

Rising Star: Skadden's Parker Rider-Longmaid

By Nadia Dreid

Law360 (August 15, 2025, 4:00 PM EDT) -- Parker Rider-Longmaid of Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP helped the Innocence Project persuade the U.S. Supreme Court to extend the statute of limitations on appealing DNA test orders for a man who has been on death row for over 25 years, earning him a spot among appellate attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

His proudest moment:

Rodney Reed has spent almost half his life on death row in Texas after being convicted of murdering a woman in 1998. But he has maintained his innocence and pushed to have the murder weapon, a belt, tested for DNA.

Reed's team argued that Texas' statute of limitations on appealing the order denying his request for the DNA test was unconstitutional, and Rider-Longmaid was the attorney that Skadden sent up to bat when it was time to convince the Supreme Court of that.

And he was successful. In a 6-3 decision, the justices said the statute of limitations should have started tolling when state proceedings were officially done, not when Reed's initial request for DNA testing was denied.

"We believe in him," Rider-Longmaid said.

The matter was sent back down to the Fifth Circuit to consider on the merits, but the appellate court ruled that the motion to deny testing wasn't out of order. Reed has once again petitioned the Supreme Court to take up the matter and force DNA testing.

His biggest case:

Though Rider-Longmaid has had many wins in his career, one of the biggest cases he's ever worked on was ultimately a loss. His Skadden

2025



Parker Rider-Longmaid
Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom

Age: 39

Home base: Washington, D.C.

Position: Partner

Law school: University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School

First job after law school: Clerk for U.S. District Judge Gene E.K. Pratter of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

team represented the Navajo Nation in its fight for water rights, which it argued were promised to the tribe by the 1868 Treaty of Bosque Redondo.

The majority of Supreme Court justices disagreed, dashing the tribe's hopes and declaring that the treaty did not create a federal obligation to secure water for the Navajo Nation.

"It was a meaningful case because Native American tribes have been disempowered for many years, and this case had to do with promises the United States made the Navajo Nation in treaties to give them a homeland and provide them with water," Rider-Longmaid said. "And the government did not want to honor those promises."

The decisions did, however, prompt a scathing dissent from Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, who said that "the Navajo have waited patiently for someone, anyone, to help them, only to be told (repeatedly) that they have been standing in the wrong line and must try another."

Rider-Longmaid said he's hopeful that publicity surrounding the case will do some good for the Navajo.

"There are now agreements that the nation has reached with the states in the area and other tribes, and if Congress goes ahead and ratifies those agreements, then the nation will finally get some measure of justice on these claims," he said.

What motivates him:

The "strategy and craft of appellate law" is definitely a big draw, Rider-Longmaid said, though doing right by his clients and building a team — particularly with junior attorneys — are close behind.

"It's really fun to develop arguments and find the most compelling and persuasive way to package them," he said. "I've always loved writing and crafting, whether it's at the sentence level or at the paragraph or the whole piece level, [and] finding what type of strategy you're going to take to best advance the interests of your client."

Why he chose appellate law:

Appellate law, in many ways, is the kind of law you learn about in law school, Rider-Longmaid said. He said he likes working out the "tricky legal questions and having time to think about the issues deeply."

Appellate attorneys aren't just there to "write briefs" or "polish" the writing, but to find the best way to present the appeal as a whole, all the way through, Rider-Longmaid said.

"We're not specialists in a subject matter," he said. But appellate attorneys work closely with specialists to figure out "how to make the best advocacy possible before generalist judges who are used to seeing advocacy in a certain way."

And the cases are most interesting when appellate attorneys can be involved from the very beginning and try to forecast how the issues will appear before an appellate court, especially when there's a sense that's where the case is going to end up, according to Rider-Longmaid.

It takes a lot of work to make the explanation seem simple, he said, and "even in the most complex case, the goal is to make your answer appear as clear and simple as possible."

How the industry will change in the next decade:

Appellate law is on the up and up, Rider-Longmaid said, with more and more firms beginning to realize the value of having an attorney that specializes in appellate law come in and help with the appeal of a case.

"Historically you'd have trial lawyers handling it all the way through," he said. "But appellate courts think about the law in a different way. Trial courts may have hundreds of cases, but [appellate courts are] three judges together looking at a very winnowed-down set of issues."

So when he looks at the future of his practice area, Rider-Longmaid sees the horizon broadening with "more and more potential for appellate lawyers to be involved in appeals."

--As told to Nadia Dreid. Editing by Linda Voorhis.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2025 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,100 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2025, to be eligible for this year's award.