



Harry W. Lerch

Principal

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Education

The George Washington
University Law School
(J.D., 1963)

Wesleyan University (A.B.
in General, 1953)

Bar Admissions

Maryland

District of Columbia

U.S. Court of Appeals, 4th
Circuit

U.S. Supreme Court

Harry W. Lerch

Harry Lerch, an attorney and immediate past president of Lerch, Early & Brewer, is one of the most influential land use and zoning professionals in the region. For more than 40 years, his law practice has been focused in the areas of eminent domain and condemnation proceedings, zoning, planning, traffic mitigation, historic preservation and legacy open space.

Banks, major national retail chains, schools, country clubs, medical and health care facilities, community associations, religious organizations and automotive dealerships, as well as individuals, turn to Harry to guide them in various real estate and development endeavors. He works diligently with clients to define their objectives, then applies determination and creativity to achieve the desired results. Harry is known for his inspired approach to problem-solving; clients have described him as thinking “inside, outside and around the box.” His “secret” arises from his ability to ascertain the true facts of his clients’ cases and then to present them, in complete honesty and openness, to the neighbors, government agency and/or other decision makers, in a way that meets their standards and objectives. In case after case, the result has been a “win-win” for all concerned.

Prior to joining Lerch Early in 1970, Harry served as general counsel for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and was a member of the Maryland House of Delegates. During his tenure at M-NCPPC, he oversaw the purchase of more than 14,000 acres of park land and was responsible for drafting numerous items of legislation affecting zoning, subdivision and planning in Montgomery County and throughout the state of Maryland.

On many occasions, Harry has served as a consultant on local, state and federal matters, and has been a member of a variety of commissions and advisory committees to the Montgomery County Council and other government bodies concerning zoning and planning issues.

Harry has argued – and won – more than a dozen major land use cases before the Court of Appeals of Maryland. He has tried many condemnation cases on behalf of both government agencies and private property owners.

Harry was born in Washington, D.C., and is a lifelong resident of Montgomery County. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., and his Juris Doctor from The George Washington University School of Law.

He is a longtime member of the American Bar Association’s Real Property, Probate and Trust section and its Land Use and Condemnation Law committee; the American College of Real Estate Lawyers; the Urban Land Institute; the Montgomery County Bar Foundation; the Montgomery County Bar Association and the West Montgomery County Citizens Association. He was a member of the National Conference of Bar Presidents and successfully completed the ABA Leadership Training Institute.

He has been included in the Best Attorneys in America every year since 1999 and is listed

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in its Real Estate Law, Eminent Domain & Condemnation Law and Land Use & Zoning Law categories. He has also been listed in the Maryland and D.C. editions of Super Lawyers since their inaugural editions.

A commercially licensed pilot since the mid-1960s, Harry is an active member of the Lawyer-Pilots Bar Association and regularly takes aerial photographs of real estate projects for strategy development. His passion for flying led him to help found and incorporate the Montgomery County Air Park Users Association and serve as its first president. He loves to travel and has navigated the skies of 49 states and half dozen foreign countries.

Reported Decisions

- M-NCPPC vs Prince George's County, 269 Md. 202, 306 A2d 223, cert. den. 414 U.S.1068, 94 S.Ct. 577, 38 LEd2d 473
- M-NCPPC vs Chadwick, 286 Md. 1, 405 A.2d 241 (1979)
- Marathon Builders vs Montgomery County Planning Board, 246 Md. 187, 227 A.2d 755 (1967)
- M-NCPPC vs. Silkor Development Co., 246 Md. 516, 229 A.2d 135 (1967)
- Rogers vs M-NCPPC, 253 Md. 687, 253 A.2d 713
- Gruver Cooley Jade vs Perlis, 252 Md. 684, 251 A2d 589 (1969)
- M-NCPPC vs McCaw, 246 Md. 662, 229 A.2d 584 (1967)
- Groner v Davis, 260 Md 471, 272 A2d 621 (1971)
- Prince George's County v Mayor and City Council of Laurel, 262 Md 171, 277 A2d 262 (1971)
- Clayman v Prince George's County, 266 Md. 409, 292 A2d 689 (1972)
- Montgomery County vs Horman, 46 Md. App.491,418 A2d 1249
- Dewey Jordan Inc. vs M-NCPPC, 258 Md. 490, 265 A2d, 892
- Laskin v Harkins Bldrs. (Md. App. Unreported)
- Mayor and Council of Rockville v Stone, 271 Md 655, 319 A2d 536 (1974)
- Bourne v Kohut, (Md. App. unreported)
- Logan v Town of Somerset, 271 Md 42, 314 A.2d 436 (1974)
- Goldberg v Anastasi, 272 Md. 61, 321 A2d 155 (1974)
- Miller v Maloney Concrete Co., 63 Md App. 38 (1985)
- Lee v M-NCPPC, 107 Md. App 486, 668 A.2d 980 (1995)
- Montgomery County v. Waters Landing Limited Partnership, 99 Md. App. 1, 635 A.2d 48 (1994)
- Waters Landing Ltd. Partnership v Montgomery County, 337 Md. 15, 650 A. 2d 712 (1994)
- Purich v Draper Properties,395 Md. 694, 912 A.2d 598 (2006)
- Davis v P.G. Co., (unreported) Ct of Spec Apps Feb. 2007

Honors and Awards

- Listed in Best Lawyers in America (1999-present)
- Listed in Maryland and Washington, DC Super Lawyers (2007-2011)
- Received Montgomery Bar Association's Professionalism Award (highest award given by the association)
- Received Montgomery Bar Foundation Honorary Life Bar Leader
- Received Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce President's Award (highest award given by the chamber)
- Received USAF Auxilary Civil Air Patrol Outstanding Assistance Award
- Navy Foundation Honorary Tailhooker, John F. Kennedy CV 67
- Appointed U.S. Delegate to the U.S./China Joint Session on Trade, Investment and Economic Law (1987, appointed by U.S. Attorney General)

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Professional Memberships

- Maryland State Bar Association (Vice Chair Land Use & Zoning 1988-1991)
- District of Columbia Bar Association
- Bar Association of Montgomery County, Maryland (President 1990)
- American College of Real Estate Lawyers (Fellow 1990-present)
- Montgomery County Bar Foundation (President 1991 and Life Fellow)
- Maryland Bar Foundation (President 1991 and Life Fellow)
- West Montgomery County Citizens Association (President 1971-1973)
- Bethesda Country Club (Board of Directors 1990-1997 and Legal Chair)
- Montgomery County Historical Society (served on Board of Trustees and as Counsel)
- Montgomery County Parks Foundation (President and Board of Trustees 1998-2003)
- Washington Adventist Hospital (Board of Directors 1987-1996)
- Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rotary Club (President 1997, Honorary Member)
- Montgomery County Airpark Users Association (Founder and initial President)
- Antietam Battlefield Protectors Association (Incorporator)