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Before receiving his bachelor's degrees in Chemistry and General Literature from the University of California, San Diego, Steven Strauss graduated from Helix High School in La Mesa, California. Mr. Strauss later received his law degree from the University of San Diego. After admission to the California bar, Mr. Strauss worked for several years as an associate attorney and served of counsel to Brown, Martin, Haller & McClain, a San Diego-based intellectual property law firm.

Mr. Strauss relocated to Hawai'i and started his own law practice in 1990. Before joining the Corporation Counsel, Mr. Strauss represented civil and criminal defense clients in trials and appeals, and enjoyed working on environmental, land use, charter school and civil rights matters. In addition to all levels of Hawai'i and California State courts, Mr. Strauss has actively practiced in several federal district and appellate courts across the United States, including the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit and the United States Supreme Court.

Mr. Strauss has also taught criminology and intellectual property courses at college and law school levels. Mr. Strauss is a member of the Hawai'i and California State Bar Associations and the Hawai'i County Bar Association.