

**Jean Smith-Gonnell**

Partner

Charlotte

[jean.gonnell@troutman.com](mailto:jean.gonnell@troutman.com)

D 704.916.2381



Jean helps clients in the cannabis sector to expand their businesses and resolve their toughest challenges. With more than a decade of dedicated experience in cannabis law, she provides clear-cut and actionable guidance in a fluid regulatory landscape.

**OVERVIEW**

Jean, who leads the firm's Cannabis Industry practice, has dedicated her entire career to the cannabis sector, helping growers, dispensaries, investors, receivers, and other stakeholders achieve their business goals and prepare for unexpected issues. She has extensive experience with medical marijuana, retail marijuana, hemp, and CBD products, and helps clients as they establish their businesses, mitigate risk, and resolve disputes. Known for responding to clients within 24 hours or less, Jean is also a go-to advisor for a wide range of day-to-day operational issues.

Drawing from experience handling more than 1,000 contracts for cannabis clients, Jean provides a well-informed perspective and intimate knowledge of the industry as she assists clients with all aspects of regulatory compliance, cannabis licensing, and business transactions. Combined with her experience in the courtroom and before administrative agencies in multiple states, she provides clients with a roadmap for effectively navigating the complex, ever-changing, and relatively new sector. Clients who seek to reorganize or wind up their business also work with Jean for her decade of experience representing cannabis receivers, as they safeguard the interests of struggling cannabis businesses and their creditors.

A Colorado native who was introduced to the cannabis industry in 2010, Jean founded and ran her own cannabis-focused practice in Denver before joining the firm. Her experience translates to the many other states that model their regulations after Colorado's time-tested system. She represents approximately 15% of all licensed marijuana businesses in Colorado alone, with a 98% client retention rate.

**REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS**

- Counseled a special master and second receiver throughout their investigation of first receiver for misappropriation of receivership assets and other potentially fraudulent actions concerning a cannabis business operation with multiple locations, resulting in a satisfactory settlement for the receivership estate and interested claimants.
- Counseled a long-term client in their growth from one rural marijuana dispensary to a large and successful multiregion cannabis operation, including 10 dispensary locations, three cultivation sites, and two infused-

product manufacturing facilities.

- Represented a buyer in a cannabis business transaction in litigation that resulted in the return of broker fees by the broker due to doing nothing more than making an introduction of the parties.

## AWARDS

- *Super Lawyers*<sup>®</sup>: Colorado (2021-2022)
- *Super Lawyers*<sup>®</sup>: Rising Stars (2021-2022)
- *Law Week Colorado: Barrister's Choice*, "Best Marijuana Lawyer" (October 2017)

## TOP AREAS OF FOCUS

- Cannabis
- Regulatory Investigations, Strategy + Enforcement

## ALL AREAS OF FOCUS

- Business Litigation
- Cannabis
- Commercial Contracting
- Corporate Governance
- Gaming
- Government + Regulatory Litigation
- Hemp + Hemp Derivatives Industry
- Regulatory Investigations, Strategy + Enforcement

## PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Member, Law360 Cannabis Editorial Advisory Board (2025)
- Member, Arapahoe County Bar
- Member, Colorado Women's Bar
- Board member, Thirdway Center (nonprofit organization), (2020)
- Member, Colorado Department of Revenue Marijuana Enforcement Division Legislation Implementation Work Group, (2016-present)
- Member, Colorado Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division, (2012-present)

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Intern, Colorado 18th Judicial District, Magistrate Elliot-Dumler, 2010
- Legislative aide, Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry (CACI), 2009
- Intern, Press and Policy Office, Colorado Senate Majority, 2009

## EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

### EDUCATION

- University of Denver, J.D., 2011, editor, *Criminal Law Review*, Finalist and Best Brief, Barristers Cup; Executive Member, Moot Court Board; Member, Appellate Team; Mediator, Student Law Office Mediation Clinic
- University of Colorado Denver, B.A., *with honors*, 2009

## BAR ADMISSIONS

- Arizona
- Colorado
- North Carolina

## SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Panelist, "[Anticipating a Cannabis Receivership – Questions You Should Ask Before Getting Involved](#)," Commercial Receivers Association Annual Conference, August 2025.
- Speaker, "[Federal Rescheduling of Cannabis](#)," Attorney General Alliance Working Group Meeting, October 24, 2024.
- Speaker, "[The Differences Between Cannabis Decontamination and Remediation: Analyzing the Latest Research](#)," 13th Annual MJBizCon, December 3, 2024.
- Speaker, "[CANNABIS LAW: Basic Cannabis Concepts](#)," Thomson Reuters West LegalEdCenter, September 5, 2024.
- Moderator, [CannMed 24 Innovation & Investment Summit](#), May 12, 2024.
- Speaker, "Cannabis and Psychedelics Law," National Business Institute, February 9, 2024.
- Presenter, "[All the Buzz: Cannabis & Banking Series from the TPPA](#)," Third Party Payment Processors Association, 2024.
- Speaker, "[Latest Developments in Cannabis and Implications for Payment Processors](#)," TPPPA 2023 Solving the Payments Puzzle Conference, September 13, 2023.
- Speaker, "Marijuana Business Operations in Connecticut," National Business Institute, August 25, 2023.
- Speaker, "Cannabis Business Law: Everything You Need to Know Now!," National Business Institute, December 20, 2021.

## PUBLICATIONS

- Co-author, "[Congressional Briefing Highlights Growing Bipartisan Consensus on the Need for Federal Clarity in Hemp-Derived Cannabinoid Regulation](#)," *Regulatory Oversight*, July 22, 2025.
- Co-author, "[Closing the Loophole: Updates on Federal and State Attempts to Regulate Intoxicating Hemp-Derived Products](#)," *Reuters* and *Westlaw Today*, July 18, 2025.
- Co-author, "[A Path Forward for Colo. Pot Products After Failed Safety Test](#)," *Law360*, May 27, 2025.
- Co-author, "[Testing Turmoil: The Legal and Business Implications of Inconsistent Cannabis Testing Standards](#)," *Reuters* and *Westlaw Today*, April 25, 2025.
- Co-author, "[Indiana AG Pushes Back on THC Legislation](#)," *Regulatory Oversight*, April 24, 2025.
- Co-author, "[Missouri Legislature's Proposals to Regulate Hemp-Derived Consumable Products](#)," *Regulatory Oversight*, February 12, 2025.
- Co-author, "[Cannabis Rescheduling: ALJ Cancels Upcoming Hearings on Proposed Rulemaking](#)," *Regulatory Oversight*, January 15, 2025.
- Co-author, "[Getting Into the Weeds on Marijuana Excise Taxes: Trends and Outliers in the Largest Markets](#)," *Reuters*, November 25, 2024.
- Podcast, "[12 Days of Regulatory Insights: Day 5 – Cannabis Chronicles](#)," *Regulatory Oversight Podcast*,

December 11, 2024.

- Co-author, "[NCAA Drug Testing & Cannabinoids: A Break-up Story](#)," *Westlaw Today*, September 13, 2024.
- Co-author, "[Missouri Governor's Efforts to Ban Unregulated Psychoactive Cannabis Products Meets Resistance](#)," *Regulatory Oversight*, September 9, 2024.
- Co-author, "[State AGs Take Action to Quell Proliferation of Intoxicating Hemp Products](#)," *Cannabis Business Times*, August 12, 2024.
- Co-author, "[Key Regulatory Changes in Colorado's Marijuana Industry – What Businesses Need to Know](#)," *Cannabis Business Times*, August 7, 2024.
- Co-author, "Rescheduling and Recreational Marijuana: Possible Step Toward National Legalization?," *Reuters* and *Westlaw Today*, July 2, 2024.
- Co-author, "[Cannabis Rescheduling: A Potential Watershed Moment That Comes with Many As-Yet Unanswered Questions for the Marijuana Industry](#)," *Cannabis Business Executive*, May 20, 2024.
- Co-author, "[Proposed Federal Cannabis Legislation Aimed at Providing Access to Veterans](#)," *Homeland Magazine*, March 1, 2024.
- Co-author, "[Where Things Stand: A Summary of Pending Federal Cannabis Legislation](#)," *Reuters*, February 7, 2024.
- Co-author, "[FOIA Exemption Questions on Redacted HHS Cannabis Letter](#)," *Law360*, January 5, 2024.
- Co-author, "[Opinion: Emerging Trends and Regulatory Shifts in 2024](#)," *Marijuana Venture*, December 18, 2023.
- Co-author, "[How Cannabis Cos. Are Adapting in Shifting Bankruptcy Arena](#)," *Law360*, December 4, 2023.
- Co-author, "[Green in a Gray Area: Lessons for Virginia Cannabis 'Gifting' Businesses](#)," *Virginia Lawyers Weekly*, November 27, 2023.
- Podcast, "[Chronic Payments: Unraveling the Complexities of Cannabis Banking](#)," *Payments Pros – The Payments Law Podcast*, October 25, 2023.
- Co-author, "[Troutman Pepper Provides Hemp Derivatives Insight](#)," *Vapor Voice*, September 15, 2023.
- Co-author, "[California AG Petitions State Court for Order to Seize Assets From an Unlicensed Cannabis Dispensary](#)," *Regulatory Oversight*, August 8, 2023.
- Co-author, "Legislative Changes Significantly Impact Ownership and Financing of Colorado Marijuana Businesses," *Colorado Bar Association Business Law*, November 1, 2016.
- Contributor, "Colorado's Emerging Medical Marijuana Legal Framework and Constitutional Rights," *The Colorado Lawyer*, 2011.

## MEDIA COMMENTARY

- Quoted, "[Can Cryptocurrencies Solve Cannabis Business Banking Challenges?](#)," *MJBizDaily*, May 21, 2025.
- Quoted, "[Cannabis Taxes Have Not Solved Colorado's Budget Woes](#)," *CPR News*, December 11, 2023.
- Quoted, "[Troutman Pepper Gains Cannabis Industry Lawyer With More Than 100 Clients](#)," *Daily Report*, July 20, 2023.
- Mentioned, "[Troutman Pepper Bolsters Regulatory Investigations. Strategy + Enforcement Practice Group with Accomplished Partner Focusing on Cannabis Law](#)," *Cannabis Law Report*, July 20, 2023.
- Mentioned, "[Wake Up Call: Taylor Swift Taps Venable Lawyer for Corporate Job](#)," *Bloomberg Law*, July 19, 2023.
- Quoted, "[Jean Gonnell Joins Troutman Pepper](#)," *Tobacco Reporter*, July 18, 2023.
- Quoted, "[Jean Gonnell Joins Troutman Pepper Tobacco Team](#)," *Vapor Voice*, July 18, 2023.
- Quoted, "[Troutman Pepper Adds New Cannabis Partner In NC](#)," *Law360*, July 28, 2023.
- Quoted, "Centennial Sues Swingers Club The Office, Alleging Zoning Code Violation," *The Denver Post*, February 8, 2023.

- Quoted, “Who Will Be Missouri’s ‘Blind Scorer’ for Marijuana Business Licenses?,” *Springfield News-Leader*, July 22, 2019.
- Quoted, “Columbia School Board Member in Running for Medical Marijuana Contract,” *ABC 17 NEWS KMIZ*, July 22, 2019.
- Quoted, “Report: Cannabis In-House Counsel Expect to Spend More to Keep Up With Market,” *Law.com Corporate Counsel*, July 15, 2019.
- Quoted, “All Change at Cannabis Law Firm,” *Cannabis Law Report*, September 23, 2016.
- Quoted, “Has Colorado Changed Its Rules for Out-of-State Marijuana Biz Investors?,” *The Cannabist*, July 16, 2015.
- Quoted, “Marijuana: Shop Drops Challenge to Pot-Hating Town Amid Fears of Overzealous Enforcement,” *Westword*, January 22, 2015.