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WHAT AI REGULATIONS
ARE NEEDED, IF ANY?

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LEADERSHIP AWARDS

2024 LEGAL VISIONARIES

LEGAL ACTIVITY AND BILLING
CHALLENGES TRENDING UP

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Dear Reader:

The legal industry is evolving rapidly, and this 2024 Business of Law magazine covers several new trends reshaping law firm operations.

A Gartner survey shows legal, compliance and privacy leaders increasingly focus on strategic roles, driving both risk management and business outcomes. AI adoption is rising, with 79% of law firms incorporating it into operations, reshaping billing models and priorities. Despite increased earnings, mid-sized firms face challenges with billing and collections. Partner billing rates are at record highs, but delayed payments persist, while general contract cases are on the rise, signaling increased legal activity. The California State Bar's "Look Up a Lawyer" tool highlights the need for trust and ethical practices. The legal profession must adapt to tech changes, enhance cybersecurity and uphold ethical standards to succeed in this dynamic environment.

Starting on page 15, we recap the 2024 In-house Counsel Leadership Awards with a photo gallery and a list of the honorees, finalists and nominees. We hope you enjoy reading about their backgrounds, accomplishments and contributions to the legal community over the past two years.

Additionally, the magazine recognizes numerous legal visionaries representing diverse areas of practice – from litigation to labor & employment to intellectual property, to name a few. They exemplify transformative leadership while setting new standards in the legal profession. Congratulations to the 2024 In-house Counsel honorees, finalists and nominees, as well as all of this year's Legal Visionaries.

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Best regards,

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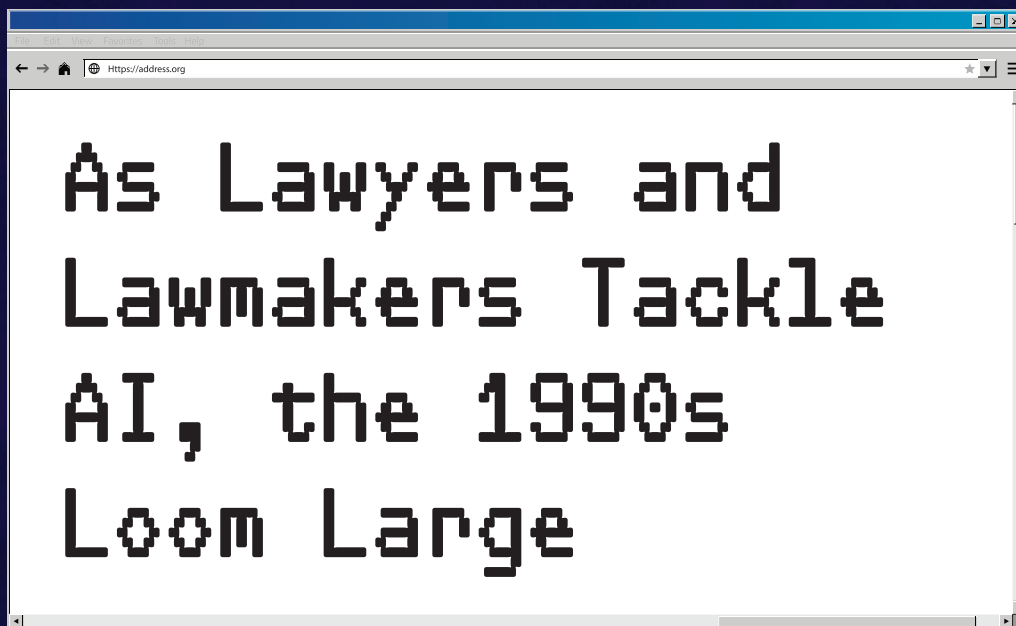
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AI innovation mirrors the early “Wild West” days of the internet – is regulation soon to come?

The 1990s seem like another world: boy band NSYNC was charting, flannel shirts were in and nascent internet businesses were flourishing under a light regulatory scheme.

Governments and citizenry alike viewed the future of this transformative technology almost entirely with promise. Then the dot.com bubble burst following intense growth in the online commerce of illicit products and bad ideas. Now, with artificial intelligence ushering in another boom, governments and citizenry are much more skeptical and have a desire to impose more regulatory restrictions on these companies.

“It was a forgiving regulatory environment,” recalled Larry Sonsini, a corporate lawyer in Palo Alto, California, who is often called the “godfather of Silicon Valley.”

“At the time, it didn’t feel that way, because the kind of technologies that we had prior to that time, beginning with the semiconductors in the 70s and software and computers and personal computers in the 80s, there wasn’t a lot of regulation there. The concern about unintended consequences wasn’t prevalent with those kinds of technologies.”

Sonsini, who cofounded Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati PC and advised Google and Netscape in the 1990s, said that in hindsight, what was now clearly a light-touch approach – or in some cases a complete absence of regulation – was fundamental to the internet’s success.

“I think it was necessary, because, as you look at the growth of the internet and the services in the 90s and 2000s, it gave us a great economic acceleration,” he said.

Most experts agree that a light regulatory touch in internet businesses that was envisioned by the Clinton administration and then largely modeled by governments around the world was crucial to the creation of the online world that we live in today. But they also say that approach is unlikely to be adopted for the AI generation for reasons both political and economic.

“Nobody wants to be quoted as only an AI evangelist that turns a blind eye to potential problems, and a lot of that comes from having seen what happened in the internet, but we’re in a very different zone in terms of being able to get things done as well,” said Kenton J. King, another corporate lawyer in Palo Alto.

King, a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates, advised companies, including AltaVista and Yahoo during the late 1990s. Regulation of the internet “wasn’t as much of a thing, to be honest,” he said.

“The environment was so different. There was an environment where tech could do no wrong. Yes, there was a valuation bubble that got ahead of valuations, got ahead of where things were, but there was real optimism about what the internet could accomplish and what tech could accomplish,” he said.

In line with that optimism, the Clinton administration took steps in the 1990s to support the rapid growth of the emerging internet. In 1996, it led efforts to overhaul the Telecommunications Act. While not specifically aimed at the internet, this update deregulated telecommunications and media ownership rules, opening the market to more companies and driving expansion of internet infrastructure. That same year, the administration passed the Communications Decency Act, which included one of the most influential provisions for the internet’s growth – Section 230. Still central to internet law today, Section 230 protects online platforms from liability for content posted by their users.

Section 230 was “foundational in many ways to the growth of the internet by taking that liability away from platform providers on the internet and remains to this day an important piece of the architecture governing it,” King said.

Contrast that approach to today and government efforts to grapple with artificial intelligence, where concerns about mitigating unintended consequences loom large.

Absent a handful of guiding principles issued by the White House, including a blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights issued in 2022, and federal regulatory agencies, efforts to govern the technology have been led by a patchwork of states. Sonsini said that this state-led approach was very different to what had occurred in the 1990s.

These efforts have primarily targeted specific concerns, such as potential bias in AI-driven hiring process as well as the creation of AI deepfakes and the use of name, image and likeness. Comprehensive attempts to regulate have been less successful, such as California’s SB 1047, which would have made companies legally liable for harm caused by their platforms. That bill was vetoed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in September.

Overseas, the European Union was the first to enact a comprehensive law governing AI. It categorizes AI systems by risk level, imposing stricter requirements on high-risk applications, such as those used in critical infrastructure or biometric identification, and holding high-risk applications liable for harm.

Taken collectively, these efforts tend to emphasize the potential risks of artificial intelligence. That's representative of what has been learned in the decades following the internet's mass adoption.

"Nobody at the inception [of the internet], or really until fairly recently, really understood a lot of the kind of societal harms that we needed to potentially be more thoughtful about, more proactive in terms of protecting our, you know, our young ones or others," said King's colleague, Skadden partner Ken D. Kumayama.

Kumayama, whose practice is focused on artificial intelligence, privacy and intellectual property, added that these societal harms, combined with dystopian images of artificial intelligence promulgated by science fiction meant many people had preconceived notions about AI.

Societal harms that are now being litigated were likely some "unintended consequences" of permissive regulation, Sonsini said.

"The downside was that it gave bad actors a microphone for their views. It created a pathway for disinformation, and it also, you know, captured a lot of young people with the iPhone, with the way that they related to some of the technology and depended on it for their own relations and their own education, and I think those are the things that started to worry us. Those were hard to foresee at the time," he said.

Realization of technology's potential for harm was evident in the way even the industry talked about itself. King noted that no AI presentation is complete without reference to the balancing of safety and benefits.

Both approaches to AI regulation – the United States' patchwork approach and the EU's broad regulation – had their advantages and disadvantages.

Kumayama gave privacy legislation as an example of the shortcomings involved with a jurisdiction by jurisdiction approach: "To date, there is no nationwide privacy law [in the U.S.] which makes it very difficult, frankly, for companies to comply with regulations, when you have patchwork of potentially 50 states that are engaged in regulation."

But the issue with broad scale, pre-emptive regulation at a national or supranational level, such as that in the European Union, is that regulators can't keep up with the technology and may stamp out innovation by being too proscriptive.

"Even Europeans will often say, you know, Europe has no innovation and lots of regulation, and the U.S. has no regulation, lots of innovation. And so, while that's a pithy statement, there, frankly, there's some truth to it," King said.

However, the risk of a lack of regulation in the United States is that "Europe ends up filling that space and becoming a default," he says.

"You had the unintended consequences of technology, but you also have the unintended consequences of regulation," Sonsini said. He added that he thinks "Europe is being aggressive too fast."

Eric Goldman, associate dean for research and professor at Santa Clara University School of Law, cautioned that the volume and extent of AI regulations, both those passed

and proposed, represented a regulatory "tsunami" that had the potential to kill the generative AI industry in its nascent phase.

"There's technologies that never emerged because they got overregulated earlier," he said.

He gave the example of digital audio tapes, or DATs, a technology that faced significant pushback from the music recording industry upon their introduction in the 1980s.

"You've never heard of them because they were regulated so early. No one ever wanted to touch them, and so that technology just faded," he said. "Every single one of these new major innovations, we have the same question: when do we regulate? How much do we know about the technology at the time of regulating, and what will the regulation do to the evolution of the technology?"

"We don't really know what that looks like, because we're thinking about it with our very limited perspectives that will only be proven right

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Mid-Sized Law Firms Demonstrate Increased Productivity

Clio's recently released Legal Trends for Mid-Sized Law Firms report highlights crucial areas impacting mid-sized law firms, defined as firms with 20 or more employees

It encompasses financial performance, the impact of legal technology and – new this year – includes perceptions of artificial intelligence in legal practice.

The 2024 *Legal Trends for Mid-Sized Law Firms* report reveals that the average lawyer in a mid-sized law firm is earning more than ever before but still has significant billing and collection hurdles. Lockup, a new cash flow metric introduced this year, underscores a collection issue among mid-size law firms that if left unsolved, could create liabilities for firms. Getting paid faster is a key theme

in this year's report, with smaller law firms outpacing their mid-sized firm counterparts in the adoption of online payments. The report also covers AI trends throughout the legal sector, unpacking how mid-sized law firms differ in their approach from smaller firms, and in some cases, even their clients.

"With the advent of AI, we have entered a new era of technology education and adoption across the legal sector, and we know that firms who find a way to leverage the technology are going to have a competitive advantage," said Jack Newton, CEO and founder of Clio. "This report uncovers an essential overview of how mid-sized firms are

keeping up with the pace of rapid innovation, something that becomes increasingly difficult with larger business infrastructures and staff. And let's be clear, AI is not the only piece of the puzzle – tech adoption, particularly in collections and payments, is still lagging in certain workflows among the mid-sized firm segment. I encourage legal professionals to leverage this rich data to see where the competitive advantages lie among firms who make their technology work harder for the overall health of the firm."

A substantial increase in billable work signals heightened productivity and financial success

Insights from the report highlight a remarkable shift in mid-sized law firms, with a massive increase in billable hours compared to 2016, indicating heightened productivity across the segment. Individual lawyers are now billing substantially more and collecting more revenue, underscoring the significant financial and operational success of mid-sized law firms in the evolving legal landscape.



- Compared to 2016, mid-sized law firms in 2024 have experienced tremendous growth in the number of billable hours captured by their employees, capturing nearly 60% more than they did in 2016.
- Mid-sized law firms have experienced tremendous growth in the number of billable hours captured by their employees – at nearly 60% more than in 2016.
- The average lawyer in a mid-sized law firm is also earning more for their firm than ever before, billing 140% more and collecting nearly 180% more than in 2016.

Mid-sized law firms lead in billing speed but lag behind smaller law firms in payment collection

Law firms should closely monitor the speed and consistency of payment collection to avoid revenue being held in lockup, which encompasses unbilled and uncollected revenue. Mid-sized law firms, on average, demonstrate a proactive approach to generating invoices but struggle with the collection process.

- Mid-sized law firms exhibit a median realization lockup of 36 days, with the top 25%

achieving a median lockup of 20 days, highlighting variations in billing efficiency.

- The median collection lockup for mid-sized firms is 52 days, emphasizing the need for improvement in the timely collection of outstanding payments.

Lawyers in mid-sized and smaller firms have similar attitudes toward AI use in the legal profession – but smaller firms may have more to gain

Lawyers in mid-sized and smaller law firms are approaching the integration of AI cautiously. While there is recognition of AI's growing importance in legal practices, some legal professionals remain skeptical about its current level of advancement and reliability. █



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Frequency and Severity of Large Cyber Claims Continue to Climb

Cyber claims have continued their upward trend over the past year, driven in large part by a rise in data and privacy breach incidents

As Allianz Commercial has warned in its annual cyber risk outlook, the frequency of large cyber claims (more than \$1 million per claim) in the first six months of 2024 was up 14% while severity increased by 17%. This is according to the insurer's claims analysis, following just a 1% increase in severity during 2023. Data and privacy breach-related elements are present in two-thirds of these large losses. Overall, the total number of cyber claims in 2024 is expected to stabilize, following a 30% increase in frequency during 2023, which resulted in 700+ claims.

"The growing significance of data breach losses among cyber insurance claims is driven by

a number of notable trends," explained Michael Daum, global head of cyber claims at Allianz Commercial. "A rise in ransomware attacks including data exfiltration is a consequence of changing attacker tactics and the growing interdependencies between organizations sharing ever more volumes of personal records. At the same time, the evolving regulatory and legal environment has brought an uptick in so-called 'non-attack' data privacy-related class action litigation, resulting from incidents such as wrongful collection and processing of personal data – the share of these claims has tripled in value in two years alone."

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Legal & Compliance Leaders Want to Increase Their Impact on Company Strategy

Legal, compliance and privacy leaders list strengthening their personal impact on company strategy as their top priority, according to a survey by Gartner, Inc.

Improving third-party risk management (TPRM) and ensuring compliance programs can keep pace with fast-moving regulatory requirements are the top three priorities for this year.

The 2024 survey of 179 legal, compliance and privacy leaders showed that developing guidance that enables the business to better balance risk and business benefit, designing or updating compliance training to make it more tailored to employee needs round out their top five priorities.

“Legal and compliance leaders have neither resources, expertise nor visibility into the business to manage the impacts of geopolitical tensions or new technologies such as generative AI, alone. They must prompt others in the business to do more to own these risks,” said Stuart Strome, director of research in Gartner’s legal, risk and compliance practice. “General counsels and chief compliance officers already needed to be lawyers, risk managers and strategists, but now they must be influencers, diplomats and sales representatives as well.”

Expanding Legal and Compliance’s Enterprise Impact

The rapid and widespread adoption of new technologies – both internally and by third parties – is putting a lot of strain on legal and compliance leaders’ time and energy. There will be some risks the business can own and manage, but others require a level of expertise the business lacks.

“Legal and compliance leaders must prioritize their time, leadership style and management behaviors to maximize team performance and influence senior leadership to take these risks seriously,” said Strome.

Strengthening TPRM Programs

Improving TPRM processes and/or technology was both the third most frequent choice among leaders’ top five priorities and the most frequently selected top priority, which reflects enterprise stakeholder demands for increased accountability for TPRM activities and programming.

“Stakeholder attention on TPRM is being driven by more stringent environmental sustainability and human rights standards prompted by the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), SEC Regulation S-K, and Germany’s Supply Chain Due Diligence Act,” said Strome. “Legal and compliance leaders know they must improve existing TPRM programs or develop a TPRM program to manage the new associated risks.”

Ensuring Compliance Program Strategy Keeps Pace with Regulatory Requirements

Legal and compliance leaders are faced with an increasingly volatile and complex regulatory and enforcement environment across jurisdictions.

“Many legal and compliance leaders are looking for strategies to implement a robust regulatory intelligence system to help stay on top of rapidly shifting regulatory requirements,” said Strome. |



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Securities Class Action Filing Activity on the Rise

Tracking of artificial intelligence-related filings began while the number of cryptocurrency-related filings declined

The number of securities class action filings increased in the first half of 2024 relative to the second half of 2023, according to a recent report by Cornerstone Research and the Stanford Law School Securities Class Action Clearinghouse.

The report, *Securities Class Action Filings – 2024 Midyear Assessment*, found that plaintiffs filed 112

securities class actions in federal and state courts in the first half of 2024, an increase from the 103 class actions filed in the second half of 2023. The number of core filings – those without merger and acquisition (M&A) allegations – in 2024 H1 (110) was above the number of core filings in 2023 H2 (101) and the historical semiannual average (96). Tracking of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) trend category began; there were six such filings in the first half of 2024. The number of filings in all other trend categories – including cryptocurrency – is on pace to decline in 2024, except for COVID-19-related filings, which are on pace to increase.

The potential for real liability resulting from Artificial Intelligence is among the more interesting developments of the past six months.

“While we’ve seen AI-related filings in recent years, the first half of 2024 marks the beginning of tracking these filings as a trend category. The growing prominence of AI in the business models of many companies may lead to more filings in the future,” said Alexander “Sasha” Aganin, the report’s coauthor and Cornerstone Research’s senior vice president. “Meanwhile, SPAC-related filings are on pace to decline steeply relative

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to recent years, and cryptocurrency-related filings, which have been hot for the past several years, experienced a sharp decline.”

The number of filings with federal Section 11 and state claims under the Securities Act of 1933 remained low in the first half of 2024. The annualized number of these filings, 22, is in line with the number of filings, 21, in 2023. There were two federal M&A filings, on pace to be the lowest annual total since tracking of federal M&A filings began in 2009.

The Maximum Dollar Loss (MDL) Index decreased 9% to \$908 billion in the first half of 2024, a continuing decline from the inflation-adjusted record high set in the first half of 2023 but remaining 51% above the historical semiannual average. The Disclosure Dollar Loss (DDL) Index increased to \$185 billion in 2024 H1, a 9% increase from 2023 H2 and the sixth consecutive semiannual period with DDL at or above the historical semiannual average of \$119 billion.

“The potential for real liability resulting from artificial intelligence is among the more interesting developments of the past six

months,” according to former SEC commissioner Joseph Grundfest, now professor emeritus at Stanford Law School. “But more immediately, keep an eye on the upcoming Supreme Court term. Important decisions will be issued in the NVIDIA litigation regarding pleading requirements for securities fraud claims and in the Facebook/Cambridge Analytica litigation involving risk factor disclosure.”

Additional Key Trends

- The likelihood of a core filing against a U.S. exchange-listed company is on pace to increase to an annualized rate of 3.9%, surpassing the 2010–2023 average of 3.6% for core filings.
- In the first half of 2024, there were 10 mega DDL filings (those with a DDL of at least \$5 billion), twice the 1997–2023 semiannual average (5) and slightly above the number of mega DDL filings in 2023 H2 (8).
- The number of core federal filings in the Second and Ninth Circuits increased and comprised of 60% of the total number of core federal filings in 2024 H1. DDL

in the Ninth Circuit more than tripled relative to 2023 H2, while DDL in the Second Circuit decreased by 84%.

- Core federal filings against non-U.S. issuers as a percentage of total core federal filings in 2024 H1 declined by nearly a quarter relative to 2023, reaching a 15-year low. █



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AI-Powered Legal Practices Surge in Major Shift

AI adoption in law firms has skyrocketed from 19% to 79% in just one year, prompting firms to realign their priorities and billing strategies.

Clio, a leading provider of cloud-based legal technology, has released the ninth edition of the *Legal Trends Report*, offering exclusive insights into the key trends shaping the legal industry. This year's report provides

in-depth analyses of AI adoption in the legal industry, the growing use of flat fees, law firm spending priorities as they relate to technology and marketing efforts and their responsiveness to prospective clients.

"AI has reached the level of adoption the cloud took a decade to obtain, with 79% of lawyers now using AI daily," said Jack Newton, CEO and founder of Clio. "This increased efficiency is pushing firms to adopt more flexible billing options, like flat fees, that better align with the value they deliver. While the appetite for AI is promising, our report reveals that many firms still miss crucial growth opportunities by failing to respond to client inquiries promptly. A real

advantage lies in improving client engagement, which will help firms stay competitive, deliver superior service and secure long-term success in the evolving legal market."

AI adoption is transforming legal practices

The latest report reveals that AI usage in law firms has skyrocketed, with 79% of legal professionals now incorporating AI tools into their daily work – a significant jump from just 19% in 2023. Not only are law firms embracing AI but clients are increasingly supportive, with 70% either preferring or being neutral toward firms that utilize AI. This acceptance signals a shift in client expectations as AI becomes more mainstream in legal processes.

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On the Rise

Lara Shortz elevated to office manager partner for Westwood firm, the latest step in her impactful legal career

For attorney Lara Shortz, her newest assignment may be one of the most rewarding – albeit challenging – of her career. In September, she was named office managing partner at the Westwood office of Michelman & Robinson.

“Our firm is very intentional with succession planning. It was an ongoing conversation over the years as I’ve worked my way up to this role,” said Shortz.

Prior to her current leadership position, she ran the firm’s labor and employment practice group and was a firm recruiting partner. She described her elevation to office managing partner as

a natural progression that matched her strong desire to work with attorneys and staff in the office on professional development while also being involved in the community through work with current clients, business development and philanthropic endeavors. She has worked at Michelman & Robinson for 15 years.

The firm is focused on commercial business needs such as litigation, intellectual property, corporate issues, and labor and employment. It provides a holistic approach for companies that require many different needs. Shortz remains a practicing attorney who engages with clients, although she noted that certain responsibilities were shifted to allow her the bandwidth to take on the added work connecting with clients and serving as a resource to attorneys in her office.

The Westwood office has an extra layer of importance for the mid-size firm because it was its first office and many of the firm’s administrative employees that handle accounting, marketing, operations and the executive management team reside locally. Michelman & Robinson operates seven offices across the country in New York, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, San Francisco, Irvine and Los Angeles. The local office employs 36 attorneys, including 14 partners, and has a total of 67 employees.

“We’re always looking to grow thoughtfully in our practice areas and provide the best service to our clients,” said Shortz. “There is an entrepreneurial spirit in the office that permeates every level.”

To support growth, the firm provides training opportunities and career development for employees at all levels. Shortz noted that her legal assistant started as a receptionist. For attorneys, it means instituting a plan to ensure that associates begin to think like partners and understand how the business works. That process starts with new hires: In September, three attorneys joined the firm in Los Angeles fresh out of law school. They will develop legal skills through a full trial advocacy training program, but will also learn how to efficiently and effectively settle cases – many eventually settle, since trials can lead to higher risk and costs.

Growth Outlook

Although there was speculation that companies would leave Southern California post-COVID-19, and there have been some high-profile companies that have done just that, there are still a plethora of businesses that remain in Los Angeles that support the local economy and need legal support. In terms of the practice areas with high demand, she

noted that employment is always a hot-button area and there can be significant litigation even when cases settle. Alternatively, high interest rates have softened the real estate and corporate work related to transactions, but that work has been picking up recently.

Moreover, upcoming global sporting events in Los Angeles will provide a boost to the hospitality industry. As a labor and employment attorney, Shortz sees firsthand how changing regulations impact the hospitality industry, which frequently rely on legal support for compliance and labor disputes.

“In terms of our local economy, hospitality is a big part of the lifeblood of this city and it’s going to become more important with these events coming. We see it with the infrastructure too and the real estate practice area,” she said.

Community Involvement

While Shortz is excited for upcoming events and excited to be involved through partnerships with organizations such as the Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment Commission, she and the firm are also looking at ways to support the local community through philanthropic endeavors.

Michelman & Robinson works closely with Angel City Sports and supports Ronald McDonald House, which will soon open a new location in Westwood close to the firm’s office. “We have a robust pro-bono program at the firm and work with organizations that have a large presence or are based in Los Angeles,” said Shortz. Angel City Sports is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit that provides adaptive sports opportunities for people with physical disabilities or visual impairments. It organizes about 250 clinics per year across 25 sports. Ronald McDonald House is building a large new facility in Westwood to serve families and children who are receiving treatment at UCLA Mattel Children’s Hospital, or other west-side medical facilities, and the firm plans to work with them on events and activities when it opens.

Ultimately for Shortz, growing and elevating her role at the firm shows no signs of slowing. “Culture is a big piece of our firm – it’s one of the reasons that I’ve been here for so long,” she said. ▮

—David Nusbaum



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Competition for Technical Skills Set to Intensify for Legal and Compliance Functions

A growing technical skills gap is a top concern for legal and compliance leaders, according to a recent survey by Gartner, Inc.

A survey of 179 legal, compliance and privacy leaders, found that 65% of respondents noted a technical skills gap among their top five concerns in the next two years.

Gartner experts said that the rapid deployment of generative AI within the business and a host of new technical regulations, such as the Digital Markets Act and ePrivacy regulation, require combinations of technical and legal or compliance skills that are currently in very short supply.

“Typically seen as a barrier to innovation, legal and compliance functions will struggle to compete for this kind of talent, even within the company, against departments that offer better career advancement opportunities and can provide more enticing benefits and compensation packages,” said Stuart Strome, director of research in Gartner’s legal, risk & compliance practice.

“Heads of legal departments should start developing their long-term talent management strategy,” Strome said. “Even lawyers right

out of school won’t be equipped with certain in-demand skills, so leaders must create opportunities in their departments for lawyers to learn these skills – either on the job or through partnership with educational institutions.”

Legal departments are facing two main issues regarding this technical skills gap. First, lawyers may be resistant to incorporating new technology into their workflows, especially if it requires major changes to how they operate. So, as pressure grows for legal departments to increase productivity with new tools, legal ops leaders must make sure these tools work as promised and that lawyers have the right training to use them.

Second, both the EU AI Act and the Biden Administration’s executive order on AI contain new requirements to minimize the risks of model bias and explainability.

“Legal leaders must be able to communicate these requirements to business partners and have a sufficient level of technical understanding

to know whether their companies’ efforts will achieve compliance,” Strome said.

Gartner experts have outlined four main areas where scarce technical skills will impact legal and compliance teams.

Talent Management Strategy

There will be in-demand areas where legal and compliance simply will not be able to hire all the skills they need; legal leaders will need to make trade-offs and consider hires they typically would not (e.g. lower levels of experience).

“In the long term, legal departments must ensure they are attractive to candidates with in-demand skills,” said Strome. “The competition for this talent is ramping up, and legal leaders will need to partner with HR to develop a talent recruitment strategy and an enticing employee value proposition.”

Internal Skills Development

Some technical skills can be developed in-house through internal training programs, external courses or partnering with outside counsel. Instead of hiring for all skills, legal departments should upskill current staff to fill technical skills gaps where possible.

Internal Technical Partnerships

Other functions in the company – such as IT, information security and data and analytics – likely already have employees with the technical skills and expertise needed by legal departments.

“When legal and compliance is seen as a roadblock, other departments may be hesitant to share resources,” said Strome. “To get access to the technical abilities they will need, legal leaders must cast off this perception and seek mutually beneficial opportunities to share technical skills and capacity.”

Workload Allocation

With approximately half of legal work sent to external providers, legal departments should prioritize sending work to outside counsel that requires technical experience when it is too costly to develop in-house. This is particularly true in cases in which regulations require highly technical knowledge to correctly interpret and devise a response. |



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IN-HOUSE COUNSEL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The fourth annual In-house Counsel Leadership Awards, presented by LA Times Publishing, took place on Friday, October 18, 2024, at the elegant Maybourne Beverly Hills. This prestigious event gathered some of the most accomplished in-house counsel from across Southern California, celebrating their contributions to their respective industries over the last two years.

The event kicked off with a lively networking reception, followed by an inspiring awards presentation and a multi-course luncheon. Honorees and finalists, recognized as true innovators and thought leaders, hailed from a wide array of sectors, including media, biotechnology, entertainment, and more. These legal professionals were lauded not only for their strategic guidance but also for their leadership and significant impact within their organizations.

With eight award categories, the event honored legal leaders across industries as diverse as nonprofits, manufacturing, biotechnology and the beverage industry. Each award recipient exemplified exceptional achievement and innovation in their field, making the event a true celebration of in-house counsel excellence.

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IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS

RISING STAR

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Desiree **TALLEY**

VP, Legal & Business Affairs ♦ **REVOLT Media & TV**
St. John's University School of Law

Desiree Talley is an award-winning attorney and creative advocate known for her impactful work in bridging the gap between law and pop culture. As the founder of POPLAW, she simplifies legal complexities, advocating for the fair representation and protection of creative minds. With a background in entertainment law and a career spanning roles at BDG Media, Viacom Media Networks (Paramount), ASCAP, Pandora Media (Sirius XM) and Turner Entertainment Networks (TruTV), Talley has honed her expertise in representing creatives. Her journey is fueled by her passion for storytelling and her commitment to influencing culture through law. Through POPLAW, she empowers creatives and artists by providing access to comprehensive legal resources, ensuring their intellectual property is safeguarded.

Today, as vice president of legal & business affairs at REVOLT Media & TV, Talley continues to shape the industry and champion the rights of artists. A graduate of Hampton University, St. John's University School of Law and the Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music at NYU, her journey exemplifies the transformative power of passion and advocacy in shaping culture. Over the last 24 months, Talley has spearheaded all operations in the legal department at REVOLT, including but not limited to several content acquisitions, development or linear, digital and social audiovisual shows; inducted over 20 new podcasts into the newly launched creator network and premiered a festival with over 30,000 attendees.

Talley has also emerged as a powerful media voice in the conversation where business, law and pop culture intersect. She is tapping into her creativity and taking her talents from behind the scenes to the main stage. She has been a featured speaker at The Creative Collective NYC's CultureCon and partnered with General Assembly x Sofar Sounds for a discussion about Women In Music. Awarded as a Top 40 under 40 Lawyer from the National Black Lawyers Association, Talley has also been honored for representing creatives at the 2019 I Am African & I Can Awards.

RISING STAR FINALISTS



Joe PILERI
Chief Legal Officer
Mission Driven Finance
Harvard Law School

As the leader of Mission Driven Finance's Care Access Real Estate REIT (CARE), Joe Pileri addresses the childcare crisis by expanding access to affordable, child-care-friendly real estate. CARE will invest in residential and commercial childcare properties, integrating wealth-building features to support providers, particularly in underserved communities. Pileri has designed and overseen CARE's legal framework, aiming for

transformative impacts on childcare providers across California and beyond. Active in the impact investing legal community, he shares his expertise through organizations like the Impact Investment Legal Working Group. Committed to training future lawyers, Pileri has taught at various law schools, focusing on transactional skills for public interest work. Outside of his professional commitments, he advocates for those with rare blood disorders and supports entrepreneurial initiatives in developing countries.



Andrew ULLOA
Head of Legal & Corporate Secretary
ChowNow, Inc.
Notre Dame Law School

Andrew Ulloa is a seasoned in-house counsel and business partner, having served at several L.A.-based companies over the past 11 years, including his current role as head of legal at ChowNow, a leading online ordering platform that connects independent restaurants with their diners. At ChowNow, he has guided the small but mighty legal team for the past three years. During his time in the role, Ulloa has implemented a novel contract lifecycle management enterprise program that has resulted in a 35% faster turnaround time in reviewing and executing company agreements. He has also served as a key corporate strategist in the face of regulatory challenges such as fee transparency and marketplace facilitator taxation, working with regulators to ensure the company's ongoing compliance and significantly mitigating risk.

Celaena Powder is the general counsel at Seismic, where she drives growth and innovation in the sales enablement sector by overseeing all legal, compliance and information security affairs. An entrepreneur at heart, she co-founded a startup during law school at UCLA and later built a successful career at Gunderson Dettmer, facilitating over a billion dollars in investments for startups. Since joining Seismic in April 2021, Powder has established the legal and information security departments, achieving a 90+% employee approval rating for her team's performance. As a strategic advisor, she handles matters including corporate governance and global expansion, while securing significant deals and managing information security during crises. Beyond her professional roles, she leads Seismic's environmental, social and governance (ESG) initiatives and actively mentors emerging legal professionals through TechGC.

Celaena POWDER
General Counsel
Seismic
UCLA School of Law



Greenberg Traurig congratulates our client and friend

Jonathan Eisenberg,

Deputy General Counsel of AIDS Healthcare Foundation,
for his recognition at the 2024 In-House Counsel
Awards from L.A. Times B2B Publishing & Events

We are proud of our collaboration with the
AIDS Healthcare Foundation and look forward to
continuing our work together.

Congratulations to our client and friend

Sapna Pandya,

*Executive Vice President and General Counsel of
Red Bull North America, Inc. ,* for her recognition
at the 2024 In-House Counsel Awards from L.A.
Times B2B Publishing & Events

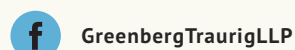
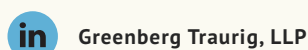
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IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS

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Dana Hirsch **LIPMAN**

General Counsel ♦ **Stand Up To Cancer**
Loyola Law School

Dana Hirsch Lipman is a distinguished C-Suite executive and general counsel with over 25 years of experience, specializing in legal and business matters, including human resources, compliance, governance, employment law, organizational leadership and diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI).

Lipman has dedicated herself to the nonprofit world and helping others through a variety of roles and initiatives. With a deep commitment to social causes, she has leveraged her skills and passion to drive positive change in communities. In that capacity, Lipman has held leadership positions in various nonprofit organizations, where she has focused on strategic planning, legal initiatives and program development to enhance the impact of these organizations. She has been actively involved in community outreach programs, working directly with underserved populations to understand their needs and provide effective support. She has been a vocal advocate for various social issues, raising awareness and mobilizing resources to address critical challenges. Her advocacy work has often involved collaboration with other organizations and stakeholders to amplify the impact of her efforts.

Lipman is known for her innovative approach to problem-solving in the nonprofit world. She has implemented creative solutions to address systemic issues, ensuring sustainable and scalable outcomes for the communities she serves.

In her current role, as the general counsel and SVP of human resources and labor relations for the Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF) and Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C), Lipman oversees all legal, human resources and risk/compliance functions, including contract negotiations and drafting, litigation, mediation/arbitration, investigations, policies and procedures, talent acquisition and recruitment, diversity, equity and inclusion, compensation and benefits, employee relations, training and development, employee reward programs and all HRIS and office support functions for all employees in more than 20 states and for over 30 fiscal program partners.

Forward Together

Venable congratulates
Dana Hirsch Lipman
for being recognized as an
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**Jonathan Michael
EISENBERG**

*Deputy General
Counsel—Litigation*

AIDS Healthcare Foundation
UC Berkeley School of Law

Jonathan M. Eisenberg, deputy general counsel for the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, has been a lawyer since 1996, beginning his career as a law clerk for U.S. District Judge Linda H. McLaughlin. He spent nine years in private law firms and 14 years as a deputy attorney general at the California Department of Justice. For the past three years, Eisenberg has served as deputy general counsel for litigation at the AIDS Healthcare

Foundation (AHF). He has played a crucial role in litigating against pharmacy-benefit managers to ensure AHF's compensation for HIV/AIDS care and guided the organization in a notable Supreme Court case regarding real estate projects tied to bribery (AHF v. City of L.A., 2022).

Teddy Low is the senior deputy county counsel with the Los Angeles Office of County Counsel, advising the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) on its most critical rail procurement and construction projects, valued at over \$30 billion. His responsibilities include managing legal issues for key infrastructure projects such as the Sepulveda Transit Corridor, Link Union Station and the San Fernando Light Rail Transit. Low specializes in procurement, public-private partnerships (P3s) and construction manager/general contractor (CMGC) deliveries. He also handles all major legal claims related to these projects and leads solicitations for new contracts, expected to add over \$20 billion in value. Prior to joining LA Metro in 2016, he served as a city prosecutor, trial attorney and counsel for cities and public agencies.

Teddy LOW

*Senior Deputy
County Counsel*

**Los Angeles Office of
County Counsel**

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**Elisa
NETHERCOTT**

General Counsel

LA Family Housing

*William & Mary
Law School*



Elisa K. Nethercott is the general counsel at LA Family Housing, a leading organization addressing homelessness and affordable housing in the U.S. With nearly 20 years of legal experience, she began her career as a corporate litigator at Foley Hoag LLP, focusing on white-collar issues and government investigations. She later advised defense sector clients on FCPA compliance at a boutique law firm in Washington, D.C. Seeking to make a greater impact, Nethercott transitioned to the nonprofit sector, first serving as chief compliance officer at the LA Conservation Corps. In her two years at LA Family Housing, she established compliance and risk management functions, created a new real estate development entity (LAFH BUILDS) and resolved several class action and PAGA matters.



Making an impact

Congratulations to our friend **Joe Pileri** on his nomination for the In-House Counsel Awards hosted by *L.A. Times* B2B Publishing Group. Joe is an exceptional leader who is transforming child care in California through innovative finance solutions that allow care providers to build wealth, stability, and community.

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IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS

PRIVATE COMPANY ♦ SMALL TO MIDSIZE

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Jennee **DEVORE**

Vice President, Legal ♦ **Inflammatix**
Santa Clara University School of Law

Jennee DeVore, CIPP/E has carved a distinguished path in the legal and life science sectors, marked by her passion for launching innovative healthcare products and her dedication to enhancing practical, efficient and smart operations and compliance programs. With over two decades of experience, she has supported the development and launch of more than three dozen healthcare products, showcasing her expertise in navigating the complex landscape of global healthcare regulations. DeVore's work has been instrumental in updating and onboarding new systems, processes and programs across multiple companies. She has a unique focus on pragmatic programming to ensure her organizations remain compliant with evolving laws and regulations.

Over the last 24 months, DeVore has made significant strides in showcasing her leadership and innovative approach to providing legal counsel. Not only is she a senior legal executive at Inflammatix and Simple HealthKit, where she is pivotal in steering these organizations through critical legal and compliance challenges, but her work has also significantly contributed to the broader community of legal professionals. Recognizing the shifting landscape of the legal profession and the evolving needs of companies, DeVore spearheaded the creation of a subgroup of fractional general counsels within the Women's General Counsel Network. This initiative was born out of the observation that many companies, especially in the volatile startup ecosystem, no longer have the funding for a full-time general counsel but still need the GC on the executive teams. Her leadership coordinated a community of GCs and former GCs who were prepared to offer their unique in-house operator mindset and legal expertise on a fractional basis, providing flexible, high-quality legal support to companies navigating through various stages of growth and development.

At a time of financial challenges, DeVore adeptly led the legal aspects of several critical projects, including budget restructuring efforts that were essential for aligning the company's financial strategies with its long-term goals. Under her legal guidance, Inflammatix also implemented in-house manufacturing of a medical diagnostic device, a move that not only streamlined production but also ensured greater control over the quality and distribution of this critical healthcare technology.

PRIVATE COMPANY ♦ SMALL TO MIDSIZE FINALISTS



Krystle **CAPONIO**
Chief Legal Officer
Vast Space LLC
Loyola Law School

Krystle Caponio is a founding team member and chief legal officer at Vast Space LLC, which is developing artificial gravity space stations to expand humanity across the solar system. Vast is launching what's currently scheduled to be the world's first commercial space station in 2025, on a SpaceX launch vehicle. Previously, Caponio served as legal counsel at SpaceX for over six years, as well as being an early team member and general

counsel at other successful space startups, and she is committed to seeing humans sustainably living and thriving in space during our lifetime. Since 2022, she has helped build Vast from a small startup to a world-class organization disrupting the space industry, with headcount nearing 500 and growing.



Asha **MULDRO**
Deputy
General Counsel
Guidepost Solutions
Columbia Law School

Asha Muldro is a senior managing director at Guidepost Solutions, bringing over 20 years of legal, investigative and compliance experience to her role. She leads compliance and incident response matters for diverse clients, including corporations, universities and nonprofits, while also serving as deputy general counsel for the firm's global offices. As chair of the Los Angeles office and co-chair of the global compliance practice group, Muldro is a founding member of the firm's diversity committee. Notable recent projects include leading the design of a compliance program for One Brooklyn Hospital System after a \$664-million grant from the Department of Health and conducting assessments for clients like Disney, Snap and General Motors.

David Eisler is the chief legal officer at NEOGOV, where he leads legal and regulatory strategies, enhancing the company's position in cloud-based talent management for governments. His career began at Dorsey & Whitney and DLA Piper, specializing in corporate law, including venture capital and M&A. Eisler transitioned in-house to the ACTIVE Network after its IPO, becoming general counsel and facilitating its sale to Vista Equity. Subsequently, he served as senior vice president and chief legal and administrative officer at US Auto Parts, managing legal and HR matters. Outside of NEOGOV, Eisler has been a founding member of TechGC since 2018 and advises CounterTen, a technology platform for youth and collegiate sports organizations.

David **EISLER**
Chief Legal Officer
NEOGOV
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EBill **BERRY**General Counsel ◆ Verkada
University of Virginia

Bill Berry is general counsel at Verkada, a Sequoia-backed disruptor in the physical security space that is valued at more than \$3.2 billion. He brings two decades of experience leading legal teams at Tesla and Google, as well as working as a litigator at Quinn Emanuel and the SEC. Berry earned his Juris Doctor and Master of Business Administration from the University of Virginia. He served in the U.S. Navy on a guided-missile cruiser after graduating with a degree in electrical engineering from the Virginia Military Institute.

Berry has built Verkada's legal department from the ground up and played an integral role in Verkada's rapidly growing business. Shortly after joining, he had an immediate impact when Verkada secured two big wins in pending patent litigation, as well as an early dismissal of a patent troll lawsuit. At the same time, he spearheaded the company's patent strategy, securing its first patents and laying out a strategic roadmap to expand its portfolio. Berry also played an important role in Verkada's Series D fundraising in September 2022 just months after he started at the company. He is the executive sponsor for the Veterans at Verkada employee resource group. Berry also serves on the board of the Family and Children's Law Center in Marin County, an organization that provides high-quality, low-cost legal services to help underserved adults and children navigate the legal system. He has also represented clients of the center on matters in Marin County Superior Court. He is also a charter member at Tech GC, an independent peer community for general counsels at startups to share knowledge, best practices and support.

Berry was previously the head of Tesla's legal department, where he led a team of 140 lawyers, paralegals and support staff worldwide and reported directly to Tesla's CEO. He developed Tesla's legal strategy and oversaw its execution on myriad issues ranging from bet-the-company litigation as well as privacy and regulatory compliance, IP licensing and all facets of its consumer, commercial, patent and employment litigation dockets. Berry also created the company's first-ever long-term patent strategy and re-structured Tesla's in-house legal function to handle commercial and employment lawsuits without outside counsel.

[continued from page 12]

The steep adoption of AI has the potential to disrupt how lawyers operate the business side of their firms. Clio's analysis shows that up to 74% of hourly billable tasks – such as information gathering and data analysis – could be automated with AI. Law firms should consider moving away from hourly billing in favor of more flexible options like flat fees to preserve profitability while benefiting from the increased efficiencies AI brings to legal workflows. As AI reduces the time spent on billable work, law firms may see a decline in revenue if they continue to rely on hourly billing.

Key highlights from the report:

- AI could make law firms more effective in working with clients – as a result, they may need to invest more in marketing to attract an increased client pipeline. The ability to handle more clients will require a stronger emphasis on marketing strategies to sustain the workload and grow the business.
- The number of legal professionals using AI has surged from 19% in 2023 to 79% this year, marking a significant shift in how law firms are integrating AI into their daily operations.
- Nearly three-quarters of a law firm's hourly billable tasks are exposed to AI automation, with 81% of legal secretaries' and administrative assistants' tasks being automatable, compared to 57% of lawyers' tasks. ■



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Patterson Belknap
congratulates our colleague,
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Jason ERB
SVP, Chief Legal &
Compliance Officer

**Hyundai Motor
North America**

*Duke University
School of Law*

Jason Erb is the senior vice president and chief legal and compliance officer for Hyundai Motor North America, providing strategic legal direction and oversight for all operations and regulatory matters across the Americas. With over 20 years at Hyundai, he joined as senior counsel in 2002 and previously served as vice president and chief legal officer, leading class action and intellectual property litigation efforts. A board member of Teach

Democracy, Erb received the Bill of Rights Award in 2023. Recently, he played a key role in Hyundai's compliance with a three-year consent agreement with NHTSA and the establishment of Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant America, a \$5-billion electric vehicle plant in Georgia.

Kim Nakamaru is a general counsel who empowers complex, fast-growing companies at Relativity Space to enhance valuation and mitigate risk through adept navigation of transactions and stakeholder dynamics. With expertise in corporate law, governance, intellectual property and risk management, she has consistently achieved results in the highly regulated technology, telecommunications and aerospace sectors. Since joining Relativity Space as general counsel in 2023, she has made strides, including securing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the company's Environmental Assessment, enhancing the IP strategy and launching an innovative IP Inventor Rewards Program. Outside of her professional contributions, Nakamaru is the executive sponsor for the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) employee resource group and serves on the board of the California Women's Law Center, advocating for equality and justice.

**Kim
NAKAMARU**

General Counsel

Relativity Space

Loyola Law School



Philip S. VOSS

*Partner, SVP
& Associate
General Counsel*

United Talent Agency

Rutgers School of Law



Phil Voss is a partner and the associate general counsel of United Talent Agency (UTA), where he helps implement corporate strategic initiatives across the agency's various departments. Over his last eight years at UTA, he has watched the company grow three-fold, being involved with every major acquisition, including multiple private equity transactions during his tenure, including the 2022 transaction that saw EQT become UTA's largest minority shareholder. Most recently, Voss has also helped close UTA and its subsidiary Klutch Sports Groups' acquisition of ROOF, a Munich-based multinational soccer representation agency. Earlier in the year, he helped spearhead Klutch's acquisition of Rep1 Baseball, a premier, full-service baseball agency and not long before that, UTA's acquisition of James & Co., an executive search firm based out of New York.

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates

Skadden congratulates 2024 finalist **Phil Voss** of United Talent Agency and the rest of today's In-House Counsel Leadership Awards nominees.

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IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS

PRIVATE COMPANY ♦ ENTERPRISE

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EJason **WEINTRAUB**

Chief Legal Officer & General Counsel ♦ Jacuzzi Group
UC Berkeley School of Law

Jason Weintraub has had a stellar in-house career not just at Jacuzzi Group, where he has worked for the past four years, but also at companies such as Taco Bell, Broadcom Corporation, Bosch Home Appliances and El Pollo Loco (at the latter two companies, he served as chief legal officer). At Jacuzzi, he has led the deal team for two significant completed acquisitions in the past two years. The acquisition of Baths for Less allowed Jacuzzi Group to enter the bath remodel business. This is now the company's fastest-growing segment, with revenue having increased by over 10 times since the closing date. The other acquisition was Vortex Leisure, the largest spa manufacturer and retailer in Australia/New Zealand, the third largest spa market in the world. These acquisitions allowed Jacuzzi Group to increase its global spa retail footprint by over 60%, while adding two global spa brands to its portfolio.

Weintraub also commenced litigation on multiple continents against a major spa business competitor to enforce Jacuzzi's intellectual property rights. He and his team obtained a complete victory less than six months after filing suit, including a worldwide commitment by the competitor not to sell the infringing product. He also successfully filed a declaratory judgment action against a significant bath business competitor who was threatening a patent infringement action. In that case, he obtained a favorable settlement less than three months after filing suit that cleared Jacuzzi's product for sale without restrictions or payment.

Weintraub has obtained \$5.3 million in insurance recoveries in 2023 alone. He has also reduced Jacuzzi Group's global insurance premiums by over 50% in the past two years, saving over \$9 million per year. Weintraub has also dramatically strengthened Jacuzzi's trademark/brand protection program for the globally famous Jacuzzi trademark. Results of that effort have included a 180% increase in enforcement activity; a 10 times increase in efficiency of infringement detections; a 95% enforcement success rate; and successful enforcement against four major global competitors without the need for litigation. In addition, Weintraub was promoted in 2023 to lead Jacuzzi's Regulatory, Employee Health & Safety (EHS) and ESG functions.

PRIVATE COMPANY ♦ ENTERPRISE FINALISTS



Lisa
GOK
Chief Legal Officer
Cetera Financial Group
Columbia Law School

Lisa Gok has been a prominent figure in the Los Angeles legal community for over 25 years and has spent the last 12 years at Cetera Financial Group, where she now serves as chief legal officer. Her career began as an assistant U.S. attorney in the DOJ's organized crime and public corruption departments, handling complex cases like "Operation Broken Faith." After moving in-house in 2005, Gok held senior roles at Transamerica and

Green Dot Corporation, where she led the company's legal team through its IPO in 2010. Her leadership also extended to Cetera's acquisition of Avantax, adding 3,111 financial professionals and \$82.3 billion in assets under administration. Her legal oversight has been crucial in both M&A and regulatory navigation, driving growth and positioning Cetera for continued success.

Ayano Ichida is the chief legal/general counsel of Aderans America Holdings, Inc. (AAH), a global leader in innovative hair care solutions, including Hair Club for Men, Bosley and medical and beauty wigs. She plays a key role in AAH's recent agreement to commercialize proprietary hair regeneration cell therapy technology. With over 25 years of experience, Ichida excels in legal, compliance and risk management across industries, such as entertainment, beauty and hospitality. She has successfully led international legal transactions and corporate strategies. A USC Gould School of Law graduate, she also serves as an adjunct professor and a board member of Grateful Crane. Fluent in English and Japanese, Ichida is known for her pragmatic, strategic counsel and global expertise.

Ayano **ICHIDA**
Chief Legal &
General Counsel
Aderans America
Holdings, Inc.
USC Gould
School of Law



Niloofer **SHEPHERD**
Deputy General
Counsel—Litigation &
Employment
Creative Artists Agency
UC Berkeley School of Law



Niloofer Shepherd serves as the deputy general counsel at Creative Artists Agency (CAA), overseeing legal aspects of the agency's growth in entertainment and sports and its expansion into new regions. She is primarily responsible for global litigation and employment matters while providing comprehensive legal support across CAA's diverse businesses, including motion pictures, sports, television, fashion and brand consulting. Shepherd played a critical role in advising on the employment aspects of CAA's acquisition of ICM Partners and managing the DOJ's antitrust review process. She successfully managed a two-year legal dispute between the Writers Guild of America and the Association of Talent Agents, leading to the resolution that reunited agents with their clients. A champion for employee welfare, she developed CAA's employee-centered policies, including a leading anti-sexual harassment training program.

PUBLIC COMPANY ♦ SMALL TO MIDSIZE

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS

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Arinolayemi (Yemi) Atinuke ADEGBONMIRE

VP, Legal & Associate General Counsel ♦ Cineverse
Wake Forest University

Yemi Adegbonmire is an attorney with many talents. This Baltimore native with Nigerian roots earned a master’s degree in public health science from Johns Hopkins University and went on to become a public health analyst for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. After securing a law degree from her alma mater, Wake Forest University, Adegbonmire’s early start in entertainment was in The Walt Disney Company’s ABC Television Group. She decided to challenge herself and left ABC to begin a solo practice. She was able to grow her practice representing a variety of creative clients, from writers and entertainers to Red Monkey brand custom leather apparel.

Adegbonmire currently serves as vice president, legal and associate general counsel at Cineverse, a global streaming technology and entertainment company. She has held the position since October 2023. A leader in the tech and streaming space, Adegbonmire’s innovative thinking has been instrumental to the company’s success. Whether maintaining the legacy business or the acquisition of multi-million-dollar IPs, her leadership has guided the company through the complexity of the cutting-edge world of entertainment. As Cineverse entrenches itself deeper into distribution technology, the dynamic thinking, vision and negotiation skills she brings to the company will allow it to maintain its positioning as a market leader.

Adegbonmire is also an avid volunteer for many organizations. She is a member of Wake Forest University’s Law Board of Visitors, the State Bar of California’s Council on Access and Fairness, a lifetime member of the California Association of Black Lawyers and a former member of GLAAD’s Los Angeles leadership council. In addition, she currently serves on Lambda Legal’s Emeritus Board of Directors and is a chapter charter member and Diamond life member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, a sisterhood of college-educated predominantly Black women that was founded in 1913. Adegbonmire was also a founding member and co-lead for Wakanda Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media (DCPI), a business employee resource group that drives revenue and relevance for DCPI with consumers. Her contributions to diversity and inclusion initiatives within the legal profession are noteworthy, reflecting her dedication to fostering a more equitable and inclusive society.

PUBLIC COMPANY ♦ SMALL TO MIDSIZE

FINALISTS



Edward D. CASTRO
Associate General Counsel & Regional Legal Officer, Americas
Cushman & Wakefield
USC Gould School of Law

Edward D. Castro serves as the associate general counsel and regional legal officer for the Americas at Cushman & Wakefield, playing a pivotal role in legal oversight and business strategy across North and South America. A key member of the Americas Executive Committee, he has led initiatives that streamline legal processes and reduce costs, enhancing efficiency and client satisfaction. His leadership extends globally,

supporting C&W’s Brokerage and Capital Markets services. A dedicated mentor and educator, Castro conducts regulatory trainings, empowering legal teams with knowledge on compliance and risk management. His commitment to education and community is demonstrated through his co-founding of the Intellectual Virtues Academy of Long Beach, a charter school fostering intellectual development in students.

Andrew Charles GOLDBERG
Partner & General Counsel
Leonard Green & Partners, L.P.
University of Pennsylvania



Andrew Goldberg joined Leonard Green & Partners, L.P. (LGP) as the firm’s first in-house counsel and is now a partner. As general counsel and chief compliance officer, he oversees all legal and compliance matters, including investments, fundraising and risk management. Goldberg has played a key role in LGP’s growth, helping to raise over \$50 billion in capital and expanding assets under management from \$14 billion to over \$75 billion. He also leads LGP’s environmental, social and governance (ESG) initiatives and spearheaded the firm’s strategic expansion into GP-led continuation vehicles. He works closely with senior leadership and serves on the investment committee, advising on transactions and strategic initiatives. Goldberg is also active in the community, serving on the board of directors for CASA LA.



Zac KATZ
General Counsel & Head of Global Affairs
Grindr
Yale Law School

Zac Katz is the general counsel & head of global affairs at Grindr, where he oversees legal, privacy, government affairs and social impact functions. With over 20 years of experience, he has advised CEOs, boards and executive teams at mission-driven organizations like Age of Learning and the White House. Since joining Grindr in 2023, Katz has played a critical role in the company’s transition to a public entity, supporting key initiatives such as major debt refinancing and international growth strategies. He also leads Grindr for Equality, partnering with 150 global LGBTQ+ organizations to advance public health and human rights. Katz previously served as chief legal officer at Age of Learning, helping scale the company and leading its \$300-million Series C funding.

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS

PUBLIC COMPANY ◆ LARGE

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Craig LEVINE

EVP, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary ◆ **WASH Multifamily Laundry Systems**
USC Gould School of Law

Craig Levine has served as WASH’s executive vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary since joining the business from private practice in 2013. WASH Multifamily Laundry Systems is North America’s leading provider of outsourced laundry equipment for multifamily housing properties including apartment complexes, condos, college and university residence halls and military bases throughout the U.S. and Canada. With 80,000-plus locations, more than eight million people do their laundry weekly at a WASH facility. Levine joined WASH at a time of tremendous growth and in the middle of the company’s global expansion, which led to a successful recapitalization by EQT Partners in May 2015. He helped navigate the company through several dozen acquisitions and other strategic ventures over the years.

In the last several years, Levine has been instrumental in completing multiple successful financing rounds, including a large public bond issuance in April 2021. More recently, he has been charged with managing the company’s Environmental, Sustainability and Governance (ESG) compliance, including the recent publication of its inaugural sustainability report in 2022.

In addition to his mergers and acquisitions work, Levine oversees all legal operations in both the United States and Canada and is responsible for cross-border and contractual aspects of the business. Ensuring proper staffing of in-house legal needs and supervising the activities of the company’s outside counsel, he expertly manages more than two dozen law firms throughout North America. Believing that outside counsel serves an important function and role, Levine has leveraged his relationship and expertise to address the company’s complicated contractual corporate governance, human resources, real estate and other legal needs. A strong leader, he actively manages the law department, counsels the CEO and board of directors, and provides strategic advice as needed. He prides himself on having strong ties not only with the C-level executives but with employees throughout the organization. A graduate of Tufts University (B.A.) and USC Gould School of Law (J.D.), when not working, Levine enjoys charitable activities, golfing, spending time with his family and is involved in mentoring law students and recent graduates.



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PUBLIC COMPANY ♦ LARGE FINALISTS

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS



Gavin GALIMI
*SVP,
 General Counsel*
eHealth, Inc.
*USC Gould
 School of Law*

Gavin Galimi, general counsel of eHealth, has been a driving force behind the company's legal strategy during a transformative period of growth. Over the past two years, he has led several high-impact initiatives that have expanded eHealth's footprint in the health insurance marketplace. Under his guidance, the company has significantly broadened its portfolio of Medicare Advantage plans, addressing the growing demand

from an aging population. Additionally, Galimi oversaw the legal aspects of eHealth's enhanced digital platform, ensuring that privacy and data security protocols were in place while improving consumer access. He has also been a vocal advocate for policies that promote transparency and fairness in the health insurance sector. His involvement in industry discussions and advocacy efforts has helped shape regulatory changes that benefit consumers and providers alike.

Joshua Que is the EVP and deputy general counsel at Banc of California, where he has contributed significantly since joining in 2015. In his current role since March 2022, he leads a legal team that supports various lending operations, including small business SBA lending, commercial real estate and asset-based lending. Under Que's leadership, the legal team has successfully managed a high volume of M&A deals, including a recent merger with Pacific Western Bank and a notable portfolio sale of \$1.95 billion in CIVIC loans. This "transformational year" for the bank has positioned it to leverage its market strength, with assets nearing \$40 billion. Prior to Banc of California, he served as SVP, assistant general counsel at Bank of America, overseeing the consumer mortgage division and handling corporate agreements.

Joshua QUE
*EVP, Deputy
 General Counsel*
Banc of California
Whittier Law School



Christine SON
*SVP, Legal, General
 Counsel & Secretary*
Dine Brands Global
UCLA School of Law



Christine Son has been a key leader at Dine Brands Global for over 10 years, currently serving as senior vice president, general counsel and secretary. She is recognized for her strong engagement with franchisees, effectively safeguarding Dine's franchise model against adverse legislation while supporting significant company growth through strategic acquisitions and refinancing. Son leads initiatives in collaboration with the International Franchise Association to advocate for franchisee interests, empowering them to influence legislation directly. In the past year, she has successfully guided Dine Brands through the acquisition of Fuzzy's Taco Shop and a securitization refinancing, ensuring regulatory compliance and optimizing terms to enhance financial stability. A strong advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion, Son co-sponsors Dine APAN and actively participates in the company's diversity and ESG committees.



Lockton Companies salutes **Craig Levine** for being named as a Honoree of the 2024 In-House Counsel Awards. Congratulations!

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS

PUBLIC COMPANY ♦ ENTERPRISE

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ESapna **PANDYA**

EVP, General Counsel ♦ **Red Bull North America, Inc.**
Cornell Law School

Sapna Pandya is the executive vice president and general counsel of Red Bull North America, Inc. As the daughter of two Indian immigrants, she learned at an early age to value hard work, education and opportunity. Her father's first steps in the U.S. were to pursue his education at the University of California, Berkeley, and Pandya continued this tradition. She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a major in business and a minor in English and developed her interest in advocacy. Pandya spent two years at Deloitte in the financial advisory services group before attending Cornell Law School. While at Cornell, she dedicated time to the Death Penalty Project, advocating for mental health considerations in capital punishment cases.

Pandya went on to become an associate at Gibson Dunn, where she represented a range of clients in food and beverage litigation, employment and securities matters. While at Gibson Dunn, she also represented plaintiffs in a voting rights matter in the County of Albany and successfully represented a class of children to reinstate funding for treatment programs in Los Angeles.

Pandya joined Red Bull in 2015 and worked her way up from legal counsel to the role of general counsel in 2020, a month prior to her maternity leave with her third child. She now oversees a team of 25 and focuses on being a champion of diversity and mentoring working mothers as they navigate their careers. In the past 24 months, she has developed the North American legal roadmap and strategy to focus on adapting to technological changes in the industry, moving the business forward in marketing and sales and handling a large and complex distributor transition to improve business performance. Pandya has also resolved multiple confidential, high-risk matters within the organization over the last 24 months. At Red Bull, she sits on the North America Leadership Team and the Global Legal Leadership Team and mentors individuals inside and outside of Red Bull in legal and other development opportunities. Her department has also created a DEI program within the department to positively impact the community and educate the team on DEI.

PUBLIC COMPANY ♦ ENTERPRISE FINALISTS

Talya **FRIEDMAN**

Director, Corporate Counsel – Labor & Employment

Starbucks

Loyola Law School

Talya Friedman serves as director, corporate counsel – labor and employment at Starbucks, providing strategic legal advice to executives, business leaders and HR teams on labor and employment matters. Her expertise includes employee relations, wage and hour laws, internal investigations, compliance, diversity and inclusion and policy development. In the past 12-24 months, Friedman has contributed to key corporate

initiatives, including COVID/health and safety protocols, workplace violence policy development and compliance with California's AB 1228 legislation affecting the fast-food industry. Beyond her legal role, she engages in Starbucks' "Holiday Helper" and "Coffee with the Cops" volunteer programs. Outside of Starbucks, she is an active parent volunteer with her local Girl Scouts Troop and serves on the educational committee and parent organization at Valley Beth Shalom.

In just four years with Radnet, David Katz has increased the size of his in-house legal department, where he now manages a group of 10 lawyers and support staff. During his time with the company, Radnet has grown from a market cap of less than \$1 billion to over \$4 billion now. Beyond a prolific career in private practice – most recently, 20 years as a partner at Perkins Coie LLP – Katz has been a model citizen for his community. He has volunteered his time with Malibu Search and Rescue for the last 30 years and spent the last 10 years as the captain of Malibu Search and Rescue.

David **KATZ**

EVP, Chief Legal Officer and U.K. Executive Sponsor

Radnet, Inc.

Loyola Law School

Njeri **MUTURA**

Assistant General Counsel

Microsoft Corporation

University of Windsor



As the assistant general counsel at Microsoft, Njeri Mutura advises on legal and regulatory issues related to emerging technologies, managing strategic projects focused on AI, data governance and sustainability. Her team oversees complex transactions exceeding \$20 billion annually and supports business objectives across the Americas. Mutura is a thought leader in law and technology, frequently speaking on topics like cybersecurity and data privacy. She engages with organizations to enhance diversity and inclusion, notably through the ACC's Summer Internship Program for diverse law students. She also leads pro bono initiatives, including legal clinics and career programs for local youth. Mutura's leadership focuses on clarity, collaboration and delivering impactful results while navigating the evolving legal landscape.

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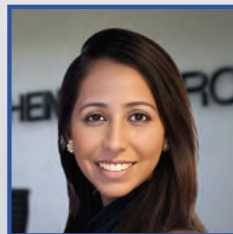
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DMITRIY GROYSMAN



JOSEPH CONTORNO



MELISSA FINCHER

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL NOMINEES

This distinguished, alphabetical list of some of Southern California's most exceptional attorneys is based on submitted nominations from their peers and colleagues and highlights their remarkable accomplishments and contributions.

To determine the selections for this prestigious list, the LA Times Publishing team evaluated each nominee's average success rates, focusing on their ability to consistently secure favorable outcomes for clients over the past two years. This was paired with a review of the leadership roles each attorney holds within their firms and broader legal communities. The recognition extends beyond their courtroom victories as their involvement in shaping the profession through board affiliations was also factored in.

These attorneys are not only skilled legal strategists but also leaders who serve as mentors within their firms and active contributors to their communities, setting benchmarks of success and influence in their respective fields.

Tina Ansari pour serves as corporate in-house counsel for five companies, leading their legal and compliance departments. Her expertise spans strategic development, contract negotiations, corporate transactions, employment law, corporate governance and more. Ansari pour provides guidance on regulatory compliance, focusing on privacy and data security laws at both state and federal levels. With a strong background in commercial transactions, intellectual property, data privacy and M&A, particularly in the financial services and software-technology sectors, she has made significant contributions. She also advises financial institutions on regulatory compliance, working with agencies such as the CFPB and FTC. Ansari pour's work includes risk assessments, updating privacy policies and ensuring compliance with consumer financial laws. An active member of the Online Lenders Alliance (OLA), she supports programs that uphold industry best practices and client fairness.

Tina
ANSARIPOUR
Corporate Counsel
Phonexa
Southwestern Law School



RISING STAR



PUBLIC COMPANY – ENTERPRISE

Shagha
BALALI
Associate
General Counsel
Smurfit WestRock
UC Davis School of Law

Shagha Balali is the associate general counsel at Smurfit WestRock, the largest paper company, and the sole California-licensed in-house attorney for the organization. Since joining in 2018, she has played a pivotal role in shaping corporate policies, ensuring compliance with California's complex legal landscape and influencing practices across the U.S. Prior to her current role, Balali spent nearly 12 years as a principal at Jackson Lewis in Los Angeles. She chairs Smurfit WestRock's Trade Secrets and Confidential Information Center of Excellence and oversees litigation matters, including class actions. She is also involved in her company's women's resource group and volunteers to support domestic violence victims and provide legal aid to her community. In addition, Balali has served as an adjunct professor of business law at Loyola Marymount University.

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL NOMINEES



Bobbi K. BUFFINGTON

Assistant General Counsel, Employment & Litigation

Supernal, LLC

Loyola Law School

PRIVATE COMPANY—SMALL TO MIDSIZE

Bobbi K. Buffington is a seasoned attorney specializing in employment law and HR compliance, with extensive leadership experience as both an HR executive and in-house legal counsel. As assistant general counsel at Supernal, LLC, she applies her expertise in litigation management, wage and hour compliance, and employee relations to support the company's growth and mitigate risks. Prior to this, Buffington spent over 17 years at Cedars-Sinai, where she held key roles in shaping HR policies and advising on complex employment issues. Her data-driven approach has led to enhanced processes and cost savings. Buffington holds a juris doctor from Loyola Law School and a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Southwestern University.

General Counsel of Mark IV Capital Robert Casey has proven himself to be a trusted legal advisor and real estate leader. With over 26 years of legal experience, he manages real estate transactions across western U.S. markets and advises the board on governance matters. His expertise spans acquisitions, development, construction, leasing, finance and corporate governance. In the past two years, Casey has led key acquisitions, dispositions, fund formations and financing transactions, while strengthening Mark IV's governance processes. Previously, he served as division counsel at Western Alliance Bank, managing legal matters for its \$3-billion California division. A former U.S. Marine Corps officer and helicopter pilot, he holds a J.D. from the University of Pittsburgh and an M.A. in business from Webster University.

Robert Kevin CASEY

General Counsel & Secretary

Mark IV Capital, Inc.

University of Pittsburgh



PRIVATE COMPANY—SMALL TO MIDSIZE



Michael R. COSTA

General Counsel

Center for Autism and Related Disorders

Suffolk University Law School

PRIVATE COMPANY - ENTERPRISE

Since July 2019, Michael Costa has been leading the legal department of the Center for Autism and Related Disorder (CARD) as general counsel. He is a seasoned 27-year healthcare business attorney representing hospitals, health systems, physician networks and more. As general counsel for large private healthcare companies for the past 20 years, Costa focuses his practice on complex regulatory and

transactional matters. He also serves on the nonprofit board of the Northern Los Angeles Regional Center which is one of 21 private, nonprofit organizations under contract with the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to coordinate and provide community-based services to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (consumers). Costa received his law degree from Suffolk University School of Law, his master's from Boston University School of Public Health, and his bachelor's from Roger Williams University.

Mariana D'Andrea, who joined Roku in 2022 and is now associate general counsel, handles international content licensing and app distribution for both TRC and the Roku platform. She is a dynamic leader and chair of the Latino Employee Resource Group (ERG) at Roku. D'Andrea has spearheaded multiple events initiatives that amplify Latino voices, foster inclusion and drive meaningful engagement across the organization. Her passion for community outreach extends beyond the ERG, as she also serves as chair of the company's Pro Bono Working Group. Originally from Buenos Aires, she graduated with honors from the Universidad Católica Argentina Law School, holds an LLM, a master's of law from NYU School of Law and a master's executive degree in management from the Spanish EOI Business School.

Mariana D'ANDREA

Associate General Counsel

Roku

NYU School of Law



PUBLIC COMPANY - ENTERPRISE



PUBLIC COMPANY - SMALL TO MIDSIZE

Khoi D. DANG

General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

Icon Business Bank

Santa Clara University School of Law

Khoi Dang is general counsel and corporate secretary of Icon Business Bank, a seasoned legal advisor specializing in corporate governance, SEC compliance and regulatory affairs. Prior to Icon Business Bank, he was the chief legal officer for Southern California Bancorp, where he managed over \$2 billion in M&A transactions and implemented corporate governance ahead of the Nasdaq uplisting. Dang also contributed to First Choice Bank's IPO and facilitated over \$400 million in SBA PPP loans during the pandemic. Previously as a partner at Duane Morris LLP and Horgan, Rosen, Beckham & Coren, LLP, he led over \$10 billion in financial institution M&A deals. He has also served on the American Bankers Association's DEI Advisory Board and the Vietnamese American Bar Association.



PUBLIC COMPANY—SMALL TO MIDSIZE

Mark E. FOSTER

EVP, General Counsel & Secretary

American Healthcare REIT, Inc.

USC Gould School of Law

Mark Foster, a 25-year attorney, serves as EVP, general counsel and secretary at American Healthcare REIT, Inc. Since joining in 2022, he successfully oversaw a \$772.8-million IPO, listing AHR on the New York Stock Exchange in February 2024. Foster manages the legal function for AHR's \$4-billion portfolio across 38 states and the U.K., handling real estate transactions, SEC filings, regulatory

compliance and corporate strategies. Previously, he was a partner at Snell & Wilmer L.L.P. and has been instrumental in structuring major transactions, improving internal processes and building the AHR legal team. An active community member, he serves on the boards of CASA Orange County, the Building Block Foundation Fund and the USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, while also volunteering through various charitable initiatives.

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL NOMINEES



Alfredo GOMEZ
General Counsel

CarParts.com
Georgetown University
Law Center

PUBLIC COMPANY – LARGE

Alfredo Gomez, general counsel at CarParts.com, is known for his leadership, expertise and optimism. A first-generation college graduate and son of immigrants, his dedication shaped a successful career spanning roles at leading corporations, including Western Digital, j2 Global Communications and Hanmi Bank. Joining CarParts.com in 2019, Gomez oversees legal functions such as contract management, litigation and SEC compliance. His influence extends beyond legal affairs as he plays a key role in company-wide strategic decisions. Over the past two years, Gomez has been instrumental in transitioning CarParts.com's management team, ensuring smooth adjustments and driving operational success. Outside his legal work, he champions diversity and inclusion as a member of the Hispanic National Bar Association and the Latina Corporate Directors Association.

Connie Shiping Hexun, chief legal officer at Hanwha Qcells USA Corp. (Qcells), is a visionary leader dedicated to fostering dynamic teams and driving renewable energy adoption across the U.S. Under her guidance, Qcells has significantly enhanced the renewable energy sector, earning a spot in TIME's 100 Influential Companies of 2024. Managing a legal team of 15, Hexun provides strategic legal guidance for the sale and development of numerous renewable energy projects, including a landmark agreement with Microsoft for 12 gigawatts of American-made solar modules. This deal alone can power 1.8 million homes. She also oversaw legal matters for Texas' largest battery storage project and led negotiations for a groundbreaking renewable project in Colorado that supports local youth initiatives.



Simone Antoinette MILLER
General Counsel

Western University of Health Sciences
University of North
Carolina School of Law

EDUCATION / NON-PROFIT / GOVERNMENT

resolving significant cases like a \$4.5-million class action settlement and enhanced governance with tools for conflict-of-interest tracking and legal training. Beyond her professional commitments, she volunteers with animal shelters and practices Ikebana, the Japanese art of floral arrangement, balancing work with personal passions. Miller's mentorship of colleagues reflects her dedication to community and leadership excellence.

Erik Graham-Smith is the general counsel at FloQast, where he oversees legal, compliance, privacy and InfoSec teams. He previously practiced at Kleinberg, Kaplan, Wolff & Cohen, P.C. and Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP. Graham-Smith earned his J.D. from Harvard Law School, an MDiv with honors from Yale Divinity School and a B.A., magna cum laude, from Boston College. His recent accomplishments at FloQast include raising \$100 million in Series E funding, opening subsidiaries in Germany, Australia and Japan, and achieving SOC 2, SOC 3, ISO 27001 and ISO 27701 certifications with zero material findings. Under Graham-Smith's leadership, the legal and compliance teams achieved the highest employee NPS scores in the company.



Wahid Ezzat GUIRGUIS
VP & General Counsel

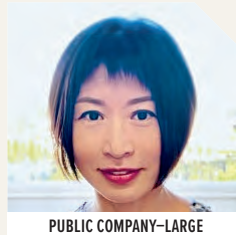
HCI Systems, Inc.
Western State
University
College of Law

PRIVATE COMPANY – SMALL TO MIDSIZE

before managing projects at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. After joining Hunt Ortman, he specialized in construction law. Since becoming general counsel at HCI Systems in 2017, he has set up legal operations for affiliates and overseen significant growth, including expanding Control Systems, Inc. nationwide and achieving over \$35 million in revenue for CMD Electric, Inc.

Connie Shiping HEXUN
Chief Legal Officer

Hanwha Qcells USA Corp.
Stanford Law School



PUBLIC COMPANY – LARGE

Wahid Ezzat Guirguis is the vice president and general counsel at HCI Systems, Inc., where he manages risk and legal operations. Born in Cairo, Egypt, he migrated to Los Angeles, California and graduated cum laude with a B.S. in civil engineering from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. Guirguis worked as a field engineer for Charles Pankow Builders and Hensel Phelps Construction



Cristina HWANG
Associate
General Counsel

Hanmi Bank
UCLA School of Law

PUBLIC COMPANY – LARGE

Cristina Hwang is the associate general counsel at Hanmi Financial Corporation and its subsidiary, Hanmi Bank. Since joining in 2020, she has provided legal support on various matters, leveraging her multicultural background and extensive experience. Previously, Hwang served as lead legal counsel at Novonor S.A., managing international construction and engineering mega-projects across multiple regions. She is licensed to practice law in California and Buenos Aires and holds a Law LL.B. from the University of Buenos Aires, a master's degree in law and economics from Torcuato Di Tella University and an LL.M. in business law from UCLA School of Law. Hwang is dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion, actively participating in organizations for Asians and Latinas in law and has received several awards for her community engagement and leadership efforts.



Erik Carl GRAHAM-SMITH
General Counsel

FloQast, Inc.

Harvard Law School

PRIVATE COMPANY – SMALL TO MIDSIZE

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL NOMINEES



PRIVATE COMPANY—SMALL TO MIDSIZE

**Bart
PEACH**

General Counsel

Unio Health Partners

*Southern Illinois
University*

Bart Peach, general counsel at Unio Health Partners, has been in the healthcare services industry since leaving law school in 2007 and has assisted in various categories within that specialty: gastroenterology, urology and radiation oncology (current), and many others. He started with boutique healthcare law firms and moved in-house with DaVita Inc. in 2014 and took his first GC role in 2020 with Veyo (patient transportation), taking them through sale to a competitor. Peach was based in Orange County with DaVita, San Diego with Veyo and now in Los Angeles with Unio Health Partners, a management services organization assisting in non-clinical matters to Unio Specialty Care (formerly Genesis Healthcare Partners P.C.).

Charles Rainey is the executive vice president of business and legal affairs at Cartoon Studios, Inc., where he combines over 30 years of expertise in both litigation and transactional law within the entertainment industry. A licensed attorney in multiple states, including California, New York and Nevada, he is recognized for his skillful negotiation, creative dealmaking and strategic risk mitigation. Previously a partner at Hamrick & Evans, Rainey has managed complex commercial disputes and served on boards like the Stan Lee Universe. He holds a Master of Laws (LL.M.) from the London School of Economics and a J.D. from the William S. Boyd School of Law. His diverse experience across film, television and music industries makes him a valued leader in entertainment law.

Charles RAINNEY

*EVP, Business &
Legal Affairs*

Kartoon Studios, Inc.

*William S. Boyd
School of Law*



PUBLIC COMPANY—LARGE



PRIVATE COMPANY—SMALL TO MIDSIZE

**Rodney Alan
RUMMELSBURG**

General Counsel

Airespring, Inc.

Loyola Law School

Rummelsburg has adapted the department to remote work, promoting collaboration through virtual meetings and maintaining team cohesion. Recently, he led efforts to expand Airespring's international network, negotiating contracts with global internet service providers, enhancing the company's competitive position. He also manages regulatory compliance, ensuring adherence to FCC regulations and implementing measures to combat unlawful robocalls, including those using deepfake technology.

Rodney Rummelsburg has served as general counsel at Airespring, Inc. for 12 years, contributing to the company's growth as a global managed services provider specializing in IT, network services and unified communications for various industries and government entities. At Airespring, he oversees a modest legal team, encouraging early engagement with legal matters to facilitate resolution.

Michel Urich is an accomplished in-house legal expert with extensive global experience across industries, such as technology, banking, financial services, consumer products and entertainment. As general counsel for Verimatrix, he oversees critical legal functions, providing strategic guidance on risk management, corporate governance and business development. Previously, Urich held key legal roles, including general counsel at cybersecurity leader Edgewise, Inc. and assistant general counsel at Mitek Systems. At XLrator Media, he facilitated negotiations for over 200 film acquisitions and a prominent TV series. Fluent in French, German, Hebrew and Dutch, he brings a multicultural perspective to complex legal matters. Urich's specialties include mergers and acquisitions, IP licensing, employment law and compliance with securities regulations, making him a trusted leader in legal and business strategy.

**Michel
URICH**

General Counsel

Verimatrix

University of London



PUBLIC COMPANY—LARGE



PRIVATE COMPANY—ENTERPRISE

**Thomas
WEHINGER**

General Counsel

Regent LP

USC Gould School of Law

Thomas Wehinger is the general counsel for Regent LP, a Beverly Hills-based private equity firm, where he oversees all legal matters for the firm and its 20+ portfolio companies. He joined Regent LP as its first in-house counsel in 2016 and became general counsel in 2017, building a highly efficient legal team. Wehinger leads corporate acquisitions and transactions, drafting contracts across various sectors, and has helped Regent LP grow from 100 to over 7,000 employees in multiple states and countries. In 2023, he successfully guided five major transactions, including the acquisition of Lydall TAS and Pearson PLC's online program management business, while also purchasing automotive facilities in Germany and Cheddar News from Altice USA.



PUBLIC COMPANY—ENTERPRISE

**David Edward
WIENIR**

*Head of Business & Legal Affairs,
HarperCollins Productions*

HarperCollins Publishers

UC Berkeley School of Law

David Wienir serves as the assistant general counsel at HarperCollins Publishers and head of business and legal affairs at HarperCollins Productions, where he oversees the development, production and distribution of various media adaptations based on company IP, including popular titles like "Carmen Sandiego" and "The Oregon Trail." With over 16 years of experience teaching entertainment law

at UCLA Extension, he has significantly influenced the field, offering courses such as "The Legal Primer for the Entertainment Business." Prior to his current role, Wienir spent over a decade at United Talent Agency (UTA) and practiced at leading talent boutiques, representing high-profile clients including Steven Spielberg and Madonna. His accolades include the Outstanding Volunteer Award from Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts and recognition in Variety's Legal Impact Report.

LEGAL VISIONARIES

Southern California continues to thrive as a vibrant center for legal innovation and leadership, drawing some of the brightest minds in the profession. In such a high-caliber legal landscape, being recognized as a visionary is not only a reflection of exceptional skill and dedication but also an acknowledgment of one's ability to rise above the field. Recognition as a 2024 Legal Visionary underscores each attorney's commitment to excellence, thought leadership and impactful contributions to both their clients and the broader legal community.



**Mark Stephen
ADAMS**

Partner
**Jeffer Mangels Butler &
Mitchell LLP**
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION

Mark S. Adams is a partner at Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP with over 15 years of experience, specializing in complex commercial litigation. He holds a J.D. from Loyola Law School and an M.B.A. in accounting and taxation from Baylor University. Adams has a proven track record in state and federal courts, achieving two of California's top 50 largest jury verdicts in one year. His expertise spans shareholder disputes, hotel management agreements and franchise litigation. He has represented major real estate developers, investors and hotel owners in high-stakes cases. Adams is a frequent speaker and author on litigation strategies and serves on several firm committees. He is also committed to pro bono work, dedicating over 200 hours annually to underserved communities.



**Natalie
ALAMEDDINE**

*Partner, Labor &
Employment*
Blank Rome LLP
UC Law San Francisco
**LABOR &
EMPLOYMENT**

Natalie Alameddine is a partner at Blank Rome, where she advises and represents employers in complex labor and employment disputes. Her expertise includes federal and California wage and hour claims, class actions, PAGA representative actions and wrongful termination cases. Known for her skill in handling misclassification and independent contractor issues, she has become a key attorney for national employers. Alameddine has successfully defended clients such as BYD Motors and Lennar in high-stakes arbitration and litigation. She has been recognized by the Daily Journal and Super Lawyers as a leading labor attorney. In addition to her legal work, she is passionate about pro bono initiatives, including efforts to secure asylum for Afghan refugees. Alameddine actively engages in diversity advocacy and serves on numerous legal boards, including the UC Law San Francisco Board of Governors.



**Clifton W.
ALBRIGHT, JR.**

Attorney
**Albright, Yee &
Schmit, APC**
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION

Clifton Albright Jr. is an attorney at Albright, Yee & Schmit, APC, specializing in business litigation with a focus on labor and employment matters. A graduate of Loyola Law

School (2020), his career has swiftly gained recognition, including being named a Southern California Super Lawyers "Rising Star" (2023-24) and one of the "Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch" (2024-25). In 2022, Albright made headlines by securing the swift dismissal of a high-profile lawsuit against Tiffany Haddish in just 18 days. He is also deeply involved in mentorship and community service, volunteering with the Young Lawyers Program, which supports high school students from low-income communities in learning about the legal system.

Tyrine Aman began her legal career as a provisionally licensed lawyer at Ivie McNeill Wyatt Purcell & Diggs in 2020, quickly establishing herself as a force in the field. In her second year as an associate, her career reached a pivotal moment when she served as first chair in an employment trial, securing a dismissal through a motion for nonsuit. She also played a key role in a landmark arbitration involving employee rights on native reservations, helping to secure nearly \$1 million for her client. Aman has managed over 100 cases and excelled in both plaintiff and defense matters. Her litigation

**Tyrine
Shawron
Laila AMAN**
Provisionally Licensed Lawyer
**Ivie McNeill Wyatt
Purcell & Diggs, APLC**
Howard University School of Law
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT



skills have led to notable victories, including a \$3-million settlement and her independent mediation efforts have resulted in significant outcomes for her client.



**Parag L.
AMIN**

*Founder &
Managing Attorney*
**Law Office of Parag L.
Amin, P.C.**
*USC Gould
School of Law*
LITIGATION

Founder of a firm with his namesake, Parag L. Amin founded his law firm out of a passion for protecting entrepreneurs, deeply influenced by his father's struggles as a business owner. After immigrating from India, his father invested his life savings into a business, only to discover he had inherited unpaid sales taxes from the prior owner. Faced with the ultimatum of paying back hundreds of thousands of dollars or closing the business, Amin's father chose to shut it down, giving up on his entrepreneurial dreams. Because of his efforts, he has been recognized as a Super Lawyers "Rising Star" for eight consecutive years (2017-2025), a prestigious honor awarded to only 2.5% of attorneys based on peer evaluations.

HUESTON HENNIGAN

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VICKI CHOU

CHRISTINE WOODIN

2024 Visionaries

—*L.A. Times B2B Publishing*

LEGAL VISIONARIES



Michael M. AMIR
Co-Founder
Doll Amir & Eley LLP
UC Law San Francisco
LITIGATION

Michael M. Amir is the co-founder of Doll Amir & Eley and has a distinguished 20-year career representing clients in high-stakes litigation. As lead counsel, he has handled complex cases at all stages of litigation, including jury trials, arbitrations and appellate court arguments. Amir's achievements have earned him recognition as a Super Lawyer by Los Angeles Magazine for a decade, and in 2020, the Daily Journal named him one of California's top healthcare attorneys. He previously practiced at Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP and O'Brien Zarian LLP. Some recent notable victories include securing multiple preliminary injunctions and a favorable jury verdict in a \$30-million healthcare case. Amir continues to defend clients in major lawsuits, including the False Claims Act and unfair competition cases.



Julian L. ANDRÉ
Partner
McDermott Will & Emery
University of Virginia
School of Law

Julian André is the litigation partner at McDermott Will & Emery, specializing in government enforcement actions, complex civil litigation and internal investigations. With a background as an assistant U.S. attorney, he offers a unique

perspective in formulating effective strategies for clients facing criminal and civil investigations by state and federal agencies. André's track record includes successfully persuading the U.S. Attorney's Office to decline criminal charges against a retired four-star Marine general during a high-profile DOJ investigation. On the civil side, he has served as lead counsel for a government contractor in a \$70-million fraud case against Malaysian suppliers. Beyond his legal practice, André is an active member of the California Lawyers Association Criminal Law Section and serves on the advisory board of the American Bankers Association Financial Crimes Enforcement Conference.

Jean-Claude ("J.C.") André is a partner at Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner and co-chair of the firm's appellate and Supreme Court practice group. With a 24-year career primarily focused on appellate litigation, he has tackled some of the most complex legal issues, such as constitutional matters, statutory and regulatory interpretation and class certification issues. André's experience spans government service and private practice, including 10 years as an assistant U.S. attorney, where he served as appellate chief in the Central District of California. He has also been recognized for his dedication to the legal community, having been selected as an appellate lawyer representative

Jean-Claude ANDRÉ
Partner
Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP
University of Virginia
School of Law
LITIGATION



to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference and as a fellow of the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers.



Maribeth ANNAGUEY
Managing Partner
Annaguey McCann LLP
USC Gould
School of Law
LITIGATION

Maribeth Annaguey is a seasoned litigator and founding partner of Annaguey McCann LLP, a woman- and minority-owned law firm. With over 20 years of experience, she advocates for businesses, entrepreneurs and public figures facing complex legal challenges, including breach of contract, defamation and employment claims. A Southern California native, Annaguey is deeply committed to inclusiveness and education having co-founded Extera Public Schools and served on the board of HOPE (Hispanas Organized for Political Equality). She earned her B.A. from UC Berkeley and her J.D. from the University of Southern California, where she was editor-in-chief of the Southern California Law Review. Recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal and Lawdragon, Annaguey is a leader in her field.



Tom ARA
Partner
DLA Piper LLP (US)
Loyola Law School
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Tom Ara is a prominent legal and business advisor with 25 years of experience in the media and entertainment industry. As global co-chair at DLA Piper, he leads high-profile transactions for clients including banks, hedge funds, private equity firms and studios. A graduate of Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, Ara specializes in both domestic and international media deals. Recognized as one of Variety's Top 500 Influential Media Leaders, he is frequently sought for insights by Forbes, The Wall Street Journal and other top publications. He also serves on the boards of the Blackhouse Foundation and U.S.-Asia Institute, where he helps foster media diplomacy and cross-cultural collaboration. Ara's global practice spans Europe, the Middle East and Asia.



Aren AVANESS
Principal Attorney
Avanness Law
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION

Founded by Aren Avanness, Avanness Law has emerged as a trusted name in personal injury law across California. Based in Burbank, the firm advocates fiercely for injured individuals, handling a range of

cases from auto accidents to premises liability claims. Over the past two years, Avanness Law has experienced exceptional growth, marked by an increase in both the size of its team and the scale of settlements secured for clients. This success reflects the firm's unwavering commitment to justice, built on a foundation of integrity, meticulous legal strategy and a deep understanding of the personal injury landscape. Renowned for its tenacious representation and personalized client service, Avanness Law continues to make a significant impact for those it serves.

Ryan Baker, co-founding partner of Waymaker LLP, is an elite trial lawyer renowned for securing landmark victories in high-stakes cases. His expertise in intellectual property and disruptive technology has solidified the firm's reputation as a premier trial boutique. Baker has achieved precedent-setting wins in state and federal courts, notably the California Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in FilmOn.com Inc. v. Double-Verify Inc., which reshaped the interpretation of anti-SLAPP statutes. His diverse clientele includes DIRECTV, USC and Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen. He is actively involved in pro bono work and community service,

Ryan BAKER
Co-Founding Partner
Waymaker LLP
Harvard Law School
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY



representing indigent individuals and advocating for social justice. Baker has received numerous accolades, including recognition as one of the Daily Journal's Top IP Lawyers and a Southern California Super Lawyer.



Adam BASS
President & CEO
Buchalter, APC
University of San Diego
School of Law
CORPORATE

Adam Bass is the president and chief executive officer of Buchalter, APC, a prominent law firm with a robust presence across the United States. Since assuming the role of president and CEO in 2013, he has spearheaded the firm's impressive growth, expanding its footprint to include 12 offices and over 500 attorneys. Bass' leadership has earned him numerous accolades, including recognition as one of the "LA500" Most Influential People in Los Angeles (2017-2024) and being named a "Top 100 Lawyer" by the Los Angeles Business Journal. He has also been recognized as a "Leader in the Law Nominee," featured in the "Top 40 Under 40" by the Los Angeles Daily Journal and honored with the "2023 State Bar of California DEI Leadership Bronze Seal" by Cal LAW Pathways.

L E G A L V I S I O N A R I E S


**Theresa C.
BECERRA**

Partner
Spencer Fane LLP
UCLA School of Law
LITIGATION

Theresa Becerra is a distinguished attorney specializing in business, real estate and construction law, with over two decades of experience at Spencer Fane. Her practice encompasses affordable housing counseling, commercial construction litigation and complex business disputes across state and federal courts in the western U.S. Since joining Spencer in October 2023 through the merger with Pahl & McCay, Becerra has contributed significantly to the firm's growth and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). A prominent advocate for mentorship, she actively supports the UCLA Latino Alumni Association and engages in community service through various organizations. Her leadership and dedication to client relationships, alongside her philanthropic efforts, position her as a key figure in both the legal and business communities.


**Gina
BIBBY**

Partner
Withers Bergman LLP
Georgetown University
Law Center
INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY

Gina Bibby is a trailblazer in fashion technology, currently serving as a partner at Withers Bergman. With a background as a software engineer, she leads a global practice advising emerging

and established companies at the intersection of fashion and technology. Bibby specializes in commercial agreements, IP procurement and litigation, corporate formation and data privacy. Notable achievements include dismissing patent infringement cases and securing favorable settlements for clients. She has been honored as a Minority Leader of Influence and a Woman of Influence by the Los Angeles Business Journal and actively promotes diversity through her work on various committees and her role on the board of the nonprofit Remake, dedicated to transforming the fashion industry sustainably and ethically.

Brian Bieluch is a partner at Covington & Burling LLP in Los Angeles, serving as vice chair of the Intellectual Property Litigation Group. He specializes in complex patent and technology litigation, representing clients in multi-forum disputes, including the U.S. International Trade Commission and federal courts. Notably, Bieluch represented Samsung Electronics in critical IP litigation and achieved a complete dismissal for taurine manufacturer QYP in a long-running patent case. His recent victories include obtaining a general exclusion order for Knowles Corporation in a trade secrets

**Brian G.
BIELUCH**

Partner
Covington &
Burling LLP
Georgetown University
Law Center
INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY



dispute, marking a significant win against competitor Shenzhen Bellsing. Bieluch's expertise in IP and technology litigation makes him a formidable advocate in high-stakes legal battles.


**Stephanie I.
BLUM**

Partner
Reuben Raucher
& Blum
USC Gould
School of Law
LITIGATION

With over 25 years of experience in family law, Stephanie Blum is a leading attorney in California and a certified family law specialist since 2003. She has earned accolades as a Southern California Super Lawyer and was previously named a Super Lawyers "Rising Star" by Los Angeles Magazine. Blum's work has been featured in major media outlets, including Entertainment Tonight and Variety. Recent achievements (2022-2024) include securing over \$500,000 in attorney's fees in a high-conflict child support case, defending parental authority in a grandparent visitation dispute and obtaining sole custody in a domestic violence case. Beyond her client work, Blum actively supports the Harriet Buhai Foundation and educates communities on family law, solidifying her impact in the legal field.

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LEGAL VISIONARIES



Eve BRACKMANN
Partner
Munck Wilson
Mandala, LLP
University of San Diego
School of Law
LITIGATION

Eve Brackmann is a highly respected senior partner at Munck Wilson Mandala, leading the firm's commercial real estate practice in Southern California. With a distinguished 20-year career, she has built a formidable reputation in real estate litigation and business disputes, earning recognition as a Best Lawyer in America since 2018 and a Southern California Super Lawyer since 2014. Brackmann's extensive client roster includes a national grocery store chain and diverse industries such as retail, hospitality, logistics and cannabis. Active in the community, she co-chairs the Orange County Bar Association's Mentoring Committee and is involved with several professional organizations, including the International Council of Shopping Centers. Her contributions extend to the OC Veterans Legal Institute and the USD Law Alumni Association.



Stephen BRADFORD
Partner
Musick, Peeler &
Garrett LLP
University of Virginia
School of Law
CORPORATE

Stephen Bradford is a partner at Musick, Peeler & Garrett, leading the corporate and business law group in Los Angeles and San Francisco. With 30 years of experience, he advises public and closely held businesses on expansion, consolidation

and succession planning. His diverse clients include automotive dealerships, a supermarket chain and a nonprofit agricultural cooperative. Fluent in English and Spanish, Bradford has co-authored business encyclopedias on U.S. and Mexican commerce. He is active in the community, serving as a former chair of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society's Los Angeles chapter and as a volunteer leader in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Bradford has successfully negotiated key agreements for major companies and participated in groundbreaking international projects, including the development of the world's largest telescope.



Emily BURKHARDT VICENTE
Partner
Hunton Andrews
Kurth LLP
UNC School of Law
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

Emily Burkhardt Vicente is the co-chair of the national labor and employment team and diversity and inclusion committee at Hunton Andrews Kurth. With only eight years as a partner, she defends Fortune 100 companies in high-stakes employment litigation, including hybrid class and collective action cases. Burkhardt Vicente has adeptly navigated challenges in the #MeToo era, handling sexual harassment claims, equal pay issues and implementing AI in the workplace while developing ESG programs focused on increasing diversity and inclusion. In 2023, she achieved a complete defense victory for a transportation client in a six-year litigation case. Burkhardt Vicente has also successfully led her team in defending food service and transportation clients against class action wage and hour claims.

As a partner at Hill, Farrer & Burrill, Kevin Brogan specializes in eminent domain, inverse condemnation and real property litigation, representing clients ranging from multinational corporations to individual owners of shopping centers, hotels and unique properties. He contributes to the American Bar Association's book, "The Law of Eminent Domain," and enjoys substantial trial experience in both state and federal courts. Inducted as a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, Brogan is consistently listed in Best Lawyers in America. He also defends professionals against malpractice claims and is certified

Kevin BROGAN
Partner
Hill, Farrer & Burrill LLP
UC Law San Francisco
LITIGATION



as a legal malpractice specialist. A graduate of UC Berkeley and UC Law San Francisco, he clerked for Chief Judge Oliver Seth of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.



Manuel F. CACHÁN
Partner
Skadden, Arps, Slate,
Meagher & Flom LLP
Harvard Law School
LITIGATION

Manuel Cachán is a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, where he excels as a trial lawyer, leading high-profile jury trials across the U.S. He represents Fortune 500 companies in complex litigations, including breach of contract, product liability and professional malpractice cases. Recently, he secured significant victories for Monsanto Company, achieving complete defense verdicts in cases alleging that Roundup weedkiller caused cancer. His track record includes successful trials for Johnson & Johnson and NBCUniversal, among others. A fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, Cachán has received numerous accolades, including recognition by Benchmark Litigation as a Top 100 Trial Lawyer. He is dedicated to pro bono work and serves on the board of Public Counsel, supporting legal services for underserved communities.



Robert CAMPBELL
Partner
Cox, Castle & Nicholson
USC Gould
School of Law
LITIGATION

Robert Campbell is a leading construction lawyer based in Southern California, dedicated to resolving construction claims disputes for owners and contractors across a wide range of projects, including hospitals, highways, high-

risers and resorts. He represents diverse clients, including project owners, prime contractors, construction managers and lenders, tackling complex disputes related to design liability, delays, change orders and more. Notable achievements include: winning a substantial recovery for an owner in a multi-party trial involving liquidated damages and change order disputes; securing a complete recovery for a contractor in a trial against a homeowner's association after a fire; and achieving favorable settlements for clients involved in complex litigation, including substantial design error claims related to multi-million-dollar projects.

Paul CARR-ROLLITT
Partner
Manatt, Phelps &
Phillips LLP
Peter A. Allard School of Law -
University of British Columbia
LIFE SCIENCES & HEALTHCARE



he volunteers with Bet Tzedek and America SCORES LA, advocating for diversity and equity in the legal field. His commitment to community service includes participating in initiatives like the Anti-Black Racism symposium at York University.



Tim CHANG
Partner
Musick, Peeler &
Garrett LLP
McGeorge School of
Law, University of
the Pacific
CORPORATE

Tim Chang is a partner in the Los Angeles office of Musick, Peeler & Garrett, serving multinational public and private companies, as well as high-net-worth individuals. Fluent in Chinese, he assists clients with transnational transactions involving China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the U.S. His practice encompasses business transactions, mergers and acquisitions, corporate governance and real estate. Recognized as a Southern California "Rising Star" by Los Angeles Magazine, Chang is active in community service, serving on the board of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation and as general counsel for the Greater Los Angeles Taiwan Center Foundation. He holds several corporate board positions, leveraging his expertise and cultural insight.

LEGAL VISIONARIES



Connie L. CHEN

Principal

Jackson Lewis P.C.
Cardozo School of Law
- Yeshiva University

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT



Vicki CHOU

Partner

Hueston Hennigan LLP
Harvard Law School

LITIGATION

Vicki Chou is a seasoned partner at Hueston Hennigan LLP and plays a leading role in the firm's trial practice and white collar and investigations teams. A former assistant U.S. attorney, she has handled

hundreds of complex criminal cases, including those involving computer fraud, intellectual property, money laundering and racketeering. Notable cases include her securing a favorable settlement for Union Pacific in a \$200-million wrongful death lawsuit and achieving a uniquely favorable plea agreement for Bill McGlashan in the "Varsity Blues" college admissions scandal. Beyond her litigation work, Chou is deeply involved in the legal community. She is president-elect of the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association, a board member of the Social Justice Legal Foundation and a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.



Morgan CHU

Partner

Irell & Manella LLP
Harvard Law School

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Morgan Chu, a partner at Irell & Manella LLP, is one of the nation's leading trial lawyers, securing over \$9 billion in verdicts and settlements. Described as "the most gifted trial lawyer in the USA," he recently won a \$2.3-billion patent judgment for VLSI Technology against Intel, the largest in U.S. history. Chu also defended Fortress Investment Group in an antitrust case filed by Intel, earning a Top Defense Verdict. Beyond intellectual property, he represented Elon Musk in a breach of contract suit against OpenAI. Chu is deeply involved in philanthropy, chairing boards at City of Hope and Public Counsel and recently pledged \$10 million to UCLA's Institute of American Cultures.

Esther E. Cho is a partner at Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, where she leads the securities litigation and enforcement practice. With over 20 years of experience, she defends major financial institutions in state and federal courts and before arbitration forums like FINRA and the New York Stock Exchange. Cho recently achieved a complete defense verdict for a multinational investment bank in a multi-million-dollar FINRA arbitration involving allegations of improper liquidation of stock positions. As the partner-in-charge of the firm's new Southern California office, she oversees strategic growth and promotes diversity initiatives. Recognized in

Esther E. CHO

Partner

Stradley Ronon
Stevens & Young, LLP
Loyola Law School

LITIGATION



top legal rankings, she is committed to advancing underrepresented legal professionals and regularly speaks on securities litigation and diversity in the legal field.



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LEGAL VISIONARIES



**Emahn
COUNTS**
Managing Attorney
Counts Law Firm PC
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION

Emahn Counts, founder and managing attorney of Counts Law Firm PC, has practiced law for over 20 years, specializing in business, family and real estate litigation. He has handled more than 1,000 cases across Southern California, representing major clients such as American Express, Porsche and Sallie Mae. His firm was featured in the Daily Journal for tackling entrepreneurial challenges. Counts has earned recognition from Best Lawyers in America (2024) and the Los Angeles Business Journal. Notable achievements include winning a \$135k-settlement in a fraud case, securing \$100k for property damages and obtaining the full title to a million-dollar family home. Before founding his firm, Counts led the Pasadena office of a nationwide litigation firm.



**Michael
DE VRIES**
Partner
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
UC Berkeley
School of Law
**INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY**

Michael De Vries is a partner at Kirkland & Ellis, specializing in high-stakes intellectual property litigation, including trade secret misappropriation and patent infringement. Over the past 24 months,

he has secured major trial wins, including one of the largest defense-side patent verdicts in U.S. history and led eight consecutive jury trial victories totaling over \$2.5 billion in awards. His notable cases include defending Samsung in a \$4-billion patent suit and securing a \$765-million trade secret verdict for Motorola. Recognized by Chambers USA, The American Lawyer and Forbes' "America's Top 200 Lawyers," De Vries also contributes to the Greater Los Angeles legal community and oversees pro bono matters for Inner City Law Center.



**Alesha
DOMINIQUE**
Partner
Norton Rose Fulbright
The George Washington
University Law School
**INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY**

Alesha Dominique is a partner at Norton Rose Fulbright, inspired by her mother's success as a female design engineer to pursue a path in mathematics, science and law. After teaching math, she found her passion in intellectual property litigation during law school. As a partner, she handles trademark, false advertising, copyright and patent cases, representing clients before federal courts and agencies. Dominique's instincts and strategic thinking have earned her a reputation as a trusted advisor. Beyond her legal practice, she actively volunteers with L.A. Works and advocates for diversity in the entertainment industry. Recently appointed U.S. chair of the International Trademark Association's Non-Traditional Marks Subcommittee, Dominique is committed to shaping the future of IP law while mentoring and uplifting others.

Dean E. Dennis is the managing attorney at Hill, Farrer & Burrill, specializing in eminent domain and land use disputes. He represents California landowners in complex cases involving zoning, property rights and environmental regulations, including the California Coastal Act and Environmental Quality Act. Dennis has argued several landmark cases before California's Courts of Appeal and Supreme Court. Notable successes include securing 180% and 700% above appraised compensation for landowners in the Intuit Dome project and winning 186% more in a shopping center condemnation case. He also advises the Coachella Valley Water District in a decades-long energy

**Dean E.
DENNIS**
Managing Partner
Hill, Farrer & Burrill LLP
USC Gould
School of Law
LITIGATION



dispute, achieving settlements over \$26 million. A Princeton and USC Law graduate, Dennis has held prominent roles on state bar committees and frequently lectures on real estate law at USC.



**Thomas
DOVER**
Partner
Nossaman
Southwestern
Law School
**INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY**

Thomas Dover is the chair of Nossaman's Intellectual Property group and co-leads the privacy/data security group, offering innovative legal strategies across intellectual property, corporate transactions and advertising. With extensive experience in the U.S. and internationally, he handles complex software transactions, IT procurement for public entities and consumer product development. Dover's diverse clientele includes small app developers, yoga instructors, North America's largest utility, major energy infrastructure entities and transportation agencies. His intellectual property practice encompasses prosecution, transactions and litigation in various courts and before agencies like the USPTO and WIPO. Dover focuses on emerging technologies and ensures compliance with privacy regulations, including the EU GDPR and the California Consumer Privacy Act, while supporting public agencies in adopting innovative solutions.



**Camron
DOWLATSHAHI**
Founding Partner
Mills Sadat Dowlat LLP
New York University
School of Law
**LABOR &
EMPLOYMENT**

Camron Dowlatshahi, founding partner at Mills Sadat Dowlat, is known for his extensive experience and personalized client care. He has successfully represented clients in various cases, including employment discrimination, intellectual

property disputes and entertainment contract negotiations. Actively advising Latina musicians, Dowlatshahi has been featured in notable outlets such as The Washington Post and Rolling Stone. In 2017, he received the Pro Bono Award from White & Case LLP for his work on homelessness legislation and various pro bono clients. He was named to the Los Angeles Business Journal's 2023 Leaders of Influence - Labor & Employment Attorneys. Noteworthy recent cases include representing Sarah Stage in a contract dispute with Unruly Agency and Shannon Sokolow, whose emotional support dog was killed by a landlord's negligence.

As managing partner of Lagerlof, LLP, Joshua Driskell has led the firm through multiple mergers and acquisitions, created a charitable extension called Lagerlof Cares and led the firm and its attorneys to be leaders in their field and communities. He is a member of the Pasadena Bar Association, the Los Angeles County Bar Association and the California Bar Association. Prior to forming Primuth, Driskell & Terzian, LLP, with partner Jonathan Primuth in 2014, Driskell worked at a multi-state law firm, handling a wide variety of matters for individuals and small- and medium-

**Joshua
DRISKELL**
Managing Partner
Lagerlof, LLP
The University of Toledo
College of Law
CORPORATE



sized businesses. In addition to his activities as an attorney, he is a board member for the Pasadena Museum of History, Leadership Pasadena and Pasadena Fire Foundation.



**Kathryn
EDGERTON**
Member
Mintz
Cornell Law School
**LIFE SCIENCES &
HEALTHCARE**

Kathryn Edgerton, a member at Mintz, is a leading advisor known for her strategic guidance to healthcare providers and related businesses, including addiction treatment facilities and telehealth providers. A recognized expert in the regulation of addiction treatment, she has successfully navigated hundreds of providers through complex operations and investigations. Edgerton's transactional experience includes serving as regulatory counsel for private equity investments in health care. Among her recent accolades are nominations for Advocate of the Year by the Los Angeles Business Journal and recognition in Best Lawyers in America. Beyond her practice, she engages in community service and supports various organizations dedicated to children and families, including the Boys & Girls Club of Metro LA and Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County.

LEGAL VISIONARIES



Hunter R. ELEY
Managing Partner
Doll Amir & Eley LLP
William & Mary Law School
LITIGATION

Hunter R. Eley, managing partner of Doll Amir & Eley LLP, is a leading attorney with extensive experience in defending clients against class action and individual lawsuits nationwide. As chair of the firm's financial services practice, he specializes in consumer lending across various sectors, including retail banking, mortgage lending and auto loans. His notable achievements include serving as national counsel for a major tech company facing "Right to Repair" class actions and successfully defending a nationwide mortgage lender against class action claims. Recognized as one of the Top 20 Under 40 by the Daily Journal and named a Super Lawyer by Los Angeles Magazine, Eley has authored several influential publications in consumer financial services law, further establishing his expertise in the field.



Phillip J. ESKENAZI
Partner
BakerHostetler LLP
UC Law San Francisco
LITIGATION

As a partner of BakerHostetler, Phillip J. Eskenazi is a seasoned trial lawyer with over 32 years of experience in complex business and securities litigation, focusing on class action defense. Born and raised in Los

Angeles, he has built a national trial practice representing clients across diverse industries. Eskenazi has served as lead counsel in more than 250 class action matters and achieved notable trial victories, including a rare jury trial win against the SEC. As co-head of the firm's retail industry team, he has represented prominent brands like Victoria's Secret and Lowe's in sensitive litigation. Recently, he has led defenses for a landfill operator in a high-stakes environmental case, a national accounting firm in a billion-dollar securities fraud matter and various retailers facing class action lawsuits.



Miles J. FELDMAN
Founding Partner
Raines Feldman Littrell LLP
UC Berkeley School of Law
LITIGATION

Miles J. Feldman is a founding partner and co-chair of the trials, litigation and dispute resolution and intellectual property departments at Raines Feldman Littrell LLP. With over two decades of experience, he has successfully navigated high-profile cases through trial and appeal. Previously a partner at leading business litigation firms in Los Angeles, Feldman has earned numerous accolades, including recognition as one of the Best Lawyers in America by U.S. News and World Report, a Super Lawyer by Los Angeles Magazine since 2008 and selection as a Top 50 Litigator in Los Angeles by the Los Angeles Business Journal. His practice centers on complex business and intellectual property litigation, representing clients across various sectors, including entertainment and finance.

Christopher E. Faenza, partner and owner at Yoka | Smith, LLP, has been a distinguished attorney since his admission to the New Jersey Bar in 1994. A graduate of Penn State University and Rutgers School of Law-Newark, he has extensive trial experience, with over 95 Superior Court jury trials to verdict in New Jersey and California. Impressively, more than 85% of these cases resulted in defense verdicts, often below the final demands made. Faenza has secured defense verdicts in wrongful death, intentional torts, business litigation, health clubs, auto, trucking and product liability

Christopher E. FAENZA
Partner & Owner
Yoka | Smith, LLP
Rutgers University School of Law
LITIGATION



cases. He actively holds leadership positions in ABOTA, ASCDC and the Italian American Lawyers Association, further showcasing his commitment to the legal profession and his community.

2024

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L E G A L V I S I O N A R I E S


Amber S. FINCH

Partner
Reed Smith LLP
USC Gould
School of Law
LITIGATION

Amber Finch is the global chair of Reed Smith's insurance recovery group, where she has led high-profile insurance coverage disputes related to opioids, environmental issues, mass shootings, the pandemic and the Ukraine war, securing hundreds of millions in recovery for clients. Recognized as one of Business Insurance's 2023 Women to Watch and a fellow of the American College of Coverage Counsel, her accolades highlight her expertise in insurance law and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Finch co-leads significant cases, including coverage disputes exceeding \$2 billion for global aircraft lessors and a federal lawsuit for a home improvement giant. As a former managing partner of Reed Smith's Los Angeles office, she leveraged her leadership to expand the firm's presence in Southern California.


Terrence Mark FRANKLIN

Partner
Sacks, Glazier, Franklin & Lodise LLP
Harvard Law School
LITIGATION

Partner Terrence Franklin of Sacks, Glazier, Franklin, & Lodise LLP is a litigator with over 30 years of experience in trusts and estates disputes, recognized as one of the top litigators in the U.S. His notable

achievements include the landmark *Moeller v. Superior Court* case and the successful representation of trustees in high stakes matters, including an \$11-million trust. Beyond his legal expertise, Franklin established the UCLA School of Law Postgraduate Fellowship for Racial Equity in Trust & Estate Law, co-founded the ACTEC DEIA Committee and developed a video series on equitable practices. He has received numerous accolades, including Chambers and Partners' "Lifetime Achievement Award" and recognition in multiple "Top 100" lists, embodying his mission to "Help Bend the Arc of History Towards Justice."


Elaine FRESCH

Partner-in-Charge,
Los Angeles
Hawkins Parnell & Young
University of San Diego
School of Law

Partner-in-Charge of Hawkins Parnell & Young, Elaine Fresch specializes in construction defect litigation, representing developers, contractors, subcontractors and construction product manufacturers. While trials in complex cases are rare, she has successfully handled federal trials and arbitrations in various commercial and real estate matters. Fresch also defends clients in general liability and construction accident lawsuits and represents product manufacturers in intricate subrogation claims. She serves on CLM's Construction Advisory Board, co-chairs its Diversity and Inclusion Committee and teaches at CLM Claims College School of Construction. A sought-after speaker at industry seminars, Fresch is a charter fellow of the Construction Lawyers Society of America and received the Larry Syhre Commitment to Service Award for her contributions to the industry.

Michael G. Freedman has rapidly become a leading criminal defense and trial attorney, founding The Freedman Firm in 2021. His firm has grown to four attorneys, representing high-profile clients like Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby and Trey Songz. Freedman has successfully defended clients in various cases, including a recent federal RICO trial involving former Los Angeles Deputy Mayor Raymond Chan. He has achieved numerous dismissals and acquittals, while also handling complex civil lawsuits for various plaintiffs and defendants. His federal practice includes diverse cases such as healthcare fraud and wire fraud, while his state court work

Michael G. FREEDMAN

Founder & Principal
The Freedman Firm PC
UC Law San Francisco
LITIGATION



covers DUIs, murder and public corruption. Freedman is a prominent figure in the cannabis litigation space and is actively involved in community initiatives, serving in leadership roles in several legal organizations.


Richard Conant GILLER

Partner
Greenspoon Marder LLP
Southwestern
Law School
LITIGATION

Richard Conant Giller, a prominent insurance recovery partner at Greenspoon Marder LLP, is a leading authority in sports insurance. As national chair of the firm's insurance recovery & counseling group, he has secured over \$26.5 million for professional athlete clients in the past year alone and expanded the insurance practice group threefold. Giller currently represents former MLB pitcher Matt Garza in a lawsuit involving insurance brokers and Lloyd's of London. His extensive experience includes representing hundreds of institutional policyholders, contributing to pro-policyholder law and authoring influential amicus briefs. Giller's accolades include recognition in The Best Lawyers in America® and the 2023 Distinguished Service Award from the College of the Holy Cross Lawyers Association.


Eric J. GITIG

Principal
Jackson Lewis P.C.
Cardozo School of Law
- Yeshiva University
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

Eric J. Gitig is a principal at Jackson Lewis P.C. in Los Angeles, where he focuses on representing employers in employment litigation, including class, collective and PAGA actions under California and federal wage and hour laws. He provides

comprehensive legal counsel on workplace issues and conducts investigations while specializing in the manufacturing, hospitality and retail industries. Over the past two years, Gitig has achieved notable case successes; he negotiated a favorable settlement for a client facing significant liability in a complex wage and hour class action and PAGA case, effectively dismissing a plaintiff's motion for class certification through strategic litigation. He also represented a prominent client in multiple class and PAGA actions involving over 20 wage and hour violations, successfully compelling arbitration and saving the client millions.


Justin M. GOLDSTEIN

Partner
Sklar Kirsh LLP
USC Gould
School of Law
LITIGATION

Justin M. Goldstein chairs the litigation department and serves on the management committee at his firm. With over two decades of trial and appellate experience, he handles business, entertainment and intellectual property disputes in state and federal courts, as well as in arbitration. Recognized as one of the Los Angeles Business Journal's 500 Most Influential Business Leaders, Goldstein has represented Fortune 500 companies and prominent entertainment entities. He previously worked at Katten Muchin Rosenman, O'Melveny & Myers and Carlsmith Ball. Notable successes include a defense verdict for Southern California Edison against ExxonMobil's \$32-million claim. A USC Gould School of Law graduate, Goldstein has published articles and lectured on various legal topics, contributing to his reputation as a leading trial lawyer in Los Angeles.

As a partner at Perkins Coie, Oliver Gold is a premier trial lawyer in Los Angeles, recognized for his strategic litigation skills across federal and state courts. Notably, he secured a major victory in a \$500-million breach of contract case for a real estate client and obtained damages against the owner of the Oceanwide Plaza property. Gold also achieved a \$42.6-million judgment against a developer's parent company and successfully resolved claims of trade libel and trademark infringement. His proactive pro bono efforts mentor junior lawyers and support vulnerable community members. Acknowledged

Oliver GOLD

Partner
Perkins Coie
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION



as a Best Lawyer: Ones to Watch in Litigation since 2022, Gold serves on the Board of Governors for the Association of Business Trial Lawyers, Los Angeles Chapter.

LEGAL VISIONARIES



Nicole Hoeksma GORDON

Partner
The Sohagi Law Group, PLC
USC Gould
School of Law
LIFE SCIENCES & HEALTHCARE

Nicole Hoeksma Gordon, a partner at The Sohagi Law Group, advises public agencies on complex environmental and land use matters across many levels. Her expertise encompasses the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and endangered species legislation. Recognized as a Super Lawyers "Rising Star," Gordon frequently lectures on environmental issues. Recent representative matters include defending UC Berkeley against CEQA challenges related to its Long Range Development Plan and various successful defenses for the County of Los Angeles on multiple CEQA cases. She also provides ongoing legal counsel to Los Angeles World Airports on modernization efforts for LAX and advises the California Public Utilities Commission on numerous complex CEQA and NEPA projects.



Adam D.H. GRANT

Partner
Grant Shenon, A Professional Law Corporation
Southwestern Law School
CYBERSECURITY

Adam D.H. Grant, partner at The Sohagi Law Group, specializes in complex litigation and cybersecurity. With over 30 years of experience, he excels in handling complex business disputes, online

privacy and embezzlement cases, often achieving favorable outcomes without trial. Grant emphasizes understanding clients' stories to tailor effective strategies and has established himself as a cybersecurity law authority. A 14-time Ironman and five-time Ultraman finisher, he embodies determination in both sports and law. He received the 2015 San Fernando Valley Business Journal Trailblazer Award for Data Privacy and was inducted into the San Fernando Valley Business Journal Hall of Fame in 2017. Grant's community involvement includes serving as an emeritus board member of the Shalom Institute Camp and Conference Center.



J. Mira HASHMALL

Partner
Miller Barondess, LLP
USC Gould
School of Law

J. Mira Hashmall is a highly regarded trial lawyer and certified appellate expert as a partner of Miller Barondess, with over 20 years of experience representing governmental entities and major companies in sectors like entertainment, healthcare and transportation. Her notable victories include a ruling from the California Court of Appeal confirming that elected officials are not "employees" under Labor Code section 1102.5 and a reversal of an \$8.1-million judgment against L.A. County. Hashmall has defended L.A. County in high-profile cases, including one concerning crash scene photographs related to the Kobe Bryant tragedy, resulting in a significantly lower jury award than sought. She is also recognized for her leadership in homeless shelter agreements and her advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights.

David Hanna, a member of Mintz, is a distinguished life sciences intellectual property attorney with over 15 years of experience in patent prosecution, litigation and advisory roles across diverse technology sectors, including pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and medical devices. He specializes in pharmaceutical patent matters under the Biologics Price Competition and Innovation Act (BPCIA) and the Hatch-Waxman Act, representing clients such as Amgen, Sanofi and SK Chemical. Notable victories include leading Amgen's defense against biosimilar competition, successfully invalidating key Pfizer patents. Recognized by

David HANNA

Member
Mintz

University of Minnesota Law School
LIFE SCIENCES & HEALTHCARE



Best Lawyers in America and Southern California Super Lawyers, he also offers pro bono work for LGBTQ+ rights. Hanna actively participates in professional organizations and serves on the board of the Echo Theater Company.

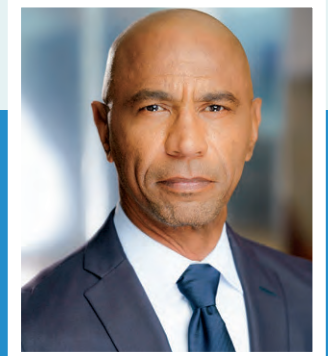


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A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

CONGRATULATES

Felton T. Newell and Quincy C. Newell

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Newell Law Group is a full service Los Angeles based boutique law firm that provides legal counsel in the areas of entertainment, employment and general business law. Our attorneys are experienced and well-connected, and we combine our decades of real-world experience and industry knowledge to bring the highest quality representation to our clients.

LEGAL VISIONARIES



Jennifer L. HERNANDEZ

Partner
Holland & Knight
Stanford Law School
LITIGATION

Jennifer Hernandez is a land use and environmental lawyer with over 40 years of experience, currently leading Holland & Knight's West Coast Land Use and Environmental Group from San Francisco and Los Angeles. She advocates for attainable homeownership for the "missing middle" in California, believing it to be a moral and civil rights issue. Hernandez has received numerous accolades, including recognition as a top-tier lawyer by Chambers USA and the State Bar of California. She has authored five books and over 50 articles on environmental law and frequently speaks at legal and environmental conferences. Outside of Holland & Knight, she serves on the board of California Environmental Voters and has been honored with the Chesterfield Smith Award for her commitment to community service and pro bono work.



Stephanie HURST

Partner
Mayer Brown
USC Gould
School of Law
CORPORATE

Stephanie Hurst has served as lead or co-lead counsel on transactions valued at nearly \$1.75 billion in the past two years, while also expanding her firm's M&A practice and enhancing diversity in the Los Angeles office. She is a trusted

advisor on corporate ESG matters for California-based companies and has guided national and international clients through new climate-related disclosure laws. Notable transactions include co-leading the \$1.16-billion sale of Foster Farms to Atlas Holdings and acting as lead counsel on a \$510-million airplane financing transaction. A passionate advocate for pro bono work, Hurst has logged over 1,700 hours, focusing on ESG certification for minority women entrepreneurs. She plays key roles in various firm committees, including diversity initiatives and co-heads Web3 LAVA, promoting innovations in the venture space.



Robbin ITKIN

Partner
Sklar Kirsh LLP
USC Gould
School of Law
BANKRUPTCY

Robbin Itkin, a partner at Sklar Kirsh, specializes in restructuring billions in debt through Chapter 11 and out-of-court resolutions. With extensive experience representing debtors, creditors and trustees across various industries, she has handled high-profile cases, including those involving Chrysler LLC and the Los Angeles Dodgers. Recognized as a Chambers USA-ranked attorney, Itkin has received numerous accolades, including the 2022 Turnaround Transaction of the Year Award from the Turnaround Management Association. She also mediates pro bono litigation for U.S. District and Bankruptcy Courts in California and has been featured in Super Lawyers and Lawdragon lists for her exceptional work in bankruptcy and restructuring.

Larry Iser, co-founder and managing partner of Kinsella Holley Iser Kump Steinsapir, is renowned for representing high-profile clients in the entertainment industry. He handles complex litigation for major firms like Kinetic Content, Delirium TV and Mattel, Inc. In a notable recent case, Iser successfully represented Delirium TV in a \$4-million arbitration against Love is Blind participant Renee Poche for violating confidentiality agreements. He also secured a \$5-million arbitration award for Kinetic Content against a Married at First Sight participant, setting a strong precedent for the reality TV industry. He achieved a complete defense verdict for Mattel

Larry ISER

Managing Partner
Kinsella Holley Iser
Kump Steinsapir LLP
UC Law San Francisco
LITIGATION



in a dispute with billionaire developer Norton Herrick, who claimed the company stole a show format; Iser also advises Mattel on various intellectual property matters.



Richard KAPLAN

Founding Partner
Kaplan Marino
Pepperdine Caruso
School of Law
LITIGATION

Richard Kaplan, founder of Kaplan Marino, PC, is a prominent attorney in white collar defense, renowned for his innovative legal strategies and unique perspective. With over 36 years of experience, he has built a reputation for achieving favorable outcomes in complex criminal cases, often resulting in dismissals. His clientele includes high-net-worth individuals and entrepreneurs seeking confidentiality and discretion. A former president of the Beverly Hills Bar Association, Kaplan frequently speaks on criminal law topics and consults on high-profile cases involving mental health issues. Notable victories include the dismissal of charges in a multi-million-dollar fraud case and a successful defense against serious allegations. Known for his empathetic approach and effective defense theories, he skillfully navigates challenging legal landscapes while maintaining the utmost confidentiality for his clients.



Stephen KAUFMAN

Principal
Kaufman Legal Group
UC Law San Francisco
LITIGATION

Stephen Kaufman founded Kaufman Legal Group in 1996 and is a recognized authority in campaign finance and election law. He represents a diverse clientele, including elected officials, corporations, PACs and nonprofit

organizations, focusing on campaign finance, election and governmental ethics. As an expert on voting systems, Kaufman served as a recount attorney for the Gore-Lieberman campaign in Florida and as chief counsel for the U.S. House Democratic Caucus on election reform. He chairs the State Voting Modernization Board and has held leadership roles in various organizations. A frequent author and speaker, he has received numerous accolades, including being named one of California's top attorneys under 40. Kaufman's recent work includes advising prominent political figures in major elections and advocating for statewide ballot measures and ensuring compliance with campaign regulations.



Sharon R. KLEIN

Partner
Blank Rome LLP
Temple University
Beasley School of Law

Sharon R. Klein is a nationally recognized leader in data privacy, cybersecurity and AI law, bringing over 40 years of experience to her role as co-chair of Blank Rome's privacy, security & data protection practice and managing partner of the Orange County office. A thought leader in her field, she has advised clients on navigating complex technology transactions, compliance with evolving regulations and mitigating cybersecurity risks. A strong advocate for women in STEM, she mentors young attorneys and supports the Girl Scouts of Orange County, emphasizing STEM initiatives. Klein's contributions have garnered numerous accolades, including being named a "Top AI Lawyer" and "Top Cybersecurity Author" in 2024, reflecting her influence and commitment to advancing legal standards in technology and privacy.

Michael Kent, founding partner at Kent I Pincin, is a seasoned litigator specializing in employment discrimination, wrongful death, personal injury and mass torts, including significant cases like the wildfire litigation and USC/Tyndall sex abuse claims. He expertly manages all litigation phases, achieving notable victories, including a \$1.65-million settlement against Los Angeles County and a \$1.45-million settlement against the City of Glendale. Recognized as a Super Lawyers "Rising Star" from 2017 to 2024, Kent is dedicated to thorough case preparation and fact development. As an Eagle Scout, he values community service, volunteering

Michael J. KENT

Founding Partner
Kent I Pincin, LLP
Pepperdine Caruso
School of Law
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT



at local events such as the Redondo Beach Police Pancake Breakfast and participating in fundraising races for cancer research. He also supports Boxer Rescue after rescuing two boxer dogs.

LEGAL VISIONARIES



Barry KURTZ
Chair, Franchise and Distribution Practice Group
Lewitt Hackman
Southwestern Law School
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Barry Kurtz chairs Lewitt Hackman's franchise and distribution practice group, one of California's largest dedicated law departments in this field. He is a certified specialist in franchise and distribution law by the State Bar of California and a certified franchise executive with the International Franchise Association. Kurtz has been recognized as one of the top attorneys in franchise law by The Best Lawyers in America® and was named a Top 100 Lawyer in Los Angeles by the Los Angeles Business Journal. He is committed to education and community service, having served on multiple boards, including Westmark School and the Dubnoff Center, and has consistently been honored as a trusted advisor in the San Fernando Valley.



Marie LAMOLINARA
Partner
Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers LLP
Southwestern Law School
LITIGATION

Marie LaMolinara is currently employed as a partner at Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers, where she plays a crucial role in advocating for clients facing the challenges of family law litigation. In

her position, she specializes in various aspects of family law, including divorce, child custody and support matters. Her expertise allows her to navigate the complexities of legal procedures and provide clients with the support and guidance they need during emotionally charged situations. In addition to her advocacy work, LaMolinara actively mentors junior attorneys and interns at the firm, fostering a collaborative and supportive environment that promotes professional growth. Her commitment to excellence in legal practice has earned her respect among her peers and clients alike.

JR Lanis is a seasoned partner and leader of the business practice group at BakerHostetler's Los Angeles office, specializing in public company securities offerings, mergers and acquisitions and corporate transactions. He serves as outside counsel for numerous public companies and investment banks, ensuring compliance with Nasdaq and NYSE regulations. Recent highlights include leading GameSquare Holdings in its acquisition of FaZe Holdings and the subsequent formation of FaZe Media. Lanis also assisted Nuve Holdings and NuZee with multiple secondary offerings on the Nasdaq. He also engages in community initiatives,



JR LANIS
Partner
BakerHostetler LLP
The University of Texas School of Law
CORPORATE

chairing BakerHostetler's West Coast Business Development Committee and participating with the Association for Corporate Growth. His strategic acumen, leadership and commitment solidify his reputation as an influential lawyer.



David LARI
Partner
Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP
UCLA School of Law
LIFE SCIENCES & HEALTHCARE

David Lari is a partner at Cox, Castle & Nicholson, one of the largest law firms specializing in real estate in the U.S. Recognized as one of California's leading transactional attorneys, he heads the healthcare real estate practice group and the Los Angeles real estate and development team, while also serving on the firm's management committee. With over 25 years of experience, he has successfully completed over \$10 billion in healthcare and life sciences transactions. Outside of Cox, Castle & Nicholson, Lari is committed to community service, serving as a board member for the City of Hope's Los Angeles Real Estate Council and participating in Cox Castle's Homelessness Initiative Committee to address the homelessness crisis.



CONGRATULATIONS

Russ August & Kabat proudly congratulates

LARRY C. RUSS

on being among the

2024 LEGAL VISIONARIES

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Russ August & Kabat focuses on representing plaintiffs in patent, trademark, copyright infringement and complex business litigation matters, intellectual property protection and licensing, mergers & acquisitions and real property transactions and litigation.

LEGAL VISIONARIES



Irfan LATEEF
Partner
Knobbe Martens
Georgetown University
Law Center
**INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY**

Irfan Lateef is a prominent leader in the Irvine office of Knobbe Martens, a national IP law firm, recognized for over 20 years of service as an IP litigator for global Fortune 500 companies. As chair of the firm's Electrical, Semiconductor & Computer Technology Litigation Committee and leader of the Japan practice, he has built a reputation in the Southern California legal community. Lateef's expertise, rooted in biomedical engineering, enables him to adeptly handle complex technologies across multiple industries. A key figure in defending Masimo's innovative patient-monitoring technology, he has secured significant victories, including landmark jury awards and successful defenses against infringement claims. In 2024, Lateef achieved notable successes for Masimo, including the dismissal of a patent infringement lawsuit and a permanent injunction against Sotera Wireless and Foxconn.



Jocelyn LEINART
Co-Chair of NIL Practice
Munck Wilson
Mandala, LLP
Loyola Law School
CORPORATE

Jocelyn Leinart joined Munck Wilson Mandala in 2021, where she serves as co-chair of the NIL practice. A corporate and sports lawyer, she has been instrumental in launching the firm's focus on name,

image and likeness (NIL) partnerships. Her notable accomplishments include facilitating multi-million-dollar real estate transactions, such as the \$2.3-billion acquisition of NIC Inc. by Tyler Technologies. Before her legal career, Leinart was an actress, known for roles in *Make It or Break It* and *The Mentalist*. Alongside fellow attorney Tasha Schwikert, she has built the firm's sports law practice, representing athletes, coaches and brands. Leinart is also a sought-after speaker on NCAA regulations affecting amateur athletes and is actively engaged with the Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) to support pediatric healthcare.

Jennifer Levitt is a leading partner in Simpson Thacher & Bartlett's banking & credit and fund finance practices and is known for her innovative financing solutions for private equity sponsors. She has pioneered structures such as net asset value (NAV) financings and subscription facilities. Some of her key accomplishments include advising on high-profile transactions like Stonepeak's \$3.3-billion Asia Infrastructure Fund and Silver Lake's \$13-billion acquisition of Endeavor. Beyond her legal work, Levitt is dedicated to community initiatives, particularly for immigrant victims of domestic violence. As co-chair of the firm's diversity and finance committees,

Jennifer LEVITT

Partner
Simpson Thacher &
Bartlett LLP
Harvard Law School
CORPORATE



she fosters diversity and oversees the firm's budget. A recognized thought leader, she frequently speaks at industry events and has received multiple accolades, including the Fund Finance Association's "Contribution to the Industry" Award.



Jason LINDER
Partner
Mayer Brown
Harvard Law School
LITIGATION

Partner Jason Linder of Mayer Brown is the only former DOJ Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) prosecutor on the West Coast, specializing in complex, cross-border investigations involving corruption and fraud. He represents notable clients, including former FTX executives in ongoing DOJ, SEC and CFTC investigations, and successfully defended 3M in a major FCPA inquiry that led to a \$6.6-million settlement. Linder also advises senior executives from Silicon Valley Bank following its high-profile collapse. Additionally, he represents a major consulting firm in a corruption probe in Saudi Arabia and guides a publicly traded mining company's response to securities fraud inquiries. As the national co-chair of the American Bar Association's White Collar Crime Committee, Linder is recognized as a top FCPA lawyer by Chambers USA and the Daily Journal.



Jonathan D. LITRELL
Managing Partner
Raines Feldman Littrell
LLP
Loyola Law School
CORPORATE

Jonathan D. Littrell is the managing partner of Raines Feldman Littrell LLP and has been consistently recognized as one of Southern California's Super Lawyers "Rising Stars." With extensive transactional experience across corporate, private equity, venture capital and securities, he represents public and private entities, fund sponsors, family offices and asset management firms in corporate governance and finance. Littrell's expertise includes structuring, mergers and acquisitions, equity financing, fund formation, joint ventures and private placements. Before joining Raines Feldman Littrell, he was a project manager for a prominent Los Angeles development company focused on low-income tax credit housing. He possesses practical experience in real estate acquisition, entitlement, construction and asset management and has collaborated with local government agencies, including the Los Angeles Housing Department and City Council.



Margaret LODISE
Partner
Sacks, Glazier, Franklin
& Lodise, LLP
UCLA School of Law
LITIGATION

Margaret Lodise is a highly esteemed trusts and estates litigator with over 35 years of experience in California, known for handling complex disputes and shaping legal precedents as a partner at Sacks,

Glazier, Franklin & Lodise. Her notable achievements include a landmark victory in *O'Connor v. O'Connor*, clarifying powers of appointment and successfully representing a nonprofit organization in a \$35-million trust case, resulting in a favorable settlement against distant family claims. A fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, Lodise has authored influential amicus briefs, impacting key Supreme Court decisions. As a former president of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, she advocates for diversity in the legal profession and has served as an expert witness in significant arbitration cases.

Tre Lovell, founder of the Los Angeles-based Lovell Firm, is a nationally recognized litigator specializing in high-profile legal matters for clients in the entertainment industry and general business litigation. A solo practitioner, he has successfully handled complex cases typically reserved for large firms, including multi-victim Ponzi schemes, securing millions for over 140 victims in a \$200-million fraud scam. Lovell has represented high-profile clients in intellectual property disputes involving music copyright infringement and celebrity endorsements. His notable cases include lawsuits against Justin Bieber and Kevin O'Leary. A leader in legal reform, he advocates for

Tre LOVELL

Trial Lawyer & Founder
The Lovell Firm, PC
Pomona College
Law School
**INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY**



addressing outdated laws, particularly regarding internet defamation and corporate accountability. Lovell is also committed to community service, offering pro bono legal support to local businesses, especially during the pandemic.



Barry MACNAUGHTON
Co-Managing Partner
Ervin Cohen & Jessup
LLP
The University of Texas
School of Law
LITIGATION

Barry MacNaughton, co-managing partner at Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP, has over 40 years of experience in resolving high-stakes business and commercial litigation across real estate, construction, manufacturing and technology sectors. With expertise in disputes such as construction defects, contract issues, business torts and insurance coverage, he has handled over three dozen trials and arbitrations. Notably, he secured a \$34-million award in a fraud case and regularly achieves defense verdicts for manufacturers. In addition to his litigation prowess, MacNaughton acts as a trusted business advisor, offering strategic guidance to clients. Under his leadership, the firm's profits and attorney headcount have grown significantly. Recognized as Best Lawyers®' 2023 Lawyer of the Year in Construction Law and consistently listed by Super Lawyers, he is distinguished for his legal expertise.

LEGAL VISIONARIES



Patrick Merritt MALONEY
Founding Partner
 The Maloney Firm APC
University of San Diego School of Law
LITIGATION

Patrick Merritt Maloney is the founding partner of The Maloney Firm APC and a renowned litigator. He has served as a volunteer fee dispute arbitrator for the Los Angeles County Bar Association and has earned accolades such as the AV-Preeminent rating from Martindale-Hubbell and Super Lawyers honors from 2015 to 2024. In recent years, Maloney secured a \$1.1-million arbitration win in a film fraud case, a significant property dispute victory and a summary judgment dismissal in a \$150-million racketeering lawsuit. He also successfully defended a fee dispute case before the California Court of Appeal. Active in the legal community, he has held leadership roles, including president of the South Bay Bar Association, and is engaged in local organizations like the Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce.



Scott MALZAHN
Managing Partner
 Waymaker LLP
UC Law San Francisco
LITIGATION

Scott Malzahn is the managing partner of Waymaker LLP and a leading California litigator specializing in complex commercial litigation, intellectual property and

Michael V. Mancini is the founding partner of Mancini Shenk LLP, specializing in shareholder, cannabis, business and entertainment litigation. A leader in cannabis disputes, he has recovered tens of millions for clients and regularly advises other top firms on complex cases. Mancini has been featured on expert panels discussing cannabis litigation and ethics. His diverse practice includes high-stakes business and entertainment cases, where he has achieved notable victories. His representative cases include defeating a temporary restraining order against a cannabis business, recovering \$900,000 in misused investments and securing a \$2.28-million jury verdict

fintech. He recently secured an \$18.3-million award in a trade secret case and crafted winning arguments in *FilmOn, Inc. v. DoubleVerify, Inc.*, setting a new legal standard for anti-SLAPP cases in California. Under his leadership, Waymaker has earned recognition as a top litigation boutique, known for its success in high-stakes cases and for fostering an inclusive work environment. Malzahn also serves as president of Equality California, playing a pivotal role in civil rights advocacy, including the historic *Perry v. Schwarzenegger* case that overturned California's ban on same-sex marriage.

Michael V. MANCINI
Founding Partner
 Mancini Shenk LLP
Georgetown University Law Center
LITIGATION



against an insurance company. Outside of Mancini Shenk, Mancini is active in the American Bar Association and the Los Angeles County Bar Association, where he serves as vice-chair of the cannabis section.



Joshua MANDELL
Partner
 Akerman LLP
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION

Joshua Mandell is a litigation partner at Akerman LLP where he handles complex business, real estate and cannabis law disputes. With a distinguished career that includes precedent-setting legal victories, he has secured significant compensatory and punitive damages for his clients. Notably, Mandell represented a prominent developer in a \$9.7-million jury award case and has been instrumental in shaping cannabis law through his leadership in the Los Angeles County Bar Association's cannabis law section. In addition to his legal work, he is deeply committed to pro bono efforts and community involvement; due to his extensive pro bono career, he was honored with Akerman's Pro Bono Impact Award in 2023 for his significant contributions.

[continued from page 5]

or wrong with hindsight." He cautioned that over-regulation could also result in the capture of AI by governments "and weaponized for government purposes, most obviously in something like censorship."

Kumayama said that it appeared that U.S. leaders were at least cognizant of the need to balance innovation with public safety, citing Gov. Newsom's decision to veto SB 1047.

"I think that California is trying to strike that balance. But it's tough. They're trying to be a lot more open to innovation than the EU," he said.

Given the pivotal role Section 230 played in allowing companies to innovate, is there a role for a similar provision applicable to artificial intelligence companies?

"We need something like Section 230 that provides some liability breathing room for generative AI model makers," Goldman said. "If they are liable for the contents that they publish, that is an untenable situation. And as a result, government interventions are necessary to provide that breathing space."

He added that this may not be the case if courts determine AI products are covered by First Amendment exemptions and noted that this relatively novel legal argument was only in the early stages of being litigated, citing a recent decision by a federal judge to California's AB 2839, which allows individuals to sue for damages over election deepfakes. *Kohls v. Bonta*, 2:24-cv-02527-JAM-CKD (E.D. Cal., filed Sept. 17, 2024).

"230 really opened the door for continued innovation and taking the risk because of the protections that 230 gave," Sonsini said. "I think that there may be the same kind of need, I'm not sure yet, and 230 is a roadmap that we can learn from ... it's on the table, but I think it's open."

"This is an area that, like so many other areas of the law, it would be logical and it would be reasonable to have some sort of an accommodation," Kumayama said.

However, he cautioned, "I don't think anybody really is seriously saying Section 230 just ought to automatically apply to AI. That's sort of a square peg and round hole."

Given the present lack of clarity, Sonsini said he's excited but sober about the prospects of AI.

"It's a complicated question, but I'll tell you, the energy is there. The investment drive is there. The innovation is there," he said.

King and Kumayama both described themselves as "AI optimists."

"I think that it has tremendous potential to change the world in a positive way," King said.

"That level of potential impact, that does, I think, demand some level of regulation or significant level of regulation," he added.

"I do worry about how, in our current political system, we're able to achieve that in a sensible way." ■

Jack Needham, Daily Journal Associate Editor
 The Los Angeles/San Francisco Daily Journal is a publication for lawyers practicing in California, featuring updates on the courts, regulatory changes, the State Bar and the legal community at large.



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LEGAL VISIONARIES


**Caroline
MANKEY**
Partner
Akerman LLP
UCLA School of Law
**INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY**

Caroline Mankey, a partner at Akerman LLP, is a distinguished trial attorney with over 28 years of experience, specializing in high-profile intellectual property disputes across industries such as entertainment, fashion and manufacturing. She has served as lead counsel in numerous trials and appeals, achieving notable victories in both federal and state courts. Recently, Mankey has successfully obtained injunctive relief for Phantom E-Moto in a counterfeit e-scooter case and represented T.W. Garner Food Company in a deceptive advertising class action, resulting in early dismissal. Her legal expertise has earned her numerous accolades, including recognition in The Best Lawyers in America® (2021-2024), 13 consecutive years on Super Lawyers' list for Intellectual Property Litigation and a spot among the Los Angeles Business Journal's "Top 100 Lawyers" in 2023.


**Neal
MARDER**
Partner
Akin
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION

Neal Marder, a Chambers-ranked trial lawyer and partner at Akin, has nearly 40 years of experience in high-stakes class action litigation. Co-chairing the firm's national class actions practice, he has led over

50 trials and arbitrations, representing major clients like McDonald's, Eastman Kodak and C.R. England. His notable victories include dismissals in securities fraud cases for Kodak and hedge fund Armistice, as well as precedent-setting wins in class action matters for C.R. England. Marder's strategic expertise has earned him numerous accolades, including the Los Angeles Business Journal's "Top 100 Lawyer" and The National Law Journal's "Litigation Trailblazer." He is also dedicated to pro bono work, advocating for foster youth and Hispanic/Latinx families with disabilities through partnerships with the Western Center on Law & Poverty.


**Marianne
MARTIN**
Partner
Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP
Brooklyn Law School
CORPORATE

Marianne S. Martin is a partner in the corporate practice at Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP, specializing in commercial and corporate finance. Over the past 24 months, she has demonstrated exceptional legal expertise in high-stakes financial transactions, successfully representing both borrowers and lenders in deals exceeding \$500 million, totaling over \$1.5 billion in her career. Renowned for her ability to simplify complex matters, Martin excels in private equity, alternative lending, distressed financing and real estate financing. She serves a diverse client base across various industries, including technology, healthcare and real estate. Notable achievements include leading a \$171-million syndicated financing and securing a \$60-million facility. Beyond her legal practice, Martin actively mentors emerging attorneys and supports financial literacy initiatives in underserved communities.

Nina Marino, co-founder of Kaplan Marino, PC, has built a distinguished career in white collar and complex criminal defense since 1998. Recognized as a Band 3 Leading Lawyer by Chambers USA, she has been celebrated for her tenacity and client-focused approach. Marino has earned accolades such as being named one of the Best Lawyers in America and a Lawdragon 500 Leading Litigator. A leader in the criminal defense community, she received the ABA Criminal Justice Section's Charles English Award and actively supports women's advocacy initiatives. In the past two years, she achieved significant victories, including a not guilty verdict


**Nina
MARINO**
Founding Partner
Kaplan Marino, PC
University of La Verne
College of Law
LITIGATION

for a CEO accused of bribery after a 10-week trial, a complete dismissal of a workers' comp fraud case and a negotiated probation for clients facing severe criminal charges.


**Hemal
MASTER**
Managing Shareholder
Frاندzel Robins Bloom & Csato, L.C.
Tulane University
School of Law
CORPORATE

Hemal Master is the managing shareholder at Frاندzel Robins Bloom & Csato, L.C., where he focuses on lender representation across various sectors, including commercial banks, private equity funds and hedge funds. Recognized as a "Leader of Influence: Minority Attorney" by the Los Angeles Business Journal and a Super Lawyer, his recent notable matters include structuring a \$125-million syndicated construction loan for a hotel, restructuring a \$120-million credit for an airplane engine leasing company and financing a private equity acquisition of technology stocks. In addition to his legal work, Master has developed four apartment buildings in Los Angeles since 2014, with 70 additional units currently under construction or in entitlement, and is the principal owner of a lounge and restaurant in Santa Monica, California.


**Jordan
MATTHEWS**
Partner
Weinberg Gonser LLP
Pepperdine Caruso
School of Law
CORPORATE

Jordan Matthews, a partner at Weinberg Gonser LLP, was lead counsel in landmark litigation against Steve Wynn, representing the primary witness in a Wall Street Journal exposé on Wynn's sexual misconduct.

He faced aggressive defense tactics from Wynn for five years, particularly regarding wrongful termination claims by Angelica Limcaco related to an alleged rape incident. Matthews filed a civil RICO case against Wynn Resorts and Wynn, coinciding with a Department of Justice lawsuit alleging violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). He argued that Wynn attempted to influence the Trump Administration to protect his business interests through a \$9-million lobbying effort. He presented the RICO case to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in December 2022, drawing significant media attention.


**Brett
MCCLURE**
Shareholder
Frاندzel Robins Bloom & Csato, L.C.
Santa Clara Law -
Santa Clara University
LITIGATION

Brett McClure is a shareholder and trial lawyer specializing in business disputes for clients ranging from Fortune 500 companies to startups and high-net-worth individuals. Recognized by The Legal 500 and the Los Angeles Business Journal, he has extensive experience as lead counsel in state and federal courts across various industries, including real estate, banking and technology. Prior to joining Frاندzel, McClure was a litigation partner at a top global law firm and remains active in the legal community through several bar associations and his support for Children's Hospital Los Angeles. His representative matters highlight his expertise in business litigation, real estate disputes, environmental cases, IP and trade secret matters and labor and employment claims, consistently achieving favorable outcomes for his clients through strategic litigation.

Kathryn McCann, a commercial litigator and co-founder of Annaguey McCann, specializes in large, complex civil litigation, including class actions and corporate disputes. Known for her strategic approach and client-focused representation, she handles a range of business disputes, including fraud, contracts, real estate and consumer class actions. McCann has extensive trial and appellate experience, representing municipalities and corporations in cases involving civil rights, real estate and financial fraud. Notable successes include winning a \$700,000 arbitration for a documentary producer, prevailing in securities fraud cases for a global real estate company


**Kathryn
Louise
MCCANN**
Partner
Annaguey McCann LLP
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION

and defending a municipality in a \$100-million settlement class action. McCann also supports pro bono work with Public Counsel, where she serves on the board of directors and has raised over \$100,000 for the organization.

LEGAL VISIONARIES



Jennifer MEEKER
Partner
Nossaman
University of Chicago
Law School
LITIGATION

Jennifer Meeker is a seasoned partner at Nossaman, specializing in complex commercial disputes for public and private clients in courts. As co-chair of Nossaman's insurance recovery group, she represents policyholder clients in various insurance claims, including CGL, D&O, E&O and first-party recoveries, and serves as vice-chair of the American Bar Association's Insurance Coverage Litigation Committee. Meeker also leads the firm's writs and appeals practice, handling civil appeals and petitions across multiple legal areas and works with trial counsel to strategically position cases for potential appeals. An active member of the legal community, she served on the board of governors of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers (ABTL), Los Angeles Chapter, and is committed to her local community through her involvement with the Boys and Girls Club of Long Beach.



Jonathan MELMED
Founding Partner
Melmed Law Group P.C.
Loyola Law School
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

Jonathan Melmed, founder of Melmed Law Group, an employment and labor law firm, has dedicated his entire professional career exclusively to high-stakes

employment litigation, representing workers across California and beyond. Over the past 10 years, he has served as lead counsel or co-lead counsel on hundreds of class and representative actions, including numerous multi-million-dollar cases, several of which have been resolved for amounts exceeding eight figures. Melmed has also been a champion for the rights of disenfranchised workers who have been victims of unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment and assault, illegal terminations and whistleblower retaliation.



Lisa Helfend MEYER
Co-Founder & Senior Partner
Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers LLP
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION

Lisa Helfend Meyer is a co-founder and senior partner at Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers, LLP, a family law firm based in Century City and Irvine. Certified as a specialist in family law since 1989, she is recognized for her work in complex divorce and child custody cases, prenuptial agreements and domestic violence matters. With over four decades of experience, she is a pioneer in the family law community, advocating for the rights of children and parents. Known for her expertise in high-conflict cases, Meyer has handled precedent-setting cases such as the Abbie Cohen Dorn case, where she secured visitation rights for a severely disabled mother. She also appeared on Good Morning America and 48 Hours for her legal achievements. She has been consistently recognized as a top family lawyer by Super Lawyers, the Daily Journal and the Los Angeles Business Journal.

Hamed Meshki is a prominent leader in Kirkland & Ellis' Los Angeles office and corporate practice, specializing in complex private equity transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, leveraged buyouts and restructurings. Since joining the firm in 2005, he has significantly contributed to the growth of its corporate practice, representing leading private equity firms such as Oaktree Capital Management and Brentwood Associates in transactions totaling over \$16.5 billion in the past two years across various industries, including healthcare, technology and consumer products. Meshki is actively involved in several firm committees and committed to community service, advising the Keep



Hamed MESHKI
Partner
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
University of Chicago
Law School
CORPORATE

Children in School Foundation. He has received multiple accolades, including recognition by Chambers USA and the Los Angeles Business Journal, and has been acknowledged for his strategic thinking and problem-solving skills.



THOMAS DOVER
Chair, Intellectual Property Group
& Co-Lead – Privacy /
Data Security Group



JENNY MEEKER
Co-Chair, Insurance Recovery
& Counseling & Lead –
Writs & Appeals Group

Congratulations Thomas and Jennifer
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L E G A L V I S I O N A R I E S



Louis (Skip) R. MILLER
Partner
Miller Barondess, LLP
UCLA School of Law
LITIGATION

With over five decades of litigation experience, Louis (Skip) R. Miller is a partner at Miller Barondess, LLP, specializing in high-stakes trial law. He has led over 100 state and federal trials, representing clients ranging from Fortune 500 companies to high-profile individuals and government entities. His notable cases include defending Byron Allen in a race discrimination lawsuit and representing LifeBrite Laboratories in a billion-dollar case against major health insurance companies. Miller has also successfully handled large-scale Ponzi scheme litigation and government-related cases, such as the Aliso Canyon gas leak settlement of \$119.5 million. He is actively involved in community service, supporting organizations like the Hollywood Food Coalition, Alzheimer's Association and D.A.R.E. America, where he served as chairman of the board.



Robert "Bob" F. MILLMAN
Shareholder
Littler
Cornell Law School
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

Robert (Bob) Millman, a senior shareholder at Littler, has been a pioneer in labor and employment law for over five decades. He founded Littler's Los Angeles offices and played a crucial role in growing

the firm into the nation's largest labor and employment law practice. Known for his leadership and dedication to his clients, Millman has represented employers in complex litigation and class actions before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and other courts across the U.S. He is frequently sought out for his expertise in Title VII, FLSA, NLRA and other employment laws. His influence extends beyond his legal work. Millman is a regular speaker on labor law topics and has received multiple honors, including recognition by Chambers USA, Best Lawyers in America and The National Law Journal.



James R. MOLEN
Litigation Partner
Greenberg Glusker LLP
University of Washington School of Law
LITIGATION

James R. Molen is a partner at Greenberg Glusker LLP, specializing in litigation for a diverse clientele, including technology firms, celebrities and real estate developers. Renowned for his innovative strategies, he focuses on entertainment, intellectual property, corporate governance, false advertising and cryptocurrency fraud. Recently, Molen has successfully represented clients affected by SIM swap hacks, securing significant recoveries. Recognized as the Inner City Law Center's Pro Bono Champion of the Month in July 2023, he also contributes to legal knowledge through articles on emerging issues. His notable cases include victories in the arbitration for 51 Minds Entertainment and the \$2-billion sale of the LA Clippers. Due to his work ethic and quality of work, Molen has been acknowledged as a Leader of Influence by the Los Angeles Business Journal in 2022.

Byrone Z. Moldo, a partner at Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP, is a leader in bankruptcy, receivership and creditors' rights. With a career spanning decades, he regularly serves as a court-appointed receiver and assignee for the benefit of creditors and fiduciary in complex insolvency matters. Moldo has represented bankruptcy trustees, creditors' committees and secured creditors, handling high-profile cases like the Skid Row Housing Trust receivership in Los Angeles. Recognized by Lawdragon 500, Super Lawyers and Best Lawyers in America, he also serves in leadership roles within

Byron Z. MOLDO
Partner
Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP
Southwestern Law School
BANKRUPTCY



the American Bankruptcy Institute and the National Association of Federal Equity Receivers. Moldo's work has made a significant impact in the field of bankruptcy and receivership law.



Sandra Lee MONTGOMERY
Partner
Proskauer Rose LLP
University of Washington School of Law
CORPORATE

Sandra Lee Montgomery, a partner at Proskauer Rose LLP, is a leader in private capital and banking and finance law. In 2023 alone, she closed over \$5.5 billion in transactions for lenders and investors across the U.S. Montgomery has extensive experience in acquisition financing, restructurings, cross-border financings and debtor-in-possession financing. Her expertise spans multiple industries, including retail, technology and agriculture, and is highly regarded for her knowledge of secured transactions under the Uniform Commercial Code. She is a key voice in the private credit space, regularly speaking at industry conferences and contributing to legal publications. Montgomery has been recognized by Chambers USA, the Los Angeles Business Journal and Best Lawyers in America for her work in banking and finance law.



Sean MORRIS
Head of Office, Partner
Arnold & Porter
UCLA School of Law
LITIGATION

Sean Morris is a partner and head of the Los Angeles office at Arnold & Porter, where he has practiced for 25 years since graduating from UCLA School of Law. Recognized

as one of California's top lawyers by the Daily Journal and The Legal 500 US, he represents major corporations like BP and Honeywell International. Morris played a pivotal role as co-lead counsel in the landmark California lead paint public nuisance case, obtaining a defense verdict for Atlantic Richfield. His current work includes serving as lead counsel for BP in environmental lawsuits and mass tort litigation for C&C North America. Beyond his legal career, Morris co-founded Reading to Kids, fostering a love of reading in underserved schools.

Ann Marie Mortimer is a partner at Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP, where she leads the firm's commercial litigation practice and specializes in cybersecurity and privacy law. Known for defending major corporations in data breach cases, her recent wins include a precedent-setting victory for Walmart under the California Consumer Privacy Act. She has been named a Cybersecurity & Privacy MVP by Law360 and recognized by the Daily Journal for her work in defending Yahoo! in the largest data breach class action in history. Mortimer is also committed to mentoring young lawyers and supporting vulnerable communities, serving on the board of trustees for the Children's Burn

Ann Marie MORTIMER
Partner
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP
UC Berkeley School of Law
CYBERSECURITY



Foundation. Her contributions to both the legal field and the community have earned her multiple accolades, including the Los Angeles Business Journal's Top 100 Lawyers and Women Leaders in Tech Law.



Sabrina NARAIN
Managing Partner
LTL Attorneys
Western State College of Law
LITIGATION

Sabrina Narain is a dynamic managing partner at LTL Attorneys, specializing in consumer protection litigation. At the age of 36, she became the first female partner at her previous firm within three years and now leads a rapidly growing team. Narain's extensive experience includes successfully defending major automotive manufacturers, such as the Ford Motor Company, in high-stakes cases involving breach of warranty and fraud. She has also achieved significant victories in employment law, notably for the County of Los Angeles, and is an advocate for diversity in the legal field. A board member of the Association of Southern California Defense Counsel, Narain has received accolades, including "Best Lawyers: One to Watch" and Super Lawyers "Rising Stars," recognizing her impactful contributions to the profession.

LEGAL VISIONARIES



Kristen J. NESBIT
*Co-Regional
 Managing Partner*
Fisher Phillips LLP
Loyola Law School
**LABOR &
 EMPLOYMENT**

Kristen J. Nesbit is the co-regional managing partner at Fisher Phillips LLP, specializing in labor and employment law. A powerhouse attorney, she has a proven track record of handling high-stakes cases for Fortune 500 companies and public entities. Nesbit has successfully navigated numerous single-plaintiff and class action lawsuits, including obtaining a favorable jury verdict for Automatic Data Processing (ADP) after a 10-day trial, where the jury awarded only \$50,000 against a claim of over \$2 million. As co-chair of the California Litigation Practice Group, she was the youngest female to hold this role when appointed in 2019. In the past year, Nesbit secured complete arbitration wins for clients, including Kinecta Federal Credit Union and loanDepot, LLC, effectively defending against allegations of discrimination and breach of contract.



Felton T. NEWELL
Partner
Newell Law Group PC
*University of Chicago
 Law School*
LITIGATION

Felton T. Newell is the co-managing partner at Newell Law Group PC, bringing over 25 years of trial experience in litigation and employment law. He has represented Fortune 100 companies and high-net-

worth individuals, having previously worked at Morrison & Foerster and Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy. Notably, Newell honed his skills at the Los Angeles City Attorney's office, first-chairing over 20 criminal trials and leading civil jury trials since 2012. Active in professional organizations, he serves on the boards of the John M. Langston Bar Association and the California Association of Black Lawyers. He is a life fellow of the American Bar Foundation, dedicated to mentorship and contributing to various community organizations.



Ryan NISHIMOTO
Partner
Arnold & Porter
*Boston College
 Law School*
**INTELLECTUAL
 PROPERTY**

Ryan Nishimoto is a partner at Arnold & Porter, specializing in high-stakes intellectual property and technology litigation. With a solid mathematics background, he adeptly represents leading companies in complex disputes involving patents, trade secrets and copyrights across various high-tech sectors, including smartphones, software and medical devices. Notably, Nishimoto led Samsung's defense against patent infringement claims, while also achieving favorable outcomes for Zinus and Cytiva in patent litigation. At Arnold & Porter, he plays an active role in hiring, development and mentoring associates. Additionally, he is involved with the LGBTQ+ Lawyers Association and the Asian Pacific American Bar Association and supports adoptive families through Public Counsel's Adoptions Project.

Quincy Newell is the founder and managing attorney at Newell Law Group PC, bringing over 30 years of experience in the entertainment and media industries. He has held senior executive roles at prominent companies like HITS Magazine, Warner Music Group's Rhino Entertainment and Lionsgate, where he was EVP & GM of Codeblack Films. Previously serving as of counsel at Sanders Roberts LLP, Newell has negotiated numerous transactions in film, television, music and digital media on behalf of notable clients, including Kevin Hart and Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Quincy NEWELL
*Founder &
 Managing Attorney*
Newell Law Group PC
*University of West Los
 Angeles School of Law*
CORPORATE



He has produced over 20 projects, including Kevin Hart's breakout concert films and the NAACP Image Award-nominated "Woman Thou Art Loosed: On the 7th Day."

RAINES
 RAINES FELDMAN LITTRELL LLP

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LEGAL VISIONARIES



**Agustin
OROZCO**
Partner
Crowell & Moring LLP
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION

Agustin Orozco is a partner at Crowell & Moring LLP, specializing in litigation and white collar crime. With extensive experience as an assistant U.S. attorney in the public corruption & civil rights section, he has successfully led high-profile cases, including the retrial of a Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputy and a federal investigation into an attorney's extensive fraud. Orozco is recognized for his expertise in conducting internal investigations and representing clients in civil False Claims Act cases. He is a sought-after speaker and thought leader, frequently cited in major publications. Actively involved in pro bono work, Orozco secured post-conviction relief for a client after 33 years in prison and champions diversity and inclusion as a Mansfield partner champion and board member for organizations supporting low-income law students.



**Eric
PERLMUTTER-
GUMBINER**
Partner
Greenberg Glusker LLP
USC Gould School of Law
**CONSUMER
PRODUCTS & RETAIL**

Eric Perlmutter-Gumbiner is a partner in the corporate group at Greenberg Glusker LLP, where he specializes in general corporate and transactional law, focusing on emerging companies, venture capital and

mergers and acquisitions, particularly in the consumer products and retail sectors. Notable transactions in the past two years include his involvement in Barstool Sports' buyback from PENN Entertainment and his ongoing representation of brands like SKIMS and Khy by Kylie Jenner. Perlmutter-Gumbiner is also recognized for his community contributions, including speaking engagements at USC Gould School of Law and mentorship activities. His accolades include the 2021 Young Professional Award from Middle Market Growth Magazine and recognition as a Southern California Super Lawyers "Rising Star" from 2015 to 2023.



**Jerry Carl
POPOVICH**
Partner-in-Charge,
Orange County
Hawkins Parnell &
Young
Western State
College of Law
LITIGATION

Jerry Carl Popovich is the partner-in-charge of Hawkins Parnell & Young's Orange County office, specializing in complex personal injury litigation with over 70 trials to his name. Recognized as a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and a senior fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America, he has achieved notable victories in high-stakes cases, including a \$337,000 jury award for a food distributor in a trial where the plaintiff sought nearly \$11 million. Popovich successfully represented a city client in a three-week trial, limiting damages to \$70,300 and won a crucial motion compelling a legal funder to comply with a subpoena in a multi-car collision case. Recently, he also secured a favorable settlement for Next Insurance in a personal injury trial.

Emily R. Pincin is a founding partner at Kent | Pincin, LLP, a law firm based in Redondo Beach, California, specializing in labor and employment law. At just 29 years old, she has built a dedicated practice advocating for individuals facing wrongful termination, harassment, discrimination and personal injuries, as well as families affected by wrongful death. Recognizing the challenges women face in the legal industry, Pincin boldly left a prestigious plaintiff's firm to establish her own practice, where she has successfully built a client base and carved out a meaningful impact in her community. As a member of the California Employment Lawyers

**Emily R.
PINCIN**
Partner

Kent | Pincin, LLP
Loyola Law School
**LABOR &
EMPLOYMENT**



Association and the Consumer Attorneys of Los Angeles, she is also committed to mentorship and empowering the next generation of legal professionals.



**Jennifer
POST**
Managing Partner
Thompson Coburn LLP
Suffolk University
Law School
CORPORATE

Jennifer Post is the managing partner of Thompson Coburn LLP's Los Angeles office and a nationally recognized leader in corporate and finance law. She has led numerous complex transactions, including a \$50-million venture lending deal for a transportation app and a \$72-million loan for a public consumer brands company. As co-chair of the firm's emerging company practice and vice chair of the corporate & securities group, Post pioneered the blockchain and digital currency group. She is also deeply committed to LGBTQ+ advocacy, founding FSIX Advisors Circle and supporting LGBTQ+ professionals through organizations like StartOut LA. Her impact has been recognized with numerous accolades, including Best Lawyers in America (2023-2024) and the Los Angeles Business Journal's Top 100 Attorneys (2022-2023).



**Angela
REDDOCK-
WRIGHT**
Employment & Title IX Mediator
Reddock Law Group/
Signature Resolution
UCLA School of Law
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

Angela Reddock-Wright is a leading employment and Title IX mediator with nearly 30 years of experience in labor law. After a successful 15-year career as a litigator, she transitioned to full-time

mediation and founded Reddock Law Group in 2011. Reddock-Wright is also a part of the prestigious Signature Resolution panel. A graduate of UCLA School of Law and Amherst College, she has mediated high-profile cases in various industries, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. She is recognized for her expertise in race discrimination and sexual harassment cases and frequently lectures on workplace transformation and mediation. Reddock-Wright has been inducted as a fellow of the International Academy of Mediators and is a past president of the Southern California Mediation Association.

Timothy D. Reuben is the founding partner of Reuben Raucher & Blum, a premier Los Angeles-based litigation boutique. With over three decades of legal experience, he has handled an impressive range of cases involving business, intellectual property, real estate and complex civil litigation. Reuben's sharp legal mind and tenacious advocacy have earned him recognition as one of California's top trial lawyers. He has led numerous high-stakes cases, including trademark disputes, class action defenses and Proposition 65 compliance. In the past 24 months, he secured a significant victory for his client, obtaining complete vindication of the client's trademark

**Timothy D.
REUBEN**
Managing
Principal & CEO
Reuben Raucher &
Blum
Harvard Law School
LITIGATION



rights. Beyond litigation, Reuben is actively involved in legal education, serving as a member of the L.A. County Bar Judicial Evaluation Committee and mentoring the next generation of legal professionals.



**Naeun
RIM**
Partner
Manatt, Phelps &
Phillips, LLP
Harvard Law School
LITIGATION

Naeun Rim, a partner at Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, leads the firm's trial, white collar and investigations practice, with extensive experience in high-profile criminal defense and civil litigation. She has secured notable victories, including a complete defense win for a movie executive in a major fraud case and representing a Fortune 150 company in one of California's largest environmental trials. Rim is currently handling several high-profile matters, such as defending Christopher Ahn in a landmark extradition case and representing clients in federal grand jury investigations, securities fraud class actions and class action lawsuits. Recognized for her leadership, she has played an active role in the Women's White Collar Defense Association and the ABA's National Institute on White Collar Crime.

LEGAL VISIONARIES


**Vanessa
ROMAN**
Partner
Akin
*USC Gould
School of Law*
CORPORATE

Vanessa Roman, a partner at Akin, is a prominent figure in corporate entertainment law, advising major clients like Comerica Bank, MUFG Bank and Bank of America on financing high-profile film and television projects such as Armageddon Time, Devotion and Plane. Her recent deals include a \$300-million credit facility for Miramax Films, multiple production loans for Asphalt City and Thug and a \$40-million tax credit loan for Skydance. Roman also maintains an active pro bono practice, representing the American Film Institute and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and serves on the board of Female Executives in Media and Entertainment. Through her efforts, she has been recognized by Variety and The Legal 500 US for her influence in the entertainment industry.


**Jennifer
ROMANO**
Partner
Crowell & Moring LLP
*UC Berkeley
School of Law*
LITIGATION

Jennifer Romano is a litigation partner at Crowell & Moring LLP's Los Angeles office, where she co-chairs the firm's litigation & trial department and serves on its management board. Recognized by

Dylan Ruga is the founder of Stalwart Law Group and co-founder, president and chief legal officer at Steno. With nearly 20 years of experience in complex litigation – including intellectual property, professional liability and commercial cases – he is known for his tenacious advocacy and innovative use of technology in legal practice. Under Ruga's leadership, Stalwart's medical malpractice team has recovered over \$150 million in just two years. Before founding Stalwart, he was an equity partner at a large law firm, and now leverages that experience to outmaneuver opponents for his clients. Ruga is involved with the Consumer

Chambers USA and other notable publications, she is a leading expert in healthcare law and frequently contributes to legal discussions in outlets like Law360 and Bloomberg Law. Among her many successful cases, Romano led the defense in *Mass v. The Regents of the University of California*, winning a complete defense verdict after a six-year class action trial. She also represented Planned Parenthood in challenging unconstitutional legislation in Kentucky and has achieved favorable outcomes in numerous healthcare class actions and corporate litigation cases.


**Larry C.
RUSS**
Founding Partner
Russ August & Kabat
UC Law San Francisco
**INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY**

Larry Russ is a co-founder and managing partner of Russ, August & Kabat (RAK), specializing in intellectual property litigation. Under their leadership, RAK's patent litigation team has secured over \$600 million in jury awards and more than \$300 million in confidential settlements. Beyond patent litigation, Russ has successfully represented clients in trademark, copyright, business torts and antitrust matters. Notable cases include defending Forever 21 in an apparel industry copyright suit, securing a \$13-million settlement in a privacy class action against LinkedIn and negotiating a settlement in a copyright case against Yahoo! Outside of law, he is active in Los Angeles' business and nonprofit communities, including leadership roles with American Rag Cie and the Jewish National Fund.


**Dylan
RUGA**
Founder & Trial Lawyer
Stalwart Law Group
UCLA School of Law
LITIGATION

Attorneys of California and the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Charities and has been recognized as one of the top intellectual property attorneys in L.A.

LTL ATTORNEYS
**CONGRATULATES OUR PARTNERS
Sabrina Narain and Cynthia Sun**

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SABRINA C. NARAIN

Sabrina C. Narain is the Managing Partner and Trial Attorney of her firm's automotive practice, where she leads litigation efforts focusing on warranty defense, product liability, and class action. Sabrina also has lead trials on employment matters and business litigation. With experience in all phases of litigation, from inception to post-judgment litigation, Sabrina has successfully represented Fortune 500 companies. Her trial work includes both lead and co-lead counsel, consistently securing favorable outcomes. Sabrina is a strong advocate for leveraging legal technologies and AI to enhance efficiency and streamline litigation processes.

Cynthia Y. Sun is a Partner and Trial Attorney at her firm, specializing in general liability, personal injury, product liability, and consumer warranty litigation. She has successfully represented Fortune 500 companies in complex civil cases, achieving favorable trial verdicts, judgments and rulings both as lead and co-counsel. Known for her meticulous application of California law, Cynthia has successfully obtained summary judgments and motions to compel arbitration in numerous high-value matters, avoiding costly litigation. She is an advocate for legal technology and embraces its application in her practice.

CYNTHIA Y. SUN

L E G A L V I S I O N A R I E S



**Arash
SADAT**
Founding Partner
Mills Sadat Dowlat LLP
Loyola Law School
**LABOR &
EMPLOYMENT**

As the founding partner of Mills Sadat Dowlat LLP, Arash Sadat is a distinguished employment attorney with over a decade of experience. Known for his exceptional litigation skills, he has secured numerous seven-figure judgments, advocating for employees in cases involving discrimination and harassment. Sadat's dedication to marginalized communities is reflected in his work representing LGBTQIA+ clients, including high-profile litigation that contributed to the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. A committed advocate for social justice, he is active in pro bono work and community service, volunteering at the Santa Monica Domestic Violence Clinic and serving as general counsel for the Santa Monica Youth Orchestra. Recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal and named a Southern California Super Lawyers "Rising Star," Sadat's contributions to the legal field continue to earn respect.



**Michael Berj
SARYAN**
Founder
Concord Legal Group,
PC
UCLA School of Law
CORPORATE

Michael Saryan is the founder of Concord Legal Group, PC, a boutique business law firm offering top-tier legal services to entrepreneurs, startups and established companies. His legal career began at

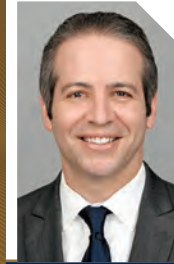
prestigious law firms, Gibson Dunn and Sheppard Mullin, where he gained expertise in mergers and acquisitions, venture capital and high-stakes litigation. After nearly a decade in big law, he transitioned to boutique firms, helping launch the Los Angeles office of a Silicon Valley-based firm. Saryan founded Concord Legal Group in 2024 to close the gap between elite legal services and the needs of small- to mid-sized businesses. His firm focuses on guiding clients through all phases of their business journey, from formation to capital raising and M&A transactions, while maintaining a commitment to making high-quality legal representation accessible.

Christian Scali is the founder of Scali Rasmussen, known for his exceptional legal acumen in the automotive industry and his diverse practice areas, including complex litigation and advice and counsel. He gained recognition through his work in California's automotive sector, particularly in defending against consumer advocacy lawsuits and representing dealerships in high-stakes cases. Scali's dedication to his clients is evident through his successful defense strategies in wage and hour class actions, discrimination claims and contract disputes. He is also a published author and frequently speaks on automotive industry legal

**Christian
SCALI**
Founder &
Managing Partner
Scali Rasmussen
The Ohio State
University
College of Law
LITIGATION



issues. Recognized as a top labor and employment attorney, Scali continues to influence the legal landscape in California through his legal expertise and community involvement.



**Todd B.
SCHERWIN**
Regional
Managing Partner
Fisher Phillips LLP
USC Gould
School of Law
**LABOR &
EMPLOYMENT**

Todd B. Scherwin is the regional managing partner of Fisher Phillips LLP's Los Angeles and Woodland Hills offices, specializing in labor and employment law. As one of California's premier employment attorneys, he has a strong track record of representing businesses in complex legal matters, including gig economy disputes and amicus curiae briefs before the U.S. Supreme Court. Scherwin founded the firm's sports industry team, advising professional sports franchises, universities and stadiums on employment matters. Under his leadership, Fisher Phillips' Los Angeles office has grown significantly, adding a diverse team of attorneys. He is also active in pro bono work, supporting local nonprofits and lecturing at California State University, Long Beach.



**Joshua
SCHNEIDERMAN**
Managing Partner
Snell & Wilmer LLP
UCLA School of Law
CORPORATE

Joshua Schneiderman is the managing partner of Snell & Wilmer LLP's Los Angeles office and a member of its corporate and securities group. With expertise in mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures and public and private securities offerings, he has guided clients through complex transactions, including high-profile sales and acquisitions in diverse industries. Schneiderman also advises clients in the cannabis industry, helping them navigate the regulatory challenges of state and federal law. A dedicated community leader, he is involved in pro bono work, supporting nonprofits and survivors of Hurricane Katrina and the Holocaust. Schneiderman has been recognized for his contributions to the legal profession and his leadership within various Los Angeles legal organizations.



**Carney R.
SHEGERIAN**
Founding Partner
Shegerian & Associates
Loyola Law School
**LABOR &
EMPLOYMENT**

Founding partner of Shegerian & Associates Carney R. Shegerian, known as "The People's Attorney," is a prominent plaintiff's employment lawyer. With over 33 years of legal experience, he has achieved

more than 100 jury verdicts, including several record-setting employment discrimination and retaliation awards. Among his most significant victories is a \$155.4-million public policy and retaliation award, alongside numerous high-value settlements. As a dedicated and passionate advocate for employee rights, Shegerian has devoted his career to representing individuals wronged by employers, including major corporations. He is also actively engaged in community service through the Carney R. Shegerian Foundation, which supports cancer research, survivors of sexual assault and trial lawyer education.

John W. Shenk is a founding partner of Mancini Shenk LLP and a specialist in business and shareholder disputes, often referred to as "business divorce." With significant experience in handling complex disputes in industries such as cannabis and real estate, he helps clients resolve partnership and shareholder issues, breach of fiduciary duty claims and fraud cases. Shenk has handled some of the most prominent shareholder and investor litigation in the legal cannabis industry. His approach combines strategic negotiation with aggressive litigation when necessary, earning

**John W.
SHENK**
Founding Partner
Mancini Shenk LLP
USC Gould
School of Law
LITIGATION



favorable outcomes for his clients. He is also a dedicated community leader, serving on the board of Rose City Center, a nonprofit providing affordable mental health services.



**Natela
SHENON**
Partner
Grant Shenon, A
Professional Law
Corporation
Pepperdine Caruso
School of Law
CORPORATE

Natela Shenon is a partner at Grant Shenon, A Professional Law Corporation, with 15 years of legal experience specializing in complex business and real estate transactions. A graduate of Pepperdine Caruso School of Law, she combines her legal expertise with a certificate in entrepreneurship and the law and a bachelor's degree in psychology from UCLA. After honing her litigation skills at a boutique firm, Shenon transitioned to an in-house role at an oil and gas company before founding Shenon Law in 2015. The firm quickly gained recognition for its client-centric approach and agile navigation of legal challenges. In April 2021, Shenon Law merged with Alpert Barr & Grant to form Grant | Shenon, where she focuses on corporate governance, commercial litigation and strategic business counsel.

LEGAL VISIONARIES


**R. Tyson
SOHAGI**
Partner
**The Sohagi Law Group,
PLC**
*McGeorge School of
Law | University of
the Pacific*
LITIGATION

Tyson Sohagi is a partner at The Sohagi Law Group, PLC, specializing in environmental law, land use and CEQA compliance. With a background in mechanical engineering, he advises public agencies on infrastructure, development and environmental projects, helping them navigate complex regulatory and legal challenges. Sohagi's expertise includes litigation involving CEQA, the Coastal Act and the Public Trust Doctrine, as well as administrative work on housing and infrastructure projects. He has successfully defended numerous public clients in litigation and is a published author and speaker on environmental law. He is recognized for his in-depth knowledge of technical and legal issues, particularly in the context of public infrastructure and environmental compliance.


**Ashley M.
SIMONSEN**
Partner
Covington & Burling LLP
Stanford Law School
LITIGATION

Ashley M. Simonsen is a partner at Covington & Burling LLP in Los Angeles, specializing in class action and mass torts. She has successfully represented major clients like Meta, Microsoft and Capital One,

excelling in early dispositive motions. Notable achievements include co-leading a team that secured dismissals for Meta in over 1,000 lawsuits alleging addiction to its platforms, obtaining the dismissal of a groundbreaking class action against Microsoft regarding OpenAI's ChatGPT and leading the dismissal of pandemic-related claims against Capital One. Additionally, Simonsen achieved a Second Circuit affirmation of a nationwide class settlement for Navient and managed multiple victories for Facebook in a UCL class action, setting important precedents in technology litigation.

Alice Chen Smith is the managing partner at Yoka | Smith, LLP, with 16 years at the firm. She is an experienced trial lawyer, specializing in catastrophic personal injury, product liability and business litigation. Practicing in trial and appellate courts throughout California, her results-driven approach has earned her recognition as a Southern California Super Lawyer since 2022 and a Super Lawyers "Rising Star" from 2012 to 2020. Smith is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), serving as membership co-chair. She also holds leadership roles in the Association of

**Alice Chen
SMITH**
Managing Partner
Yoka | Smith, LLP
Loyola Law School


Southern California Defense Counsel (ASCDC) and the Los Angeles County Bar Association. She earned her J.D. from Loyola Law School.


**Cynthia Y.
SUN**
Partner
LTL Attorneys
*Western New
England University
School of Law*
LITIGATION

Cynthia Y. Sun is a partner at LTL Attorneys, specializing in litigation for the past 17 years in areas such as general liability, personal injury, product liability and consumer fraud. With a background that includes prominent minority-owned law firms in Los Angeles, she has represented clients ranging from individuals to Fortune 500 companies. Sun has a strong track record in litigation, having secured summary judgment in key cases, including *Yaghoubi v. Ford Motor Company* and *Heredia v. Culver City Mall, LLC*. As lead trial counsel, she achieved favorable judgments in consumer warranty cases and successfully defended against wrongful death claims. Deeply engaged in her community, she serves on the board of governors for the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association and mentors young female and minority attorneys.

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McKenzie.**

Baker McKenzie congratulates **Perrie Weiner** for being recognized as a **legal industry Visionary** by **L.A. Times B2B Publishing**.


Perrie M. Weiner
*Partner-in-Charge
of Baker McKenzie's Los Angeles Office,
and Chair of the Firm's North America
Securities Litigation Group*

Over the past 4 years, our Los Angeles office has grown from 4 to over 64 lawyers and professional staff.

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William L. TROUTMAN

Partner
Norton Rose Fulbright
USC Gould
School of Law
**CONSUMER
PRODUCTS & RETAIL**

William (Will) Troutman is a partner at Norton Rose Fulbright, where he heads the U.S. consumer markets and co-leads the U.S. environmental, social, governance (ESG) and human rights practice. With nearly two decades of experience, he specializes in product safety, compliance and environmental law. He advises retailers, manufacturers and importers on federal and state compliance, particularly with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the California Air Resources Board. Troutman also focuses on ESG matters, helping companies navigate modern slavery risks and climate change disclosure laws. His legal expertise extends to PFAS regulations, product recalls and green claims for sustainable products. He regularly shares his insights as a lecturer, panelist and co-editor of Norton Rose Fulbright's Consumer


Kate Eun Zu TUMA

Partner
Squire Patton Boggs
(U.S.) LLP
University of Chicago
Law School
CORPORATE

Kate Eun Zu Tuma is a partner in Squire Patton Boggs' global corporate practice in Los Angeles, where she co-leads the global and U.S. automotive & transportation group, making her one

of the few female minority leaders in this role at a major international law firm. Over the past two years, she has advised on significant automotive transactions, including joint ventures for battery recycling and electric vehicle manufacturing, and has provided legal support on various strategic operations for automotive manufacturers. Beyond her corporate work, Tuma is actively involved in volunteer efforts with organizations like Back on My Feet, which supports unhoused individuals and ex-incarcerated members through fitness and career mentoring.


Alex M. WEINGARTEN

Managing Partner
Willkie Farr &
Gallagher LLP
Georgetown
University
Law Center
LITIGATION

Alex M. Weingarten is the managing partner of Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP's Los Angeles office and chair of the firm's entertainment litigation practice. A leading commercial trial lawyer, he specializes in entertainment, probate and business litigation, earning recognition as one of the top trial lawyers in Los Angeles and one of the nation's leading entertainment litigators. Recently, Weingarten has successfully represented clients in high-profile cases, including securing a victory in arbitration for The Chosen, Inc., which faced a licensing dispute worth over \$1 billion. Additionally, he handled the transition of Britney Spears' conservatorship for Jamie Spears, settling confidentially and is currently involved in litigation concerning the Leonard Cohen Family Trust, where he suspended a former trustee for fraud.

Perrie M. Weiner is the partner-in-charge of Baker McKenzie's Los Angeles office and chairs the North America securities litigation group, specializing in high-stakes securities class actions, SEC enforcement matters and complex business litigation. With over 35 years of experience, he is recognized as a "go-to advocate" for hedge funds and CEOs facing SEC scrutiny, earning high rankings from Chambers and The Legal 500 USA. Under Weiner's leadership, the Los Angeles office has grown from four to over 63 attorneys, becoming one of the firm's fastest-growing locations. He is actively involved in philanthropy, serving on the boards

Perrie M. WEINER

Partner
Baker McKenzie
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION



of organizations like Windward School and the Institute for Corporate Counsel, and he plays drums in the band "Run BMC," raising significant funds for local charities.

[continued from page 8]

'Non-attack' claims increase as privacy litigation ramps up

The rise in 'non-attack' data privacy claims is the consequence of developments in technology, the growing commercial value of personal data and a developing regulatory and legal landscape. For example, unlike the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), privacy regulations in the U.S. are less prescriptive and open to interpretation, while plaintiff lawyers are hungry for potential sources of revenue. This is creating a grey area that is ripe for class action litigation, the report notes.

"We are seeing more data privacy breach claims in the U.S. where there is a growing trend for class-action litigation against large U.S. and international corporations related to privacy violations, such as around consent and data usage," said Daum. "The cost of some of these claims can be even larger than a ransomware incident, in the hundreds of millions of dollars."

Over the last year, in particular, data breaches have emerged as one of the fastest-growing areas of U.S. class-action litigation. Over 1,300

were filed across a wide range of data privacy regulations in 2023, more than double the number filed in 2022 and four times that filed in 2021, according to law firm Duane Morris.

Multiple class-action lawsuits have been launched against organizations across a wide range of industries, including healthcare, social media and gaming, for using Meta Pixel tracking tools to monitor consumer behavior, while entertainment streaming platforms have also been targeted, alleging that they may have violated privacy protection rights.

Large data breach events can also evolve into hyper litigation, with one event triggering a slew of class actions. More than 240 lawsuits related to the 2023 MOVEit data breach were consolidated into a single multidistrict litigation in October 2023. And with large numbers of claimants, there are incentives for parties on both sides to settle. The top 10 data breach class-action settlements last year totaled \$516 million, a significant increase over the \$350 million recorded in 2022. ▮



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LEGAL VISIONARIES



Bart H. WILLIAMS

Partner
Proskauer Rose
Yale Law School
LITIGATION

Bart H. Williams is a prominent trial lawyer and partner at Proskauer Rose, where he chairs the litigation department and leads the Los Angeles office. Renowned for his strategic and persuasive litigation style, he has successfully represented Fortune 500 companies in high-stakes cases, often brought in just weeks before trials. Williams' notable achievements include securing a full defense verdict for Gilead Sciences in a \$3.6-billion antitrust case and resolving a defamation suit for Netflix without any payments to the plaintiff. Beyond his legal practice, he is committed to community service, serving on the board of directors of the LA84 Foundation and co-founding the Los Angeles Metropolitan Debate League, which supports debate for students in underserved public high schools.



Michael WISE

Partner
Perkins Coie
Loyola Law School
LITIGATION

Michael Wise is a patent attorney and partner at Perkins Coie, specializing in life sciences and intellectual property law. With over 30 years of experience, he leads a core team of patent lawyers focusing

on litigation, inter partes review (IPR) strategies and patent prosecution for cutting-edge technology. Wise's expertise spans a variety of industries, from biotech to consumer products, where he has helped startups to Fortune 500 companies protect their innovations. He is highly regarded for defending patents in IPR proceedings and has been consistently recognized by Chambers USA and Best Lawyers. Wise also serves as a dedicated leader in community engagement through charity efforts like Law Rocks! and The Access Project.



Christine WOODIN

Partner
Hueston Hennigan
University of Chicago
Law School
LITIGATION

Christine Woodin, a partner at Hueston Hennigan, specializes in high-stakes intellectual property and complex commercial litigation. She has secured significant victories for major clients, including a \$300-million-plus settlement for Match Group against Google in a high-profile antitrust case, where she successfully challenged Google's evidence handling. Woodin also represented Ericsson in a worldwide dispute with Apple, resulting in a multi-year license agreement worth \$400 million upfront and achieved a favorable settlement for Amazon in a billion-dollar patent infringement case. Currently, she is involved in high-profile matters for Shopify regarding data protection, TotalEnergies Renewables in a billion-dollar dispute with Trina Solar and GoodPop in a false advertising case against JonnyPops. Some of Woodin's earlier victories include securing a 2021 verdict for ClearOne in a Delaware trial against Shure.

Richard J. Wittbrodt is an equity partner at Gibbs Giden Locher Turner Senet & Wittbrodt, recognized as a leading construction lawyer with over 36 years of experience in construction litigation. He is a co-author of the authoritative treatise California Construction Law and has served on the governing committee for the ABA Forum on Construction Law. Currently, Wittbrodt is lead co-counsel in significant litigation concerning the design and construction of a light rail line crucial to Los Angeles, especially in relation to the 2028 Olympics. Due to his work ethic and expertise, he has received numerous accolades,

Richard WITTBRODT

Law Partner
Gibbs Giden Locher
Turner Senet &
Wittbrodt
Pepperdine Caruso
School of Law
LITIGATION



including listings in The Best Lawyers in America® and WWL: Thought Leaders Construction 2024 and has been honored by the Los Angeles Business Journal as a leader in law.



Kimberly WRIGHT

*Founder &
Managing Partner*
Revolve Law Group
Southwestern
Law School
LITIGATION

Kimberly Wright is the founder and managing partner of Revolve Law Group, specializing in real estate litigation with over 15 years of experience as a California attorney. Known for her strategic approach to mediation, she has helped many clients avoid courtrooms, achieving resolutions through her deep knowledge of real estate law. Wright's practice spans civil litigation, appeals, asset protection, business law and taxation. She also founded Wright Real Estate Group, leveraging her legal expertise to provide exceptional service in real estate transactions. Outside of her practice, she also invested time and resources by serving on the board of Mariposa, a family mental health, wellness and empowerment nonprofit.



Daniel WU

Partner
Thompson Coburn LLP
Pepperdine Caruso
School of Law
LITIGATION

Daniel Wu, a partner at Thompson Coburn LLP, specializes in business litigation, representing banks, financial institutions and businesses in complex cases involving fraud, breach of contract, discrimination and employee misconduct. With 26

years of experience, he has defended financial institutions in high-profile fraud schemes and unauthorized account openings. Wu also represents entrepreneurs and high-net-worth individuals in commercial and intellectual property disputes. His recent cases include resolving loan disputes with a Hollywood producer, a real estate contract breach and defending a business owner misled by a disbarred lawyer. Outside of Thompson Coburn, he is an active member of the Bank Operations Counsel Association, provides pro bono legal services to underserved communities and volunteers with organizations supporting orphanages in Mexico.



Kenneth YOOD

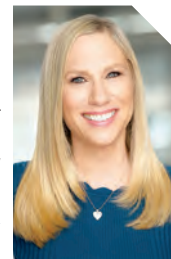
Partner
Holland & Knight
University at Buffalo
School of Law
**LIFE SCIENCES &
HEALTHCARE**

Kenneth Yood, a partner at Holland & Knight, leads the firm's West Coast life sciences and healthcare practice. With over 34 years of experience, he has played a pioneering role in the transformation of healthcare law, navigating the shift from independent practices to a competitive, multi-faceted industry involving nonprofits, for-profits and private investors. Yood represents a wide range of healthcare entities, providing counsel on regulatory compliance, reimbursement, fraud and abuse laws and privacy. His career highlights include guiding the expansion of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Hospital post-COVID and helping establish the MLK Community Health Foundation to address physician shortages in South Los Angeles. A dedicated mentor, Yood also advocates for at-risk youth through his work with Sycamores and Casa de Amma.

A partner at Fox Rothschild in Los Angeles, Nancy Yaffe specializes in labor and employment law with nearly three decades of experience. She advises businesses on wage-and-hour compliance, disability accommodation, harassment prevention and regulatory issues, often resolving disputes before they escalate. Yaffe also defends clients in class actions and PAGA cases, with a focus on minimizing litigation risks. As co-chair of the firm's Women's Initiative Network, she advocates for gender equality, mentoring women attorneys and promoting work-life balance through equal parental

Nancy YAFFE

Partner
Fox Rothschild
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**LABOR &
EMPLOYMENT**



leave policies. She played a key role in Fox Rothschild's DEI efforts, leading to national recognition, including Working Mother Magazine's "Best Law Firms for Women" and Mansfield Rule certification.

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