

# LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: Labor & Employment Attorneys



**T**HERE ARE MANY BRILLIANT ATTORNEYS IN LOS ANGELES – MASTERS OF THEIR CRAFT THAT CAN PREPARE individuals and businesses for any legal issue that might arise while expertly providing counsel as needed and writing and overseeing the documents designed to protect their clients’ assets and livelihoods.

When it comes to the intricacies of employment and labor, a whole additional set of skills is required. The leading employment attorneys and experts in the region have their finger on the ever-changing pulse of labor legislation, what changes have come to the labor law landscape in recent times, the new rules of hiring and firing, and the various trends that they have been tirelessly monitoring and managing for their clients.

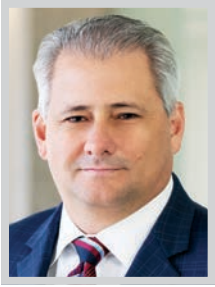
In this special section we have gathered some of the very best labor and employment attorneys in the region. These are the lawyers you want in your corner in court.

We’ve alphabetically listed this lineup of superb specialists, along with information about their careers, practice and some of the relevant recent successes they’ve achieved. Congratulations to the attorneys who made this prestigious class.

*Methodology: The professionals featured in these pages did not pay to be included. Their profiles were drawn from nomination materials submitted to the Los Angeles Business Journal. Those selected for inclusion were reviewed by the editorial department. The professionals were chosen based on a demonstration of impact made on the profession and on the Los Angeles community.*



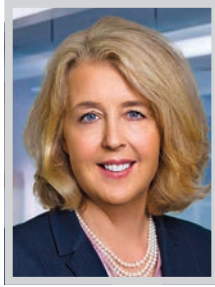
## LOI: LABOR &amp; EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEYS

**ADAM ABRAHMS**

Partner  
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP

**A**galvanized labor movement and evolving rules on wages and working conditions have made employer-employee relations front page news and added complexity to the already multifaceted terrain of labor negotiations. Morgan Lewis partner Adam Abrahms has, for more than two decades, represented employers through these complicated matters.

From representing clients before the National Labor Relations Board and other federal agencies to being at the center of the high-profile test case to determine if college student-athletes are employees under the National Labor Relations Act, Abrahms is unquestionably an influential force in the world of labor-management relations. He counsels clients in both organized and nonunion operations and is a go-to lawyer for employers entering collective bargaining and other complex labor negotiations.

**DAPHNE M. ANNET**

Partner; Vice-Chair,  
Labor & Employment Practice Group  
Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP

**D**aphne Annet, AWI-CH, is a Burke partner and based in the firm's Los Angeles office. Annet is an experienced litigator, labor negotiator, and investigator. She is chair of the firm's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee and vice-chair of the firm's Labor and Employment Practice Group. Annet has also served as a member of the firm's Management Committee.

In her role of chair of Burke's DEIB Committee, Annet works to ensure fair and equal opportunity for Burke's talent to advance into leadership roles. Under her leadership and in recognition of Burke's ongoing efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion, Burke attained achieved Diversity Lab's 2023 Mansfield Certification Plus status. A skilled litigator, Annet has achieved excellent results for clients in state and federal court.

**KATHIANA AURELIEN**

Counsel  
Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

**K**athiana Aurelien is counsel in Willkie's Labor and Employment Group in Los Angeles. She focuses her practice on California employment issues, representing industry-leading clients on a wide range of labor and employment matters. She regularly advises on the employment implications of corporate transactions, and has extensive experience working with clients on workplace investigations, evaluating worker classification issues, and implementing reductions-in-force.

Aurelien regularly advises clients on sensitive executive separation matters, compliance issues, and developing, implementing and enforcing personnel policies. She has experience defending state and federal discrimination and retaliation claims; drafting and negotiating employment, severance, and general release agreements.

**JAMES (JIM) H. BERRY**

Co-Managing Partner - Los Angeles Office  
Munck Wilson Mandala

**J**ames (Jim) Berry is a partner in Munck Wilson Mandala's labor and employment and litigation practice groups, as well as co-managing partner of the firm's Los Angeles office. Practicing law for over 30 years, his many career accomplishments in employment and labor law demonstrate his exceptional skill, strategic awareness, and dedication to his clients. Berry has successfully resolved hundreds of individual employment discrimination and retaliation claims across California and other states. His extensive experience allows him to provide his clients with effective and innovative solutions.

What sets Berry apart is his proactive approach to employment law. He has developed protocols for clients to respond to employment records requests from former employees, significantly reducing the risk of subsequent litigation and PAGA claims.

**JASMIN BHANDARI**

Principal  
Scali Rasmussen, PC

**J**asmin Bhandari maintains a regulatory and litigation practice primarily focused on labor and employment law. She provides advice and counsel to clients on compliance with state and federal employment laws, including termination and on-boarding issues. She also represents businesses in a broad range of disputes, including discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, wage and hour, and trade secret matters.

Bhandari's experience further includes defending companies in wage and hour class actions against meal and rest break, overtime, and timely payment of wage claims, including extensive experience with PAGA cases in both litigation and arbitration. Bhandari has obtained a dismissal of class claims in arbitration, drafted briefs for cases at the California Court of Appeal and successfully brought a motion to dismiss the appeal.

**DEBBIE BIRNDORF-ZEILER**

Partner  
Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP

**A**fter over 20 successful years as founder and managing partner of Birndorf Law Offices, an employment counselling and litigation boutique representing California employers and executives and Debbie Birndorf-Zeiler's firm prior to joining Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP, she reinvented her career path again to join Norton Rose Fulbright's Los Angeles office, bringing her over 30 years of experience to help build a talented team at the firm.

Birndorf-Zeiler currently represents employers in all aspects of employment law, including defense of harassment and discrimination claims, wage claims, wage and hour class actions, Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) claims, disability claims and misappropriation of trade secrets. She also advises employers on day-to-day employee relations matters.

**PHILIP BONOLI**

Co-Managing Partner  
BG Law

**P**hilip Bonoli of BG Law is a seasoned litigator with extensive experience in a wide array of employment matters, including wrongful discharge, discrimination and harassment, tort claims, and contractual matters. He also regularly represents employers before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, and the California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Labor Standards Enforcement.

As the co-managing partner of BG Law, Bonoli is involved in the day-to-day administration of the firm. As part of his duties and responsibilities, he is required to ensure that there is open communication between management, attorneys, and staff to allow for the efficient operation of the firm and its business. He has been a litigator his entire career.

**CARMEN COLE**

Partner  
Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP

**W**ith more than 20 years of legal experience, Squire Patton Boggs' Labor & Employment Practice Group partner Carmen Cole works with employers to navigate complex employment law issues. A skilled litigator, Cole is a labor and employment law expert who works with employers in a range of industries, including entertainment, education, health-care, retail, and hospitality, to navigate complex employment law including compliance with wage and hour laws, employee mobility, reductions in force, recruitment and hiring, employee classification, leave laws, and termination.

Cole litigates high stakes restrictive covenant litigation, including non-solicitation and non-compete issues, for a variety of clients to both enforce and invalidate these agreements.

**JESSE CRIPPS**

Partner  
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

**J**esse Cripps is consistently recognized as a leading labor and employment attorney for his track record of major victories in high-stakes employment actions. He has practiced in the area for more than 21 years and handles the full range of labor and employment matters under both federal and state law. He is unique among his peers in his success at both the trial and appellate court levels.

Clients not only trust him to litigate these high stakes matters at the pre-trial phase, but to try them. Earlier this year, in *Rice v. Gulfstream*, following an eight day jury trial, Cripps won a complete defense verdict for Gulfstream in a long-running age discrimination, misclassification, and Cal-WARN action brought by a former employee who had been laid off during the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Jurors needed less than two hours to deliver a verdict for Gulfstream.

**MARA CURTIS**

Partner  
Reed Smith LLP

**M**ara Curtis is a partner in the Labor & Employment Group of Reed Smith and focuses her practice on counseling and litigating wage and hour matters. Curtis has distinguished herself as one of the nation's leading lawyers in wage and hour law for cutting-edge industries, particularly the gig-economy, transportation, health care and retail sectors.

Curtis has played lead roles in many of the most significant wage and hour cases of the recent past—many of which involve high-risk operational, classification and/or business model challenges that make them fundamentally different from other employment litigation—including obtaining the first published decision by the Ninth Circuit and the first published decision by the California Court of Appeals upholding the dismissal of a claim brought under PAGA underlying the claim.



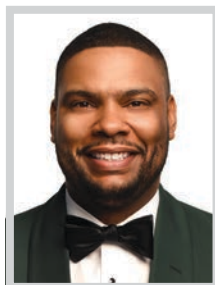
LOI: LABOR & EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEYS



**DAMIEN DELANEY**  
*Partner; Co-Chair,  
 Wage and Hour Practice  
 Akerman LLP*

**D**amien DeLaney stands out as a veteran employment litigator and co-chair of the Wage and Hour Practice Group at Akerman LLP, boasting a remarkable 20-year journey characterized by impactful achievements. His expertise extends across a diverse spectrum of industries, including retail, hospitality, real estate, technology, entertainment, and more. What sets DeLaney apart is his ability to offer inventive and value-centered approaches to complex employment litigation matters. Clients rely on his seasoned expertise for resolving intricate challenges and for proactive risk management that preempts potential liabilities.

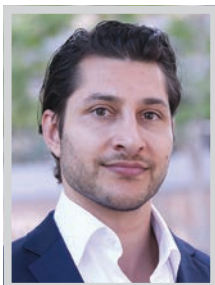
DeLaney's legacy is underscored by his proficiency in handling class actions and complex litigation scenarios.



**RODNEY DIGGS**  
*Director  
 Ivie McNeill Wyatt Purcell & Diggs*

**R**odney Diggs became a partner at Ivie, McNeill & Wyatt in 2016, and in 2019, he became a named partner when the firm changed its name to Ivie McNeill Wyatt Purcell & Diggs. Diggs has obtained over \$200 million in verdicts and settlements on behalf of his clients in his eleven years of being an attorney. In addition to his corporate practice, Diggs has had notable successes with assisting individuals in need of representation.

Diggs' significant achievements include recently obtaining a \$25 million verdict as lead counsel in an employment retaliation lawsuit, which is considered to be the largest retaliation verdict against a school district.



**CAMRON DOWLATSHAHI**  
*Founding Partner  
 Mills Sadat Dowlat LLP*

**C**amron Dowlatshahi is a leading entertainment and employment attorney recognized for his personalized approach and dedication to his clients. His practice spans employment, entertainment, and personal injury law, with a strong track record in cases involving pregnancy discrimination, wage and hour violations, racial discrimination, wrongful death, and trademark infringement. Dowlatshahi has represented both plaintiffs and defendants in complex employment matters, including high-profile sexual harassment and racial discrimination lawsuits. He has also handled entertainment-related disputes for major production companies, actors, and social media influencers, securing significant settlements for victims of sexual harassment.

A former associate at White & Case LLP, Dowlatshahi has been honored for his pro bono work.



**ANET DRAPALSKI**  
*Partner  
 Fisher Phillips*

**A**s a partner at Fisher Phillips, Anet Drapalski serves as a key advisor to employers across California in a diverse group of industries, including technology, hospitality, fashion, financial services, music, and emerging companies. She defends employers against a wide range of employment law claims, including disability, race, age, and gender discrimination, sexual harassment, retaliation, and unlawful termination of employment. Drapalski also defends employers against wage and hour class action claims and representative claims under the Private Attorney General Act (PAGA).

Drapalski works tirelessly to prevent litigation by providing preventative counseling for employers. This includes updating and providing advice regarding California's many changing laws.



**LAURA FARBER**  
*Partner  
 Hahn & Hahn LLP*

**L**aura V. Farber is a partner in the Pasadena law firm of Hahn & Hahn LLP and is an accomplished trial lawyer in the areas of employment and commercial litigation, and personal injury. Farber practices civil litigation with an emphasis in employment disputes and also counsels clients in employment and a variety of other matters. She has authored multiple articles on pressing labor and employment topics.

In 2003, she received the American Bar Association's Commission on Ethnic and Racial Diversity in the Profession – Spirit of Excellence Award, the YWCA San Gabriel Valley Women of Excellence in the Law Award in 2004, and was selected as Woman of the Year in 2022 by US congressional Representative Judy Chu representing the 27th Congressional District of California.



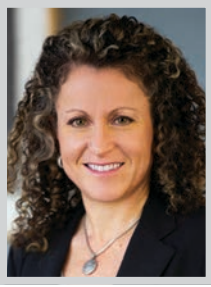
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Thompson Coburn is proud to congratulate our partner **Kacey Riccomini** on being named one of Los Angeles Business Journal's **Leaders of Influence: Labor & Employment Attorneys!**



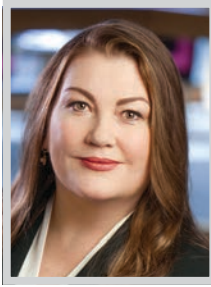
## LOI: LABOR &amp; EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEYS

**DEBRA FISCHER**

Partner  
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP

In the fierce battle for talent, Debra Fischer has a well-established track record of helping companies hire employees who will help their businesses thrive. Leading insurance brokerages, financial services firms and recruiting companies, among clients in other industries, routinely turn to Fischer to defend against challenges from competitors that seek to stop top talent from competing or make it financially unviable for those individuals to do business at their new employer.

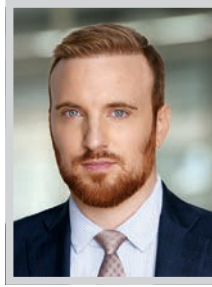
Fischer has created a nationwide niche in her more than 30 years of practice, advising on and litigating unfair competition and trade secret issues that arise when employees change employment. She is sought-after for her skill in responding to motions for temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions in employee mobility disputes across the country in state and federal courts.

**KATHERINE FORSTER**

Partner  
Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP

As a seasoned employment practitioner, Katherine Forster has litigated scores of class, collective, and representative actions. She has also particular expertise in helping companies navigate highly sensitive claims for sexual harassment and abuse, gender discrimination, whistleblower retaliation, and pay equity at the pre-filing stage, thereby avoiding any public filing.

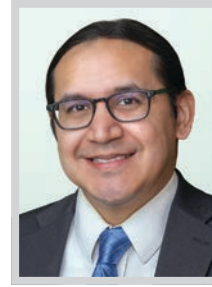
Among Forster's recent matters has been her work defending Activision Blizzard and two subsidiaries in a government action brought by the California Civil Rights Department (CRD) alleging systemic sexual harassment. Her aggressive litigation strategy secured a legal ruling limiting the time period for which CRD could pursue claims, persuaded CRD to drop its pattern-and-practice claims of sexual harassment, and led to a settlement for half of what companies facing similar claims had paid.

**STEVEN GALLAGHER**

Partner  
Fox Rothschild

For nearly a decade, clients have relied upon Steven Gallagher to successfully defend them in complex litigation, including wage-and-hour class actions, Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) actions, and Fair Labor Standards Act collective actions.

Gallagher represents Fortune 500 clients in an array of industries, routinely handling their highest value cases. He works with companies to correct hard-to-spot time and pay errors to prevent liability. Gallagher defends employers in informal tribunals, including before the Department of Industrial Relations, Department of Labor Standards Enforcement, Department of Labor, Civil Rights Department and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. He also provides due diligence on the labor and employment aspects of buy- and sell-side multistate and international mergers and acquisitions.

**JOHN HANEY**

Partner  
Holland & Knight

John Haney is a uniquely versatile labor and employment attorney in Holland & Knight's Los Angeles office, serving clients on both sides of the typical law firm divide of litigation and transactions. Haney defends clients in high-stakes cases involving single-plaintiff, class, collective and representation actions. He brokers practical settlements – frequently for a fraction of the plaintiffs' initial demands – that often save his clients significant time and money and prevent future problems. Clients have trusted Haney with high-risk, high-visibility matters and the leading human resources organization in the world relies on his counsel on labor and employment law.

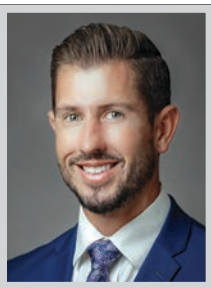
On the transactional side, Haney advises clients in mergers, acquisitions and other deals with pending or potential labor and employment litigation risks.

**MIRA HASHMALL**

Partner  
Miller Barondess, LLP

Mira Hashmall is an accomplished trial attorney who has guided clients through high-stakes commercial litigation and complex employment matters for over 20 years. Her trial experience in employment matters runs the gamut from whistleblower retaliation and wrongful termination cases to FEHA harassment, retaliation, and discrimination claims. In addition to her trial practice, Hashmall has been a certified appellate specialist since 2015. Her clients appreciate the efficiency of using Hashmall as trial counsel and having her handle the appeal with her familiarity with trial court proceedings and appellate experience.

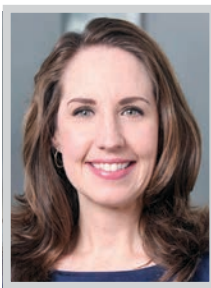
Hashmall is often brought in to handle cases after previous trials have resulted in adverse outcomes, so she is comfortable navigating the advantages and potential pitfalls of extensive prior testimony from key trial witnesses.

**RYAN HAWS**

Partner  
LightGabler LLP

With over 15 years of experience counseling businesses in all aspects of employment law, Ryan Haws has earned a reputation for developing proactive strategies to enhance workplace productivity and avoid employment disputes. Haws became a partner at LightGabler LLP in 2024.

Since 2018, Haws has managed the firm's employment law advice and counsel practice, which provides employment law counseling to businesses of all sizes. He consults with hundreds of companies throughout California regarding day-to-day employment law needs and helps them focus on the proactive resolution of workplace disputes while aggressively defending their interests. Haws provides guidance to employers on complying with legal standards while preserving business productivity and employee morale.

**ESRA HUDSON**

Leader, Employment and Labor Practice  
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP

As a leader of Manatt's Employment and Labor practice, Esra Hudson has established herself as the go-to employment adviser for iconic entertainment companies, national insurance providers, well-known medical centers and leading financial services companies through her deft defense against wage and hour class and collective actions, PAGA representative matters, and trade secret and unfair competition claims.

With extensive experience in crisis management and media relations, including in sensitive matters involving executives and high-profile individuals, Hudson has successfully represented employers in proceedings across a number of forums, as well as in alternative dispute resolution and arbitration, often saving her clients financial and reputational damage in claims, or even avoiding litigation altogether.

**TRAVIS JANG-BUSBY**

Partner, Labor & Employment  
Blank Rome LLP

Travis Jang-Busby strategically represents his clients in high-stakes class action litigation in California and nationally, representative wage-hour litigation under PAGA, discrimination litigation, and administrative investigations, and provides them with preventative counseling. He has varied and extensive experience successfully representing clients in all phases of litigation.

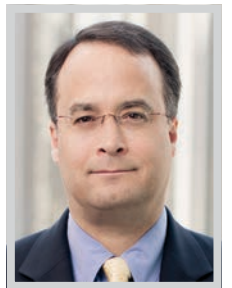
Among his recent client successes include his work on *Veterinary Clinics of America (VCA) v. Nancy Hampel*. Jang-Busby successfully obtained a non-compete injunction against a former employee veterinarian after she opened a competing veterinary hospital next door to a VCA hospital. The court agreed that the former employee was not permitted to compete following receipt of over \$5 million dollars for her interest in the purchased animal hospital.

**ARWEN JOHNSON**

Partner  
King & Spalding

Arwen Johnson is unique in having several distinct and impressive practices: representing some of the nation's top entertainment clients in high profile idea theft and copyright infringement matters; representing tech companies in trade secrets disputes over their highly valuable technologies; and representing public companies in complex class action and commercial disputes. Regardless of the issue, clients seek Arwen out to get positive results in their highest stakes matters.

Johnson led the defense in a matter in which the plaintiff asserted an "idea theft" claim under California law, claiming that the Ben Affleck thriller *The Accountant* was based on his unpublished novel written under a pen name in the early 2000s. In March 2022, the court sustained the demurrer without leave to amend and dismissed the case with prejudice.

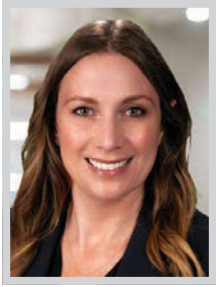
**ROLAND JUAREZ**

Partner  
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

Roland Juarez' career is known for handling high-stakes labor and employment cases for some of California's largest and most high-profile employers in the temporary staffing, service, manufacturing, and retail industries, skillfully defending clients against challenging wage and hour, discrimination, non-compete and anti-raiding claims facing employers in California and nationwide.

Juarez is currently defending multiple clusters of PAGA and class actions for several clients, in varied industries, and has developed an accomplished and impressive unfair competition and employee raiding practice. Roland is at the forefront of thinking on the Supreme Court's Viking River decision and the impact it has on arbitration agreements and PAGA claims. In May 2024, Juarez led a LA employment team to secure a victory for a federal contractor.

LOI: LABOR & EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEYS



**NICOLE KAMM**  
Partner  
Fisher Phillips

Fisher Phillips' Nicole Kamm represents a broad range of clients, from small businesses to national companies, in a variety of industries, including healthcare, education, technology, manufacturing, retail, hospitality, construction, transportation and professional services. Kamm defends employers and provides dispute resolution counsel against individual and class claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, and wage and hour violations before state and federal courts and administrative agencies.

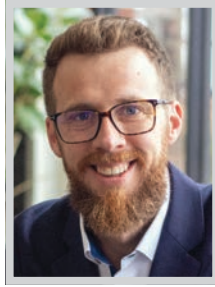
Kamm also provides strategic counsel and management training on employment issues that arise in the workplace, including hiring, discipline and termination decisions, leaves of absence, reductions in force and compliance issues.



**TRACEY KENNEDY**  
Partner  
Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP

Described as “an outstanding trial lawyer; absolutely fantastic and deserving of high accolades,” Tracey Kennedy is the go-to Los Angeles trial attorney in California. Her 30 years of representing clients in discrimination, harassment and wrongful termination cases combined with an impressive win record (including trying-to-verdict three multi-million-dollar wage-and-hour cases) make her one of the most sought-after labor and employment trial lawyers around.

Kennedy spent eight years on Sheppard Mullin's Compensation Committee and nine years on the Executive Committee. Her leadership has been critical to the most important D&I initiatives, including the Women Attorneys Success Initiative Committee and the Attorneys of Color and LGBTQ+ Attorneys Success Initiative Committee.



**MICHAEL KENT**  
Founding Partner  
KENT | PINCIN

Michael Kent has extensive experience litigating a variety of matters. Kent has a wide range of experience in litigation including employment discrimination, retaliation, and harassment, wrongful death, personal injury, Mass Torts, including the Wildfire Litigation, Route 91, and the USC/Tyndall sex abuse cases. He has engaged in all aspects of litigation from case inception and development, discovery both written and depositions, law and motion, and trials and arbitrations.

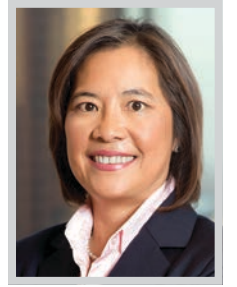
Kent has had a number of victories in his career. Most recently, Kent resolved a case for \$1.65 million dollars against the County of Los Angeles, a \$495,000 Federal ADA disability discrimination case, and a \$1.45 million dollar settlement against the City of Glendale.



**DANA KRAVETZ**  
Firm Managing Partner  
Michelman & Robinson, LLP

Having built a career marked by significant achievements, Dana Kravetz remains at the helm of Michelman & Robinson, LLP, where he is the firm's managing partner. Juggling his managerial role with legal practice, Kravetz prides himself on a client roster that includes some of the most dynamic and forward-thinking companies in the nation, underscoring his position as a sought-after legal counsel.

Over the past several months, Kravetz has achieved notable successes on behalf of management, particularly in the hospitality space. He successfully negotiated a settlement in a high-profile class action against a leading hotel brand, resolving a contentious donning and doffing dispute with the client paying only a fraction of the original demand.



**KRISTINE KWONG**  
Partner  
Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP

Kristine Kwong is a partner in the Musick, Peeler & Garrett's LA office and advises clients on business, corporate, operational, and employment issues, including business counseling, contract negotiation and preparation, restrictive covenant and non-compete agreements, executive mobility issues, due diligence in connection with mergers and acquisitions, and range of employment matters.

Kwong represents both public and private sector entities in retail, manufacturing, finance, health-care, hospitality, real estate, and charitable and tax-exempt organizations, including religious entities, federally qualified health centers, educational institutions from K-12 districts, colleges to charter schools, and public sector agencies, municipalities, commissions, and special districts in both litigation and transactional matters.

Congratulations to our partner  
**Philip J. Bonoli**  
 for being named to the  
*Los Angeles Business Journal's*  
 2024 list of **“Leaders of Influence:  
 Labor & Employment Attorneys.”**



## LOI: LABOR &amp; EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEYS

**MELISSA MURO LaMERE**

Partner  
Snell & Wilmer LLP

**M**elissa Muro LaMere is an accomplished attorney focusing on employment and business litigation, with licenses to practice in California, Arizona, and Minnesota. With a strong track record in assisting clients to protect and expand their businesses in competitive environments, LaMere's experience spans employment counseling, litigation, and business disputes.

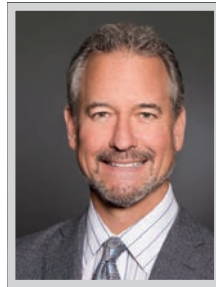
LaMere handles matters involving non-competition and non-solicitation agreements, trade secrets, business contracts and torts, as well as unfair competition and trade practices. Her diverse clientele includes multinational corporations, small businesses, and individuals, and she frequently acts as a trusted advisor in various litigation scenarios across state and federal trial and appellate courts.

**KATE LaQUAY**

Partner – Employment & Labor  
Munck Wilson Mandala

**K**ate LaQuay has made significant strides in her career by continually advancing the discourse on evolving aspects of California employment law. Her dedication to keeping the legal community and employers informed is evident in her writing and speaking engagements on various cutting-edge topics. LaQuay has covered a wide range of subjects, including amendments to laws, novel applications of existing laws, and emerging theories of liability. Her work has been published in multiple reputable sources.

One of LaQuay's notable accomplishments includes writing a comprehensive article on PAGA reforms, which has been a topic of significant interest due to its impact on employer liability and litigation trends. She has also explored novel applications of employment laws, such as the compensation requirements for remote workers during computer startup times.

**JONATHAN FRASER LIGHT**

Managing Partner  
LightGabler LLP

**J**on Fraser Light has more than 40 years' experience in employment law. He is AV Preeminent-rated by Martindale Hubbell, the highest peer-review rating possible. As co-founder and managing partner at LightGabler LLP, he leads his team of over 20 attorneys who consult with almost 5000 companies throughout California regarding their day-to-day employment law needs.

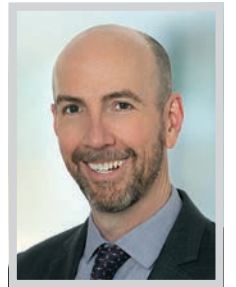
Light has been successful in multiple jury trials, appellate cases, Labor Commission hearings and binding arbitration claims involving wrongful termination, sexual harassment, race discrimination, class action wage & hour, and other employment-related matters. He has also appeared on behalf of employers before the federal EEOC and Labor Department, the state Civil Rights Department, the National Labor Relations Board, and other government agencies involved with employment law.

**MARGARET MARASCHINO**

Partner  
Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP

**A**rising star in the California employment law world, Maggie Maraschino regularly leads the defense of cases against leading national and California companies against wage-and-hour class and collective actions, discrimination claims and termination challenges. In addition to the litigation, trial, and appeal of employment disputes, Maraschino provides strategic advice to major companies on a broad range of employment matters.

Maraschino's clients include Morgan Stanley, Wells Fargo, Carrington Mortgage Services, Square, Inc., Yelp, NBCUniversal, Novartis and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, a philanthropic entity created by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Dr. Priscilla Chan. Among her recent matters has been prevailing in an appeal before the Ninth Circuit in late 2023, protecting an arbitration victory for Morgan Stanley in 2018.

**DWAYNE MCKENZIE**

Managing Partner  
Cox, Castle & Nicholson

**D**wayne McKenzie is the managing partner at Cox, Castle & Nicholson and has a diverse practice that has grown to meet the needs of a wide variety of real estate and construction industry clients in traditional labor relations, employment law, ERISA matters, and litigation in state and federal courts. With 30 years of experience, McKenzie is highly regarded by his clients for his depth of experience and wealth of knowledge in all facets of labor and employment law, particularly in the real estate, construction and public works industries, and his ability to give practical as well as sound legal advice to owners, public agencies, developers, contractor trade associations, and employers in traditional labor relations.

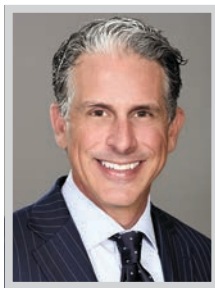
McKenzie has also been involved extensively in prevailing wage law legislation, interpretation, and litigation for over 20 years and is active in public works.

**E. SEAN McLOUGHLIN**

Partner  
Hill, Farrer & Burrill LLP

**S**ean McLoughlin litigates labor and employment cases for management. Specialized expertise includes aggressive and innovative defense of class action and UCL lawsuits based on California's unique wage and hour laws, as well as federal FLSA claims. Additional expertise includes development and implementation of cutting edge arbitration strategies to preserve employers' rights to defend wage and hour claims.

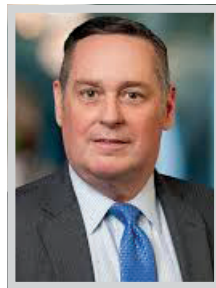
During his 20 years of practice, McLoughlin has defended employers in courts and in arbitration against claims of unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, breach of contract, defamation, Labor Code violations, and unfair business practices. Experience spans all stages of employment suits, from conducting prelitigation factual investigations to trial and appellate work.

**MATTHEW McNICHOLAS**

Partner  
McNicholas & McNicholas, LLP

**M**atthew McNicholas has impacted the inner workings of large and powerful agencies. He has prevented illegal and coercive force that affects the lives of the public, law enforcement officers and firefighters. He has protected the livelihoods of good law enforcement officers and firefighters who've dedicated their lives to serving and protecting.

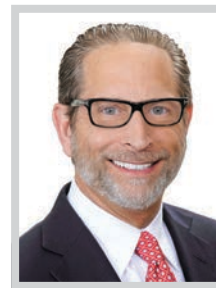
As panel counsel to the Los Angeles Police Protective League and the United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, McNicholas is Southern California's go-to employment attorney for first responders who have faced discrimination, harassment and retaliation at work throughout the state. Securing over \$17 million in employment resolutions in 2023 alone, he stands as the leading advocate for law enforcement professionals committed to eradicating misconduct within their departments.

**PATRICK MICHELA**

Partner  
Hill, Farrer & Burrill LLP

**L**itigator Patrick E. Michela practices in the area of general civil and business litigation, with an emphasis on employment defense. Michela's employment work involves litigation for small- and medium-sized companies in both state and federal courts, as well as arbitration before the American Arbitration Association. He has defended numerous class action lawsuits and representative actions under the California Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA).

Michela also has extensive experience in compelling arbitration of employment-law claims under both private arbitration agreements and under collective bargaining agreements against union-represented employees. In his business and commercial litigation representation, Michela helps resolve a range of disputes.

**ROBERT (BOB) MILLMAN**

Shareholder  
Littler Mendelson P.C.

**W**ith 50 years of experience practicing labor and employment law, Bob Millman continues to be widely recognized as one of the deans of the management labor and employment bar in California. Employers seek his counsel and guidance, and he is regularly featured in prominent media outlets for his vast knowledge on labor and employment issues.

Millman joined Littler in the fall of 1974 right after law school as the firm's 18th attorney and is now a senior shareholder at the firm. As the founder of Littler's two Los Angeles offices and former chair of its board of directors, he has been an integral part of the growth, development and success of the firm for 50 years. He has helped Littler grow its presence in Southern California – between its LA and Irvine offices, Littler now has the largest number of labor and employment attorneys.

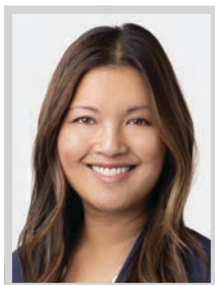
**ANTHONY (TONY) ONCIDI**

Partner; Co-Chair, Labor & Employment Law Department; Head of West Coast Labor & Employment Practice  
Proskauer Rose LLP

**T**ony Oncidi is the co-chair of Proskauer's market-leading Labor & Employment Law Department and heads the West Coast Labor & Employment group in the firm's LA office. Oncidi is the go-to employment lawyer in Los Angeles and his influence reverberates throughout the legal landscape.

Oncidi represents employers in labor relations and employment law, including litigation and preventive counseling, wage and hour matters, restrictive covenant and noncompete matters, wrongful termination, employee discipline, discrimination laws, contract disputes, sexual harassment training and investigations, workplace violence, Sarbanes-Oxley claims and trade secret protection.

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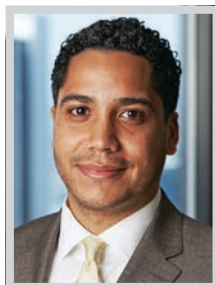


**EMILY PATAJO**

Partner, Labor and Employment  
Akerman LLP

Emily Patajo, a labor and employment partner at Akerman LLP, boasts a wealth of experience focusing on employment litigation in state and federal courts. Specializing in risk assessment and defense, she represents employers across diverse sectors, including grocery, retail, technology, and healthcare. Patajo excels in handling matters related to wrongful termination, unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation under California law. Additionally, she provides valuable counsel on wage and hour class action cases.

Beyond litigation, Patajo adeptly manages administrative issues, advising on charges before state agencies like the California Civil Rights Department. Her strategic guidance to human resources spans personnel management, investigations, and evaluations of requests for reasonable accommodations.



**RYNE POSEY**

Partner  
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Ryne Posey leads Skadden's West Coast labor and employment department and is a dynamic, go-to attorney for clients across a broad range of industries, including sports, media and entertainment, and technology and financial services, among others. His broad and unique practice encompasses litigation and other controversy matters, compliance and counseling, and transactional matters.

Posey leads Skadden teams in litigation and other controversy matters, serving as the lead employment attorney in highly sensitive issues, including representing a private equity fund in securing the return of trade secrets and other confidential information from former employees; and securing a multi-million dollar settlement on behalf of a semiconductor company.



**NICK PUJII**

Partner  
Dentons US LLP

Nick Pujii, a partner in Dentons' Employment and Labor practice, represents a wide array of clients in complex business, employment, trade secret, ADA website accessibility, and class action litigation, with a particular emphasis in consumer and wage and hour class actions. He has extensive experience handling all aspects of the litigation, arbitration and appellate processes, with a strong track record of resolving matters through early-stage strategy and communication, negotiated settlement, mediation, trial and arbitration.

Pujii advises clients on day-to-day employment issues — including employment policies and procedures, compliance, non-compete agreements, terminations, and training — designed to avoid litigation. His success is based, in part, on his creative, business savvy, and cost-effective results.



**ANGELA REDDOCK-WRIGHT**

Mediator, Employment & Title IX Law  
Signature Resolution/Reddock Law

Angela Reddock-Wright is a leading employment and Title IX attorney mediator with her own firm and as part of the distinguished panel of neutrals with Signature Resolution. She has practiced employment and labor law for nearly 30 years. After working as an employment litigator for 15 years, in 2011 she opened the Reddock Law Group and transitioned to becoming a full-time neutral.

Reddock-Wright is a member of the panel of mediators with the US District Court, Central District of California. She is an adjunct professor for the Mediation Clinic at USC Gould School of Law. Reddock-Wright has mediated and investigated some of the most sensitive and high profile cases involving private, public, and non-profit sector employers.

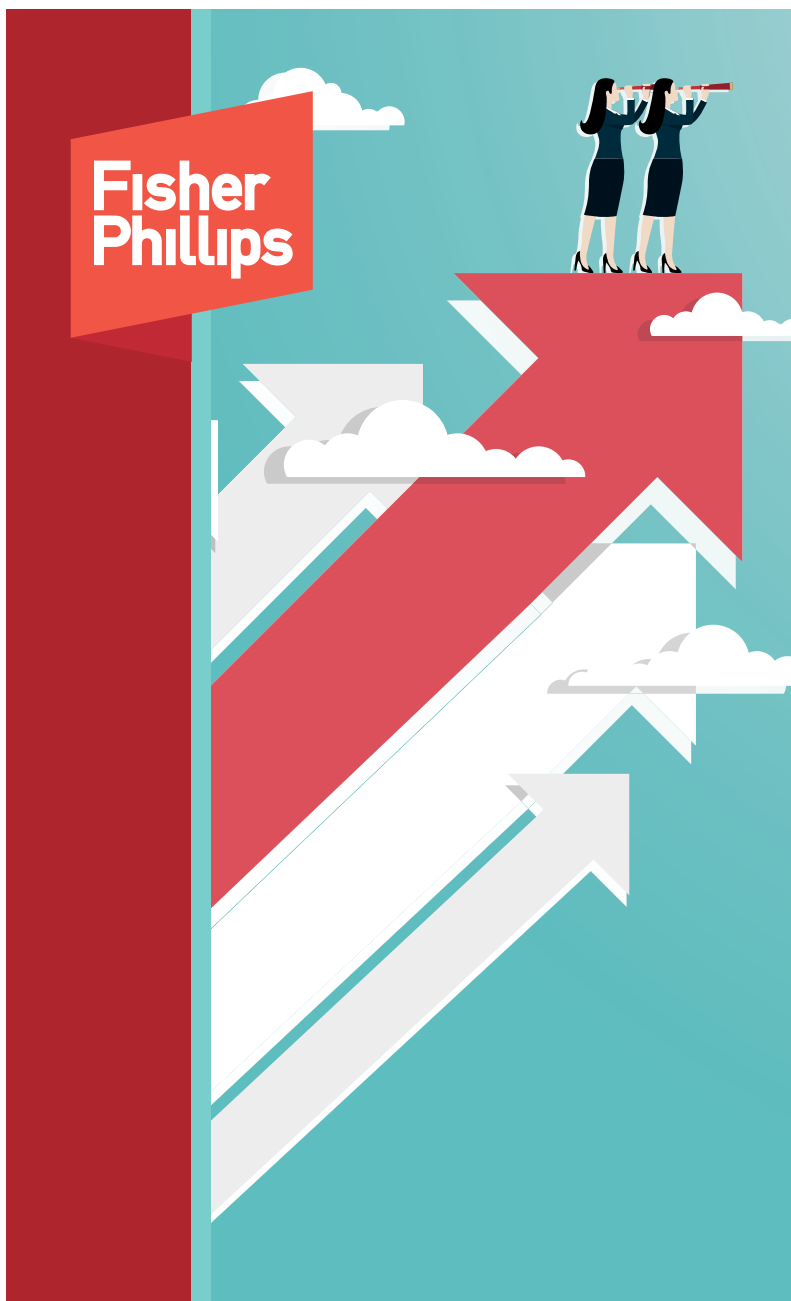


**KACEY RICCOMINI**

Partner  
Thompson Coburn LLP

Kacey Riccomini is not only a leading defense attorney in complex employment litigation but has carved out a niche in representing clients in Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) claims and high-stakes wage and hour disputes. Currently, she leads the defense in six PAGA and class action cases.

Riccomini has successfully defended Fortune 500 companies, large privately held companies and small businesses in various industries, protecting them from multimillion-dollar claims from hundreds of employees, inflated attorney fees and unreasonable demands. She has prevailed in state and federal courts at all stages of litigation, including trial, and has successfully arbitrated and mediated numerous cases before the AAA and other dispute resolution agencies.



**Anet Drapalski and Nicole Kamm**  
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**Anet Drapalski**

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adrapalski@fisherphillips.com

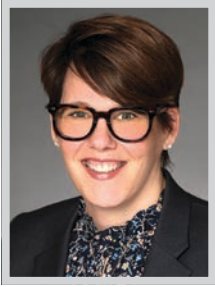


**Nicole Kamm**

Partner  
Woodland Hills/Los Angeles  
818.230.4253  
nkamm@fisherphillips.com



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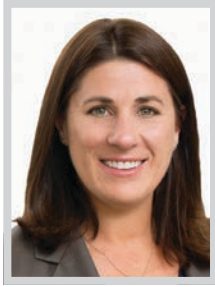


**KATHERINE ROBERTS**

Partner; Co-Chair, Labor, Employment and Immigration Group  
Sidley Austin LLP

**K**atherine A. (Kate) Roberts is the co-chair of Sidley's Labor, Employment and Immigration group whose experience extends to all aspects of employment litigation, counseling and labor relations. Roberts routinely handles wage and hour class and collective actions involving state and federal overtime exemptions, meal and rest period claims and claims under the California Private Attorney General Act (PAGA). She also defends employers against claims of discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, failure to accommodate and other causes of action arising under state and federal law.

Roberts partners with clients to complete efficient, timely factual investigations and legal evaluations to help them make informed decisions about litigation strategy and deployment of resources.

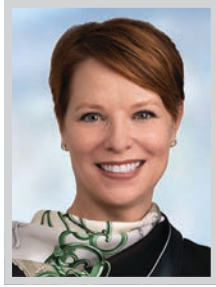


**MARIA RODRIGUEZ**

Co-Head, Global Employment Practice  
McDermott Will & Emery

**A**s co-head of McDermott's Global Employment Practice, and head of the Media Entertainment Sports Practice, Maria Rodriguez is a sought-after legal advisor in the media, entertainment and sports sectors. As a result of her strategic leadership, Maria has built an incredibly diverse team of skilled lawyers across the US to deliver nuanced perspectives and strategic, highly effective solutions to clients.

Rodriguez represents Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros., MGM, Fifth Season, NBC Universal, Disney, ABC, Twentieth Century Fox, Sony Pictures, Endeavor (aka William Morris Endeavor Agency), HBO and Lions Gate. Her clientele extends to sports companies and agencies including Stephen Curry's companies, SC30, Change the World, Unanimous Media, Ayesha Curry Productions, The SpringHill Company, the UFC and Octagon.

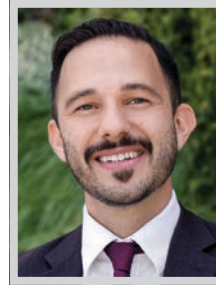


**MELANIE RONEN**

Partner  
Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP

**W**orking with clients across a broad array of industries, partner Melanie Ronen advises on all aspects of employment law, including hiring, promotion, termination, privacy, wage and hour, disability and protected leave, and retaliation and whistleblower issues. She assists with the drafting and review of employment manuals and agreements, ensuring compliance with federal and state employment laws.

Ronen handles single-plaintiff and complex employment disputes in state and federal courts and arbitration involving claims related to discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, breach of contract, defamation, trade secret, unfair competition, and wage and hour issues, including class action and Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) claims.



**ARASH SADAT**

Founding Partner  
Mills Sadat Dowlat LLP

**A**rash Sadat is an employment attorney with extensive experience as a litigator and an impressive track record, which includes representing LGBTQ+ employees in discrimination and harassment cases against a large logistics company; representing a woman in a sexual harassment suit against a private jet management company; negotiating severance on behalf of CEO of financial advisory firm; representing an Indian national in a racial discrimination suit against a large streaming service and production company; and representing misclassified employees against a large events company.

With over a decade of experience and a background working at prestigious law firms, Sadat has successfully represented clients in a wide range of cases, is also known for pro bono work and community service.



**CHRISTIAN SCALI**

Founder & Managing Shareholder  
Scali Rasmussen, PC

**C**hristian Scali has a diverse practice that includes advice and counsel and complex and high stakes litigation. His clients are in a variety of industries, including restaurant and hospitality, property management, entertainment, clothing manufacturing and ecommerce, with the majority of clients in the retail automotive industry.

Scali is known throughout California for his work on behalf of the retail automotive industry in a series of advertising lawsuits brought against it under California's Unfair Competition Law resulting, among other things, in the disbarment of consumer advocates, Trevor Law Group, and for his work on the Defense Steering Committee in the massive automobile consumer leasing lawsuit against the entire California retail automotive leasing industry.



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# 2024 Leaders of Influence: Labor & Employment Attorneys



A special congratulations to Glaser Weil's practice chair, Kerry Garvis Wright!

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Burke proudly celebrates partner

**DAPHNE ANNEET**

being named to the Los Angeles Business Journal's

**2024 LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEYS**



A dynamic team builder and player, Daphne brings superior litigation skills and subject matter expertise to develop winning legal strategies.

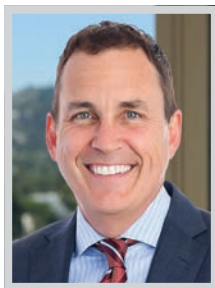
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bwsllaw.com



BURKE, WILLIAMS & SORENSON, LLP



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**KELLY SCOTT**

Partner

Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP

Kelly Scott is a partner and head of the Ervin Cohen & Jessup's Employment Law Department. Scott is also a member of the Litigation Department and has practiced law since 1987. His areas of practice include representation of employers in all types of employment matters, including class actions, wrongful termination, sexual harassment, employment discrimination and harassment, retaliation, wage and hour claims and advice and/or training for compliance with various employment laws.

Scott is also an experienced investigator in various types of employment law related complaints and problems, including, but not limited to, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, workplace violence, wage and hour issues, overtime exemptions, employee theft and various allegations of employee misconduct.



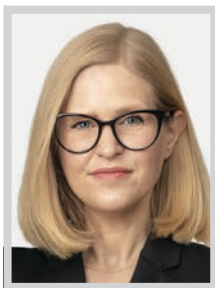
**CHRISTEN SEWELL**

Partner

Covington & Burling LLP

In her current role as a partner in Covington's Los Angeles office, Christen Sewell counsels private and public companies and executives on all aspects of employee benefits and executive compensation. She has a particular focus on benefits and executive compensation issues for early stage and emerging companies, including advising on the design, compliance, and administration of stock options and equity-based plans and arrangements as well as drafting and negotiating executive compensation arrangements, including, employment, retention, change in control, and separation agreements.

Among Sewell's recent cases has been her work representing Flex-base Technologies, a financial platform for small businesses, on the equity and executive compensation aspects of \$120 million equity and debt financings.



**KATHERINE SMITH**

Partner; Co-Chair, Labor and Employment Practice Group

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

As co-chair of Gibson Dunn's Labor and Employment Practice Group, Katherine Smith has extensive experience representing employers in individual, representative and class action litigation at both the trial court and appellate level. Smith is in demand by clients needing guidance with respect to nearly all aspects of employment law, including government investigations, enforcement of non-solicitation and non-competition covenants, and independent contractor/common law employee status.

Among Smith's recent achievements has been her work securing final approval of an \$100 million putative class and government action settlement for Riot Games. She also secured victories for Lowe's in PAGA claims and successfully defended Cognizant in a class action trial alleging discrimination.



**KARINA STERMAN**

Partner

Greenberg Glusker

Karina B. Sterman, partner in Greenberg Glusker's Litigation and Employment Law Departments, is a creative and ardent advocate for her clients. Her litigation practice includes representing businesses in wage and hour class action and PAGA lawsuits as well as in discrimination, retaliation, wrongful termination, trade secret misappropriation, employee embezzlement, and other employment disputes.

While Sterman regularly appears in court, arbitration, and administrative proceedings, she also leverages her significant experience in "behind the scenes" counseling to avoid or resolve pending lawsuits and claims. Sterman counsels on wage and hour and other employment law compliance, drafts employment-related documents, and engages in solutions-focused business-minded employment strategy.



**JENNIFER TERRY**

Partner

Reed Smith LLP

Jennifer Terry is the office managing partner of Reed's Smith Los Angeles Office, a Labor & Employment partner, and the lead of the Restaurant and Food Services subgroup for Reed Smith's Retail Industry group.

Terry is a skilled litigator and counselor for her clients who predominantly fall in the retail, food and beverage, transportation and logistics, life sciences, consumer products and tech sectors. She defends employers in class and PAGA claims alleging failure to pay overtime, report time pay, provide meal and rest breaks, and pay waiting time penalties, among others. She also defends single plaintiff cases involving sexual harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and wrongful termination. She has recently had significant successes at the motions for summary judgment.

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**DANA KRAVETZ**

**M | R** MICHELMAN & ROBINSON, LLP

**A True Leader of Influence  
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**Devon S. Mills**  
Associate

**Alec DiMario**  
Senior Associate

**Stacey Chiu**  
Senior Associate

**Amanda K. Monroe**  
Partner

Firm Managing Partner

**Lara A. H. Shortz**  
LA Office Managing Partner

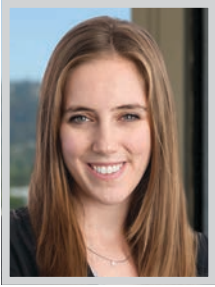
**Bryan Johnson**  
Partner

**Alexandra Miller**  
Associate

**Natalie E. Manoogian**  
Associate (pending admission)



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**CATHERINE VEENEMAN**  
Partner  
Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP

Catherine Veeneman represents California employers in responding to a wide-range of employment claims and minimizing litigation risk. Her clients include small and medium-sized employers in the hospitality, retail, media, security, and construction industries. Veeneman has defended clients against all types of employment claims, including wrongful termination, retaliation, discrimination, harassment, and wage and hour. Veeneman has experience defending clients against both class and PAGA claims.

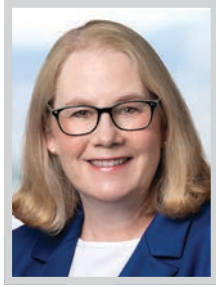
Veeneman understands that, when it comes to resolving a matter, there is no one size fits all solution. Veeneman therefore strives to be there for her clients through each step of litigation, working with them to find the most effective solution for each case.



**ALEXANDER VOLBERDING**  
Partner  
Liebert Cassidy Whitmore

Alexander Volberding is recognized as a top attorney in labor law and labor relations, particularly for his expertise in representing public agencies in California. His leadership in managing high-stakes labor disputes, especially those involving potential strikes that could disrupt essential public services, demonstrates his strategic acumen and deep knowledge of the field. Volberding has consistently navigated complex legal landscapes to deliver results that protect his clients.

One of Volberding's most significant career accomplishments is his role as lead counsel in preventing a Service Employees International Union led strike involving over 55,000 employees, including essential healthcare workers. His strategic approach to negotiations ensured that minimum staffing levels were maintained across critical departments.



**LISA VON ESCHEN**  
Partner  
Greenberg Glusker

In her more than three decades of practicing law, Lisa Von Eschen has earned an impeccable reputation for counseling and defending businesses and non-profit organizations in state and federal employment law matters. As partner at Greenberg Glusker, she advises management on day-to-day compliance issues, including leaves of absence, accommodations, exempt classifications, discipline, terminations, and reductions in force.

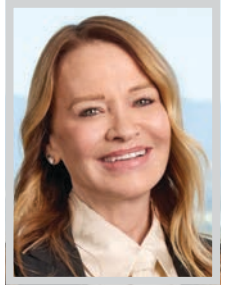
Von Eschen also handles executive employment contracts, commission and bonus plans, restrictive covenants, trade secret and confidentiality issues, and severance agreements. She regularly drafts and audits personnel policies and handbooks, leads internal investigations, and conducts preventive training sessions on harassment and other employment topics.



**MATTHEW WALLIN**  
Partner  
Gibbs Giden Locher Turner Senet & Wittbrodt

Matthew Wallin is a partner in the Los Angeles and Westlake offices where he practices labor and employment law. He has extensive experience defending private business and public entities in litigation involving discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and wage and hour disputes. He also has experience defending employers against claims of assault.

Wallin assists businesses of all shapes and sizes by assessing their compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. This assessment includes thorough reviews of policies, payroll records, personnel files and other relevant documents to determine if a business is following wage and hour laws and Labor Code requirements. Wallin also advises companies on proper procedures when dealing with complex issues.



**KERRY GARVIS WRIGHT**  
Partner and Chair;  
Employment Practice Group  
Glaser Weil

Litigation partner, trial attorney, and chair of Glaser Weil's Employment Practice, Kerry Garvis Wright is widely recognized for her experience and caliber of service. Wright is considered a 'warrior in court and therapist out of court' with a portfolio of clients including household names in entertainment. In addition to litigation, Wright also has led noteworthy workplace investigations involving highly sensitive allegations, including sexual harassment and other workplace misconduct. Since the watershed #MeToo movement was sparked, Wright has handled claims by and against some of the most significant names in entertainment, private equity and tech.

Wright has been broadly recognized for her experience and caliber of service.



**Dwayne McKenzie**  
Managing Partner

Congratulations on being recognized as a  
**Leader of Influence:**  
Labor & Employment Attorney

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Los Angeles, CA 90067  
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**ORANGE COUNTY**  
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Ignoring employee issues doesn't make them go away.

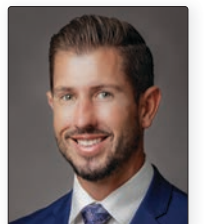


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as **Leaders of Influence:**  
Labor and Employment Attorneys.



Jonathan Fraser Light,  
Managing Partner



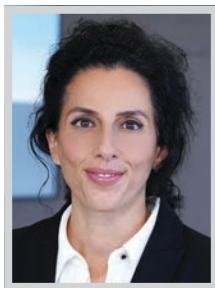
Ryan M. Haws,  
Partner

EMPLOYMENT COUNSEL & LITIGATION | INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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**LIAT YAMINI**

Partner  
Jones Day

Li at Yamini is a devoted advocate of Jones Day’s clients, demonstrating strong business acumen and interpersonal skills. These skills enable her to analyze legal issues with a strategic lens towards finding practical, actionable solutions and help her effectively interact with clients, witnesses, jurists and colleagues. Yamini regularly leads Jones Day employment teams in landmark cases.

An example of her recent noteworthy accomplishments includes Andersen et al. v United Parcel Service, Inc. Yamini was the lead partner on this wrongful termination and unpaid wages claim brought by four former seasonal employees. Jones Day obtained summary judgment on all but two of the plaintiffs’ claims, including the high value claims of wrongful termination, retaliation and breach of contract.



**RON ZAMBRANO**

Employment Litigation Chair; Partner  
West Coast Employment Lawyers

R on Zambrano brings over a decade of experience fighting for employee rights, winning nearly \$3 million in verdicts and settlements between 2020-2022, with an average success rate of trial / arbitration of 50% (very high) and trials and settlements at 99.99%. Zambrano is deeply passionate about employee rights, and he is particularly skilled in claims on behalf of Spanish-speaking employees.

An example of his work is the representation of the former nanny of actors Olivia Wilde and Jason Sudeikis. The couple’s former nanny is suing for wrongful termination, describing unbearable stress and anxiety inside the home. He also represents several teachers at Kanye West’s Donda Academy, who sued the artist in a complaint containing allegations of misconduct.



**CANDICE ZEE**

Shareholder  
Vedder Price

C andice Zee is a shareholder at Vedder Price and a member of the Labor & Employment practice area in the firm’s Los Angeles office. Zee is a diverse and skilled labor and employment shareholder who has the versatility to handle traditional labor matters as well as represent multi-state and international corporations in all aspects of employment litigation.

Zee has served as lead counsel on a number of cases, including several regarding Adventist Health and Dameron Hospital with respect to labor and employment matters. In addition, she provides both labor and employment advice and counsel for companies such as Shea Homes, California Pizza Kitchen, Inc. and El Pollo Loco, while also handling traditional labor matters for the University of Southern California, among others.

“All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”

–MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

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