, "Making It" by Matthew Crumpton, Esq. and Tristan Kinsley** (book on music industry)

- Author, "The "Judge Judy" of Copyright Claims? The Copyright "CASE Act" Would Create a Small-Claims Court Equivalent for Copyright Enforcement Lawsuits"
- Author, "Chief Wahoo and the Washington Redskins Are Safe - for Now: U.S. Supreme Court Kills Trademark Disparagement Clause"
- Author, "Everything You Need to Know about Trademark Protection and Registration"
- Author, "Why You Can't Copyright Your Song If You Have Already Written It!"
- Author, "Takin' Care of Business: A Band's Basic Business Guide"
- Author, "Will You Face the Music? Music Downloading 101"
- Author, "When to Consider Trademark Protection and Registration" 2009
- Author, "Brand due diligence saves millions" *Columbus Business First*, May 14, 2010
- Speaking engagements include: Columbus Bar Association, Virgin Islands Bar Association, CLE courses, The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law; Capital University Law School Sports & Entertainment Law Association; Midpoint Music Festival; AllBiz Music Conference; Undercurrents

EXPERT WITNESS ENGAGEMENTS

- **2011: MICROSOFT CORPORATION v. TECH-MART, INC. and AYMAN ARAF A ABDELM AKSOUD**; United States District Court Southern District of Ohio Eastern Division Case No. 2:10 cv 340
- **2013: GEOLOGIC COMPUTER SYSTEMS, INC. v. JOHN D. MACLEAN et al.**, United States District Court Eastern District of Michigan Case No 2:10-cv-13569-AJT-RSW,

ORGANIZATIONS, AFFILIATIONS and ACTIVITIES (past and present)

- **The Copyright Society** – Member of international copyright law organization
- **INTA – International Trademark Association**: Long-time member and attendee of international trademark law organization, including two year-service position on Copyright Committee
- **Columbus Bar Association** – Member of the Columbus Bar Association's Ethics Committee & Arts Committee
- **Virgin Islands Bar Association** – Appointed by VI Supreme Court to Ethics Panel; Appointed as Chair of Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee
- **Capitol Square Rotary** – (Past) President and Board of Directors, multiple committee leadership roles
- **Hocking College** – (Past) Board of Advisors, music program
- **Columbus Community Festival** - (Past) Board Member, Entertainment Selection Committee
- **Music in the Round** – Founder and chairperson of annual charity concert for anti-domestic violence non-profit
- **Greater Columbus Local Music Awards** – Founder and Executive Producer
- **Photography** – Produced award-winning photographs; concentration in underwater coral reef life
- **Music** – Performs in Grassinine, a musical act that performs for charity
- **SCUBA** – Certified by PADI, extensive dive experience
- **Comfest** – Volunteer - Booked talent and supervised staging for large annual non-profit music and arts festival