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OCTOBER 28, 2024



LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL
**CORPORATE
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AWARDS 2024**



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2024 HONOREES



CORPORATE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR – PUBLIC COMPANY HONOREE

JONATHAN ANSHELL

*Executive Vice President; Chief Legal Officer; Secretary
Mattel, Inc.*

Jonathan Anshell is executive vice president, chief legal officer and secretary of Mattel, Inc. In his role, Anshell oversees all legal responsibilities for the company's operations and transactions, as well as corporate governance, securities, intellectual property, litigation, privacy and compliance and government affairs.

Within the last year, Anshell has demonstrated leadership in supporting key company initiatives, such as overseeing the legal aspects of over 165 consumer product licensing partnerships tied to the Barbie movie and optimizing department operations. These optimizations include enhancing key capabilities to maximize the value of the company's intellectual property, reducing outside legal expenses, advancing the company's citizenship strategy by launching a departmental pro bono program to provide legal and volunteer services to communities in need, and supporting the publication of Mattel's 2022 Citizenship Report. In 2023, Mattel extended its leadership in its key toy categories, achieved extraordinary success with the Barbie movie, and further strengthened its financial position. Anshell was recognized for his outstanding performance and criticality to Mattel in 2023, and was noted for his successful execution of its financial and operating plan, which over-delivered the company's profitability and operational targets, despite a challenging retail inventory headwind and a toy industry decline during the year.

A proponent of giving back to his community, Anshell serves as a director of the Board of Public Counsel, the nation's largest pro bono law firm located in Los Angeles, with which he works to advance civil rights and racial and economic justice while empowering clients through comprehensive legal advocacy.



CORPORATE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR – LARGE PRIVATE COMPANY HONOREE

LISA GOK

*Chief Legal Officer
Cetera Financial Group*

A key voice within the Los Angeles legal community for more than 25 years, Lisa Gok has acted as a significant guiding hand for Cetera Financial Group for over a decade. Gok began her career as an assistant US attorney in the departments of organized crime and public corruption for the DOJ, where she handled complex cases pertaining to money laundering schemes and 'Operation Broken Faith,' one of the largest instances of police corruption in DC history. She credits her current ability to conduct effective internal investigations as in-house counsel to the several hundred hours she spent interviewing witnesses as part of her duties at DOJ.

After joining the US Securities and Exchange Commission's Los Angeles office as assistant regional director, Gok developed her knowledge of the inner workings and complex standards enforced by the regulatory agency, preventing Ponzi schemes, implanting investor protection methods and keeping capital markets clean.

Today, Gok leads Cetera's legal team, which currently consists of 18 lawyers and nine paralegals, helping the financial services firm manage litigation and navigate its regulatory landscape. She works closely with the company's finance team to provide strategic counsel for growth, which necessitates her working on major M&A activity. Within the last year, Gok guided Cetera through its largest acquisition in company history, bringing on the retail wealth and trust business from Securian representing nearly \$50 billion in assets and nearly 1,000 financial professionals, along with 150 home office staff. She now serves on the Board of Directors of Cetera Trust Company, N.A., which will expand the company's capabilities and services to advisors and clients.

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Greenberg Glusker is a full-service law firm in Los Angeles, California with clients that span the globe. For 65 years, the firm has delivered first-tier legal services, rooted in understanding clients' intricate business needs and personal concerns. With tailored solutions driving outstanding results, we go beyond the practice of law; we become committed partners in our clients' success.

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- Technology





2024 HONOREES



CORPORATE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR – MID SIZE PRIVATE COMPANY HONOREE

MATT FALLEY

*General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer
Cityview*

With over 25 years of experience as a lawyer specializing in the real estate industry, Matt Falley started his career and was for many years a partner at Greenberg Glusker Fields Claman & Machtinger LLP. Ten years ago, he decided to pivot and move in-house, joining his then-client Cityview as general counsel and chief compliance officer.

During his tenure, Falley oversaw the creation of five Opportunity Zone Funds with more than 150 high-net-worth investors and family offices and helped launch the Cityview's affiliated property management company in 2018. Falley has helped Cityview navigate numerous challenges in the commercial real estate market, most recently addressing the rapid increase in interest rates, cost of debt and lack of liquidity in the market. Despite these challenges, Falley was an integral part of the company's success over the past year in executing new loan originations, refinancings and loan modifications totaling \$500 million.

As CCO, Falley is responsible for ensuring Cityview meets all compliance and regulatory obligations as an SEC registered investment advisor. Additionally, Falley oversees the company's Human Resources department, and in this capacity has successfully grown its summer intern program and overseen its leadership academy, which provides the team with Harvard management courses, case studies and other resources that help develop internal talent. He also oversees Cityview's DEI employee initiatives, which strive to promote a workplace centered on diversity of perspective, equity across the organization and inclusion at every stage. 94% of the new hires in 2023 at Cityview and its affiliated property management company, Westhome, were women and/or racially underrepresented individuals.



CONGRATULATES

Scopely
Chief Legal Officer



We are proud to support
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Corporate Counsel Awards
and would like to congratulate

Jonathan Anshell

Executive Vice President and Chief Legal Officer

Mattel, Inc

Julia Bredrup

Associate General Counsel, Litigation & Regulatory

Snap Inc.

on their well-deserved
recognition as finalists

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2024 HONOREES



CORPORATE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR – GROWING PRIVATE COMPANY HONOREE

ELIJAH ROSENTHAL

Counsel
BLT Enterprises

As counsel for BLT Enterprises, Elijah Rosenthal has been involved in every aspect of a multitude of commercial real estate transactions, from ground-up industrial projects and complex entitlement processes to high-end residential builds and environmental remediations. Since joining the firm in 2016, Rosenthal has also been a crucial partner in facilitating creative strategies for BLT's acquisitions, disposition, and leasing with prestigious Fortune 500 companies such as Amazon, FedEx and Frito-Lay.

After graduating from Loyola Law School, Rosenthal began his career at a small litigation practice, but soon realized he was drawn to more collaborative work. After accepting an in-house counsel position at a mobile technology company focused on app development, he gained invaluable experience working closely with creative teams and navigating a fast-paced culture.

Since landing at BLT, Rosenthal has thrived. As one of only two attorneys at the company, he wears many hats and frequently adapts quickly to acquire new skills, always doing so with unwavering enthusiasm. Complex transactions such as portfolio acquisitions and those involving seller-carry financing, trailing liability, or multiple parties, have become part of Rosenthal's responsibilities. Rosenthal has played a key role in many of BLT's diverse projects, notably in the environmental remediation of Television Center, a 200,000 square-foot creative office and production campus spanning 6.4 acres in Hollywood. He is actively engaged in several philanthropic endeavors in the Los Angeles area, including with PS Science, Communities in Schools, LACER Afterschool Programs, Boy Scouts of America, and Jewish Family Service LA.



CORPORATE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR – START UP HONOREE

NIKITA PATEL

General Counsel
Brand New Holdings, LLC

Nikita Patel spent her time at Fashionphile Group, LLC, leading the company through the legal challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, managing its Series B financing and supporting international expansion efforts. In 2022, she joined Brand New Holdings, LLC, the founding entity behind several consumer-packaged goods and personal care brands. In her current position, Patel oversees both strategic and day-to-day legal functions at Brand New Holdings and its portfolio companies. As the sole lawyer for the group, she effectively acts as general counsel for all six companies, and has successfully overseen the launch of four brands.

As general counsel, Patel manages legal affairs for each brand from ideation and incubation to potential exit and everything in between, including debt and equity raises; employee matters; commercial agreements with manufacturers, retailers and distributors; intellectual property issues; enforcement; marketing campaigns; and regulatory compliance. She has established a reputation for her proactive approach in immersing herself in each brand's product life cycle and ensuring that legal risks are clearly understood while supporting her partners and stakeholders in achieving their goals.

As a native Angeleno, Nikita Patel takes pride in serving her community both as a lawyer and a resident. Since May 2023, she has been an executive board member with TechGC (now L Suite), an international peer community where general counsels and chief legal officers collaborate to make more informed and efficient decisions that drive their companies forward. Patel is also a frequent speaker at industry conferences and her alma mater, where she addresses substantive legal issues and advocates for meaningful DEI initiatives in the workplace.

2024 HONOREES



CORPORATE COUNSEL OF THE YEAR – NONPROFIT/GOVERNMENT/
MUNICIPAL HONOREE

JEANNINE TAYLOR

Deputy General Counsel
Keck Medicine of USC

Jeannine Taylor serves as the deputy general counsel for Keck Medicine of USC, where she has been a pivotal legal advisor since the establishment of USC's health system in 2009. Throughout her tenure, she has been promoted multiple times, ultimately ascending to the highest legal position at the medical enterprise. As the lead counsel, she manages a team of dedicated health sciences attorneys, and provides strategic guidance on major corporate acquisitions, affiliations and high-profile projects. During Taylor's leadership, Keck Medicine has grown into one of the most highly regarded academic medical systems in the nation.

Among Taylor's professional achievements is the successful establishment of a new health system board that enables the medical enterprise to respond more nimbly to the rapidly evolving healthcare landscape. Additionally, she served as the key legal advisor for Keck Medicine's affiliation with Arcadia Methodist Hospital, enhancing access to care for residents in the San Gabriel Valley.

Taylor demonstrated exceptional leadership in navigating an array of unprecedented legal challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. She played a critical role in expanding the telemedicine services, transforming the health care delivery system from relying 10% on telehealth to over 90% during the pandemic's peak. This transition was essential to ensuring patient access to uninterrupted clinical care and remains a popular option for many patients today. Taylor's team also managed the legal details of vaccine compliance following the state's mandate for vaccinations among healthcare employees and physicians. These challenges underscored Taylor's leadership and organizational prowess, solidifying her role as an indispensable leader at Keck Medicine.

DEMETRIOU, DEL GUERCIO, SPRINGER & FRANCIS, LLP

CONGRATULATES



Brian C. Ostler

General Counsel for the Los Angeles World Airports

for his well deserved recognition and selection as a finalist for the Los Angeles Business Journal's 2024 Corporate Counsel Awards

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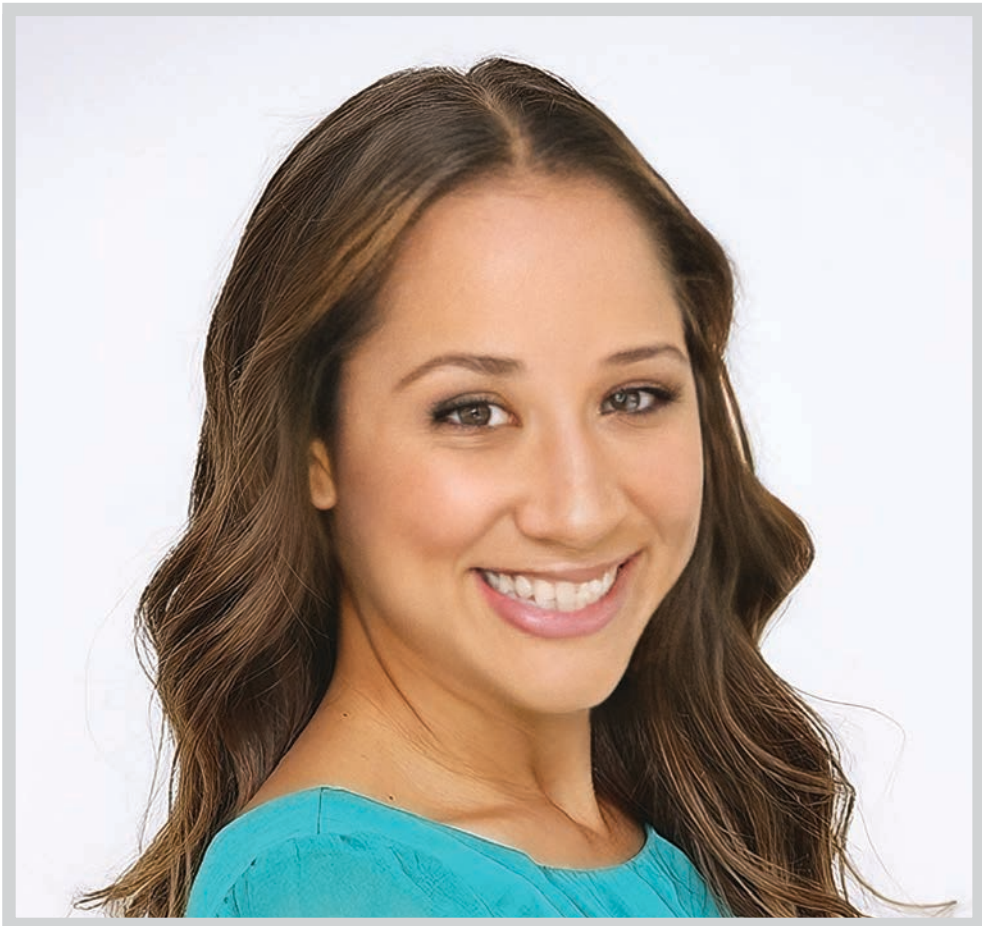
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RISING STAR OF THE YEAR HONOREE

LINDSAY HOLLOWAN

SVP & Deputy General Counsel
RadNet Management, Inc.

Lindsay Holloman is senior vice president, deputy general counsel and head of litigation at RadNet, one of the nation’s largest radiology companies that operates almost 400 diagnostic imaging centers and employs over 10,000 people. Since 2021, Holloman has overseen RadNet’s nationwide litigation, managed California-based employment matters, and provided strategic advice to senior management regarding labor and employment matters, business operations, and growth strategies.

Holloman has demonstrated exceptional leadership and adaptability amidst the advent of artificial intelligence and cutting-edge technological advances within a rapidly transforming medical imaging industry. Over the past two-and-a-half years, she has represented her company, litigating matters as in-house counsel. Examples include obtaining a complete summary adjudication for eight of ten causes of action in a disability discrimination and retaliation matter in arbitration, and obtaining a complete summary judgment in a single plaintiff disability and race discrimination, harassment, and wrongful termination matter in arbitration.

Holloman represents employers in all aspects of labor and employment counseling and disputes under federal and state law, including discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, disability, gender identity and sexual orientation. She has been actively involved with the Hispanic National Bar Association and has served as national secretary and regional president for the Western Region. She has organized local mixers for HNBA and led mentorship programs for members in the LA region to come together and empower each other. She hosted a workshop for junior college and college students interested in pursuing a legal career, called ‘Walk the Walk,’ focusing on how to position themselves for internships and externships and prepare for long-term success.

The best way to predict success is to create it.



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2024 FINALISTS



HEATHER ANDERSON
VP, Original Content & Business Affairs
ESPN

Heather Anderson joined Thelen Reid & Priest LLP after receiving her law degree with a concentration in intellectual property and entertainment from the UCLA. She has worked as an entertainment and technology attorney for almost 30 years. She joined ESPN in October 2021 as vice president, programming and acquisitions, where she worked closely with sports betting and fantasy systems, and served as the primary point of contact between programming, original content, content strategy and the office of the chairman, focusing on multi-sport opportunities and audience expansion initiatives. Anderson played a similar acting role for ESPN Edge and The Undeclared. By 2023, Anderson transitioned from programming to content to lead business affairs and operations in original content, leveraging her legal expertise in the role. She currently assists the creative teams that bring ESPN's engaging content such as the 30 for 30s, In the Arena series, and ESPN Films.



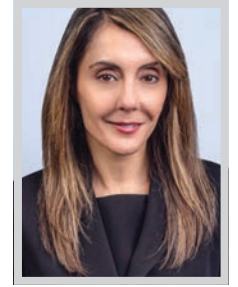
TINA ANSARIPOUR
Corporate Counsel
Phonexa

Operating as corporate in-house counsel and the head of Regulatory Affairs at leading SaaS platform Phonexa, Tina AnsariPour possesses extensive expertise in navigating complex legal landscapes, offering specialized legal and compliance services across multiple jurisdictions, including the US, UK, and Canada. In her current role, she provides legal oversight and guidance for the company's compliance with data privacy, cybersecurity and technology regulations. Additionally, she serves as corporate counsel for five separate companies, leading their legal and compliance departments while providing guidance on corporate affairs, intellectual property, licensing, consumer finance regulations and playing a key role in strategic business development. AnsariPour's work spans various regulatory areas at both federal and state levels, and she is consistently called upon to perform security audits, draft internal policies and ensure that best practices are upheld.



FRANCISCO ARIAS
General Counsel and Head of Business & Legal Affairs
FIFTH SEASON

As general counsel for FIFTH SEASON, Francisco Arias operates directly with the executive team and parent companies, managing risk and leading a team of 23 attorneys and legal professionals, which oversees all business and legal affairs for FIFTH SEASON's various Film and TV divisions. Over the past year, Arias assisted FIFTH SEASON to secure a \$225 million strategic investment from Toho, Japan's largest film studio, empowering the company to continue expanding its premium content slate and its unique network of global collaborations. Arias has provided ongoing oversight of business and legal practices for several hit series, including Severance, and upcoming series The Savant, starring Jessica Chastain, and Chief of War, led by Jason Momoa. In 2023, Arias received the Mexican American Bar Foundation Achievement Award, and April 2024, he was honored for the fourth time by the Imagen Foundation as one its Influential Latinos in Media.



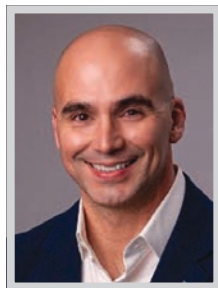
KERRY AYAZI
Chief Administrative, Compliance and Legal Officer
HRC Fertility

With nearly two decades of experience in healthcare, Kerry Ayazi is a passionate advocate for reproductive medicine and women's health. After working with Planned Parenthood for 13 years, she gained valuable experience in the cancer care space with City of Hope, before returning to reproductive health with HRC Fertility, where she serves as Chief Administrative, Compliance and Legal Officer. Ayazi's passion for healthcare and advancing reproductive medicine forward has directly benefitted HRC. She has helped the company to refine its practices and procedures, prioritizing patient care, safety and privacy. Ayazi is on multiple boards that have positively impact the local Los Angeles community, including the Child Foundation, with which she is also board chief ethics & compliance officer. She sits on the board of NonProfits' United and the Pacific Council on International Policy.



HOLLY BARBERI
In-House Counsel
Vista Sotheby's International Realty

Holly Barberi joined the Vista Sotheby's International Realty team in 2019. After serving as general counsel for other real estate brokerages for almost thirteen years, Barberi shifted roles to incorporate both her legal and management skills. She graduated from the University of Houston Law Center in 2000 and has spent nearly two decades in the legal field, working both in private practice and in-house, with a focus on corporate, real estate and business law. Her business skills have moved her beyond legal work and into general company management. She offers guidance and support to agents at every step of the escrow process, accompanying them on their journeys as real estate business owners within a brokerage. Barberi regularly speaks at company sales meetings and special events designed to keep agents, support team members and brokers informed of the latest trends in the market.



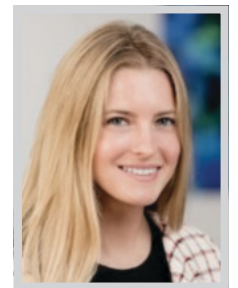
FEDERICO BLANCO
Chief Legal Officer
Studio71

Federico J. Blanco began his legal career in 2005 as a litigation associate handling intellectual property rights actions, SEC/DOJ investigations, and other commercial litigation matters. Today, he is the chief legal officer for Studio71, a division of ProSiebenSat.1 Media SE. As the head business and legal affairs executive, Blanco plays a pivotal role in structuring, drafting and negotiating agreements for all the company's business units, including media sales, brand sponsorships, content production and distribution. With a focus on innovation, collaboration and value creation, Blanco helps drive Studio71's unique success in the dynamic media landscape. He oversees corporate governance, compliance, litigation, intellectual property management, employment matters, and advises on joint ventures, investments, and other strategic corporate opportunities. Additionally, Blanco serves on the Board of Directors for Just Us 4 Youth, a nonprofit organization dedicated to mentoring, training, feeding and housing at-risk youth.



BRANDON BRAGA
General Counsel
The Agency

As general counsel of global real estate brokerage The Agency, Brandon Braga embodies the essence of strategic legal leadership. In a role that extends far beyond traditional legal counsel, Braga oversees The Agency's and its affiliates' legal affairs, encompassing litigation, intellectual property, corporate governance, and franchising matters, and has been instrumental in supervising comprehensive risk management policies and procedures that safeguard the company's assets and reputation. His multifaceted expertise in these areas has been crucial as The Agency continues its impressive expansion, now operating more than 50 offices across the US, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Europe. As a strategic advisor, Braga has fostered a positive, solution-oriented environment, reinforcing a uniquely collaborative company culture. He is frequently consulted on significant business decisions, ensuring that the company's growth is sustainable, and that its legal and ethical standards are upheld across all operations.



JULIA BREDRUP
Associate General Counsel, Litigation & Regulatory
Snap Inc.

As associate general counsel, litigation and regulatory for Snap Inc., Julia Bredrup, provides strategic guidance for the company's most critical and challenging litigation and regulatory issues, leading the in-house team on matters such as ongoing social media addiction litigation. Prior to her move to Snap in November 2021, Bredrup spent over a decade developing a robust breadth of experience as a private practice attorney at Am Law 200 firms in Los Angeles. Her private practice experience includes complex commercial litigation and white-collar criminal defense, while her civil practice experience encompasses employment, professional liability, securities, copyright, partnership and entertainment. Bredrup served multiple terms on the union board of the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, including a term on its Executive Committee and as a liaison to a next generation affinity group. In 2019, she was named by the Daily Journal to its Top 40 Under 40 Lawyers list.



2024 FINALISTS

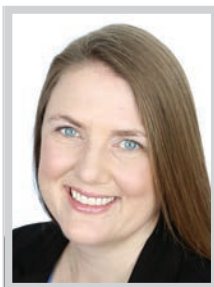


SCOTT CHAPLAN

General Counsel
Hayward Lumber Company

General counsel of Hayward Lumber Company, Scott Chaplan has built a successful business boutique law firm, a substantial national real estate and private equity portfolio, and deep relationships with the family offices and mid-market companies for which he serves. With over 20 years of experience in construction defect litigation, having endured the Great Recession as a real estate developer and fulfilling his obligations to the successors of his failed lenders, he has become increasingly adept at navigating the complex needs of the company's select clientele with whom he interacts daily.

Chaplan serves on several for-profit and nonprofit boards, including his role as general counsel and governing board member for the Forest Stewardship Council, as well as on the Jewish National Fund Board. He regularly mentors and employs non-violent offenders with the goal of facilitating their reintegration into society.



DANA CLAUSEN

General Counsel
Partner Engineering and Science, Inc.

With a JD from UCLA School of Law and over 20 years of legal expertise, Dana Clausen serves as the inaugural general counsel for Partner Engineering and Science, Inc., where she established and leads a legal team. Clausen develops and executes the company's legal and risk management strategies, and oversees all aspects of claims management, collections, litigation, insurance, contracts, licensing and other risk management departments.

Clausen extends her legal expertise to the community through her work with Bet Tzedek House of Justice. Her consistent and outstanding pro bono legal service earned her the Wiley Manuel Award from the California State Bar and has been recognized as a "Rising Star" by Super Lawyers. She actively volunteers at the Girls Academic Leadership Academy, the only all-girls public school in California, where her two daughters are students.



JOHN DeFRANCE

Senior Attorney
The Kroger Co.

Throughout his 17 years at The Kroger Co., John DeFrance has expertly managed the company's national commercial real estate legal needs, both transactional and litigation, making a profound impact on the company's operations and success. His experience in sophisticated commercial real estate matters, particularly in the shopping center space, has been invaluable to the company.

DeFrance acts as a trusted advisor to the businesspeople in the Kroger Real Estate Department, navigating through every type of legal need that arises. A mentor and problem solver, he has prioritized the health and safety of communities and their members by ensuring that landlords of the shopping centers housing the company's stores fulfill their obligations to maintain cleanliness and safety. Additionally, DeFrance has been mentoring 1L students at his alma mater, Loyola Law School, since 2010.



JAMES DIERKING

Assistant General Counsel
Fluor Corp

James Dierking is assistant general counsel with Fortune 500 company Fluor Corporation, where he is responsible for overseeing and managing the company's worldwide dispute resolution activities. Considered an industry leading attorney, Dierking has been involved in litigation, international arbitration, and risk management as well as transactional work to prevent, mitigate, and resolve risks, claims and disputes on major EPC projects worldwide.

In January 2024, Dierking participated in a panel discussion "What In-House Counsel Need to Know about Bankruptcy" for the ACC Southern California Conference. He also participated on an industry panel of construction in-house counsel on an educational session focusing on primary concerns and potential misunderstandings in the relationship between in-house and outside counsel. Dierking spent time as a research attorney on the California Court of Appeals and in the US Attorney's office.



ELIZABETH DUONG

*Vice President and General Counsel,
Business and Staffing Solutions*
ActOne Group

During and after her time at University of California College of the Law, San Francisco, Elizabeth Duong held positions at financial advisory firms, nonprofits, a technology company, and a litigation firm, making her way to the ActOne Group as counsel in 2008. In 2014, the ActOne Group promoted her to vice president and general counsel, Business and Staffing Solutions. She also earned her Executive MBA at the University of California, Rady School of Business in San Diego, where she was a Foster MBA Fellowship recipient.

Duong's leadership and resilience in overcoming unpredictable challenges during and after the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in her winning the company's Mike Hoyal Award for operational excellence. Duong has been a member of the Association of Corporate Counsel, Southern California Chapter, since 2008. She has also mentored law students through the Chapter's Diversity Summer Internship Program.



FRANZ ESPANOL

Managing Associate General Counsel
Prime Healthcare

Franz Espanol joined Prime Healthcare, a full service healthcare provider, in March 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and right before many shelter-in-place orders were effectuated. He hit the ground running and made immediate and significant contributions to the company in employment law. Espanol played a key role in workplace safety initiatives for frontline healthcare workers throughout the country and assisted the company's affiliates in solving staffing issues during a critical staffing shortage in healthcare.

Espanol is one of two lawyers tasked with managing Prime Healthcare's robust employment litigation portfolio. He develops and oversees strategy on a wide variety of employment cases across 14 states. His work has resulted in several defense awards in high-stakes litigation and favorable settlements for his organization. He now manages a team of employment law subject matter experts for Prime Healthcare.

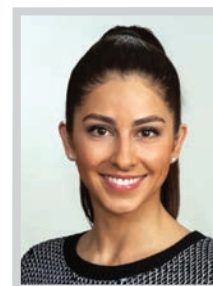


KAYHAN FATEMI

Executive Vice President / General Counsel
Best Contracting Services

A graduate of Pepperdine School of Law, Kayhan Fatemi joined national law firm, Wickwire Gavin LLP in 1993. Over his 13 years with the firm, Fatemi rose from associate to managing partner in Los Angeles. Since 2006, Fatemi has been with Best Contracting Services as General Counsel, leveraging his extensive experience in commercial construction law as a key voice in guiding the organization. His responsibilities include operational oversight, business/financial/insurance oversight and general counsel duties. He has overseen commercial developments in Dubai and UAE, applying his experience with all aspects of construction, from roofing and waterproofing to glazing and metal panels.

A dedicated member of his community and lover of sports, Fatemi has been an active volunteer of the LA Watts Summer Games' annual summer high school soccer tournaments hosted by the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce.



JAEGA HARALAMBUS

VP, Corporate Counsel
Skydance

As VP, corporate counsel, of Skydance Media, one of the world's largest independent content studios, Jaega Haralambus brings essential legal and strategic guidance on corporate matters, including financing, consumer products, intellectual property, investment opportunities, strategic partnerships, technology transactions and vendor contracts.

Since joining Skydance in 2021, Haralambus has played a key role in the legal aspects of many major decisions and dealings, helping to propel the studio to landmark and record-breaking successes across all its divisions. Haralambus is the legal point person for Skydance's five-year, \$1 billion credit facility led by J.P. Morgan, and helps with all negotiations and agreements for the company's consumer products division across live-action and animated properties. She was instrumental in the formation of Nocturna Pictures, a new horror label launched earlier this year by Skydance in partnership with Andy & Barbara Muschietti.

2024 FINALISTS



CRISTINA HWANG
Associate General Counsel
Hanmi Bank

Licensed to practice law in both the State of California and Buenos Aires, Argentina, Cristina Hwang is the associate general counsel at Hanmi Financial Corporation, and its wholly owned subsidiary, Hanmi Bank. Hwang provides legal support on a variety of matters, conducts research, drafts policies and reviews and negotiates contracts.

Hwang's career at Hanmi began in 2020, and she has since applied her extensive legal expertise and multicultural experience to enhance the legal department's function. She has enhanced employee engagement with the legal department and fostered an open-door policy that encourages employees at all levels to seek advice and address concerns early. Her leadership has led to an improved legal risk management and a collaborative work environment, and inspired a culture of cooperation and proactive problem-solving.



DAVID KATZ
Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer and UK Executive Sponsor
Radnet, Inc.

After spending 30 years in private practice, David Katz moved in-house in 2020 to become the general counsel of Radnet. Since then, the company's market capitalization has increased from under \$1 billion to over \$4 billion. In four years, Katz and the team he manages, which includes lawyers and support personnel, have completed almost 60 acquisitions and joint ventures involving cutting-edge technology and imaging centers, essential for addressing healthcare needs of individuals in the United States and internationally.

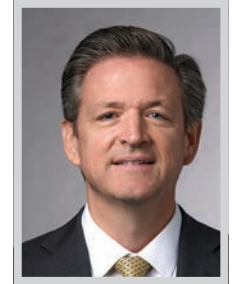
Katz's legal practice has focused on corporate finance, international transactions, mergers and acquisitions, business planning, and SEC compliance for domestic and foreign companies. He has also served as a reserve deputy for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department since 1990.



KIM NAKAMARU
General Counsel
Relativity Space

A distinguished senior executive and general counsel at Relativity Space, Kim Nakamaru helps fast-growing companies increase valuation and reduce risk by navigating complex transactions, managing stakeholder dynamics, and developing high-performing teams. With a strong background in corporate law, governance, intellectual property, risk management and operations, Nakamaru has consistently delivered results in highly regulated technology, telecommunications, and aerospace industries.

As a key member of the executive team reporting to the president, Nakamaru oversees the legal, corporate security, and environmental health & safety departments. In her first year at the company, she has already matured the intellectual property strategy to best-in-class, launched an inaugural IP Inventor Rewards Program and assumed oversight of two additional departments.



BRIAN OSTLER
General Counsel, Los Angeles World Airports
City of Los Angeles, Office of the City Attorney

Brian Ostler is a sr. assistant city attorney with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office and serves as general counsel to Los Angeles World Airports. Ostler advises the organization's Board of Airport Commissioners, the Department, the Department's chief executive officer, the City Council and its subcommittees on legal matters relating to the operation and management of the Airport System. He is responsible for overseeing all cases and contracts relating to the Airport System and providing specialized legal counsel on federal regulatory matters governing airports. Ostler served for over 15 years as lead attorney responsible for advising the department on construction, planning, and development-related legal issues.

Ostler has served as the chair of the Construction Law Subsection of the LA County Bar Association's Real Property Section Subsection.



Leading the Way

King & Spalding congratulates all the nominees and in particular our friends at **Prime Healthcare** and **Snap**.

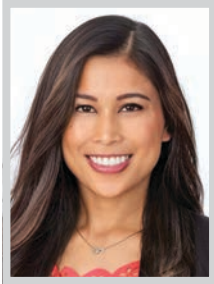
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Best Law Firm
of the Year

—AMERICAN LAWYER (2023)



2024 FINALISTS



MELISSA PARISI

Vice President, Global Privacy Counsel (Legal)
Herbalife

Melissa Parisi joined Herbalife in 2019 and was given ownership of the entire Global Privacy team by 2021. Following her success in leading and restructuring the team, she was promoted to vice president in 2022. She oversees the development, execution and continuous refinement of the organization's privacy policies, procedures and educational initiatives.

During recent company restructuring efforts, Parisi successfully navigated this challenging period while keeping the team motivated to meet the business needs. Additionally, she oversees the privacy aspects of the global incident management team, ensuring swift and efficient responses to personal information security incidents. She often speaks at various industry events and panels addressing privacy issues. She has authored publications on privacy and data security topics for the American Bar Association (Privacy & Data Security Committee) and DarkReading.



BILLIE PIERCE

Vice President, Deputy General Counsel
& Chief Employment Counsel
Prime Healthcare

Originally joining Prime Healthcare as assistant general counsel seven years ago, Billie Pierce rapidly progressed up internal ranks and now leads the company's legal teams on Employment, OSHA, Workers' Compensation, and Immigration and works closely with all specialty teams within the legal department and company's executive leadership to further its goal of protecting hospitals, preserving jobs and saving lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to an immediate shift in her strategy as she delegated litigation management to her team and focused entirely on aiding the company's leadership in meeting the challenges of the pandemic. As a member of the company's COVID-19 Task Force, Pierce worked tirelessly to support hospital leadership and frontline caregivers and ensure they had the support and resources necessary to serve their communities.

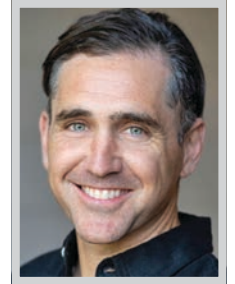


CHRISTINE ROSELAND

Senior Staff Counsel for Investment Transactions
Los Angeles County Employees Retirement
Association (LACERA)

Christine Roseland is the lead senior staff counsel for Investments and Commercial Transactions for the Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association, an independent governmental entity responsible for administering and managing the retirement fund for Los Angeles. Roseland works with the organization's Transactions Group by handling all investment-related and commercial transactional matters.

In 2023, Roseland led a legal team that negotiated, documented and closed over 500 investment and commercial transactions having a value of close to \$8 billion. Her work is essential to the success of the organization's \$80 billion global portfolio for the payment of pension and retiree healthcare benefits, the delivery of counseling and support services and efficient back-office support, and to the organization's members, who are over 190,000 active, deferred, and retired public servant employees.



ROY ROSENTHAL

Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary
Scopely

Roy Rosenthal has served as a strategic partner and played a pivotal role in laying the foundation for Scopely's continued business growth through a series of acquisitions and notable successes. He led the \$4.9 billion acquisition of Scopely by Savvy Games Group, the seventh largest acquisition in video game history. This feat reshaped the landscape of the video game market and provided the company with previously unimaginable access to capital and development opportunities.

Rosenthal has been instrumental in the development of new products for the business by forging strategic partnerships with industry giants such as Marvel, Disney and Warner Brothers. Leveraging the significant energy around one of last year's largest cultural moments, Rosenthal negotiated with Mattel for a Barbie integration with Scopely's viral Gen-Z hit 'Stumble Guys,' which became the number one 'top free' game on the Xbox platform, attracting over 50 million monthly players.



DAVID RUIZ

General Counsel; Partner; Chair of Appellate Law
(Strategy, Writs and Appeals) Team
Manning Kass

Partner in the Los Angeles office of Manning Kass, David Ruiz is the leader of the Appellate Law (Strategy, Writs, and Appeals) Team and a member of the Special Investigations Unit / Insurance Fraud Litigation team. Also serving as general counsel for the firm, Ruiz has been involved in numerous multi-million personal injury cases, where his writing and research skills have been instrumental in resolving matters.

Ruiz has gained extensive experience in high-stakes litigation, participating in many multi-million exposure cases in the areas of personal injury, insurance fraud, employment law, consumer class actions and real property, as both plaintiff and defense counsel. He is well-versed in all aspects of the evaluation and defense of first and third-party SIU claims and is constantly working on developing new legal avenues to pursue those who attempt to defraud insurance companies, including affirmative litigation matters such as qui tam, lien consolidations, declaratory relief and RICO matters.



SANJESH SHARMA

Assistant General Counsel - Patents
Johnson & Johnson Surgical Vision, Inc.

Sanjesh Sharma serves as assistant general counsel, patents at Johnson & Johnson Surgical Vision. For more than a decade, Sharma has managed high-value, business-critical global patent portfolios for the Refractive and Laser Cataract Surgery product lines at the company, which have pioneered innovation in the nearly \$70 billion, rapidly growing eye health segment. Sharma's strategic counsel helps guide the growth, development and protection of the company's assets, as she works closely with the business in developing strategies for domestic and global patent filings, freedom-to-operate analyses, and more.

Sharma recently played a critical role in a high-stakes and widely publicized intellectual property dispute against a major competitor involving laser cataract surgery equipment and software which resolved with a settlement agreement that included a payment to Johnson & Johnson, in addition to cross-licenses and mutually agreed covenants and releases that enabled both parties to resolve various related worldwide intellectual property disputes.



NILOOFER SHEPHERD

Deputy General Counsel - Litigation & Employment
Creative Artists Agency (CAA)

Niloofer Shepherd is deputy general counsel at leading entertainment and sports agency Creative Artists Agency, where she manages many legal components of the company's continued growth in the entertainment and sports marketplaces and its expansion into new regions.

Principally responsible for global litigation and employment matters, Shepherd provides broad legal support to CAA's wide spectrum of businesses. She was a key advisor on the strategic employment aspects of CAA's acquisition of ICM Partners and managed the company's handling of the DOJ's anti-trust review process. Over the course of a two-year legal dispute between the Writers Guild of America and the Association of Talent Agents, Shepherd managed the litigation to a resolution that saw agents reunite with their clients. She has also been a key developer of the company's employee-centered policies and protocols, including pioneering its best-in-class anti-sexual harassment training program.



ALEX SHVARTSMAN

General Counsel
Pelago

With a rich legal background in digital health and a focus on complex transactions, data privacy/security and board governance, Alex Shvartsman serves as general counsel at Pelago in Los Angeles. Shvartsman's focus on healthcare reflects a deep commitment to improving access for vulnerable and underserved populations. In his current role at Pelago, he leads the legal function for a company that provides coaching, counseling and treatment programs for employees struggling with substance use disorders in all 50 states. He recently assisted Pelago in securing its Series C funding and signing its largest customer, creating a long-term opportunity for the company to continue helping people overcome addiction.

Before Pelago, as general counsel at Castlight Health, Shvartsman was part of a team that worked with the CDC and Boston Children's Hospital during the pandemic to create real-time COVID-19 vaccine inventory, tracking through VaccineFinder, which was later integrated into vaccines.gov.

Keck Medicine of USC is proud to honor Jeannine Taylor, deputy general counsel, who has been recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal for the 2024 Corporate Counsel of the Year Awards. The outstanding work of all of our teams is focused on one goal — delivering world-class care tailored specifically for our patients. **Together we are Limitless**

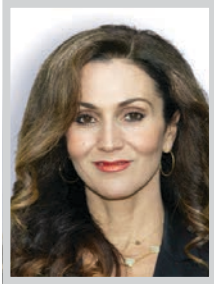


Jeannine Taylor
Deputy General Counsel
Keck Medicine of USC





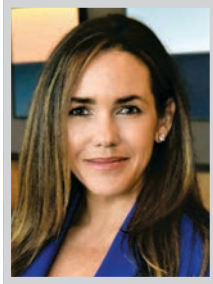
2024 FINALISTS



SUNNY SOLTANI
City Attorney
City of Carson

As the city attorney for Carson, Sunny Soltani has demonstrated exceptional legal acumen, resilience and leadership, significantly impacting the city and its constituents. She has been pivotal in navigating complex legal landscapes, including spearheading the city's oil business tax measure, a significant policy that impacts the economic foundation of Carson.

Soltani's work promotes fair taxation practices and compliance, contributing to the city's financial health and reflecting her commitment to serving the public interest. Her strategic approach to the ongoing litigation against major refineries for tax deficiencies is rooted in balancing firm legal strategies with the city's economic goals. Her success stems not only from over two decades of experience, but also from her ability to foster collaborative relationships, driving solutions that uphold municipal integrity.



ERICA REILLEY SWANHOLT
Vice President; Deputy General Counsel;
Chief Litigation Counsel
Prime Healthcare

Erica Reilley is the vice president & deputy general counsel for award-winning health system Prime Healthcare, which operates 44 hospitals in 14 states, providing over 2.6 million patient visits annually. Reilley has been recognized as a trusted advisor and strategist at all levels of litigation and in a broad variety of areas. She joined the company's legal department in 2023 bringing over 23 years of experience, including in the Issues and Appeals Practice at the Los Angeles office of Jones Day, where she represented healthcare providers on a wide variety of complex issues, including fair reimbursements for services.

Reilley is an appointed member of the Local Rules Advisory Committee, US District Court, Central District of California. She is also a member of various professional law organizations.



MATTHEW SYKEN
Chief Legal Officer and General Counsel
Noble 33

Matthew Syken has served as the chief legal officer and general counsel of lifestyle hospitality company Noble 33 since its inception. Throughout his tenure, he has overseen the company's legal affairs, effectively mitigating its liabilities while implementing proactive policies to safeguard employees and minimize risks to the organization. In the complex landscape of operating across multiple highly regulated states, Syken has proven to be an indispensable asset to the company.

As an integral part of our company's mitigation strategy and proactive measures, Syken has championed support for victims of sexual harassment. He has facilitated access to resources and assistance, prioritizing the well-being and recovery of individuals, irrespective of the associated costs or liabilities to the company.



JOJI TAKETA
Secretary and General Counsel
Braille Institute of America

After receiving his juris doctor degree from UCLA School of Law in 1983, Joji Taketa began a 24-year litigation career, handling a wide variety of cases ranging from business disputes, to trust and probate matters, to construction and real estate. He has represented many nationally recognized companies, restaurant chains, contractors, and financial institutions.

In 2007, Taketa became Braille Institute's general counsel and corporate secretary, bringing a legal perspective that would support the growth of strategic initiatives within the organization. Taketa supervised the construction of a new 14,000 square foot center in Anaheim, and with his team, oversaw a robust bequests program, which serves as a major source of critical revenue for Braille Institute's free programs and services for the blind and visually impaired.

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Brian Ostler
General Counsel
Los Angeles World Airports

Los Angeles Business Journal
2024 Corporate Counsel
Awards Finalist





Braille Institute
congratulates...

Anthony Joji Taketa
General Counsel,
Braille Institute of America



**Honoree of the 2024
Corporate Counsel Award**

We thank him for his outstanding work and unwavering dedication to Braille Institute's mission of positively transforming the lives of those with vision loss.

No boundaries in sight.

BrailleInstitute.org



Corporate Counsel's 2025 Guide: Key Deadlines and Legal Trends to Watch

As legal risks continue to evolve, in-house counsel are tasked with navigating complex regulatory and compliance challenges. This article contains a collection of insights from Greenberg Glusker thought leaders that explores the Corporate Transparency Act deadline, data security threats from collaboration tools, political expression in the workplace during election season, and trends in data privacy litigation.

CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY ACT: REPORTING DEADLINE APPROACHING

By Elias Kawas

The Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) imposes far-reaching new reporting obligations on many US businesses, and the penalties for non-compliance are substantial. Exemptions include large operating companies, government entities, tax-exempt organizations and publicly traded companies. Non-compliance can lead to significant penalties, including fines up to \$500 per day for civil violations and up to \$10,000 and/or imprisonment for up to two years for criminal violations. With only a few months left before the **January 1, 2025** deadline to file your initial beneficial ownership reports for existing entities, we urge you to act now to comply with the new regulations.

WHY COLLABORATION TOOLS POSE A GROWING DATA SECURITY THREAT

By Peter Jackson

In 2025, reliance on external tools cannot come at the expense of security. By addressing these risks head-on, business owners can reduce their exposure to legal, financial and reputational damage.

AI-powered tools that summarize meetings, generate transcripts, or allow screen-sharing add to this risk. These records, stored on external servers, create a digital trail that businesses may not anticipate. For instance, sales teams using Loom or Slack for internal communications could be exposing proprietary business strategies and sensitive client information. During litigation, these records may surface as part of discovery, expanding the scope of what courts can access. What seems like a harmless collaboration now becomes a legal vulnerability, putting your most valuable data at risk.

Worse, workplace policies can't enforce data security when employees use personal devices or accounts outside of company oversight. Cloud-based SaaS services retain vast amounts of information, including business plans discussed in meetings, and companies often lack visibility into these storage practices.

Tools like digital whiteboards, used for brainstorming new products or services, could become targets for external information requests. Companies relying on cloud storage must contend with third-party vendors who might store or even share this data without clear safeguards.

Recent reports show a growing number of legal challenges stemming from this issue. Over 60% of global general counsel have already encountered problems caused by collaboration platforms, chat apps, or other cloud-based



systems. As more businesses adopt these tools in 2025, the problem will only intensify. Regulations like GDPR and CCPA demand that businesses implement strict security measures, but many companies overlook these requirements, especially when dealing with third-party vendors.

ELECTION SEASON AT WORK: BALANCING FREE EXPRESSION AND WORKPLACE HARMONY

By Karina B. Sterman

The upcoming presidential election is not only primed to cause friction at family dinner, but also in the workplace. In anticipation of such mounting tensions, employers must proactively evaluate and establish policies about employee displays of political slogans, attire and rhetoric in the workplace. Legally, as long as restrictions on political expression do not violate anti-discrimination or harassment laws, they may be permitted. Private-sector employees generally lack First Amendment protections in the workplace. However, even if legally permitted, many employers celebrate and promote diversity in the workplace and are reticent in encroaching on political views. While employers may be inclined to respect and even encourage multiple political perspectives as part of workplace conversation, they are well-counseled to counterbalance such latitude by minimizing the inflammatory nature of fixed images

and triggering slogans that have a compounding effect by virtue of their fixed omnipresence. In other words, one can walk away from or brush off a conversation one disagrees with, but it's harder to avoid a coworker sitting next to you with a desk full of mocking cartoons, bobble heads or a shirt with a slogan.

Employers should set the tone and manage expectations as to what is appropriate in the workplace, much like dress codes and other unifying workplace policies meant to minimize offensive behavior and disruption. Setting clear boundaries with simple guidelines such as prohibiting political candidate names, party logos and campaign slogans are a good place to start. These restrictions can help reduce the emotional intensity that often accompanies political expression in the workplace. By establishing and communicating these policies consistently, employers can help ensure a more civil and focused work environment, where potential conflicts or distractions related to political paraphernalia are minimized. This is at the heart of maintaining a productive and respectful environment.

DATA PRIVACY LITIGATION CONTINUES TO SURGE

By Ira Steinberg

The surge in data privacy litigation aimed at common e-commerce analytics tools continues to expand. Plaintiffs have gone beyond

anti-wiretapping provisions of laws such as the Federal Wiretap Act and California Invasion of Privacy Act, to assert claims under the Video Privacy Protection Act. The Second Circuit recently allowed a case to go forward alleging that the NBA's use of analytics tools on its website violated the VPPA. This decision, though counter-balanced by more business-friendly interpretations of the VPPA in other jurisdictions, has created significant concern regarding the litigation exposure of businesses with websites featuring video content. On the other hand, the wave of website ADA litigation appears to be receding slightly as jurisdictions that had previously been hospitable to such claims are treating them far more skeptically.

Consumer facing businesses should carefully review their dispute resolution policies in light of the upsurge in data privacy claims. Businesses should be particularly careful when mixing mandatory arbitration with class-action prohibitions. Some plaintiffs firms now collect hundreds or thousands of claimants and file individual claims for all of them that cannot be consolidated as a class action because of the class action waiver. Because arbitration services usually charge the defending business an administrative fee on a per-claimant basis, these mass arbitrations can have a significant cost of defense even where the claims are weak (which they often are). Careful and strategic drafting of dispute resolution provisions is critical.

Learn more at [GreenbergGlusker.com](https://www.GreenbergGlusker.com).



We are pleased to congratulate **Billie Pierce** and **Franz Espanol** of Prime Healthcare, **Dana Clausen** of Partner Engineering and Science, Inc. and all the finalists for the 2024 Los Angeles Business Journal Corporate Counsel Awards.

BakerHostetler

bakerlaw.com



Profile of the Profound Contributions of a Corporate Counsel

Anthony Joji Taketa, a distinguished legal professional and native of Los Angeles, has made profound contributions to Braille Institute of America throughout his remarkable career. After earning his juris doctor degree from UCLA School of Law in 1983, Taketa embarked on a 24-year journey in litigation, handling a wide spectrum of cases that spanned business disputes, probate matters, real estate and construction law. His expertise and dedication attracted nationally recognized clients, including restaurant chains, contractors and financial institutions. His litigation experience and versatility as an attorney have been invaluable assets in every role he has undertaken.

In 1988, Taketa joined the prestigious law firm Poindexter & Doutré, Inc., where he became a shareholder in 1996. It was during his tenure at Poindexter & Doutré that Taketa began his association with Braille Institute of America, serving as outside counsel. In this role, he played a pivotal part in securing bequests and other critical gifts that furthered Braille Institute's vision of empowering individuals with visual impairments to live "a life without boundaries." This work was not only

professionally significant, but it also laid the foundation for his deeper involvement with the organization.

In 2007, Taketa transitioned from outside counsel to Braille Institute's in-house general counsel and corporate secretary. This shift marked a new chapter in his career, allowing him to immerse himself fully in the organization's mission and strategic goals. By joining the Executive Leadership Team, Taketa contributed his keen legal insights and strategic thinking to initiatives that fostered Braille Institute's growth and success. One of the crowning achievements of his tenure came in 2019, when he supervised the construction of a new 14,000 square foot Braille Institute center in Anaheim. The center stands as a testament to Taketa's dedication and leadership in creating spaces that serve the needs of the visually impaired community.

A hallmark of Taketa's work has been his leadership of Braille Institute's robust bequests program, which secures more than 200 bequests annually. These contributions are a major source of revenue that enables Braille Institute to provide free programs and services to thousands of individuals across Southern



Taketa

California and nationwide. With seven centers in Southern California and a range of online and teleservice offerings, Braille Institute serves as a lifeline for the visually impaired, and Taketa's leadership in sustaining the organization's financial stability is integral to its

success.

In December 2022, Braille Institute welcomed Jim (Dimitri) Kales as its new CEO. Taketa quickly became a trusted confidant and strategic partner to Kales, ensuring a seamless transition in leadership and helping to align the organization's legal and strategic priorities. Taketa's role now extends far beyond traditional legal matters — he is instrumental in guiding the alignment of Braille Institute's Board of Directors and Board Committees with the organization's dynamic strategic plan. His vision and leadership are critical as Braille Institute embarks on an ambitious goal: to expand its reach from 20,000 individuals served annually to 200,000 over the next five years.

Taketa's contributions to Braille Institute exemplify corporate counsel excellence. His ability to blend legal expertise with strategic foresight has made him an indispensable partner to the CEO, leadership team and Board of Directors. Through his commitment to advancing Braille Institute's mission, Taketa has helped transform countless lives.

Learn more at BrailleInstitute.org.



Prime Healthcare

Congratulations!

2024 Corporate Counsel of the Year

Finalist Nominations by the Los Angeles Business Journal



Billie Pierce, Esq.
Vice President,
Deputy General Counsel
& Chief Employment Counsel



Erica Reilley Swanholt, Esq.
Vice President,
Deputy General Counsel
& Chief Litigation Counsel



Franz Español, Esq.
Associate General
Counsel – Employment

CONGRATULATIONS

to all the LMU Loyola Law School alumni honored with the Los Angeles Business Journal's

2024 Corporate Counsel Awards



LMU Loyola
Law School



John DeFrance '99

Senior Attorney
[The Kroger Co.](#)

Jaega Haralambus '14

Vice President, Corporate Counsel
[Skydance](#)

David Katz '90

Executive Vice President, Chief
Legal Officer and UK Executive
Sponsor
[RadNet, Inc.](#)

Kim Nakamaru '11

General Counsel
[Relativity Space](#)

Erica Reilley '00

Vice President, Deputy General
Counsel and Chief Litigation
Counsel
[Prime Healthcare](#)

Christine Roseland '04

Senior Staff Counsel
for Investment Transactions
[Los Angeles County Employees
Retirement Association
\(LACERA\)](#)

Elijah Rosenthal '11

Counsel
[BLT Enterprises](#)

Sanjesh Sharma '99

Assistant General Counsel -
Patents
[Johnson & Johnson Surgical
Vision, Inc.](#)

Sunny Soltani '00

City Attorney
[City of Carson](#)

LMU Loyola Law School Means Business

Transactional Lawyering Institute

Coordinates Loyola's many activities to promote corporate and transactional lawyering learning. This includes offering the unique Transactional Negotiation Team competition, held every spring, which allows students to negotiate key terms of a mergers-and-acquisitions deal. Other activities include experiential transactional courses and other opportunities outside the classroom to learn about transactional law.

Business Law Fellows

Offers selected students the opportunity to participate in a series of small gatherings and workshops hosted by distinguished alumni who practice business law. Fellows are paired with an alumni practitioner with a shared practice area interest.

Innovative Business Courses

Related courses include Business Planning: Financing the Startup, Cybersecurity and AI Governance, Accounting for Lawyers, Business Strategy for Lawyers, Corporate Finance, and Exploring the Role of In-House Counsel.

Business-Related Student Groups

The Business Law Society, Real Estate Law Society, Labor & Employment Law Society, and more organize networking and speaker events.

In Heart of L.A.'s Business Center

The Loyola Law School campus is a short shuttle ride away from the corporate, banking, and legal epicenter of downtown Los Angeles.

Meeting Students Where They Are

The Hybrid JD Evening Program, top-ranked in the West, features a regular on-campus commitment of one night a week thanks to virtual learning options.

LEARN MORE » lls.edu/LABJ



In-House Legal Departments Embrace GenAI

The Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC), in partnership with Everlaw, the cloud-native litigation and investigation platform, published a new report today highlighting GenAI's transformative impact in corporate legal departments. The report, "GenAI and Future Corporate Legal Work: How Ready Are In-house Teams?," details the numerous ways GenAI is driving the rapid evolution of in-house legal departments, including economic and cost-cutting impacts, rapid adoption of the technology, and its career implications.

As GenAI adoption takes off in-house, CLOs must lead the way in upskilling employees and reimagining roles, making clear how GenAI proficiency is expected and rewarded. Operational efficiencies can't be achieved if departmental trust in using the technology is concentrated with a few subject matter experts.

Top findings on economic impact of GenAI:

- Nearly half (49%) of those surveyed expect reduced operational costs from AI. Year over year, 33% of respondents in the survey looked to technology/AI to control costs – a 4x increase in three years.

- 25% of respondents already report cost savings on operational expenditures from using GenAI.

- 58% of legal departments expect a reduced reliance on outside legal service providers, specifically due to GenAI. This has more than

doubled since the 2023 survey where 25% of respondents said they would cut the number of law firms they work with in the next year, with the top reason cited by (79%) being to increase cost effectiveness.

"The rapid pace of GenAI's integration into corporate legal departments and the significant impact it is making is remarkable," said Veta T. Richardson, ACC president & CEO. "The snapshot this comprehensive survey provides of GenAI's use in legal departments helps illustrate the magnitude of its effect on budgets, operations, and staff."

"The expectation for in-house teams to cut costs with AI is becoming a reality, with over a quarter now reporting savings," said Gloria Lee, chief legal officer of Everlaw. "In just three years, AI technology's accelerating impact on corporate counsel has begun to reshape in-house legal functions, spurring a sea change across the legal industry."

CLOs have embraced GenAI but legal teams would benefit from broader upskilling:

- A third of CLOs are using GenAI daily; 79% of CLOs use GenAI once a week.
- 23% of legal professionals have proactively integrated GenAI into their daily routines; and more than two-thirds (70%) of in-house professionals use GenAI at least once a week. Notably, only 10 percent say that they are neither using

'Operational efficiencies can't be achieved if departmental trust in using the technology is concentrated with a few subject matter experts.'

nor planning to use GenAI.

- Despite the rapid adoption, less than a quarter believe their legal department is prepared for the talent implications of this transformative technology. 64% of departments with 100 or more legal staff have appointed a GenAI subject matter expert, compared to 42% of mid-size departments with 10 to 24 staff, and 25% of small departments with 2 to 5 staff members.

"With GenAI's potential to significantly increase efficiency, improve client service, and cut costs, it's no wonder legal leaders are embracing this technology as they are continuously asked to do more with less. Those that can effectively integrate GenAI into their department's operations, while providing the necessary balance of safeguards and training, clearly have a lot to gain," added Richardson.

"As GenAI adoption takes off in-house, CLOs must lead the way in upskilling employees and reimagining roles, making clear how GenAI proficiency is expected and rewarded. Operational efficiencies can't be achieved if departmental trust in using the technology is concentrated with a few subject matter experts," Lee said.

Optimism abounds on career impact of GenAI but least so for mid-level attorneys:

- 59% of respondents are excited about the positive potential impact GenAI tools can have on their careers yet only 26% say their department is prepared for GenAI's impact.

- Over time, respondents expect GenAI to continue to improve their work speed and efficiency (83%), allow for faster insight and creativity in their work (57%) and the development of new skills (51%). Among the negative outcomes many foresee are ethical dilemmas (47 percent), and skill degradation (38 percent).

- Legal operations professionals are the most enthusiastic about the potential impact (73%), while mid-level attorneys are least enthusiastic (54%), and they are the most concerned about job losses due to GenAI (67%).

A webinar on November 7 at 11:00 am PT will discuss the report's findings in further detail.

For more information, visit acc.com.

Congratulations

HOLLY BARBERI

ON HER NOMINATION
FOR THE CORPORATE COUNSEL AWARDS

1 of 1

Congratulations to Nominee Holly M. Barberi, General Counsel at Vista Sotheby's International Realty, on being selected as a finalist for the Corporate Counsel Awards. Her uniquely effective style, and personal touch makes her a perfect ambassador of the Sotheby's International Realty philosophy.



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General Counsel Compensation Continues to Increase

General counsel compensation has surged nearly 25% since 2019, according to Equilar’s 2024 General Counsel Pay Trends report, which features commentary from BarkerGilmore. The report, based on an analysis of the Equilar 500 — the 500 largest US companies by revenue — reveals that the median total compensation for General Counsel during the five-year period grew to \$3.3 million in 2023, from \$2.6 million in 2019.

While each component of general counsel compensation rose in value during the study, stock awards and performance incentives saw the largest increases. In 2023, the median value for stock awards was \$519,800, marking a 50.8% increase since 2019. Median value of performance incentives reached \$945,000 in 2023, up 33.7% in the same period.

Tenure also impacted pay, with general counsel who served between six to 10 years earning the highest median compensation of \$3.7 million in 2023. Conversely, those with more than 20 years of experience earned a median income of \$2.7 million last year. According to John Gilmore, co-founder and Partner at BarkerGilmore, “This disparity underscores the fact that many companies are willing to pay a premium for top legal talent, and that younger candidates have been able to command a premium over the past five years.”

TWO NOTABLE PAY TRENDS: GENDER AND VALUE TO ORGANIZATION

In terms of gender representation, women have climbed the ranks to General Counsel positions. From 2019 to 2023, the percentage of women holding Equilar 500 General Counsel positions rose by 12.1%, increasing to 37.1% from 33.1%. Over that period, female General Counsel pay increased 34.5%, versus 18.5% for their male counterparts. In 2023, women earned a median compensation package of \$3.4 million, surpassing their male counterparts’ median pay of \$3.3 million.

“This shift in pay disparity comes as no surprise,” according to Gilmore, “because so many companies have selected the General Counsel position to diversify their executive leadership team. Women continue to gain representation every year, and in 2023 they held 39 of the top 100 highest-paid General Counsel positions.”

Another notable trend, according to Gilmore, is the increased stature of the general counsel role within Equilar 500 companies. This is reflected in the CEO-to-general counsel pay ratio, which declined to 4.0 from 4.2 over the five-year period, indicating that compensation for General Counsel has increased at a higher rate than CEO pay.

Gilmore said, “Companies are investing in General Counsel who not only possess the



legal expertise to anticipate, avoid and manage risks but, more importantly, who can provide well-informed opinions and advice on a wide range of business issues. They demonstrate the wisdom, gravitas and self-confidence to consistently add value and are considered strategic

advisors and trusted colleagues at all levels of their organization. That’s why compensation for the General Counsel role continues to increase.”

Learn more at equilar.com.



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GAURAV MALHOTRA, PARTNER & HEAD OF M&A

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Attorneys Have New Areas of Focus as they Begin their Careers

Bloomberg Law recently released the results of its Law School Preparedness survey and announced its newly added resources for law students, including an “In Focus: Law Student Development” page.

The new In Focus page provides resources that help students develop critical lawyering skills and aid in their early career choices by identifying what type of work is commonly performed by a given type of attorney, information on how to get started in those positions, and how to make lateral moves to other positions.

The page also provides Bloomberg Law tools to help law students with coursework and research, including law review and law library resources and information on circuit splits. It provides guides to well-being to help navigate the stress of school while seeking post-graduation employment.

Also available on the new In Focus page are the results of Bloomberg Law’s biannual Law School Preparedness survey, which measures perspectives on readiness to enter the profession. Bloomberg Law surveyed more than 2,700 individuals in the fall of 2023, including practicing attorneys, law students and others in the legal profession. Each group was asked about



their law school experiences and opinions throughout their professional career.

Among the survey’s key findings:

- Knowledge of legal tech saw the largest

rise in importance for attorneys, with 62% suggesting new lawyers should study legal technology, up from 39% just months ago.

- More than 70% of those surveyed support

the idea of students learning to use generative AI (artificial intelligence) as part of their legal education. Only 6% of those surveyed are “strongly opposed” to teaching law students to use the technology in their practice.

- About half of practicing attorneys think law students should learn to use AI for legal research, but most students and teachers don’t know whether their school teaches any AI use at all or are sure that it doesn’t.

- Attorneys rate the junior associates they supervise as most skilled at digital literacy and tech savviness, and least-skilled at negotiations and business development.

- Teachers, including anyone who teaches law students, including some practicing attorneys, rated new attorneys as highly skilled at spotting and analyzing issues by the time they graduate.

- Nearly half of current students describe their overall well-being as having gotten worse since starting law school, with most relating law school to increased anxiety and trouble sleeping.

To download a copy of the Law School Preparedness survey, visit aboutblaw.com/bcPH or for more information, visit Bloomberg Law.

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

Corporate Counsel Awards 2024



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE NOMINEES AND OUR
KAYHAN FATEMI
EVP AND GENERAL COUNSEL



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New Tech Enables Secure Remote Legal Proceedings

US Legal Support, a leading provider of litigation support services, recently announced the general availability of its reimagined remote proceeding platform, RemoteDepo Pro, which is designed specifically for legal proceedings and leverages new technology to provide the tools legal professionals need for secure, seamless and flexible remote depositions, hearings and other matters.

Modeled after in-person proceedings, RemoteDepo Pro simplifies and streamlines exhibit sharing, annotation and stamping with elevated functionality and controls. Participants can share documents with a single click, upload and annotate exhibits before or during the proceeding, and view introduced exhibits from past proceedings within the platform. High-fidelity audio from each participant is captured on individual channels, helping ensure a clean record, while Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) technology provides a live speech-to-text feed and the ability to instantly play back audio during the proceeding.

“I am thrilled to unveil RemoteDepo Pro, our latest innovative solution to further accelerate the evolution of remote legal proceedings,” said Jimmie Bridwell, US Legal Support’s CEO. “Over the last few years, fueled in large part by the pandemic, we saw an explosion in



the adoption of remote depositions and other legal proceedings. We set out to reimagine the remote deposition experience for attorneys, their clients, witnesses and court reporters to provide a more complete and effective solution. The platform provides a seamless experience with advanced tools and functionality, making it easy and flexible to keep your discovery on track.”

RemoteDepo Pro is built to leverage cutting-edge technology, providing the agility legal professionals need to improve efficiency, contain costs, and increase speed-to-delivery. The platform includes ViewScript, a

live speech-to-text feed of participant audio powered by the Stenograph Phoenix ASR engine. ViewScript captures high-fidelity audio from each participant on individual channels, instantly translating it from speech into summary text for immediate review. You can also playback any portion of audio during the proceeding without crosstalk or interferences.

In 2022, US Legal Support announced a multi-year technology partnership with Stenograph to provide additional technology solutions to enhance the exceptional client and reporter experience throughout its legal services offering.

RemoteDepo Pro is built to leverage cutting-edge technology, providing the agility legal professionals need to improve efficiency, contain costs, and increase speed-to-delivery.

“As the leading technology provider in the legal transcription market, we are excited to expand our partnership with US Legal Support to provide solutions across all methods of reporting and transcript production,” said Anir Dutta, president, Stenograph, LLC. “The platform is powered through best-in-class technology from Stenograph to aid with the capture, creation and production of verbatim records. With ViewScript within RemoteDepo Pro, participants benefit from unparalleled and convenient access to synced audio, video and text immediately following the deposition. Stenograph is committed to making court reporters and agencies more efficient and productive while preserving the accuracy and sanctity of the spoken word.”

Learn more at uslegalsupport.com.

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State Bar Sees Record Diversity Gains

The State Bar's Annual Diversity Report Card released last month highlights the demographic composition of California's 2023 attorney population and, for the first time, analyzes changing trends in demographic representation since 2019. The report also explores racial/ethnic and gender patterns in recent cohorts of attorneys admitted to the State Bar.

The report highlights record gains for people of color, driven largely by women of color, as newly admitted attorneys over the last five years. The report also notes that white attorneys still constitute nearly two-thirds of the overall attorney population, in contrast to California's highly diverse population.

"While there have been encouraging advancements in the diversity of new attorneys, notably among women and people of color, these changes are gradual," said Leah Wilson, State Bar executive director. "It's important to recognize that such progress might not automatically sustain itself to create a lasting impact. Our commitment to actively fostering and championing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the legal profession is integral to both fulfilling our statutory mission and the goal of long-term, sustainable, change in the make-up of California's attorney population. This approach is not about diversity for its own sake, but about understanding the essential role of representation in fostering an inclusive legal community and providing

meaningful access to justice."

Another new feature in this year's report is an analysis of Latino and Asian subgroups among active attorneys, and detailed reporting on the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender identity.

Also included is a summary of a recently published study that examined how the share of licensees in inactive status among all licensees has changed over the last 10 years, the diversity of that group, and the reasons driving decisions to leave the practice of law. The State Bar's groundbreaking DEI Leadership Seal Program, which recognizes legal organizations that demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal field, is also highlighted in the report. The State Bar earned a Gold DEI Leadership Seal in January 2024 for its own efforts.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT'S FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- At a third of the total of new admittees, women of color were the largest group of newly admitted attorneys in 2023, a trend that began in 2021.
- Latino representation among newly admitted attorneys has nearly tripled, increasing from 4 percent in 1990 to 11 percent in 2023. And the percentage of newly licensed Black attorneys has nearly doubled over the same period, rising from 3 percent to 5 percent.
- The proportion of newly admitted attor-

'This approach is about understanding the essential role of representation in fostering an inclusive legal community and providing meaningful access to justice.'

neys who identify as Asian has more than tripled since 1990, while the percentage of those identifying as multiracial has more than quadrupled.

- Several demographic groups have seen a significant increase in their representation among California's licensed attorneys over the last five years, including both men and women of color, Asian, multiracial, Asian women, LGBTQIA+, Veterans and attorneys with disabilities. In contrast, the share of attorneys who identify as white has decreased.
- However, as it currently stands, white attorneys still constitute nearly two-thirds of California attorneys, in contrast to California's highly diverse population. Latinos, in particular, continue to be severely underrepresented within

the legal profession, constituting 37 percent of the state's population but only 6 percent of all California's licensed attorneys.

INACTIVE STUDY FINDINGS:

The inactive attorney survey was the first in-depth look at when and why attorneys choose to go on inactive status. Among its findings:

- Each year, about 4,600 attorneys choose to transfer to inactive status.
- The number of inactive status licensees increased by 38 percent over the last 10 years, reaching an all-time high of over 71,000 in 2023. The growth in inactive attorneys was primarily driven by those age 70 and older, who accounted for 12 percent of all licensees in 2023 compared with just 5 percent in 2013.
- In 2023, white men and white women are overrepresented among those transitioning to inactive status compared with their representation among all licensees.
- The analyses suggest that retirement is a significant reason for transitioning to inactive status, cited by over half of those making the switch.
- However, 43 percent indicate that retirement is not their motive, particularly women and attorneys of color, signaling a deliberate departure from active law practice. The State Bar will conduct further analyses to better understand why some attorneys are choosing to leave the practice of law before retirement.

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