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NOVEMBER 29, 2021

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL
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— in Law —

2021 HONOREES
& FINALISTS

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Letter from the Publisher



Welcome to our eleventh annual special section honoring the leading general counsels and firm-based attorneys in the Los Angeles area for 2021. Considering the fact that the Los Angeles region has long been known for its status as a hub for legal thought leaders and record-setting attorneys, being a standout in that field is particularly impressive.

Our virtual celebration of these examples of legal leadership excellence took place as part of our Leaders in Law Awards on November 17th. The Los Angeles Business Journal honored the accomplishments and significant roles that attorneys play in the success of their business enterprises and also recognized accomplishments of leading attorneys in firms within the Los Angeles business community.

Candidates in various categories were recognized for exceptional legal skill and achievement across the full spectrum of responsibility, exemplary leadership and for contributions to the Los Angeles community at large. You can find the archived video of the event on the Los Angeles Business Journal website (labusinessjournal.com/lil2021).

In the following pages we share biographical information on the honorees and finalists, from what was a truly inspirational event, and shed some additional light on some of the premier examples of business law practitioners among us today.

We hope you enjoy this special section, which contains some unique insights on what exactly it means to be a leading attorney in today's business climate.

Best regards,

Josh Schimmels
Publisher & CEO

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IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR - PUBLIC COMPANY HONOREE

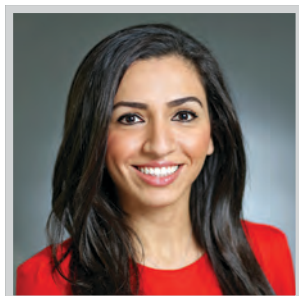
ELIZABETH ATLEE

SVP, Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer
 CBRE

Elizabeth Atlee has been practicing law for more than 25 years, first at Keesal, Young and Logan in Long Beach, where she represented the Mexican Oil Company PEMEX, and then continued her practice at BP. She ultimately came to CBRE where she was head of global litigation for five years before becoming the chief ethics & compliance officer in 2019.

At CBRE, Atlee has led and managed attorneys globally handling some of the company's largest cases in jurisdictions as far away as London and Hong Kong. In her role as chief ethics & compliance officer she is responsible for the firm's anti-corruption, anti-bribery and other financial integrity issues, investigations, data privacy, training, and ethical behavior. She leads a dynamic team of professionals globally through all of these issues, while acting as a trusted advisor to senior management. In collaboration with senior management, internal business people, and key external stakeholders, Atlee helps CBRE chart the course of business consistent with the company's RISE values of Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence.

Atlee has been recognized as one of the 50 Most Powerful Latinas in Corporate America, according to the Association of Latino Professionals for America. She was also awarded the Professional Achievement Award from the Mexican American Bar Foundation. She serves as the executive sponsor of Hispanics Organized to Leverage our Advantage (HOLA), CBRE's Latino employee network, serves on the company's Executive Inclusion Committee and the Women's Network. Atlee is also a member of CBRE's Executive Risk Committee and Cyber Security Response Unit.



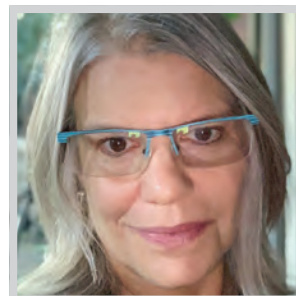
ELINA AVAKIAN

FINALIST

Senior Counsel
 Snap Inc.

Elina Avakian is senior counsel at Snap Inc., the company that owns Snapchat, Bitmoji, and Spectacles, and has been with the company for over five years. Prior to joining Snap in 2016, Avakian practiced in Dublin, Ireland in the Commercial Legal team at Mason Hayes & Curran, a Tier 1 Irish law firm focused on tech, media, and telecommunications. She also completed an extended in-house secondment at Facebook with their Irish Commercial Legal team.

At Snap, Avakian works in the Tech Platforms & E-Commerce commercial team and supports internal clients in teams across Snapchat, Bitmoji, and Spectacles. She also lends her expertise and innovative approach to the global payments and e-commerce space, which is a constantly evolving area with new regulations and requirements. Her subject-matter expertise and creative negotiation strategy ensures that she closes a high-volume of compelling and strategic deals for Snap Inc. in a challenging and fast-paced environment.



CAROLINE GALANTY

FINALIST

Senior Vice President - Associate General Counsel
 Bank of America

Caroline Galanty started with the legal department of Bank of America 25 years ago as a bankruptcy attorney in Los Angeles. Today she supports the Global Commercial Banking, Business Banking/ Wholesale Credit, Business Banking Special Assets, and Middle Market Special Assets teams throughout the Western United States. She advises clients on credit structuring, risk assessment and compliance issues arising throughout the life cycle of credits from origination through restructure or enforcement.

Advising on opposite ends of the credit life cycle creates a certain synergy. It has afforded Galanty a unique visibility into the two businesses' respective (and different) skill sets, risk appetites, communication styles and processes. The recent massive influx of troubled credits caused by the Pandemic has tested those differences in unprecedented ways. Her line of sight has allowed her to see possibilities to leverage resources to more efficiently manage the legal needs of this growing group of credits.

CONGRATULATIONS

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Los Angeles Business Journal

2021 Litigation Attorney of the Year



and Leaders in Law Nominees



Dana Kravetz

Labor & Employment



Ronald Camhi

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IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS



IN-HOUSE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR - LARGE PRIVATE COMPANY HONOREE

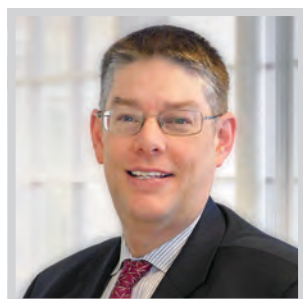
PATRICK KIRBY

Senior Vice President, General Counsel
 Webcor

After making a significant impact as part of Webcor's in-house legal team, In March 2021, Patrick Kirby was promoted to general counsel and joined Webcor's Executive Committee as senior vice president and corporate secretary of Webcor's Board of Directors, becoming one of the youngest members in the committee's and Board's history. In this vital role, Kirby continues to reorient Webcor's Legal Department to provide greater project support, work more closely with project teams through the entire life cycle of projects, and complete the transition toward a more holistic approach to legal and risk management project support within Webcor.

Kirby's private practice experience representing several of the largest general contractors in the United States, which are connected to many of the most significant and complex construction projects in the country, combined with his business-side experience has uniquely positioned him as Webcor's general counsel. He works closely with Webcor's general contracting, federal, and self-perform business units to provide truly integrated legal and business strategy advice and counsel. His expert guidance and deep construction law background are key drivers of Webcor's overall profitability and span the company's diverse portfolio, which encompasses everything from higher education facilities via public-private-partnerships, to major public infrastructure, to high-rise commercial, luxury residential, and hospitality projects.

Kirby is especially passionate about his role because it allows him to regularly visit the company's project sites and interact with a broad cross-section of the workforce, from laborers to senior executives.



JOHN L. ERIKSON FINALIST

SVP, Assistant Secretary and Corporate Counsel
 Wedbush Securities

John Erikson's position as senior vice president, assistant secretary, and corporate counsel is an integral part of a five-attorney in-house Legal Department that handles most of Wedbush Securities' legal matters. His role includes handling litigation, regulatory, and transactional matters for the firm, and providing counsel to the firm's management committees, as well as the boards of both the firm and its parent company, Wedbush Financial Services, LLC.

Among other duties, Erikson handles a wide variety of litigation matters for his firm. He has primary responsibility for handling numerous litigation and arbitration matters, including FINRA arbitrations, state and federal court cases, and state court appeals, defending against investor-related claims of suitability, failure to supervise, inadequate due diligence, and fraud, along with various employment claims. He also plays a significant role in assisting and advising Wedbush on corporate governance matters.



JOEL RICHLIN FINALIST

Vice President and General Counsel
 Prime Healthcare

Joel Richlin is the vice president & general counsel for Prime Healthcare, an award-winning health system operating 45 hospitals and more than 300 outpatient locations in 14 states, providing over 2.6 million patient visits annually. It is one of the nation's leading health systems with nearly 50,000 employees and physicians dedicated to providing the highest quality healthcare. Over the past year, Richlin has led the Legal Department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provided tremendous support to the system and its front-line caregivers. This past year has brought extraordinary legal and operational challenges, but Richlin's leadership of the Legal Department ensured consistent and sound legal advice to Prime Healthcare's hospitals and medical groups.

In addition to all of the challenges posed by the pandemic, Richlin helped lead Prime Healthcare's acquisition of St. Francis Medical Center, a level II trauma center in South Los Angeles.

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Congratulations



MICHAEL H. TODISCO

Leaders in Law: Rising Star

—Los Angeles Business Journal

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR - MIDSIZED COMPANY HONOREE

MOHAN NADIG

Director of Legal - US
ByteDance

Mohan Nadig is a director of legal – US at ByteDance, the parent company of TikTok and one of the most popular and highly valued tech companies in the world. Serving as a trusted leader on cutting-edge legal issues – including Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, social media influencers and creators, and “ad tech” – makes him a true leader in law.

Nadig has the added distinction of being an in-house leader focused on supporting revenue generation and user growth at his companies. At ByteDance, he leads the team of lawyers supporting the monetization initiatives of the company, including rolling out new and different product features for creators, advertisers, and brands. He oversees a wide range of matters, from commercial contracts with digital advertisers, to review of ad technology products, to the establishment of a first-of-its-kind Creator Marketplace. And Nadig has built an experienced and diverse group of professionals in LA, NY, and Toronto during an unprecedented health crisis, almost entirely virtually. His team is responsible for advising on cutting-edge legal issues at a company experiencing historic growth and a wide range of external challenges.

As a thought leader on technology law, Nadig also teaches a course entitled “Counseling the Startup Company” at the USC Gould School of Law. He frequently speaks at technology conferences, and recently presented cutting-edge topics at the 2019 All Hands Meeting of general counsels at technology companies and the 2021 Marketplace Risk Conference, the leading conference for online platforms and marketplaces.



PATRICK MONAGHAN
FINALIST
Chief Legal Officer
SADA

Patrick Monaghan is the chief legal officer and board secretary at SADA, a premier global cloud consultancy and technology services firm. For over 20 years, Monaghan has successfully advised leading Fortune 500 corporations, domestic entities and multinational clients. He is a “full stack,” entrepreneurial and tech-savvy public company CLO/GC, corporate leader, certified privacy expert and trusted board member.

Described as a true “operator’s lawyer” and “someone who gets it,” Monaghan’s ability to apply a high EQ, sound business judgment, creativity and financial acumen to legal and strategic business problems, with a sense of pragmatism, humility and humor, distinguishes him from lawyers of narrower backgrounds. Expert in SaaS licensing, enterprise software, data privacy, M&A and information security, at SADA, he leads the legal and compliance team that is remarkably efficient and resourceful given the fast-paced and agile culture equivalent to the maturity of a 20+ year old company.



BETSY TUCCI
FINALIST
General Counsel
InStride

Betsy Tucci is general counsel and company secretary of InStride, where she oversees all legal affairs. InStride is a public benefit company whose mission is to develop the workforce of the future by helping employers provide their employees with access to strategic workforce education. Tucci is a critical business and strategic partner on the executive leadership team, as she supports a wide range of legal, compliance and risk matters across the company.

Tucci has focused her legal career on technology, starting in the mid-2000s when there were even fewer women in the space than there are today. Her experiences helped to prepare her for her leadership role at InStride and the ability to impact thousands of lives through workforce education. An instrumental asset to InStride’s success, Tucci thrives in a fast-paced, collaborative environment with an intentional and inclusive culture.



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IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR - GROWING COMPANY HONOREE

JENNIFER LEVIN STEARNS

Vice President of Operations and General Counsel
 Goldco Direct LLC

Jennifer Levin Stearns' experience at Goldco Direct has clearly positioned her as deserving of the "In-House Counsel Award" for a growing company in the Los Angeles legal community. In her role as vice president of operations and general counsel, Stearns oversees all legal issues pertaining to Goldco Direct's operations. Goldco Direct is a company that helps its customers identify the best approach for adding precious metals to a new or existing IRA account and provide the information and resources needed to decide what types of precious metals make sense for the customer. Stearns' pertinent legal guidance preserves Goldco Direct's reputation in the marketplace for achieving the highest standards in customer satisfaction.

Stearns has received honors in the past for her accomplishments and the significant role she plays in the success of Goldco Direct. She has also been recognized for her contributions to the Los Angeles community at large. A longtime Los Angeles resident, Stearns earned her J.D. from USC Gould School of Law and her B.A. from USC.

Prior to joining Goldco Direct as general counsel, Stearns was a trial lawyer at the national law firm, Venable LLP, for a decade. In that capacity, she tried many high profile entertainment cases and arbitrations, representing William Morris Endeavor, Lionsgate, and other clients.



C. MAXWELL GARRISON

FINALIST

Chief of Staff & In-House Counsel
 LeaseLock

Max Garrison joined LeaseLock in the year following his passing the California State Bar. LeaseLock was a young start-up, insurance/dotcom company with fewer than 15-employees. The company now has over 80 employees. LeaseLock's flagship lease-insurance product leverages artificial intelligence to eliminate security deposits from enterprise operating infrastructure – powering a faster, simpler, more affordable rental transaction.

On February of this year, LeaseLock closed a \$52 million series B financing round – with Garrison overseeing the legal and contractual elements. The round was led by London-based Westerly Winds and Wildcat Venture Partners; major investors include SoftBank Ventures Asia, Vertex Ventures US, Liberty Mutual Strategic Ventures, American Family Ventures, Moderne Ventures, Strata Equity Group, Veteran Capital and Mucker Capital.




CHRIS RAMOS

FINALIST

General Counsel
 Time by Ping, Inc.

Chris Ramos moved from Big Law (Paul Hastings, Greenberg Traurig, Vedder Price) into the GC role at a (then) Series A company. He has worn every hat at the company and has navigated challenge after challenge with grace, grit, and passion. Not only does he valiantly handle all of Time by Ping's legal work, but as chief of staff, he has also run point on: fundraising, goal setting, running the executive meeting, Company All Hands, and up-leveling cross-functional communication.

Among other successes, Ramos guided the management team in the formation of the company's "pro bono" program, enabling staff to each give back time to the community in a manner of their choosing. In a more structured sense, he is also a cofounder of Time Foundation, a non-profit emerging from Time by Ping.



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IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARDS



NONPROFIT IN-HOUSE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR HONOREE

STEPHANIE VILLASENOR

General Counsel
 Norton Simon Museum

Stephanie Villasenor serves as vice president, general counsel and secretary at the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena. She started at the Norton Simon Museum in 2010, initially as tax manager and in-house attorney. In 2013, she was promoted to general counsel for the museum.

The Norton Simon Museum was closed to the public for 14 months, from March 2020 to May 2021, which is the longest period of time that the museum was ever closed. Over the past 18 months, Villasenor has been responsible for navigating the challenging new world of COVID legal compliance, ensuring that the museum's remote staff was able to quickly pivot to serving the public through engaging new online, educational content, including lectures, live art making programs and other publications, while the onsite staff continued to perform the essential function of protecting the Museum's priceless collections of art and antiquities and preserving it for generations to come. Villasenor continues to be responsible for developing and implementing all of the museum's COVID policies and procedures, from educating museum staff on the ever-evolving pandemic related regulations and rule compliance to maintaining the safest environment possible for the museum going public.

Since 2016, Villasenor has also been serving as an advisory board member of the Gloria Borges WunderGlo Foundation, which supports cancer patients by funding research to find a cure for colon cancer. Villasenor is an active member of the foundation and regularly helps with fundraising events and also assists the foundation with its tax compliance.



GREGORY SCHETINA

FINALIST

General Counsel and Corporate Secretary
 City of Hope

Gregory Schetina has overseen City of Hope's legal, compliance and corporate risk management functions with distinction. Schetina joined City of Hope, one of the world's foremost cancer treatment centers and academic research institutions, in 2004 as chief deputy general counsel, becoming general counsel in 2009. He oversees a team of skilled in-house lawyers who provide legal advice and representation for City of Hope, including on issues relating to health care, regulatory compliance, operations, labor and employment, intellectual property protection and patent and trademark portfolio management.

Schetina also directs the ethics and corporate compliance program and internal audit. In addition, he is in charge of the corporate risk management department and the design of City of Hope's insurance program. Finally, he serves as City of Hope's corporate secretary, advising the boards on governance matters and overseeing the office of the board of directors.



SHAWN WHITE

FINALIST

General Counsel
 Smith Family Circle
 (formerly The Barack Obama Foundation)

Shawn White is an experienced nonprofit executive who in March 2021 joined The Obama Foundation (now known as Smith Family Circle) as general counsel. Prior to joining the Obama Foundation, White served as general counsel to Eli Broad.

Throughout her career, White has a long-standing positive impact on her community by fostering the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. She has forged a reputation as leader in the legal community who dedicates her time and talents to empower others and make a positive impact. Despite her demanding legal career, she has maintained an active commitment to community-service as a mentor and through various pro bono programs. She has been a longstanding mentor for Big Brothers Big Sisters. She has a deep interest in immigrant rights and protecting access to the American dream for all people. This has carried throughout her career and her advocacy.

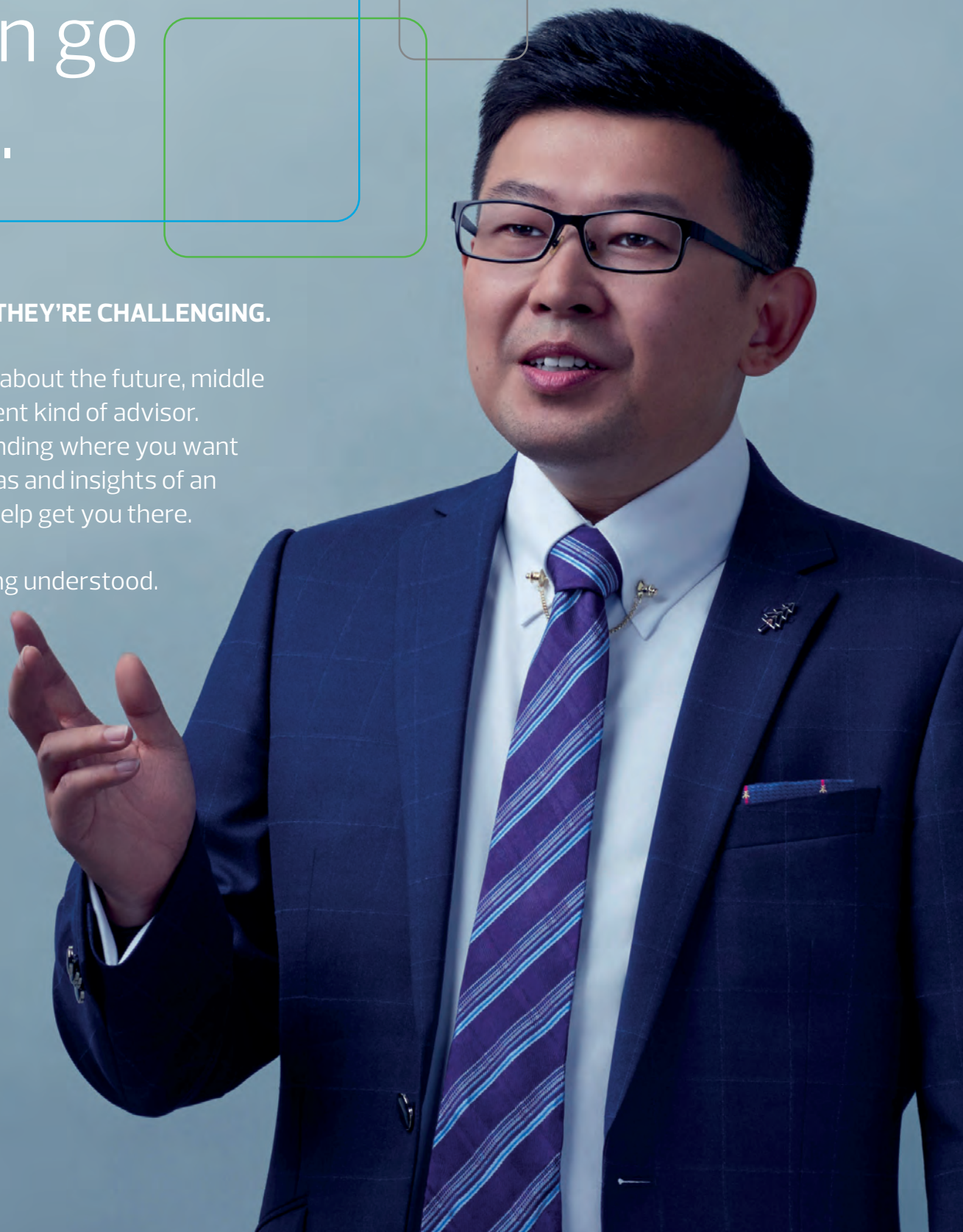
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so you can go
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FIRM ATTORNEY AWARDS



CORPORATE ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR HONOREE

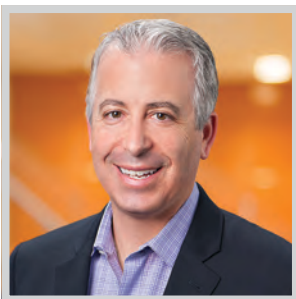
MONICA SHILLING

Partner
 Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Monica Shilling understands that lawyers are important vessels of guidance, helping clients through changing times and cultural shifts. She uses her unique legal insight to assist clients in structuring complex transactions and finding creative strategies to get deals done, especially during these challenging times of economic uncertainty and looming regulatory developments.

Within the past year and a half, Shilling has worked non-stop to help clients raise capital and address liquidity needs, raising over \$10 billion in a variety of transactions. Her vast experience and skill not only make her a leading corporate attorney, but an invaluable business partner as well. She has also made it her mission to address some of the inequalities brought to the forefront during the last year. She provided pro bono legal counsel – in an effort to diversify the alternative investment industry – with respect to a 10-year, \$90 million, industry-first initiative, “AltFinance: Investing in Black Futures,” launched by Apollo Global Management, Inc., Ares Management Corporation and Oaktree Capital Management, L.P. She also assisted Hello Sunshine, the mission-driven media company that puts women at the center of every story it creates, founded by Reese Witherspoon in 2016, in connection with its recently announced definitive agreement for a majority investment.

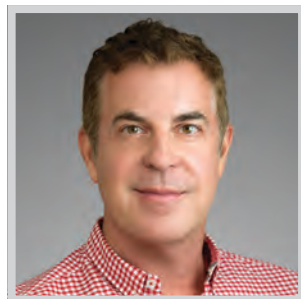
Shilling has been at the forefront of creative financing structures her whole career. Her experience helping clients navigate regulatory changes and innovations in the marketplace has placed her among a handful of senior female attorneys leading the current special purpose acquisition companies boom. Since January 2021, she has worked on multiple high-profile de-SPAC transactions worth over \$17 billion.



ANDREW APFELBERG
 FINALIST
 Partner
 Greenberg Glusker LLP

Andrew Apfelberg, a partner at Greenberg Glusker LLP, is a corporate and finance attorney for middle-market companies throughout the United States. Often acting as their outside general counsel, Andrew provides advice on a business’ significant transactions, whether it’s a merger or acquisition, private equity or other financing, joint venture or licensing deal. He has a considerable depth of experience in the branded consumer products, manufacturing & distribution, new media and technology industries.

Apfelberg’s strong business and finance background comes from his USC Marshall School of Business education and working for a Los Angeles-based investment banking prior to going to law school. This experience enables Andrew to more effectively structure transactions and negotiate agreements to maximize the value to the client and increase the likelihood of getting the deal closed. He has completed several notable mergers and acquisitions for Los Angeles-based companies.



ROBERT DARWELL
 FINALIST
 Partner
 Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP

Over the course of his legal career, Bob Darwell has worked on the development, finance, production and distribution of hundreds of motion pictures and television productions. In addition, he has handled major newsworthy deals such as Disney’s termination of Bob and Harvey Weinstein (which garnered him the prestigious CLAY Award as California Entertainment Lawyer of the Year for Entertainment) and Disney’s subsequent sale of Miramax. He also served as lead entertainment counsel to Comcast in connection with its acquisition of NBC Universal.

Through the years, Darwell has launched several specialty practices in the areas of advertising, fashion, and art law and has handled transactions that reflect the intersection of those verticals as well as those in sports, music, gaming, merchandising and mobile/digital areas. He represents clients in all segments of these businesses around the world.



MICHAEL LINDSEY
 FINALIST
 Partner
 Steinbrecher & Span LLP

Michael K. Lindsey is a corporate and transactional lawyer, with more than 40 years of experience in the areas of intellectual property, cyberlaw and trade regulation. Lindsey’s intellectual property practice includes the acquisition, development, protection, and licensing of various forms of intellectual property. In the cyberlaw area, Lindsey represents diverse clients on matters ranging from domain name disputes to e-commerce structuring, new media development, co-branding, alliance, and other marketing arrangements.

Lindsey’s practice in the trade regulation area involves antitrust preventive counseling; merger analysis and structuring; franchise disclosure, registration and relationship matters; and advice concerning the sale, distribution and marketing of products and services through manufacturing, joint venture, distribution, dealership and agency relationships. A true leader in law, Lindsey has been featured across multiple media outlets over the challenging times of the pandemic.



DANIEL LYNCH
 FINALIST
 Partner
 Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

Akin Gump partner Dan Lynch is a highly regarded emerging leader in the firm’s renowned global project finance practice. He maintains a cutting-edge practice and is regularly called upon to assist leading renewable energy clients in highly complex transactions with a particular focus on power hedges – highly complex financial tools that require the understanding and experience of a derivatives lawyer as well as insight and understanding into the unique aspect of renewable energy projects.

Lynch is a pioneer in the area of deploying technological solutions to solve clients’ compliance challenges. He spearheaded the creation of an innovative tool designed to help sort through various derivative financial arrangements and help commercial users navigate different hedging strategies, Akin Gum’s Power Hedge Settlement Calculator. This first-of-its-kind tool allows users to interact with, and manipulate in real time, a financial model of a physically settled renewable energy hedge transaction with a tracking account.

FIRM ATTORNEY AWARDS

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL
LEADERS
in Law



LITIGATION ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR HONOREE

SANFORD MICHELMAN

Chairman
Michelman & Robinson, LLP

More than two decades ago, Sanford Michelman co-founded Michelman & Robinson, LLP, and over the years he has built M&R into a nationwide law firm operating out of five offices in three states – California, Illinois, and New York. His namesake firm is sought after by companies in the advertising & digital media, banking & financial services, cannabis, entertainment & music, hospitality, insurance, retail & apparel, and technology spaces, to name a few. Having handled countless, consequential class action cases and “bet the company” litigation matters considered the most challenging, Michelman has, over the years, become a formidable presence in courtrooms – and boardrooms – nationwide, representing insurers, broker/agents, underwriters, private equity groups, banks and advertising and media companies.

Michelman’s track record of litigation success is remarkable. During his tenure as chairman of M&R, he has been responsible for precedent-setting legal work, particularly in the insurance and banking & financial services sectors. He is also known for his representation of clients in governmental investigations, including those conducted by Departments of Insurance, Attorney General’s Offices, the Department of Justice, Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Trade Commission and Department of Real Estate, among others.

And as a testament to his work in the financial world, Michelman was re-elected to the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco in 2019. In that role, he contributes to the formulation of U.S. monetary policy. He also serves as chair of the Bank’s Audit and Risk Management Committee.



MOEZ KABA FINALIST

Partner
Hueston Hennigan LLP

Moez Kaba is a co-founder of Hueston Hennigan LLP. At the age of 40, he has stacked up an enviable record of trial and appellate victories. Kaba’s perfect trial record in trying seven cases to verdict or judgment makes him a trusted advisor to his clients.

Kaba has prevailed in trials and arbitrations across the nation, including, most recently, a complete defense verdict for PricewaterhouseCoopers in a closely watched federal trial and a complete win “on all claims” for Amazon in a high-profile and consequential breach-of-contract and tortious interference suit brought against it by eBay. He also secured a complete defense verdict for renowned research university California Institute of Technology (Caltech) after a four-week jury trial in a \$65 million+ tortious interference and whistleblower case. In addition to his trial victories, Kaba most recently won a major victory for Malwarebytes obtaining dismissal of a case involving cutting-edge technology issues.

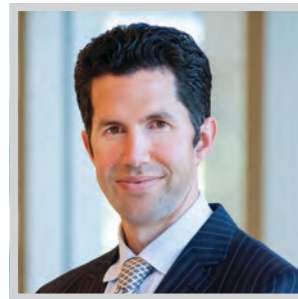


JONATHAN LOEB FINALIST

Partner, Business Litigation
Blank Rome LLP

Jonathan Loeb has nearly 30 years of complex litigation experience. He has a proven track record of success in high stakes cases which has built his reputation within the real estate, healthcare and entertainment industries, among others. Loeb counsels clients in real estate disputes involving fiduciary duties and creditors’ rights. In the ever-changing healthcare industry, he represents provider groups and physician management companies in a range of commercial litigation. In addition, he has broad experience representing studios and television networks and affiliates, film financiers, and other entrepreneurs and production companies in a variety of types of licensing, intellectual property, and entertainment litigation.

Recent successes Loeb has achieved for his clients includes his work for an international receivership firm and its receivers. Loeb prevailed in both the district court and Ninth Circuit in a suit to recover millions of dollars in damages to an oil tanker and related claims.



DAN MILLER FINALIST

Partner
Miller Barondess, LLP

Dan Miller is an accomplished trial lawyer and a founding partner of Miller Barondess, LLP. He has a record of success litigating cases all over the country including in New York, Delaware, Washington, D.C., Florida, Nevada and South Carolina. He is sought out to handle complex business matters that have a broad legal impact. With extensive experience in the banking and private equity sector, he represents some of the leading investment banks in the world, two of the largest publicly traded banks in California, a prominent private equity firm, and a leading venture capital firm in Los Angeles.

Miller also has a sophisticated sports and entertainment practice. In addition to representing an NFL head coach in arbitration in front of commissioner Roger Goodell, he has represented witnesses in confidential NBA internal investigations and NBA players in litigation matters, and currently represents one of the nation’s leading NBA sports agents.



DONNA WILSON FINALIST

CEO and Managing Partner
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips

In June 2018, Donna Wilson was elected to serve as Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP’s CEO and managing partner, a role that officially began in July the following year. Wilson’s elevation stands out in the legal industry for numerous reasons, not the least of which is the fact that she is both a woman and a member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Since her elevation in July 2019, Wilson has successfully brought her unique perspective to bear in her efforts to expand Manatt’s reach into new geographies as well as the restructuring of the firm to focus on industry groups rather than traditional practice areas. Through her efforts to build the professional services firm of the future – one built on a foundation of inclusivity – Wilson has overseen the opening of the firm’s tenth office, in Boston, and the acceleration of the growth of Manatt’s pool of elite talent.

FIRM ATTORNEY AWARDS



REAL ESTATE ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR HONOREE

ALFRED FRAIJO JR.

Partner
Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP

Alfred Fraijo, Jr. is a partner in Sheppard Mullin's Real Estate, Land Use and Natural Resources practice group in the firm's San Francisco and Los Angeles office. He is currently the youngest member of the firm's Executive Committee and is team leader of the firm's Latin America and Hispanic Business Team, a global initiative to provide specialized legal representation to Hispanic/Latino-owned companies and companies focused on the U.S. and Latin American markets. He is also one of Sheppard Mullin's first openly gay associates elevated to partner and one of the firm's first Latino associates promoted to partner and equity partner. Fraijo serves on the firm's national Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

As the son of immigrant farmworkers, Fraijo overcame poverty as the first of many achievements. He was the also first in his extended family to graduate from high school and go to college. Throughout his life, he has maintained a tireless focus on community service and expanding economic opportunity. His portfolio of work for clients includes some of the most significant, catalytic redevelopment projects in California and are driving economic investment and job creation in many communities.

Fraijo represents clients in diverse and challenging real estate strategies as they operate in cutting-edge industries including renewable energy, logistics (distribution and warehouse centers), housing (homeless and affordable housing), healthcare (Fraijo represents one of the largest HMOs in California, AltaMed) and hospitality (he has seven hotels in development in Los Angeles alone). He currently has more than \$6 billion worth of real estate projects under construction or in permitting stages throughout California.

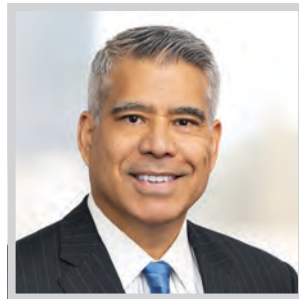


MEGHAN COCCI FINALIST

Partner, Global Co-Chair of the Hospitality,
Gaming & Leisure Industry Group
Latham & Watkins

Meghan Cocci stands out among top L.A.-based real estate lawyers for her successful stewardship of Latham & Watkins' Global Hospitality, Gaming & Leisure Industry Group through a highly tumultuous time for the industry. Within weeks of her arrival at the firm in January 2020 as vice chair of the group, nearly all client projects shut down due to the pandemic. Cocci quickly pivoted from negotiating high-profile transactions and introducing herself to Latham colleagues to leading a global effort to stabilize and protect hospitality clients from the ravages brought by COVID-19.

Owners, investors, and operators of many of the world's most high-value properties turned to Cocci and her Latham colleagues to navigate urgent financial restructurings, operational issues relating to public health, implementing and enforcing new guest and events policies, and myriad employment matters. Cocci saw clients through the storm to a successful landing, with many now in robust recovery.



SALVADOR LAVIÑA FINALIST

Partner/Chair of the Real Estate Department
Barnes & Thornburg LLP

Salvador LaViña was named chair of Barnes & Thornburg's Real Estate Department at the start of the 2021 calendar year – which makes him the first person of color and Latinx head of a major department in the 40-year history of the firm, which has grown to over 700 lawyers in 20 offices across the United States.

LaViña is the consummate deal lawyer, and he has supervised or closed transactions totaling billions of dollars in several states across the U.S. and over \$13 billion in transactions since the economic downturn in 2008. He advises clients in virtually all areas of real estate, including real estate investment and private equity, joint ventures, multifamily transactions, complex 1031 exchanges, opportunity zone, development, public-private and multistate matters. In the corporate realm, he focuses on private equity, fund formation, syndication, private placements, mid-market mergers and acquisitions, and stock and asset transactions.



CASEY SOBHANI FINALIST

Partner, Head of Leasing (US)
DLA Piper

Apremier leasing attorney well known in Los Angeles for his strong community ties, Casey Sobhani is directly responsible for managing and handling the legal work for millions of square feet of commercial office, industrial and retail space across the nation. Locally, his work includes many of the most prominent and iconic buildings in Los Angeles, from downtown to Century City, Santa Monica to Glendale and beyond.

Sobhani is a first-generation Iranian-American who grew up in rural Pennsylvania before establishing his professional roots in Los Angeles, where he has remained for the entirety of his 22-year career. When DLA Piper decided in 2017 to expand its presence in Los Angeles, Sobhani was a key part of firmly establishing Los Angeles as a hub for the firm's vast leasing practice. Although Sobhani's practice these days is national, his highest transaction volume still flows through the Los Angeles area.



TYSON SOHAGI FINALIST

Partner
The Sohagi Law Group PLC

Tyson Sohagi's practice focuses on environmental law, land use and planning law, the Coastal Act, the California Environmental Quality Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Public Trust Doctrine, and Election Law. Sohagi received a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from UC Berkeley that helps with SLG's review of issues involving complex legal and technical issues. He advises public clients on complex matters such as infrastructure projects (transmission lines, port facilities, airport facilities, intermodal and on dock railroad facilities, utility plants), mass transit fees, general plans and specific plans, specific development proposals, and other land use issues.

Many of Sohagi's projects have involved complicated issues pertaining to historic resources, water supply, sea water intrusion, groundwater, water quality, stormwater, wastewater, cultural resources, air quality, greenhouse gases, hazardous materials, noise, and geology. Sohagi also has substantial experience related to transportation analysis.

FIRM ATTORNEY AWARDS

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL
LEADERS
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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR HONOREE

CHRISTINA N. GOODRICH

Partner
K&L Gates

Christina Goodrich is an intellectual property litigator in the Los Angeles office of K&L Gates LLP – a fully-integrated full service global law firm. She has experience litigating complex civil cases in federal trial and appellate courts across the nation. Goodrich has trial experience in the International Trade Commission on a large patent infringement case and first chair arbitration experience in a complex and lengthy action in which she and her team secured a complete defense verdict. She has consistently held numerous important leadership roles at the firm over the past 10 years, including Intellectual Property Litigation Practice Group coordinator, co-chair of the Los Angeles Women in the Profession committee, member of the firmwide Women in the Profession Committee, inaugural member and co-chair of the Global Associate Liaison Committee, and co-chair of the Los Angeles Associates Group.

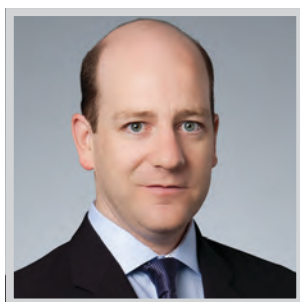
Goodrich's involvement in these leadership roles, while managing a busy litigation practice, belies her dedication to excellence, invocation, and mentorship. While still an associate, she worked quickly to take over and co-chair the Los Angeles Women in the Profession committee to re-invigorate the group, increase individual investment, promote development, and support women in the Los Angeles office. She continues such dedication in all of her leadership roles, including through initiatives designed to increase the recruitment, development, retention, and promotion of women and diverse individuals practicing in intellectual property. She believes in mentorship and development that pushes each individual to uncovering and developing their strengths.



MICHAEL DE VRIES
FINALIST
Partner
Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Mike De Vries just finished his fifth in-person jury trial over the last 20 months, and his third since the start of COVID-19. U.S. District Judge Laura Schofield who presided over his Syntel v. TriZetto case in New York in October 2020 told jurors it was "...in some ways a historic event." Everyone in the courtroom wore face coverings, and counsel and the witnesses stood inside plexiglass boxes when speaking, as a HEPA filter ventilated the courtroom. Kirkland attorneys reported that "you couldn't read the judge's expressions, you couldn't read a jurors' expressions." Counsel was even forbidden from passing notes or whispering to co-counsel who were presenting.

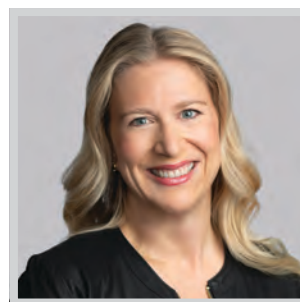
All told, in the last 20 months, De Vries and his partner, Bay Area-based litigator Adam Alper have secured winning verdicts in five jury trials in a row, three of which were plaintiff-side trade secret wins occurring in the last 14 months.



BEN HATTENBACH
FINALIST
Partner
Irell & Manella LLP

Recognized as one of California's leading IP lawyers, Ben Hattenbach practices full-time while serving in firm leadership as a member of Irell's three-person management committee, the firm's executive committee, and as vice chair of the litigation practice. Hattenbach's practice is focused on intellectual property litigation and counseling, with a particular emphasis on the trial of patent infringement matters.

Most recently, as co-lead counsel, he obtained a \$2.175 billion jury verdict for VLSI Technology in a March 2021 patent infringement trial against Intel Corporation involving microprocessor technology. Tried before a jury in Waco, Texas, this result was the second-highest U.S. patent verdict of all time. Beyond navigating the challenges of the highly complex case, Hattenbach and the rest of the trial team successfully dealt with a range of pandemic-related precautions to keep proceedings safe including undergoing regular COVID testing, wearing N95 masks and social distancing.



MELANIE HOWARD
FINALIST
Brand Protection Group
Loeb & Loeb

When iconic brands like Saks Fifth Avenue, Canada Goose, St. John Knits, The Gap, and celebrity personalities like Tyler 'Ninja' Blevins (one of the highest viewed gamers and social media influencers with more than 22 million YouTube subscribers), need to protect and monetize their intellectual property assets, they turn to Melanie Howard, chair of Loeb & Loeb's Brand Protection practice.

Howard's clients trust her business-savvy guidance on complex intellectual property transactions, advertising and marketing matters, and privacy and data security issues. While Howard has a great deal of experience in luxury fashion, esports, and the crossover between the two, her range of experience spans numerous industries, including automotive, entertainment and media, financial services, consumer packaged goods and technology. Howard has recently served as lead counsel on a number of matters in the fashion and luxury retail, e-sports, automotive, technology, entertainment and media, and financial sectors.



LAUREN SCHNEIDER
FINALIST
Partner and Managing Partner, California Offices
Lewis Roca

Lauren Schneider is a partner in Lewis Roca's Intellectual Property practice and also serves as the office managing partner of the firm's Los Angeles and Silicon Valley offices. She oversees more than 40 intellectual property lawyers that focus on the areas of trademark prosecution, patent prosecution, licensing, opinion work, post-grant proceedings and litigation.

Schneider's practice focuses on U.S.-based and international patent procurement and portfolio development, as well as licensing and opinion work. She provides patent strategy and portfolio management for numerous major clients across a diverse array of technical disciplines, both in the United States and internationally. She has extensive experience providing intellectual property protection and counseling in the biotechnology and chemistry sectors, and has counseled numerous clients, large and small, and prosecuted patent applications in a wide variety of technical fields, including life sciences, chemistry, materials science, optics, and mechanics.



FIRM ATTORNEY AWARDS



LABOR & EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR HONOREE

THEANE EVANGELIS

Partner and Co-Chair of the global Litigation Practice Group
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Theane Evangelis is an appellate, class action, and general commercial litigation partner in the Los Angeles office of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher. She serves as co-chair of the firm’s global Litigation Practice Group and previously served as co-chair of the firm’s Class Actions Practice Group. In the last year alone, Evangelis has played a lead role in a wide range of high-profile, groundbreaking litigation matters and has been a leading lawyer who has helped shaped how companies serving the “gig economy” operate. She has emerged as a go-to class action lawyer for businesses whose business models are under attack.

In addition, Evangelis has played a substantial role in a wide range of appellate, constitutional, media and entertainment, and crisis management matters, as well as a variety of other employment and consumer-related class actions. She joined Gibson Dunn after serving as a law clerk to Justice Sandra Day O’Connor during October Term 2004. Before clerking for Justice O’Connor, she was a law clerk on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Evangelis serves on the board of the California Women’s Law Center and as an advisory board member of the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival. She serves on the State Appellate Judicial Evaluation Committee of the Los Angeles Bar Association and is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the NYU Law School as well as St. James Episcopal School. She was also recently appointed to serve as a commissioner on the Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness.

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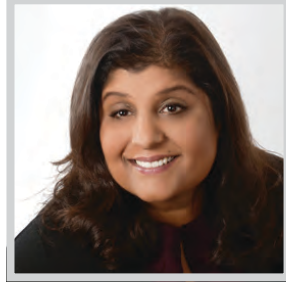


CAMILO ECHAVARRIA
FINALIST

Los Angeles Partner-in-Charge
Davis Wright Tremaine LLP

Camilo Echavarría combines the highest levels of performance in his area of specialty – employment litigation and counseling – with a strong and abiding commitment to leadership in the firm and in the profession at large. Born in Colombia and raised in Miami, Echavarría has dedicated himself to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal profession and beyond.

Some of California's largest employers turn to Echavarría because he's a fixer. He handles his clients' employment problems so that they can focus on their business. Some of his long-term clients include such well-known companies as Providence Health and Services, Bank of America, Dollar Tree, United Airlines, and Princess Cruise Lines. He regularly manages dozens of high-profile cases for such clients at any one time. He also provides his clients with practical employment advice in their day-to-day operations.



NICKY JATANA
FINALIST

Office Managing Principal
Jackson Lewis P.C.

Nicky Jatana is the office managing principal of the Los Angeles office of Jackson Lewis P.C. Her practice focuses on employment litigation, as well as on advising employers regarding daily workplace issues. Jatana has significant trial and arbitration experience and has spent the majority of her career focusing on complex and class action litigation in wage and hour matters and alleged Fair Credit Reporting Act violations. She frequently litigates wrongful termination, discrimination, harassment, breach of contract, and other labor and employment-related matters. She also provides day-to-day counseling and conducts various employment-related training for clients. She frequently speaks publicly on a multitude of employment law topics.

Jatana's experience includes handling employment matters from both in-house counsel and outside counsel perspectives.



DWAYNE MCKENZIE
FINALIST

Managing Partner
Cox, Castle & Nicholson

Dwayne McKenzie is the managing partner at Cox, Castle & Nicholson (CCN) and has a diverse practice that has grown to meet the needs of a wide variety of real estate and construction industry clients in traditional labor relations, employment law, ERISA matters, and litigation in state and federal courts.

McKenzie represents owners, public agencies, developers, contractor trade associations, and employers in traditional labor relations. He counsels contractor associations and participates in their industry-wide master labor agreement negotiations and in legislative matters. He negotiates project labor agreements on behalf of owners and developers and provides ongoing representation for owners, developers, contractors, and contractor trade associations in managing relationships and resolving disputes with unions.



EMILY BURKHARDT VICENTE
FINALIST

Partner, Co-Chair Labor and Employment
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

Emily Burkhardt Vicente, co-chair of the Hunton Andrews Kurth's national labor and employment team and diversity and inclusion committee. She was selected as co-chair of the national labor and employment practice of an American Lawyer 100 firm after only eight years as a partner. She has defended some of the largest Fortune 100 companies in high-stakes employment litigation and is experienced in taking hybrid class and collective action cases to jury trial.

Vicente has helped clients navigate sexual harassment claims fraught with legal and public relations challenges in the #metoo era, equal pay challenges, implementation of AI and emerging technologies in the workplace, and most recently COVID-19 related employment issues. She has also helped Fortune 100 companies develop and implement ESG programs around diversity and inclusion that balance legal, business and social interests.



Fisher Phillips is proud of our trailblazer nominees and congratulates all the **2021 Leaders in Law winners**

Fisher Phillips is a national law firm committed to providing practical business solutions for employers' workplace legal problems.

With more than 500 attorneys in 36 offices across the United States, Fisher Phillips is a national labor and employment firm providing practical business solutions for employers' workplace legal problems. We regularly advise and counsel clients on issues surrounding wage and hour, employment discrimination and harassment, litigation, workplace safety, immigration, trade secrets and non-competes, and more.



Todd B. Scherwin

Regional Managing Partner, Los Angeles & Woodland Hills Offices
tscherwin@fisherphillips.com

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BANKRUPTCY ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR HONOREE

JEFF BJORK

Partner; Global Vice Chair of the Restructuring & Special Situations Practice
 Latham & Watkins

As partner in the Los Angeles office of Latham & Watkins and global vice chair of the firm's Restructuring and Special Situations Practice, Jeff Bjork is widely recognized as a leading restructuring lawyer. In addition, he is recognized as a leading restructuring lawyer by publications such as, ILFR1000 ("Highly Regarded," Restructuring and Insolvency); The Best Lawyers in America (Bankruptcy/Insolvency); The International Who's Who for Restructuring & Insolvency Lawyers; The Legal 500 (Municipal Bankruptcy); and by the 2020 Lawdragon 500 as one of the top 500 U.S. Bankruptcy & Restructuring Lawyers and Global Restructuring & Insolvency Lawyers. Chambers and Partners said his "experience in matters involving any and all industries enables him to quickly assess and understand a situation, and to provide the legal advice that best positions his clients for maximum recovery and success."

Bjork represents public and private companies, creditors, and investors in all aspects of restructuring. With more than 20 years in practice, Bjork has represented clients in all aspects of restructuring, including debtors (public company and privately held), distressed investors, sellers, and purchasers of financially troubled companies, bond insurers, debt syndicates, and bondholder groups.

During the COVID-19 pandemic that caused massive disruption around the world, Bjork, in his leadership role as global vice chair, worked diligently to ensure full-client coverage and maintain continued service throughout to help clients navigate new business challenges and crisis. As a result, the firm's Restructuring Group that Bjork co-leads, had a record year – currently leading some of the largest restructuring matters at Latham.

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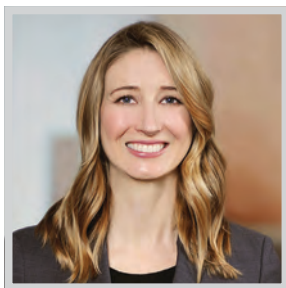
ERIC ISRAEL
FINALIST

Managing Partner

Danning, Gill, Israel & Kransoff, LLP

Eric Israel has been a lawyer and advisor for more than 40 years in Los Angeles for debtors, trustees, creditors, creditor committees, and shareholders in complex bankruptcy and workout scenarios. Clients seek Israel's counsel for bankruptcy, workouts, debtor-creditor litigation, exemption planning, and business reorganizations. Israel is also a certified mediator through the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution. He has served on the panel of mediators for the bankruptcy courts in the Central District of California since the panel's inception in 1998.

Recently, he represented the Chapter 11 trustee for the estate of HVI Cat Canyon, Inc., which owned approximately 1,000 oil wells, most of which were idle or not performing. Although the company had a long history of regulatory issues, the trustee was able to sell the oil and gas assets for \$26.8 million.



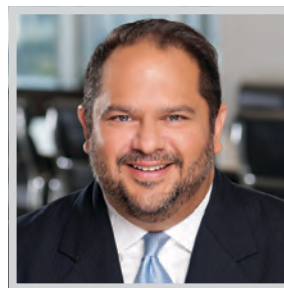
ABIGAIL O'BRIENT
FINALIST

Member

Mintz

A first generation college graduate and professional, Mintz member Abby O'Brien has displayed her legal acumen to clients from very early in her career. Starting as an associate in Mintz's Bankruptcy and Restructuring group in 2009 and elevated to partner in 2019, O'Brien has risen to the top in the high-demand male-dominated commercial bankruptcy practice due to her ability to lead successful trial teams and guide buyers in distressed transactions.

O'Brien maintains a wide-ranging insolvency and litigation practice, representing secured and unsecured creditors in bankruptcy cases and other insolvency proceedings, purchasers and sellers of distressed assets, bankruptcy trustees and receivers. She led the Mintz team defending six real estate investment companies in litigation filed by Stillwater Liquidating LLC.



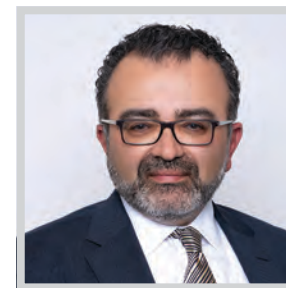
MALHAR PAGAY
FINALIST

Partner

Pachulski Stang Ziehl & Jones LLP

Malhar Pagay is a business lawyer whose practice focuses on the development and implementation of strategic alternatives for and against distressed businesses. He has substantial experience representing chapter 11 debtors, trustees, unsecured creditors, creditors' committees, and other parties in the contexts of bankruptcy cases, adversary proceedings, commercial litigation, mediations, domestic and international business transactions, business reorganizations, and out-of-court corporate restructurings of debt. He has broad industry experience, including healthcare and life sciences, real estate, technology, retail, manufacturing, transportation, sports, and entertainment.

Recent representations include reorganizing the Ruby Tuesday casual-dining chain with over 200 restaurants through a debt-for-equity transaction with its secured lenders.



HAMID RAFATJOO
FINALIST

Partner

Raines Feldman

Hamid R. Rafatjoo has over 25 years of experience representing clients in complex transactions and reorganizations throughout the United States. He counsels companies and individuals in a variety of industries, including healthcare, retail, restaurant, manufacturing, entertainment, real estate, and hospitality. He has represented entrepreneurs, small family owned businesses as well as companies with over a billion in revenue. Some of the many bankruptcies on which Rafatjoo has worked include representing the unsecured creditors committee of Penthouse Global Media, Inc. and Michael Avenatti's law firm in various bankruptcy matters.

Rafatjoo advises clients on a wide array of matters including business formation and corporate restructuring, debt and equity transactions and workouts, acquisitions and sales, and structuring and amending key contracts.

SADA

CONGRATULATIONS TO PATRICK MONAGHAN

Named In-House Counsel Finalist for the Los Angeles Business Journal Leaders in Law



Patrick Monaghan

Chief Legal Officer
General Counsel
Board Secretary



FIRM ATTORNEY AWARDS



RISING STAR OF THE YEAR HONOREE

MICHAEL TODISCO

Associate
Hueston Hennigan LLP

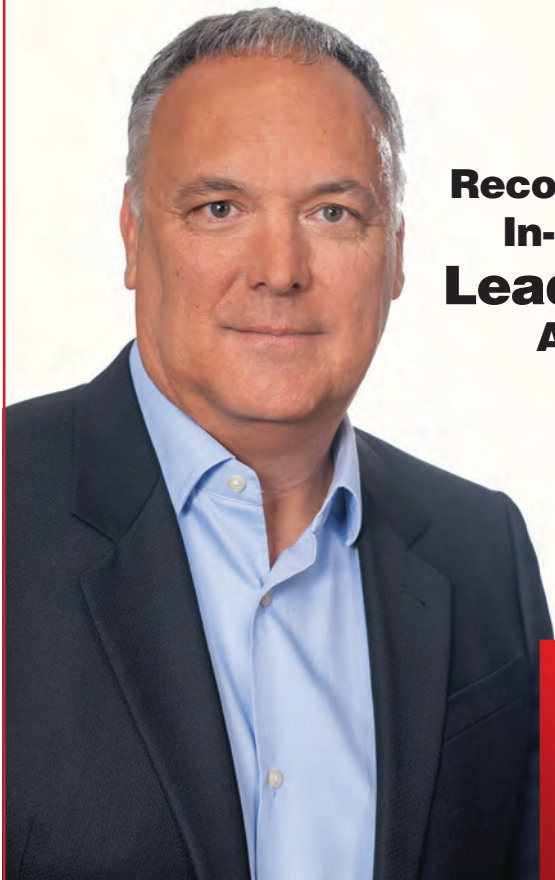
Already with three trial wins and three appellate victories under his belt, Michael Todisco is one of the most promising young trial lawyers in California. Todisco is the rare effective trial lawyer who is also a gifted writer. Clients prize his robust and balanced skills; often wrestling internally to staff Todisco on the firm’s most important cases.

A recognized rising star, Todisco has prevailed in state and federal courts across the nation. Last month, Todisco secured a complete defense verdict for PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in a federal whistleblower trial. Todisco also recently obtained a complete defense verdict for renowned research university California Institute of Technology (Caltech) after a four-week jury trial in a \$65 million+ tortious interference and whistleblower case.

Todisco has also helped secure numerous victories on appeal and through motion practice. In an important class-action appeal, Todisco prevailed at the U.S. Supreme Court in a unanimous opinion for Nutraceutical Corporation. In a high-profile First Amendment case, Todisco obtained a unanimous opinion at the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit for the Internet Movie Database (IMDb.com). And on behalf of Blackberry Corporation, Todisco secured a complete voluntary dismissal – with a stipulation from the opposing party to pay Blackberry’s attorney fees – after Blackberry filed its motion to dismiss and motion to strike. He also won an early motion to dismiss for Amazon Studios, significantly narrowing the claims against it in a contract case brought by Woody Allen.

CONGRATULATIONS MICHAEL PENDLETON

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MICHAEL ADAMSON
FINALIST
Associate
Susman Godfrey

Michael Adamson is a rising star at premier litigation firm, Susman Godfrey, where he currently serves a talented, versatile, and effective trial lawyer. Signaling his deep understanding of the bench, Adamson regularly represents both plaintiffs and defendants in federal and state courts across various industries and practice areas.

Adamson has taken a lead role in his cases from his early days at the firm. For instance, in just his first year, he argued a successful claim construction hearing in federal court, took and defended many critical depositions, and tried a four-week jury trial in California state court. He has continued to enthusiastically embrace new challenges in his cases and as a result has developed into a capable and well-rounded advocate in all phases of litigation. He is also currently leading efforts for the firm on a number of important putative class actions.



JEFFREY ROSEN
FINALIST
President/CEO
Rosen Trust Law

Jeff Rosen recently left Cunningham Legal to open his own firm. He is an up and coming star in the field and has worked with leading experts in the field of estate planning and trust law. Among his early successes was his work during the passing of Prop. 19. He assisted with Prop. 19 research and collaboration for attorneys across LA and the state of California. He was working alongside expert attorneys and became a leading expert himself regarding Prop. 19 research. The work he did with other attorneys became known throughout the state as an example of excellent research and collaboration.

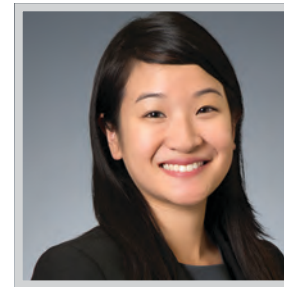
Colleagues report that Rosen is personable, charismatic, and a genuine team player that is fast developing widespread recognition for his work. Collaborators had described Rosen as the definition of a young attorney that will likely positively alter the legal landscape of California.



DAVID SONG
FINALIST
Associate
Nixon Peabody LLP

David Song is a public finance associate in the Los Angeles office of Nixon Peabody LLP, and an impactful addition and team player to the larger public finance group in Los Angeles as well as to the firm's national bench. Over the course of a year, Song has worked on a number of billion dollar deals for issuers, including the State of California, City of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

In the early days of the pandemic, the Federal Reserve authorized a Municipal Liquidity Facility to manage the short-term impacts of the economic slowdown. Song, with the guidance of a senior partner, co-authored two key NP Blog posts detailing "What is the Federal Reserve Municipal Liquidity Facility?" as well as the follow up, "Municipal Liquidity Facility - Federal Reserve Amended and Additional Guidelines."



CHARLOTTE WEN
FINALIST
Associate
Irell & Manella LLP

Although she's been an attorney for only four years, Irell & Manella associate Charlotte Wen has repeatedly shown that she is a rising star in the intellectual property and general litigation fields. In just a few years, she's been a core member of teams on some of the firm's highest-profile cases, helping secure nine- and 10-figure jury awards including the second-highest patent infringement verdict in U.S. history. She's handling her complex matters while simultaneously serving on Irell's Associates, Hiring, Summer, and Mentoring committees.

Wen focuses on a range of IP and litigation matters, including actions for patent infringement, trademark infringement, and breach of contract. Wen was also selected as a 2019 Pathfinder by the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, a year-long program designed to provide critical career development strategies and training for attorneys.

Miller Barondess congratulates
our partner DAN MILLER
for being named among
Los Angeles Business Journal's
Leaders in Law—Top 5 in Litigation



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Anti-SLAPP in Arbitration? A Closer Look

By MICHAEL H. TODISCO

Anti-SLAPP motions “cannot be used in arbitration proceedings under California law.” That, at any rate, is what the Ninth Circuit stated earlier this year in the published opinion of EHM Productions, Inc. v. Starline Tours of Hollywood, Inc., 1 F4th 1164 (9th Cir. 2021).

Given the importance of the anti-SLAPP statute and the proliferation of arbitration, such a rule would have significant real-world consequences. This article preliminarily explores EHM’s announcement and what we believe a California court would do if opining on the same issue.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ANTI-SLAPP STATUTE

California’s anti-SLAPP statute is designed to root out Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation, or “SLAPP.” In passing the statute, the Legislature sought to give defendants a powerful set of tools (including attorney’s fees provisions, burden-shifting rules, and a discovery stay) to fight back against lawsuits targeting First Amendment rights.

A well-timed anti-SLAPP motion can be a game changer. Cases have been rapidly settled or voluntarily dismissed as a result of early anti-SLAPP motions. The anti-SLAPP statute turns defendants into plaintiffs and turns no-risk litigation (for plaintiffs) into potentially costly mistakes.

THE PROLIFERATION OF ARBITRATION

Even if the anti-SLAPP statute is important, does it really matter whether it applies in arbitration? In a word, yes.

For starters, arbitration has become a fact of litigation life. There is no denying that several decades of arbitration-friendly court decisions have spurred a “rapid expansion of

arbitration as a dispute resolution mechanism” (Aguilar v. Lerner, 32 Cal. 4th 974, 985 - 2004).

Some may argue that the anti-SLAPP statute’s speech and petitioning protections are unlikely to be implicated in the commercial-heavy setting of private arbitration. But as California courts have recognized, the anti-SLAPP statute is properly applied even when defendant’s conduct was “directed to obtaining a financial advantage” (Ludwig v. Superior Ct., 37 Cal. App. 4th 8, 15 - 1995). That speech may arise in a commercial dispute does not strip it of constitutional protections.

THE NINTH CIRCUIT’S EHM DECISION

If the anti-SLAPP statute is an increasingly critical statute and arbitration is an increasingly critical forum, how did the Ninth Circuit justify stating that anti-SLAPP motions “cannot be used in arbitration proceedings under California law”?

The EHM decision does not cite any authority for its statement that the anti-SLAPP statute cannot be used in arbitration—and we have found none. Nor did the EHM court explain why it believed anti-SLAPP motions should be so confined.

Indeed, by the time the case reached the Ninth Circuit, the parties were no longer squarely disputing the question. Thus, the EHM court’s statement that anti-SLAPP motions “cannot be used in arbitration proceedings under California law”—stated as a background principle—was not essential to its holding, and future courts may treat it as dicta.

THE ANTI-SLAPP STATUTE SHOULD APPLY IN ARBITRATION

Indeed, there are strong arguments for why the anti-SLAPP statute should apply in arbitrations decided under California law.

Arbitration changes procedure, not sub-

stantive rights. Or as the U.S. Supreme Court put it: “By agreeing to arbitrate a statutory claim, a party does not forgo the substantive rights afforded by the statute; it only submits to their resolution in an arbitral, rather than a judicial, forum” (Mitsubishi Motors Corp. v. Soler Chrysler-Plymouth, Inc. - 1985).

Does California’s anti-SLAPP statute provide substantive rights? As any 1L civil procedure student knows, it is notoriously tricky to determine whether a right is “substantive.” But fortunately, the Ninth Circuit has taken much of the guesswork out of the inquiry.

In *Newsham v. Lockheed Missiles & Space Co.*, the Ninth Circuit analyzed California’s anti-SLAPP statute under the Erie doctrine to decide whether it provided substantive rights. Rejecting the argument that the anti-SLAPP statute was merely procedural, the Ninth Circuit explained that “California has articulated . . . important, substantive state interests furthered by the Anti-SLAPP statute”—namely, vindication of “the constitutional rights of freedom of speech and petition for the redress of grievances” (U.S. ex rel. *Newsham v. Lockheed Missiles & Space Co.*, 190 F.3d 963, 973 - 9th Cir. 1999). Accordingly, the Ninth Circuit held that “subsections (b) and (c) of California’s Anti-SLAPP statute”—the burden-shifting framework and attorney’s fees provisions, respectively—were substantive protections that could be vindicated in federal court.

A simple syllogism proves that the same analysis applies to arbitration. The first premise, established through the U.S. Supreme Court precedent discussed above, is that arbitration does not eliminate a party’s substantive statutory rights. The second premise, established by the Ninth Circuit in *Newsham*, is that California’s anti-SLAPP statute provides substantive statutory rights. The conclusion: California’s anti-SLAPP statute should apply

to arbitration.

CALIFORNIA COURTS WOULD REACH THE SAME CONCLUSION

As the arbitrator in EHM recognized, no California court has squarely addressed this question. But even in the absence of an on-point decision, California decisions shed light on the answer.

As the California Supreme Court explained, “[t]he anti-SLAPP statute’s definitional focus is not the form of the plaintiff’s cause of action but, rather, the defendant’s activity that gives rise to his or her asserted liability.” Thus, if a defendant engages in protected speech and then is sued for it, it should make no difference whether that SLAPP claim is filed in court or in arbitration. This makes sense: “all kinds of claims could achieve the objective of a SLAPP suit—to interfere with and burden the defendant’s exercise of his or her rights” (*Navellier v. Sletten*, 29 Cal. 4th 82, 92 - 2002).

In any event, when there are close calls about the anti-SLAPP statute’s application, the tie goes to application. As California courts have recognized, the Legislature intended the anti-SLAPP statute to be interpreted broadly given its critical remedial purpose. To effectuate that purpose and to protect the First Amendment in all forums, the anti-SLAPP statute should be available in arbitration.

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It's No Act—Venable Knows the Entertainment Business

As entertainment and media companies faced the challenge of staying afloat during the global pandemic, Venable and its LA office have been a steady and stable presence throughout. In addition to helping above-the-line talent raise their profile, our team has been helping talent agencies, management compa-

nies, entertainment executives, production companies, distributors, studios, networks, and

others to not only survive but thrive during a difficult time.

Venable has been a well-established presence in Los Angeles for over 15 years, and currently has more than 60 attorneys practicing within the entertainment space. Venable's full-service team works side by side with entertainment lawyers and business managers to provide a full array of support in areas such as corporate, litigation, tax, intellectual property, estate planning, employment, real estate, data privacy, trademark, and nonprofit. We've done it all, and always with an appreciation of the unique concerns of talent and other players in the entertainment industry.

Throughout the pandemic, Venable has



worked with leading industry players to restart productions and to identify new growth opportunities. For instance, the uptick in demand for streaming content has caused existing studio space in Los Angeles and elsewhere to become even more valuable, and the demand for studio space continues to rise. In response to this demand, Venable has facilitated major real

estate deals, including purchases, sales, and sale/leasebacks of stage, studio, and office space, as well as "headquarter deals," each on behalf of the most established media and entertainment companies.

Aside from the increase in content production, new technology accelerates changes in content delivery. And so, identifying future

streams of income—such as those from digital rights—can help creative and financial contributors realize sustained returns. Venable is well attuned to the connections between entertainment, commerce, and technology, and has helped a variety of producers, production companies, distributors, and advertisers spot opportunities to expand the use of content and increase audience size.

The team also works with celebrity and high-profile clients looking to boost brand value through endorsements, influencer deals, or licensing opportunities. In this sphere, they rely on Venable's deep bench to provide counsel on rights of publicity and managing the use of name, image, likeness, and trademarks.

With their industry evolving at an accelerated rate, entertainment clients need tailored solutions that look beyond the immediate deal toward the ultimate business goal. Listening to their clients and then designing contextual solutions has allowed Venable attorneys to earn trust and to become loyal and cost-conscious partners. Now, as more clients are returning to full operation and then some, Venable will be at their side, helping them grow and growing alongside them.

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State Bar Approves Comprehensive Client Trust Account Protection Program

At its meeting November 18, the State Bar Board of Trustees approved creation of a new, comprehensive Client Trust Account (CTA) protection program and other corrective actions to strengthen the State Bar's oversight and regulation of client trust accounts.

"The Board is moving forward with urgency and resolve to fix the problems that have come to light over the last several months," said Board Chair Ruben Duran. "Strengthening the regulation of client trust accounts through proactive oversight and intervention will improve public protection and increase trust in our discipline system. We must help attorneys improve their own trust accounting practices so that we can prevent lapses that could harm clients, and we must get better at detecting and prosecuting misconduct by those attorneys who engage in intentional malfeasance regarding entrusted funds."

The Board received the final report and recommendations by the Committee on Special Discipline Case Audit, chaired by Trustee José Cisneros. Its recommendations envision a comprehensive program of education, deterrence, detection, and enforcement. Key elements include:

Requiring licensed attorneys to report annually to the State Bar whether they are respon-

sible for CTAs and to provide basic account information.

Requiring attorneys responsible for CTAs to certify annually to the State Bar that they know and comply with the rules of professional conduct related to safeguarding client funds. They would also be required to complete an annual self-assessment to validate their practices.

Requiring a subset of CTAs to undergo a compliance review by an independent third-party Certified Public Accountant (CPA), based on policies and procedures developed by the State Bar in collaboration with the CPA community.

Using data including complaints, identified risk factors, and results from these compliance reviews, the State Bar would follow up on any identified issues, using a response proportional and appropriate to their findings.

The State Bar would also expand education for attorneys responsible for CTA management and launch a campaign to educate consumers about what they should expect from their attorney in safeguarding their funds. Such changes would put California in the forefront nationally of protecting funds that attorneys hold in trust on behalf of clients and others.

The Board authorized staff to return with program design details and effectuating rule proposals for consideration at the January or March

'We must help attorneys improve their own trust accounting practices so that we can prevent lapses that could harm clients.'

Board meetings. Rule changes would then circulate for an extended period of public comment, to be completed by June 30, 2022.

In other actions at the November meeting, the Board:

- Approved amendments to Rule 2201, which addresses the recusal of the chief trial counsel in discipline cases involving individuals with close ties to the State Bar. The amendments are designed to further improve the oversight and integrity of the Rule 2201 program.

- Approved amendments to the charter of the Board's Regulation and Discipline (RAD) Committee to strengthen its oversight of the chief trial counsel. The changes include approval of an annual performance plan and completion of an annual performance evaluation as well as quarterly meetings between the chair and vice-chair of the RAD committee and the

chief trial counsel to review a dashboard of data on the operations of the Office of Chief Trial Counsel.

- Announced that it had authorized staff to pursue a plan to place the State Bar's building at 180 Howard Street in San Francisco on the market for sale in 2022. The State Bar purchased the building in 1996 and paid off the mortgage in 2006. Capital projects needed to maintain the 43-year-old building have been an ongoing financial challenge, and were only partially addressed by the 2020 licensing fee increase. The agency has turned to debt financing and restructuring of its existing debt portfolio to address the highest-priority building improvements. The agency's ability to lease out vacant space in the building also has been challenging, a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. State Bar staff continue to work predominantly remotely, and the agency continues to evaluate options for a long-term hybrid work plan for its staff.

The State Bar of California's mission is to protect the public and includes the primary functions of licensing, regulation and discipline of attorneys; the advancement of the ethical and competent practice of law; and support of efforts for greater access to, and inclusion in, the legal system.

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