

LAW WEEK

COLORADO



Litigator Reid Neureiter shows his other side as a cyclist and sports photographer

BY **JULIA CARDI**
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On a weekend in mid-August, sunflower fields are in bloom. East of Denver, past DIA, between Monaghan and Hudson roads, it's two miles of late-summer golden magnificence. One Saturday before 8 a.m., Reid Neureiter staked out in a field with a camera among stalks as tall as a small person.

Moments later, a few dozen bicycles whizzed by. The riders pedaled so furiously that they passed the spot where Reid crouched in about 15 seconds. They bike this 40-odd mile route looping just south of DIA each Saturday. And when the sunflowers are in season, Neureiter follows on his motorcycle with camera gear.

He's a general litigator and trial lawyer for Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell, but during his off-time, he's a cyclist, motorcyclist and sports photographer.

"I think most people know me as the guy who takes pictures on the motorcycle, rather than the lawyer," Neureiter said.

Neureiter's smooth, even voice belies expectations for a trial lawyer, a role that calls to mind a certain courtroom intensity. But he cuts a striking figure with his motorcycle and camera gear. He's six feet tall, which is easy

to imagine translating to an imposing presence in court. Dan Recht, partner at Recht Kornfeld who knows Neureiter both through their mutual pas-

sion for cycling and through his legal work, said Reid Neureiter the attorney and Reid Neureiter the photographer aren't all that different, because he's

so talented and dedicated to both.

And his photography, which includes shots of high-profile rides like the Mount Evans Hill Climb and the



TOP OF PAGE: Cyclist participate in the 2017 Bob Cook Memorial Mount Evans Hill Climb July 2017. **ABOVE:** Cyclist ride past the sunflower field east of Denver in August 2017. / **REID NEUREITER**



Triple Bypass, has reached benchmarks full-time professionals would dream of. Neureiter's pictures have more than 5 million views online. The "Colorado Lawyer" has featured his nature images on the magazine's cover three times. And, among others, he's won the Denver Bar Association's art contest for photography.

His expeditions grew from his twin interests in sports photography and cycling, but with three children active in sports, he has also chronicled their skiing adventures and high school teams at Kent and Denver East.

Neureiter moved to Denver in 1996 when Michael Tigar, Terry Nichols' attorney and Neureiter's former law professor at the University of Texas, asked him to join the team working on the Oklahoma City bombing trial.

For Neureiter, his photography is a welcome break from the work of high-stakes litigation. He can spend time outdoors and with people who do different work than he does. In fact, some riders he has met didn't know he's a lawyer. But as disparate as photography and law practice might seem in some ways, they actually have something to do with each other, according to Neureiter.

"The different ways you can depict a view based on the equipment that you have ... has come in handy, sometimes, in terms of evaluating evidence in a legal case," he said. "Because the assumption that that photograph shows this person and that distance between them, well, depending on the lens, the two things in your photograph might be 100 yards behind or 10 yards behind. And you could have the lens in that corner that can show the whole room, or it can only show one thing. It forces

you to evaluate the propriety of the evidence and what it's being used for in a legal case."

Jack Robinson, a partner at Spies Powers & Robinson and a friend of Neureiter, agreed with the comparison between photography and law practice. "I think that there's a fair amount of intuition in photography that you don't overthink it and you have a concept of what you want to do in framing the image," he said. "And I think the same holds true for the law, especially in liti-

gation, that I think a lot of it is intuitive ... looking at a certain set of facts and knowing what law applies to those facts."

Neureiter has an easy answer for that intuition: Practice. Well over a decade of photography has taught him to envision a shot, predict where his subjects will be and prepare with the right equipment, all for when he has 15 seconds to capture the perfect image.

Tom Miller knows Neureiter through the Park Hill Peloton — a ride Neureiter founded in 2002 — and knows a thing or two about the different perspectives the photographs provide. Miller said he and other riders didn't pay much attention to the Colorado beauty they'd been biking through until they saw the scenery in Neureiter's pictures.

"So a lot of times we go on these rides — I've been on some of these rides hundreds of times — and all we see is the rear wheel of the bike in front of us," he said. "And it wasn't until Reid started taking pictures that we went home and went, 'Wow, this is really beautiful scenery we're riding through.' There's sunflowers, and you can see the airport and Mount Evans."

Miller said when Neureiter photographs the ride instead of participating in it, they nickname it "senior picture day," a special occasion.

"It always lights up the ride," Miller said. "The ride gets a lot faster when Reid is taking pictures. You always know it's going to be fast, because everybody wants to be in front in the pictures. And then we all race home and check Facebook or Instagram and try to look at all the pictures and see where we are."

The route past the sunflower fields is jokingly nicknamed the "Frustrated Dads Ride," gleaned from the thinking that an early-morning ride fit in well when juggling hobbies and responsibilities at home. Neureiter compared the ride to a scene from the Tour de France, and the photographs are some of his

proudest ones. On this Saturday in August, he also wanted to photograph riders from the perfect angle near Hudson Road. It's a shot he'd been wanting to capture for a long time.

"The sun will be behind them so that they're going to be dark, and off in the distance you can see DIA and (the Westin Hotel)," he said. "And it'll be an interesting juxtaposition to have the cyclists, who are probably three or four miles away from the airport. I have a large enough lens that it should bring both the cyclists and the airport into focus."

Neureiter often photographs the Park Hill Peloton, a ride he started with Robinson in 2002. It's a 30-mile group ride around Cherry Creek reservoir every Tuesday and Friday, usually five dozen strong. But the Peloton's popularity belies its humble beginnings. As Robinson explained, the ride started regularly with a small group of dads in Park Hill, but as word of it spread, elite cyclists who use the ride to train began joining in. It's grown so much that the Peloton now splits into two groups for safety's sake, one for the fastest cyclists and a second much smaller one for the rest. Recht said he doubts many of the younger riders know it's Neureiter who started the Peloton 15 years ago. Neureiter himself admits he now sometimes trouble keeping up with some of the rides even on his motorcycle.

The regularity of the different rides has created camaraderie among their participants, despite any differences in skill levels. Just ask Galen Stilgebauer, a friend of Neureiter who has done the ride by the sunflower fields dozens of times.

"I've made friends with the guys that are out here," he said. "I think the cool thing is, we're all kind of weirdos in our own right. You know, anybody who shaves their legs and dresses up in Spandex has to have a certain personality." •

—Julia Cardi, JCardi@circuitmedia.com



TOP OF LEFT: Neureiter's son, Austin, ski jumps off a cliff at Copper Mountain Ski Resort in Summit County. **ABOVE:** Cyclists ride during the 2017 Bob Cook Memorial Mount Evans Hill Climb July 2017. / **REID NEUREITER**