

WM. DAVID CORNWELL, SR.

Biography

Wm. David Cornwell, Sr., is President of DNK Cornwell, LLC, a law firm that provides legal representation and business consulting services to sports agents, the men and women who play professional sports, coaches, executives, and companies involved in the sports and entertainment industry. Cornwell is the primary counsel for Reggie Bush (New Orleans Saints), Gilbert Arenas (Washington Wizards), Darren McFadden, and LS Legacy Sports Group, LLC.

Cornwell also serves as an expert witness and litigation consultant in sports-related cases and is often retained by players to represent them in administrative appeals under the NFL's Substance Abuse and Steroid Programs. Among other notable matters, Cornwell negotiated the terms under which Ricky Williams was permitted to resume his professional football career when he was facing a year-long suspension for violating the NFL Drug and Alcohol Policy. Cornwell also successfully represented three NFL players (Benito Santiago, Dana Stubblefield, Chris Cooper, and Barret Robbins) who faced discipline under the NFL's Steroid Policy for their unintentional ingestion of a designer steroid provided by BALCO Laboratories.

Cornwell is one of the most sought-after legal analysts for insight on the implications of current legal events in the sports industry. He has analyzed high-profile cases, e.g., Terrell Owens' dispute with the Philadelphia Eagles and the Kobe Bryant sexual assault case, on television (NFL Network; ESPN; MSNBC; CNN; and BET television), radio, and in print media. ESPN.com referred to Cornwell as a "brilliant legal mind." ESPN recently retained Cornwell to serve as a Legal Analyst.

In 1987, Cornwell joined the National Football League as Assistant League Counsel where he represented former Commissioners Pete Rozelle and Paul Tagliabue. During his five years as NFL counsel, Cornwell represented the Commissioner's office in legal and business affairs, negotiating the principal agreements for the Super Bowl, Pro Bowl and other league-sponsored special events. Cornwell also developed and directed the NFL's minority hiring program during the period when the NFL hired its first black head coach. When Tony Dungy and Lovie Smith made history by becoming the first black head coaches to reach the Super Bowl, the Washington Post acknowledged Cornwell's historical contribution in a front-page article on February 4, 2007.

After a short period as a sports agent, Cornwell joined the Upper Deck Company in 1993 and was named Vice President and General Counsel in 1994, serving in that capacity until re-entering private practice in 1997. Cornwell was the principal negotiator for Upper Deck's trading card and memorabilia licenses with the professional sports leagues and their players associations. Cornwell also negotiated endorsement agreements to use the name and likeness of professional athletes such as Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretzky, Troy Aikman, Steve Young, and Joe Montana. During his tenure at Upper Deck, Cornwell and his staff negotiated and administered licenses and endorsement agreements that earned Upper Deck and its affiliates in excess of \$1 billion in gross revenues.

Cornwell may be the only lawyer in the sports industry who has represented a professional sports league (NFL), players within that league (as a sports agent in 1992), and a major licensee of the same sports league (the Upper Deck Company). Cornwell uses this unique professional experience to provide strategic legal and business advice and to assist his clients in navigating through complex business and legal issues that arise in the sports industry.

Cornwell has served as the primary counsel for Leigh Steinberg, Jeff Moorad, Eugene Parker, Dan Fegan, and Michael Gillis—agents who represent players and coaches in the National Football League; Major League Baseball; National Basketball Association; and National Hockey League. He quarterbacked the trial team that obtained a \$47 million judgment for Leigh Steinberg against his former partner, David Dunn, and Dunn's company, Athletes First.

Cornwell's daily practice includes negotiating, drafting, and reviewing endorsement, licensing, and employment agreements for athletes, coaches, executives, and companies in the sports and entertainment industry. He also advises sports agencies and professional athletes on complying with the rules and regulations of the professional sports leagues, their players associations, and with state laws governing sports agents. Cornwell is a popular lecturer on topics unique to the sports industry and serves as a television legal analyst on sports-related topics. He serves as a guest lecturer at the Wharton Business School, examining critical principles of negotiations.

A graduate of Tufts University, Cornwell studied abroad for one semester at the American University in Cairo, where he studied Middle Eastern History and Arabic and played professional basketball. He received his law degree from the Georgetown University Law Center. He began his legal career with Whitman & Ransom, the New York law firm, where he primarily focused his practice upon antitrust, trademark, and securities litigation.

Cornwell is 47 years old and was born and raised in Washington, D.C. He lives in Georgia, with his wife, Kimberly H. Cornwell, Esq., and their daughter and son, Taylor Alexis and Wm. David, Jr.