



# JAMES GOODNOW

CEO & President

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James Goodnow

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"There's a way to do it better. Find it." – Thomas Edison

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## JAMES GOODNOW

James Goodnow is Fennemore's CEO. Nearly two decades after starting his career at the firm as a file clerk, he became the youngest known chief executive of a major law firm in U.S. history when he started in his current role in 2018. He earned his J.D. at Harvard Law School, a master's degree in entrepreneurship at the University of Cambridge Business School (U.K.), and a B.S. from Santa Clara University, where he graduated first in his class.

During his time as CEO, James has focused on positioning Fennemore for the future. He has helped lead the M&A teams that have resulted in the opening of 15 new offices around the U.S. —allowing the firm to better serve its business client base. Fennemore's upward trajectory led to it being named the **#1 firm in the U.S. for year-over-year revenue growth according to the 2023 American Lawyer Am Law 200 rankings (45.6%)**. He's been at the forefront of artificial intelligence innovation, driving the launch of **Project BlueWave AI**, an industry-leading, proprietary, and secure system that empowers teams to deliver exceptional client service. He's helped pioneer **Fennemore Forward**, a bold new platform redefining workplace flexibility. He and the firm's senior leadership team believe in listening carefully and always putting people first—a philosophy that contributes to Fennemore's **industry-leading retention and job-satisfaction statistics**.

James is known for his thought leadership at the intersection of law and business. He has been featured on the cover of *The American Lawyer* ("Meet the New Boss ... James Goodnow Shows What the Firm of the Future Might Look Like"), and *ABA Journal* named him one of "America's Techiest Lawyers" in a cover story. Apple profiled James on Apple.com and in a worldwide "Apple in Business" ad campaign. He is a contributor to *Entrepreneur Magazine* and writes a **law firm management, leadership, and innovation column** for *Above the Law*. He is the co-author of *Motivating Millennials: How to Recognize, Recruit and Retain the Next Generation of Leaders*, which debuted at #1 on Amazon in the business management new release category. A lifelong

learner, [James Goodnow shares the 10 books](#) that have most influenced his leadership and thinking.

James is involved in the community. He has chaired, served on the board, or been involved in many organizations, including Make-A-Wish AZ, TGen (Translational Genomics Research Institute), the National Kidney Foundation of Arizona, Brophy College Preparatory, the AZ Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired, and more. He is married to his high school sweetheart and is the proud father of two children. Outside of the office, James can be found playing pickleball with his family. He enjoys wine because it's about people, culture, history, science, and relationships. He's a Level I sommelier with the Court of Master Sommeliers.

## EDUCATION

J.D., Harvard Law School (Thesis/3L paper on research-focused LegalTech)

Master's Degree, University of Cambridge Business School (U.K.), Entrepreneurship (Thesis-“Reboot: Using Entrepreneurial Strategies to Infuse Innovation in Established Businesses”).

MIT Sloan School of Management, Dual Certificates in (i) Management & Leadership, and (ii) Strategy & Innovation

Harvard Business School, Management Certificate (“Becoming a Better Manager,” HBSO)

B.S., Santa Clara University, *summa cum laude* (graduated first in class)

Certified Mergers & Acquisitions Professional (M&AP), Institute for Mergers, Acquisitions and Alliances (IMAA)

Certified International Mergers & Acquisitions Professional (IM&A), Institute for Mergers, Acquisitions and Alliances (IMAA)

Phi Beta Kappa



## AREAS OF PRACTICE

# Professional Services M&A Experience

James has led or co-led M&A transactions that have led to the opening of 10 new Fennemore offices across the United States.

## AWARDS AND HONORS

AZ Big 100: 50 Arizona business leaders to watch in 2026, *AZ Big Media*

Most Powerful Business Leaders in Arizona for 2025, *AZ Big Media*

Innovative Business Leader of the Year, *AZ Big Media*

Best Lawyers in America<sup>®</sup>

Southwest Super Lawyers<sup>®</sup>

Top 50 AZ Big Media Leaders to Watch in 2025, *AZ Big Media*

Top 100 Lawyers in Arizona, *AZ Big Media*

AZ Business Leader, *AZ Business Magazine*

Lifetime Achievement, America's Top 100 Attorneys<sup>®</sup>

Top 100 Lawyers, *AZ Business Magazine*

AZ Business Leader, *AZ Business Magazine*

*Newsweek*, 20 Leaders (Law)

AV<sup>®</sup> Preeminent<sup>™</sup> Peer Review Rated (the highest rating available), by Martindale-Hubbell

AZ Big 100, Business Leaders, AZ Big Media

## ARTICLES AND PRESENTATIONS

Featured, "[Generations – Millennials](#)", *AZ Business*, May/June 2026

Interviewed, "[The Future Of The C-Suite: 16 Executive Trends For 2026](#)," *Forbes*, February 20, 2026

Interviewed, "[16 Top Leaders 2025: Our list of Valley leaders who are making a real difference!](#)"  
*Greater Phoenix InBusiness*, December 2025

Interviewed, "[What a Stuffed Giraffe Can Teach You About Scaling Service](#)," *Entrepreneur*,  
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Quoted, "[Fennemore combines with Galvanize to strengthen construction law practice in the West](#)," *AZ Big Media*, July 27, 2025

Quoted, "[Fennemore growing again, adding Denver construction law firm](#)," *BusinessDen*, July 23, 2025

Quoted, "[Phoenix law firm expanding in Denver with boutique acquisition](#)," *Denver Business Journal*, July 23, 2025

Quoted, "[Valley Law Firm Expands Western Presence with Colorado Partnership](#)," *Greater Phoenix InBusiness*, July 23, 2025

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Quoted, "[Fennemore and Galvanize Law Combine to Build Construction Law Services Across the West](#)," *Business Wire*, July 22, 2025

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Quoted, "[Fennemore combines with Phoenix-based BurnsBarton](#)," *AZ Big Media*, May 16, 2025

Interviewed, "[Fennemore expands labor practice with acquisition of Phoenix boutique firm](#),"  
*Phoenix Business Journal*, May 14, 2025

Interviewed, "[Fennemore Craig Keeps Up Expansion with Ariz. Firm Combo](#)," *Law360*, May 13, 2025

Quoted, "[Fennemore Craig Combines With Arizona Employment Firm BurnsBarton](#)," *American Lawyer Magazine*, May 13, 2025

Quoted, "[Law Firms Combine to Redefine Employment Law in the West](#)," Greater Phoenix inBusiness, May 13, 2025

Quoted, "[Fennemore Combines With BurnsBarton to Redefine Employment Law in the West](#)," Business Wire, May 13, 2025

Featured, "[AZ Big 100: 50 Arizona business leaders to watch in 2025](#)," February 22, 2025

Interview, "[Building the Law Firm of the Future](#)," Hire an Esquire, December 9, 2024

Interview, "[The Business of Law](#)," Hire an Esquire, November 7, 2024

Quoted, "[US law firm Fennemore launches Project BlueWave to integrate AI into legal services](#)," Canadian Lawyer, October 4, 2024

Quoted, "[Fennemore Craig Expands with Acquisition, Embraces AI for Legal Services](#)," JD Journal, October 4, 2024

Quoted, "[Law firm Fennemore touts AI-fueled fee options with new merger](#)," Reuters, October 2, 2024

Quoted, "[Fennemore Launches Groundbreaking AI Initiative and Combines With Lucent Law](#)," Business Wire, October 1, 2024

Quoted, "[Valley Law Firm Launches AI Initiative, Combines with Tech-Driven Boutique Firm](#)," Greater Phoenix inBusiness, October 1, 2024

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Author, "[Don't Let AI Eat You Alive — Follow These 3 Strategies Instead](#)," Entrepreneur, September 5, 2024

Quoted, "[Law firm Fennemore takes bulk of Moye White's RiNo office space](#)," BusinessDen, August 15, 2024

Quoted, "[Fennemore to Occupy 2 Floors at The Current in RiNo](#)," Mile High CRE, August 14, 2024

Author, "[Biglaw Still Doesn't Get It](#)," Above the Law, July 23, 2024

Quoted, "[Legal Lowdown: Venable, Berg Hill Greenleaf Ruscitti, Spencer Fane, Holland & Hart, Buchalter Add Attorneys](#)," Law Week Colorado, July 12, 2024

Author, "[5 Recruiting Secrets Every Leader Should Follow](#)," Entrepreneur, July 11, 2024

Quoted, "[Fennemore Aims to Expand Talent Pool with New Remote-Work Program](#)," ABA Journal, July 11, 2024

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Quoted, "[Another US Law Firm Touts Fully Remote Option, Bucking Post-Pandemic Trend](#)," XM.com, July 9, 2024

Quoted, "[Law Firm Introduces a New Standard for the Modern Law Firm with 100% Remote Work Program](#)," inBusiness Phoenix, July 9, 2024

Quoted, "[Fennemore Announces New Fully Remote Work Platform](#)," Law Week Colorado, July 9, 2024

Quoted, "[Biglaw Firm Says Blanket Mandated Office Policies Are a Mistake, Launches Remote Recruiting Effort](#)," Above the Law, July 9, 2024

Quoted, "[Want to Work Remote? Fennemore Law Firm Just Launched a National Hiring Program](#)," Phoenix Business Journal, July 9, 2024

Quoted, "[Another US Law Firm Touts Fully Remote Option, Bucking Post-Pandemic Trend](#)," Reuters, July 9, 2024

Quoted, "[Path to Greatness: How Good Lawyers Become Great Leaders-the Power of Personal Responsibility](#)," Law.com, May 17, 2024

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Quoted, "[Fennemore Craig Makes Another Mass Lawyer Hire, Leading to Closure of Denver Law Firm](#)," ABA Journal, April 2, 2024

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Quoted, "[Fast-Growing Fennemore Adds 50 Lawyers from Denver Firm](#)," Reuters, April 1, 2024

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Quoted, "[After 47 Years Denver's Moye White to Wind Down After Most Lawyers Join Fennemore Craig](#)," Law.com, April 1, 2024

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Quoted, "[Fennemore Craig CEO on Kicking Off 2024 with Rapid Growth](#)," Law360, March 1, 2024

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Quoted, "Fennemore Acquires San Diego Firm, Solidifying West Coast Presence," Law.com, January 30, 2024

Quoted, "Still Bullish on Growth, Fennemore Merging with Seattle Firm," Law 360, January 10, 2024

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Quoted, "Seattle's Savitt Bruce & Willey combines with Phoenix-based law firm," Puget Sound Business Journal, January 9, 2024

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Author, "Why Long-Term Strategic Planning is the Lifeline Your Business Needs Right Now," Entrepreneur, September 20, 2023

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Author, "That's How We've Always Done It' is Killing Your Business — Here are 4 Simple Ways to Cultivate Consistent Success," Entrepreneur.com, June 30, 2023

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Author, "Tomorrow Is Here (Again)," Above the Law, May 26, 2023

Featuring, "James Goodnow: Winner of the Most Innovative Business Leader Of The Year," AZ Big Media, May 18, 2023

Featuring, "Pressures to grow are everywhere so are the hazards of doing so carelessly," Law.com, May 9, 2023

Featuring, "Here are the finalists for the 2023 Champions of Change Awards," AZ Big Media, April 13, 2023

Featuring, "NextGen Legal Podcast Episode 4: The Platinum Rule With James Goodnow," Withum, March 13, 2023

Author, "Big Law Rates in this Economy Midsize and Specialized Firms Poised to Gain Market Share in 2023," Law.com, February 2023

Author, "The Business of Fun," Above the Law, February 17, 2023

Featuring, "James Named One Of The Top 25 Business Leaders To Watch In Arizona for 2023," AZ Big Media, January 23, 2023

Author, "The Lean Law Firm" Above the Law, December 16, 2022

Author, "Has Yale Changed The Law School Rankings Game?" Above the Law, December 2, 2022

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Featured, "19 Top Leaders Who Are Making a Real Difference!" inBusiness, December 1, 2022

Author, "Does Biglaw Need Less Lawyering?" Above the Law, November 4, 2022

Author, "The Haves And The Have Nots," Above the Law, October 21, 2022

Author, "The Recessionary RULES," Above the Law, October 7, 2022

Author, "A Letter To A New Associate: 2022 Edition," Above the Law, September 23, 2022

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Author, "Down With The LSAT?" Above the Law, August 26, 2022

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Author, "Is The Problem With Partnerships The Partnership?" Above the Law, July 15, 2022

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Featured: James Goodnow Forbes bio

Author, "Getting to Know," Above the Law, July 1, 2022

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Author, "The Biglaw Recession Playbook," Above the Law, June 17, 2022

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Quoted, "Oakland Law Firm Wendel Rosen Merging With Phoenix-based Fennemore," San Francisco Business Times, June 15, 2022

Quoted, "Fennemore Joins Forces With Bay Area's Wendel Rosen," AZ Big Media, June 15, 2022

Quoted, "Fennemore Mergers to Add 56 Lawyers, Nearing 200 Biggest," Bloomberg Law, June 14, 2022

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Quoted, "Fennemore Absorbs Third California Law Firm in Past Two Years," Phoenix Business Journal, June 14, 2022

Quoted, "Fennemore Joins Forces With Bay Area Wendel Rosen," Businesswire, June 14, 2022

Quoted, "Fennemore to Combine With 56-attorney California Law Firm," Reuters, June 14, 2022

Author, "A How-To Guide For Summer Associates," Above the Law, June 3, 2022

Author, "Stop Managing Like A Lawyer," Above the Law, May 20, 2022

Interview, "In Their Words: BigLaw Leaders On Why They Merged," Law360, May 18, 2022

Author, "One Bar Admission To Rule Them All?" Above the Law, May 6, 2022

Quoted, "Fennemore Craig CEO On Adding 24 Gresham Savage Attys," Law360, April 21, 2022

Quoted, "Fennemore Embroiled in a Worldwide Shift to the United States, Bringing 25 California Attorneys to the Rescue," List23.com, April 6, 2022

Quoted, "Fennemore Craig Absorbs Gresham Attys and 2 SoCal Offices," Law360, April 6, 2022

Quoted, "Fennemore Poaches 25 California Attorneys in Ongoing Westward Push," Reuters, April 5, 2022

Quoted, "Fennemore Law Firm Grows Again in California With Addition of 25 Attorneys," Phoenix Business Journal, April 5, 2022

Quoted, "Fennemore Scoops Up 24-Lawyer Group From Southern California Firm," Law.com, April 5, 2022

Author, "The Wolf of Biglaw," Above the Law, March 25, 2022

Author, "'Mo Money Mo Problems' – 2022 Reprise," Above the Law, February 25, 2022

Author, "Young Lawyers In Trouble," Above the Law, February 11, 2022

Author, "Talent Tug of War," Phoenix Business Journal, February 4, 2022

Author, "Are The Stories About Your Law Firm Worth Telling," Above the Law, January 28, 2022

Author, "The Hidden Factor Undermining Your Firm's COVID-19 Protocols," Above the Law, January 14, 2022

Author, "A Lawyer's 'Christmas Carol'," Above the Law, December 17, 2021

Author, "Don't Let Your Yule Log Burn Out," Above the Law, December 3, 2021

Author, "My Thanksgiving Objection," Above the Law, November 19, 2021

Author, "Is Every Company a Tech Company," inBusiness Greater Phoenix, November 1, 2021

Author, "Sense, Seek, Seize," Above the Law, October 29, 2021

Author, "LegalZoom Is Coming For Your Lunch," Above the Law, October 15, 2021

Author, "What Lawyers Can Learn From Preschoolers," Above the Law, October 1, 2021

Author, "Law Firms, Don't Throw It All Away," *Above the Law*, September 17, 2021

Author, "How The Pandemic Breathed Life Back Into Law Schools," *Above the Law*, September 3, 2021

Quoted, "Fennemore Scoops up Denver Boutique, Keeping up Western Expansion," Reuters, August 4, 2021

Quoted, "Fastest-Growing Biglaw Firm Fennemore Strikes Again With Reilly Add," Nevada Business, August 3, 2021

Quoted, "Fennemore Craig Acquires Denver Trial Firm As It Plots Continued Expansion in the West," Law.com, August 3, 2021

Quoted, "Reilly LLP, Leading Colorado Trial and Litigation Firm Joins Forces With Fennemore," Financial Post, August 3, 2021

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Author, "A Letter to Incoming Associates," *Above the Law*, June 4, 2021

Quoted, "Phoenix law firm extends ASU Law scholarship, fellowship program to improve diversity in legal field," ASU News, June 2, 2021

Quoted, "Arizona State University: Shaping The Future Of Data Privacy, Cybersecurity And Learner Empowerment At ASU's Digital Trust Summit," Patch, June 2, 2021

Quoted, "Most Admired Leaders 2021: James Goodnow, Fennemore," *Phoenix Business Journal*, May 13, 2021

Quoted, "Talking Trendspotter: Readers Say Business Pros Can Help Law Firms Innovate—but Only If They Have Support From the Top," Law.com, May 10, 2021

Author, "How to Start Working Backward," *Above the Law*, May 7, 2021

Interview, "New rules allow investment in law firms by non-lawyers," Arizona PBS, May 3, 2021

Interview, "James Goodnow of Fennemore: 5 Things I Wish Someone Told Me Before I Became a C-Suite Executive," *Authority Magazine*, April 26, 2021

Author, "Why Are Lawyers Leaving Money On The Table?" *Above the Law*, April 9, 2021

Author, "Stop Managing Your Law Firm From Crisis to Crisis," *Above the Law*, March 26, 2021

Author, "Profitability 2.0," *Above the Law*, March 12, 2021

Quoted, "'This is the gold rush.' The buzz about Arizona licenses," Law.com, March 12, 2021

Quoted, "16 Useful Tips For Safely Reopening Offices," *Forbes*, March 10, 2021

Quoted, "Working Together in a Post-COVID World: How and Where," Law.com, March 5, 2020

Author, "What Productizing Means to Your Law Firm," *Above the Law*, February 26, 2021

Interview, "Entrepreneurial law," University of Cambridge Judge Business School, February 22, 2021

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Author, "The Dormroom Hacker Who Dropped A Bomb On The Legal Industry," *Above the Law*, July 10, 2020

Quoted, "The New Abnormal," *Chief Executive*, July 6, 2020

Presenter, "Navigating the 'New Normal': How to Thrive in the Age of Millennials, the Post-COVID Era, and a Shifting Legal Landscape," State Bar of Nevada Webinar, July 2, 2020

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[James Goodnow Entrepreneur Magazine Author Bio](#)

[James Goodnow Above The Law Author Bio](#)

[James Goodnow interview on InBusiness Greater Phoenix](#)

## **PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

Member, State Bar of Arizona

Member, Board of Directors, National Kidney Foundation of Arizona (Immediate Past Chair)

Member and Class Captain, Brophy Prep Alumni Association

Member, Board of Directors, Make-A-Wish® Arizona

Former Judge Pro Tempore, Maricopa County Superior Court

Former Member, Board of Directors, Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

## **ADMISSIONS**

Arizona

New York

District of Columbia (inactive)

Colorado

Illinois

U.S. District Court, District of Arizona

U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia

U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit

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