

NEVADA TRAILBLAZERS

Meet Charlie Finlayson

A Leader in His Career and Personal Life



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

Charlie Finlayson is a senior deputy attorney general in the post-conviction division at the Nevada Attorney General's Office. Although Finlayson has resided in Nevada for less than a decade, according to Nevada Supreme Court Chief Justice James W. Hardesty, "Charlie has already made incredible contributions to the criminal law in our state and has set a high bar for members of our profession to achieve."

Finlayson is one of those few people who have known their life's calling from an early age. He always wanted to be an attorney. Born and raised in rural Michigan, his childhood had its share of challenges. He grew up in a financially distressed household and started working at age 14. By the time he graduated high school, he managed a nearby McDonald's. Although Finlayson's parents could not provide him with financial support, they believed in him, and he was determined to make them proud.

In pursuit of his goal to become an attorney, Finlayson attended Central Michigan University, majoring in sociology and criminal justice. To finance his education, he continued working at McDonald's and at times had up to four jobs, including his first

legal job as an intern at the prosecutor's office in northern Michigan, which sparked his passion for the criminal justice system.

After college, Finlayson attended the DePaul University College of Law. There, he continued his work in the criminal justice system, albeit on the other side of the aisle. He interned with the Federal Public Defender and the Center for Justice in Capital Cases, which focused on representing indigent defendants facing death sentences, including the defense of Casey Anthony, with which Finlayson had the opportunity to assist.

After graduating from law school with honors and a short stint in California, Finlayson eventually moved to Nevada in August 2012 to work as a staff attorney at the Nevada Supreme Court, focusing on death penalty appeals.

"He is without question, one of the most intelligent, dedicated lawyers to work at the court," Hardesty said. "He possesses a unique understanding of criminal law, including some of the most complex issues presented in capital cases. And he is one of the most skilled legal writers in the appellate system. Charlie's passion for the law, thoughtful and caring demeanor, and civility in all of his affairs make him a model for the legal profession."

After seven years with the court, Finlayson joined the Nevada Attorney General's Office, where he currently represents the Attorney General in federal and state habeas

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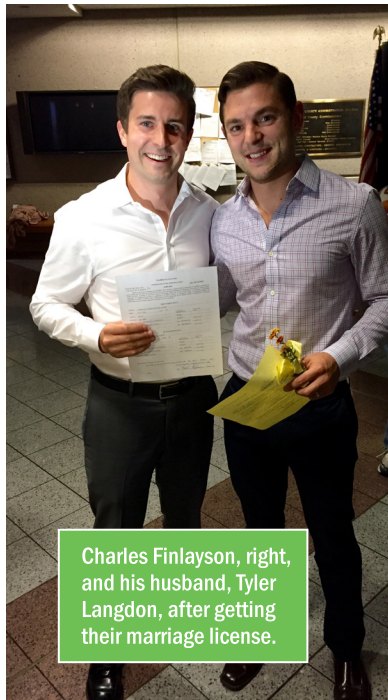
proceedings and extradition matters. On a day-to-day basis, Finlayson supervises, advises, and mentors the post-conviction division deputies. On a more infrequent basis, and given his extensive experience reviewing and drafting appellate briefs, he has filed pleadings in the U.S. Supreme Court and argued to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Although his present practice is adversarial by nature, he also handles non-adversarial matters, such as assisting inmates with credits calculations. He is particularly proud of his office's contributions in the wrongful conviction arena, which he sees as evidence of his office's commitment to justice. Following his first year with the Attorney General's office, Attorney General Aaron Ford recognized his efforts, honoring him with the Rookie of the Year award.

In addition to his significant contributions to Nevada's criminal justice system, Finlayson can lay claim to another important Nevada milestone. He and his husband were the first male couple in the history of Reno to obtain a marriage license, following the legalization of same-sex marriage in Nevada in October 2014. They were humbled that U.S. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto agreed to be a witness at their wedding.

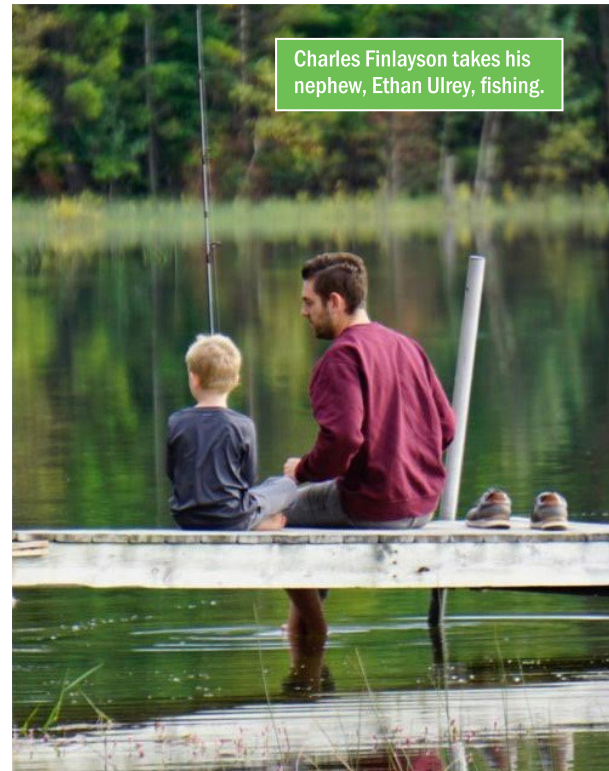
In his spare time, Finlayson tends to his burgeoning farm, which now includes ducks, chickens, and two beehives.



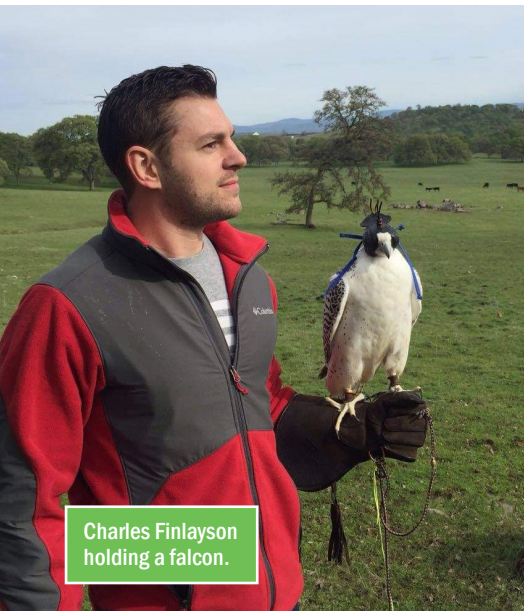
Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford, left, congratulates Charles Finlayson after swearing him in as a deputy attorney general.



Charles Finlayson, right, and his husband, Tyler Langdon, after getting their marriage license.



Charles Finlayson takes his nephew, Ethan Ulrey, fishing.



Charles Finlayson holding a falcon.



Charles Finlayson works in his garden.



Charles Finlayson tends to his beehive.