



NEVADA TRAILBLAZERS

Meet Henry Sotelo:

Reno Attorney Fights for Justice ... Like King and Chavez

BY RYAN GORMLEY (WEINBERG, WHEELER, HUDGINS, GUNN & DIAL, LLC);
MARY BACON (SPENCER FANE LLP); AND MARISA RODRIGUEZ (CITY OF NORTH LAS VEGAS)

Speaking with Henry Sotelo, it does not take long to recognize the recurring themes running through his wide array of interests and pursuits—a **passion for overcoming challenges and lending a hand to those who need a little assistance.**

Sotelo grew up in California to Mexican American parents with Yaqui roots, who prioritized education and public service for their children. Sotelo, who grew up admiring Martin Luther King Jr. and Caesar Chavez, whose portraits hung in his parents' home, took to both. When it came time to select an education and career path, he hoped to pursue a career that would give him a chance to serve others. This led him to attend the University of Nevada, graduating with a degree in journalism, and then the McGeorge School of Law.

Upon graduating from McGeorge, Sotelo returned to Reno, serving as a civil trial attorney and prosecutor for the Washoe County District Attorney's Office and Reno City Attorney's Office. During this time, he noticed an alarming

trend—many of the criminal defendants were serial repeat offenders, and the usual tools of punishment and threat of punishment were proving ineffective. To combat this “revolving door of recidivism,” Sotelo looked for a new approach. His search led him to the specialty courts system.

Over the years, Sotelo has assisted with specialty courts in various capacities. He participated in the creation of Reno's veteran's treatment court, which included training with the Department of Justice to become a DOJ-sanctioned treatment court. He also works with the DUI Court, known as “Fresh Start,” and is a dedicated advocate for defendants who struggle with mental health and addiction issues.

In the words of the Reno Municipal Court's Chief Judge, The Honorable Shelly T. O'Neill, with whom Sotelo worked with in creating the veteran's treatment court: “Mr. Sotelo has the heart, intellect, and compassion to help those in our system who

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have no voice. He is, and has been, a valued member of the judicial system in our community.”

Sotelo operates his own law firm, practicing primarily in criminal law, and he serves as a hearing officer for the city of Reno and as a faculty member at Truckee Meadows Community College. Yet, when reflecting on his career, Sotelo is most proud of his 2016 judicial campaign, during which he attempted to spotlight the importance of both specialty courts and criminal justice reform on the local level.

Sotelo’s sense of civic duty does not end when he leaves the courtroom. He also serves on the Washoe County Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board, writes a legal column for ThisIsReno.com, sits on Washoe County Sheriff Darin Balaam’s Community Engagement Committee, served for two years as an inaugural member of the Reno Human Rights Commission, and regularly performs pro bono work at the Domestic Violence Resource Center.

When asked how a person can do so much, Sotelo’s answer is “multi-sport workouts.” He enjoys strength training, pool and open water swims, distance running, and cycling, which he credits as effective means to de-stress and facilitate outside-the-box thinking.

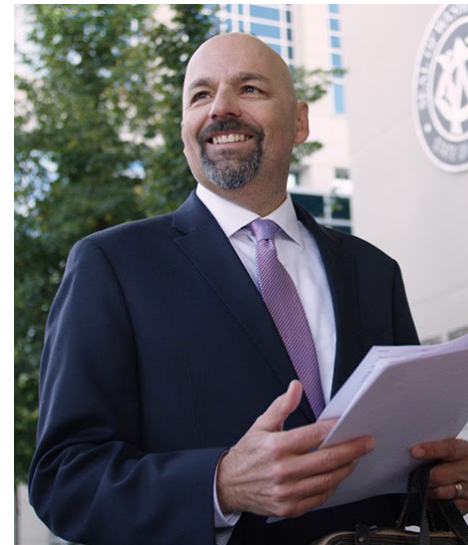
Although Sotelo now regularly participates in triathlons and swims Alcatraz on an annual basis, these pursuits did not come naturally. Well into adulthood, Sotelo feared the water and did not know how to swim, until he decided to face his fear and taught himself. And it was only two years ago that a defect with Sotelo’s aortic valve led to him undergoing open heart surgery, which he has overcome to get back on the running trail and in the water, having swam Alcatraz only 11 months after his surgery.

Sotelo is a loving husband and father of two children, recognizing his wife, Renee, as the cornerstone of their family.

What’s on the horizon for Sotelo? He is planning a future judicial campaign, looks forward to continuing his community efforts, and hopes to make an impact through criminal justice reform.



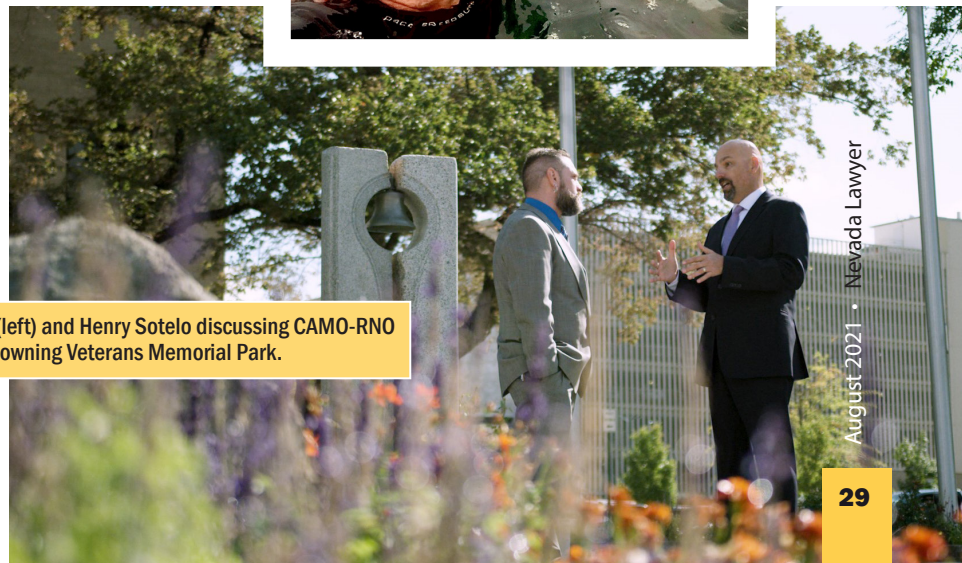
Veronica Sotelo-Sanchez (left)
Henry Sotelo and Enrique Sotelo
enjoy a day at Lake Tahoe.



Henry Sotelo setting up
for a spring bike ride.



Ross Edwards (left) and Henry
Sotelo (right) swimming Alcatraz
Strait in November 2019.



Shane Whitecloud (left) and Henry Sotelo discussing CAMO-RNO
Veterans Court at Powning Veterans Memorial Park.