

Los Angeles Times

JUNE 2023

**B2B**

**INSIGHTS ON AI,  
LITIGATION AND  
THE LATEST  
LEGAL TRENDS**

**BUSINESS  
OF LAW**

**DEI and Adaptability  
in the World of  
Jurisprudence**

**In-House Counsel  
Leadership Awards  
Recap and Southern  
California's Top Attorneys**

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Dear Reader:

LA Times B2B Publishing is excited to present our third annual Business of Law magazine, covering trends and updates in the industry, recapping the In-House Counsel Leadership Awards, and spotlighting legal visionaries.

The articles in this magazine examine a range of topics impacting the business of law – from shifting operational priorities in legal departments to how in-house counsels are responding to changing regulations to new challenges arising from a post-pandemic landscape and more.

The In-House Counsel Leadership Awards were held on May 4, 2023 at The Beverly Hilton, where we recognized executive-level in-house lawyers for their leadership skills within their organizations as well as their contributions to the legal field and the community at large. The evening kicked off with a cocktail mixer, was followed by an illuminating panel discussion on adopting AI within the legal profession, and concluded with a dinner and awards presentation.

The law firm attorneys profiled in this magazine have exhibited noteworthy achievements within their respective practice areas. Each was considered for their successes and accomplishments achieved in the past 24 months and for innovative strategies to help their organizations and clients avoid risk and leverage opportunities.

Congratulations to all of the honorees and visionaries! Also, thank you to our Platinum sponsors, Rutan & Tucker, LLP and University of West Los Angeles, and our Gold sponsors, Nixon Peabody LLP and Waymaker LLP.

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Best regards,



Anna Magzanyan

Chief Strategy & Revenue Officer and Chief of Staff to Executive Chairman

The selection of honorees and visionaries and the production of the event as well as the magazine were organized by LA Times B2B Publishing and did not involve the editorial staff of the LA Times. Contact us with comments or questions at [b2bpublishing@latimes.com](mailto:b2bpublishing@latimes.com).

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# Workplace, Cybersecurity and Regulatory Disputes Top Trends in Business Litigation

## Labor, data protection and DEI litigation are key risk areas for 2023; class-action suits remain a critical concern.

**GLOBAL LAW FIRM** Norton Rose Fulbright's 18th Annual Litigation Trends Survey, released earlier this year, found that corporate counsel faced a significant rise in regulatory proceedings in 2022, with more expected this year, as agency enforcement activity picks up. In fact, half of the survey respondents were involved in at least one type of regulatory proceedings last year, and more than one-third expect such proceedings to increase in 2023.

The survey also reveals heightened litigation risk in key areas: the top three spots in which respondents expected disputes exposure to increase this year are employment and labor, cyber and data protection, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). The report also explores class actions in greater depth, revealing fresh insights into an area that more than 33% of respondents identified as a critical concern in 2023.

"Our experience precisely mirrors what our respondents say," said Steven Jansma, Norton Rose Fulbright's U.S. head of litigation and disputes. "Government agencies are eager to bring impactful cases and investigations, and we are seeing robust enforcement efforts across the board."

This year's report is based on a survey of more than 430 general counsel and in-house litigation leaders, based in the United States and Canada, in industries such as financial services, energy, healthcare



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and technology. The research also includes insights from in-depth interviews to better explore emerging trends and the litigation challenges facing leading organizations.

"Corporate counsel anticipate increased exposure to employment and labor disputes in 2023, and DEI is an increased litigation concern for the third straight year," said Shauna Clark, Norton Rose Fulbright's U.S. head of employment and labor who is also the firm's U.S. chair. "Between the current regulatory environment, economic headwinds and lingering effects of the pandemic, now is not the time for business leaders to scale back their preparation."

Despite these challenges, corporate counsel feel largely prepared to

address litigation in the year ahead, with respondents citing factors including their organization's in-house litigation experience and confidence in external counsel, as well as in-house tools and capabilities such as eDiscovery platforms and data protection solutions.

"Companies have become very sophisticated in connection with risk mitigation, litigation management and the retention of highly skilled in-house counsel and outside trial lawyers to prosecute or defend cases which they face," said Richard Krumholz, Norton Rose Fulbright's global head of litigation and disputes.

A comprehensive report detailing the survey's findings is available at [litigationtrends.com](https://litigationtrends.com). Highlights include:

- Sixty-five percent of respondents reported that they had to work on employment and labor disputes last year. They also ranked it first among the most concerning areas in the year ahead, amid increased enforcement actions, rising unionization activity and a heightened focus on social justice and DEI.
- Cybersecurity, data protection and data privacy are also top of mind, with one-third of respondents experiencing litigation in this area last year. It was the number two area in which respondents expect dispute exposure to increase in 2023.
- More than one-quarter of respondents (28%) said their exposure to environmental, social and governance (ESG) litigation increased in 2022, and 24% expect increased exposure in the coming year.
- Class action activity and risk parallel the broader litigation landscape, with employment and labor identified as the most common type of class action encountered in 2022. It was also the leading area of future concern when it comes to class actions, followed by cybersecurity, data protection and data privacy, while ESG ranked third.
- Healthcare, including life sciences and retail, were the leading industries when it comes to an expected uptick in regulatory proceedings, with 46% and 45% of respondents in those respective sectors predicting an increase in the coming year.
- Thirty-six percent of corporate counsel surveyed expect to increase the number of in-house litigators in 2023, up from 22% the previous year.

*Introduced in 2004, Norton Rose Fulbright's Annual Litigation Trends Survey is the longest-running survey of corporate counsel on litigation issues and trends.*





# Constrained Budgets and Expanding Workloads May Squeeze Legal Departments

Corporate legal departments will feel the impact of three major operational trends this year, according to Gartner, Inc.

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The effects of less cash on hand and bigger caseloads will challenge legal departments, according to a study from Gartner, Inc. The trends range from ongoing disruption to flat budgets and information-related regulation.

“At the broadest level, legal resources will remain flat due to modest budget increases in the face of rising personnel, technology and service provider costs, lawyer exhaustion and record-high attrition, and an environment of cost-consciousness with some industries implementing hiring freezes,” said Raashi Rastogi, director, research in the Gartner Legal Risk & Compliance Practice. “Meanwhile, the demand for, scale and complexity of legal work is increasing due to more time spent managing disruption, new information-related regulation, and changing risk appetite.”

## Disruption Will Continue to Weigh on Legal Teams

There have been a range of disruptions that lawyers have faced in the past year that are set to continue through 2023. Despite expectations that disruptions will be less continuous in 2024 and beyond, in a Gartner survey of 140 lawyers in July 2022, respondents expected to spend 100% more time managing business disruptions going forward than they did pre-pandemic.

These disruptions include events such as the ongoing Russian invasion

of Ukraine; supply-chain shocks that are causing macroeconomic difficulty; along with high inflation and the specter of recession. There is also intense societal pressure that is redefining what is expected from businesses in terms of their social and environmental practices.

Legal must define a “disruption response service” – a process that defines how/whether to support a disruption, and how to allocate resources to it. Legal needs to identify and invest in the activities that drive disruption response, such as keeping on top of regulatory changes, changing risk appetites more frequently, educating business partners on new risk considerations, or coordinating responses with business partners when having to deal with abrupt changes such as sanctioned entities.

## Legal Budgets Will Likely Not Face Cuts

It’s unlikely that legal will see big budget changes in 2023. It is one of the business functions least likely to face cuts, but also the least likely to see an increase, according to a 2022 Gartner survey of CFOs. In such turbulent times, it’s easy to see budget stability as a good thing, but burgeoning workloads, personnel costs and fast-rising costs for legal service providers mean that lawyers will still have to find ways to do more with less.

“Legal departments may not be facing cost cutting at the moment, but the macroeconomic environment is making businesses very cost-conscious,” said Rastogi. “Cost consciousness can quickly become cost cutting if economic conditions worsen.”

Gartner experts recommend that legal leaders make critical investments now. Even with constrained resources, prioritizing and implementing projects that will save resources in the long run may pay off sooner rather than later if things turn for the worse.

## Information-Related Regulation Will Continue to Expand

Societal pressures around privacy and the rapid evolution of artificial

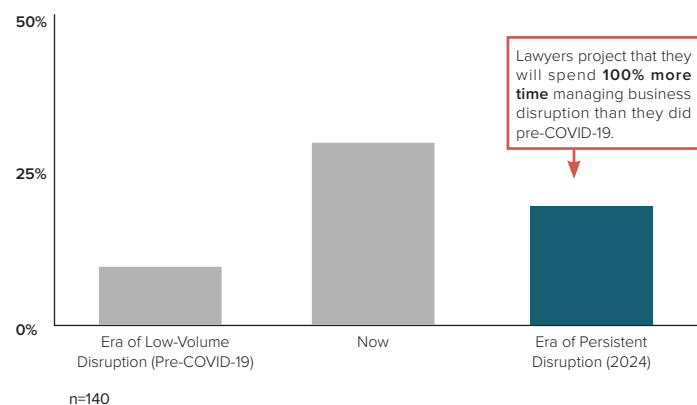
intelligence (AI) have forced regulators to move very quickly. The public’s increasing unease around AI is leading to more legislation such as the U.S. AI Bill of Rights and the EU AI Act.

Privacy legislation, such as GDPR and CCPA, has enormous implications for business and is being echoed across most jurisdictions. In fact, Gartner predicts that 75% of the world’s population will be covered under modern privacy regulations by 2024, up from just 20% in 2021.

“Lawyers will need a strategy for adapting to new legislation faster than ever,” said Rastogi. “Understanding how their organization is exposed to new regulations and how to evaluate potential disruptions will be critical for all organizations in the coming years.”

Figure 1: Lawyers Time Spent Managing Business Disruption

Median Percentage of Time Spent Managing Business Disruption



Source: Gartner (2023)



# Four Paths for Legal Teams to Stay Ahead of Regulations in a Time of Unprecedented Change

Regulatory changes are being driven by increasing regulatory oversight, renewed geopolitical tensions and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

**T**here are four primary options available to legal and compliance leaders to cope with unprecedented levels of regulatory change, according to technology research and consulting firm Gartner, Inc.

“The blistering pace of regulatory change right now is threatening to overwhelm some legal and compliance teams,” said Nick Sworek, director, advisory in the Gartner Legal, Risk & Compliance practice. “As the main drivers of regulatory change appear ongoing, legal and compliance leaders will need to find a sustainable way to keep on top of

the requirements this will place on their organizations.”

Gartner experts believe three distinct waves of investment in regulatory tracking have emerged in recent years.

“At the beginning of the pandemic, legal and compliance leaders turned to law firms for a quick solution to track the regulatory volatility of that time,” said Sworek. “In 2021, when the pace of change clearly wasn’t slowing, legal leaders started looking at less costly in-house tracking options. This year, as legal and compliance teams are finding their ‘new normal,’ they are looking at

technology investment as a more sustainable strategy to keep up with ongoing regulatory change and support in-house staff.”

To help legal and compliance leaders understand their options for tracking regulatory change, Gartner experts have identified four main approaches that should be evaluated.

## 1. Law Firms

When faced with the regulatory volatility in the early stages of the pandemic, legal and compliance leaders turned to their law firm partners to help stay on top of the changes. This is a good option because law firms tend to have a comprehensive

understanding of what regulations apply across geography and industry, and do not require a long onboarding process to get them up to speed.

“The main drawback of using a law firm for regulatory tracking is that it’s expensive, and that cost is likely to increase further as many law firms are set to increase their rates,” said Sworek. “The cost factor has led many legal and compliance firms to look for a more sustainable long-term approach to regulatory tracking.”

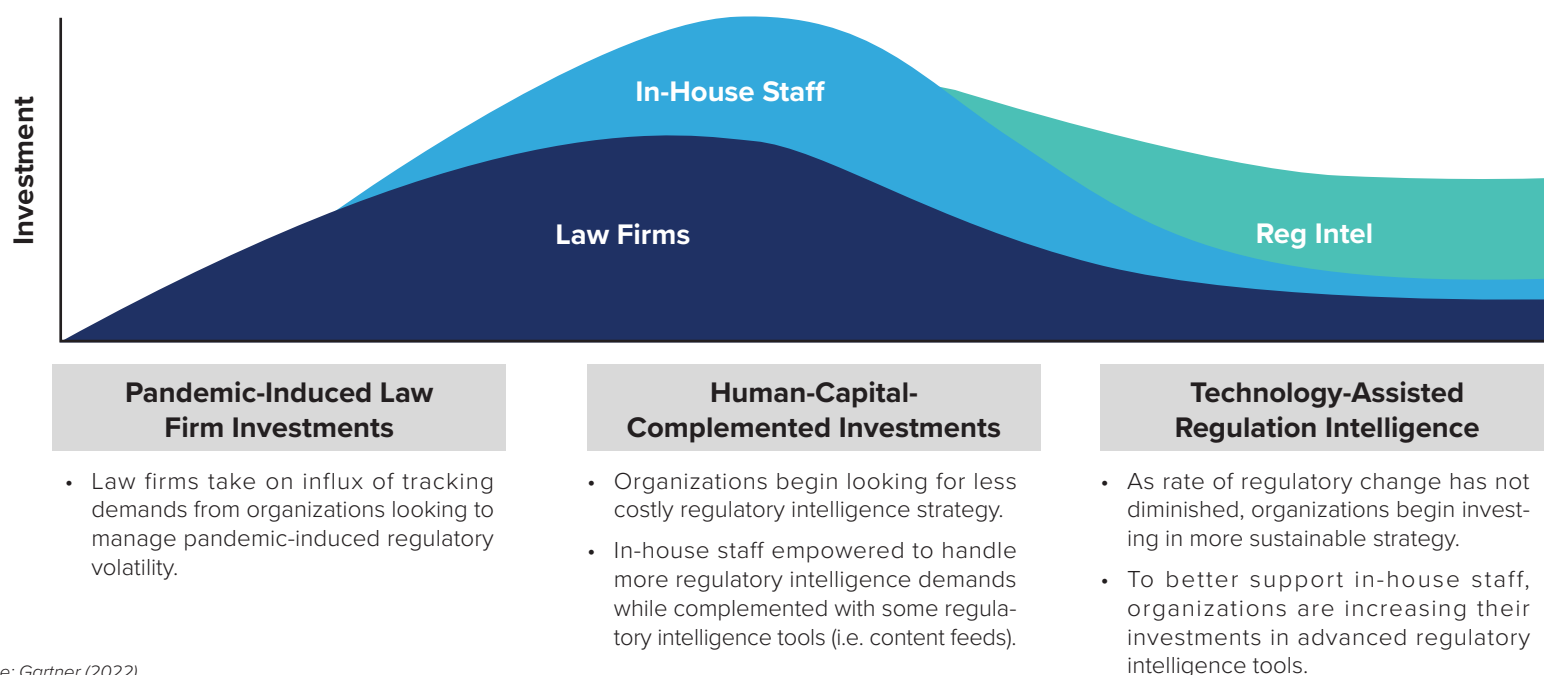
## 2. ALSPs

The second path for regulatory tracking is to engage with alternative legal service providers (ALSPs), nearly a third of which offer some form of regulatory tracking. ALSPs are particularly useful where off-the-shelf products – such as regulatory intelligence tools – cannot meet the organization’s needs.

“ALSPs are a cheaper option than law firms for regulatory tracking, but they may lack the necessary institutional knowledge to understand which regulatory topics are important to organizations. Additionally, the long

*[Continued on page 30]*

Figure 1: Evolution of Legal and Compliance Regulatory Intelligence Investments



Source: Gartner (2022)



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# Most Lawyers Want Options for Remote Work, Court and Conferences

**A new survey suggests that stress, burnout, mobility and increased technological improvements are factors in these preferences, especially among younger professionals.**

**A** recent national survey sponsored by the American Bar Association shows most lawyers want the option to work from home, including the opportunity to attend many court hearings, meetings, conferences and legal training sessions remotely. The survey focuses on hybrid and remote work; mobility of lawyers; stress and burnout; diversity, equity and inclusion; use of technology; and the types of bar association resources lawyers want.

Findings from the survey "Where Does the Legal Profession Go from Here?" also show remote options are especially important to young lawyers, 44% of whom said they would leave their jobs for a greater ability to work remotely. Also, a majority of lawyers said they preferred that bench trials, pretrial hearings, depositions and court-ordered mediations take place remotely.

"This report is a valuable follow-up to last year's "Practice Forward" survey, which offered guidance about the best path forward for the legal profession after the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic," said ABA president Deborah Enix-Ross. "With the new survey findings, we are seeing how lawyers want to work – with flexibility playing a key role for many as they transition back into the workplace."



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The survey, commissioned by the Coordinating Group on Practice Forward, was conducted on behalf of the ABA last year by The Red Bee Group as a follow-up to last year's first Practice Forward survey. Responses this year came from 1,994 ABA members who work in jobs that require law degrees. Most lawyers who responded (75%) work in private practice.

Among the results:

- Most lawyers (59%) work more than 40 hours a week. More than 1 in 5 (22%) work more than 50 hours a week.
- The vast majority (87%) said their workplace allows lawyers to work remotely. About 30% of lawyers work from home almost all the time. Another 30% work in the office nearly 100% of the time.
- Women lawyers, lawyers of color, LGBTQ+ lawyers and disabled lawyers reported feeling more stressed and perceived as less competent at work than their colleagues; feeling unable to be their authentic selves at work; and receiving demeaning or insulting comments at work.
- Most lawyers reported that working remotely or on a hybrid basis has not adversely impacted the quality of their work, productivity or billable hours. This is particularly true for

women lawyers, 56% of whom said that remote or hybrid working increased their ability to balance work and family obligations.

- A majority of respondents said that courts should allow remote court-ordered mediations (82%), depositions (88%), pretrial hearings (93%) and even bench trials (64%).

In light of the survey findings, the report also offers a set of recommended best practices for lawyers and legal employers in the workplace as well as the preferred resources lawyers would like to have from bar associations to help them navigate "the new normal."

# Incubators for Change

## The Important Role Richly Diverse Universities Play in Broadening the Base of Future In-House Counsel Candidates

**D**iversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the workplace matters. And it's not just about fairness or representation.

When workplaces become more diverse and inclusive, they also become more productive, positively impacting the bottom line. According to research, diverse companies enjoy two-and-a-half times higher cash flow per employee and diverse management results in a 19% increase in revenue.

As more businesses focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I), the trend is impacting in-house counsel as well. Not surprisingly, a study from 2021 found that 75.6% of general counsels are white, compared to 7.8% Hispanic or Latino, 6.4% Asian, and 5.6% Black. The ratio of male to female in-house counselors hovers just above 60:40, and the percentage self-identifying as LGBTQ+ is about 11%. Despite these positive trends, the need for greater diversity in the legal profession remains glaring.

### The Importance of Widening the Lens When Seeking Diverse Candidates

As companies look to make strides towards diversity for in-house counsel offices or law firms, finding the best talent remains paramount. In the past, hiring would often be limited to candidates from Ivy League institutions. But with more jobs to fill, businesses are compelled to look more broadly for high-caliber, diverse attorneys.

It is incumbent on corporations and firms to widen their scope to find attorneys who not only are diverse but also bring a mentality of diversity and inclusion that can foster a culture of belonging,



Photo: University of West Los Angeles School of Law

mentorship, growth, and change. Such professionals will be essential for continuing progress and instilling these values in the in-house counsel's office.

### Diverse Legal Talent Hiding in Plain Sight

When sourcing diverse talent for in-house counsel jobs in the future, there is some good news. According to a Pew Research Center report, "Generation Z is the most racially diverse U.S. generation, with approximately 48% identifying as non-white."

As companies look to hire diverse attorneys for in-house counsel positions, there is a robust pool of highly qualified legal talent hiding in plain sight. Attorneys who have graduated from community-based law schools, such as the University of West Los Angeles (UWLA) School of Law, often bring a deeper understanding and commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusion because of their unique educational path.

One of the factors distinguishing UWLA is the institution's focus on the democratization of education. This attracts highly motivated law students who bring a unique perspective and life experience to employers. Richly diverse learning institutions, such as UWLA, are true incubators for attorneys who bring

a broader range of views to the role of in-house counsel, which is foundational to a vibrant workplace.

### Steady Progress Requires Diversity-Minded Leadership

While hiring diverse attorneys is important to fulfilling DE&I hiring objectives, finding in-house counsel to provide diversity-minded leadership is key to creating a culture that will grow and flourish.

"When law students are exposed to a diverse and inclusive learning experience, there is a greater opportunity for a transformative and lasting impression on the positive effects of an inclusionary workforce," explained Robert W. Brown, president of UWLA. "Graduates of law schools like UWLA come away with an experience grounded in the values of fairness, equity, and respect. These attorneys become the diversity-minded leaders of the future."

There are also practical aspects to this style of education. Law graduates from programs such as UWLA are experienced in multi-tasking while attending law school. Many go to school in the evenings while working full time and managing their families. These are skills attorneys must demonstrate in real work. Also, UWLA, in particular, is accredited

by WASC and the California State Bar, providing an affordable legal education while sparing graduates from exorbitant debt.

"Providing access to higher education for a more diverse student body will inevitably incubate compassionate leaders who are sensitive to the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace," stated Perry Martin Jr., professor of Business and dean of DE&I and Transformation at UWLA.

"Transformative and DE&I leadership-oriented colleges and universities that recognize, value and embrace the opportunity they have to plant seeds of justice into their students' minds will reap what they sow – the essence of DEI work: justice," Martin added.

### A 'Closing Argument'

As companies look to expand the diversity of in-house counsel teams, there is a pressing need to find the most qualified talent reflecting the DE&I values of the business. Rather than focusing on attorneys from marquee educational institutions, it makes sense to mine hidden gems from lesser known, for-profit universities.

"At UWLA's School of Law, our focus is on practical training and developing trailblazing attorneys our students are capable of becoming," concluded Jay Frykberg, dean of the School of Law at UWLA. "Our commitment to equity is reflected throughout our programs, student body and faculty. Many of our law school graduates are uniquely qualified to champion the important mission of embracing DE&I within and through the legal profession."

Learn more about UWLA at [uwla.edu](http://uwla.edu).



# BIGGEST PRESSURES ON BUSINESS LAWYERS TODAY INCLUDE PACE OF CHANGE, COMPLIANCE COMPLEXITY AND TALENT CHALLENGES

**The increasing complexity of compliance, new client expectations, talent challenges and productivity demands are pressuring legal professionals as never before, according to the findings of Wolters Kluwer’s new global “Future Ready Lawyer” survey.**

**T**he survey also finds that more progress is needed as most legal professionals say they are not well-prepared to address key challenges and opportunities.

Challenged to keep up with emerging trends and escalating demands, legal professionals are increasingly

turning to legal technology for help. Across Europe and the U.S., the investment and demand for legal tech solutions have accelerated, with technology now firmly at the center of improved performance, productivity, client-firm relations and talent expectations. According to survey findings:

- 91% of corporate legal departments are expecting their law firms to fully leverage technology.

- More than 80% of lawyers say it’s of high importance to them to work for a tech-savvy law firm or legal department.
- The “Increasing Importance of Legal Technology” is a top trend for 79% of lawyers.
- 64% of legal departments and 63% of law firms will increase their software investments over the next year.

“Lawyers already work in a high-pressure environment, and the *Future Ready Lawyer Survey 2022* found that demands are growing as trends impacting the legal profession continue to accelerate,” said Martin O’Malley, Wolters Kluwer Legal & Regulatory CEO. “The pressure further intensifies as only

about one-third of lawyers say that they are very prepared to address these trends. As legal professionals look to bolster their capabilities, the survey found that – more than ever – organizations are turning to technology as a lever to improve performance.”

The survey includes insights from 751 legal professionals across the U.S. and 10 European countries. In its fourth consecutive year, the survey offers a timely perspective with benchmark data pre- and post-COVID crisis on trends, capabilities and changes in the profession and examines how well-prepared organizations are to drive higher performance.

## Key Survey Findings

The top trends expected to have the most impact across the legal sector over the next three years are:

- Increasing importance of legal technology – 79%
- Coping with increased volume and complexity of information – 79%
- Meeting changing client/leadership expectations – 79%

Just 36% or fewer lawyers say their organization is very prepared to keep pace with any of these trends.

New and growing areas in law are another big trend impacting lawyers:

- 77% report that coping with emerging and growing compliance areas, such as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and data privacy, is a significant trend.

[Continued on page 58]



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# Trademark 'TIPS' for Building Your Brand

**A brand distinguishes your company or your goods or services from others – trademarks are intellectual property that protects valuable brand recognition.**

**W**hile business owners have a lot to manage in providing valuable goods and services in the first place and then marketing to customers, evaluating the names, slogans, and images that make up your brand from a trademark protection perspective is critical.

In particular, giving some thought to what makes your brand unique – and partnering with experienced trademark counsel early on in that process to protect those unique aspects as trademarks – can pay off and avoid pitfalls down the line.

For the busy reader, here is a helpful acronym (TIPS) for how to approach trademark protection:

**Think** distinctive

**Investigate** the marketplace

**Protect** what's unique

**Seek** sound advice

Because strong trademarks are fundamental to eliciting, maintaining and potentially monetizing the goodwill of a brand, every business owner can benefit from implementing these steps.

(1) **Think** Distinctive

One goal of a trademark is to tell consumers a given product or service comes from a particular source, so the strongest trademarks help consumers distinguish your brand from others on the marketplace. Any number of words or symbols (and even colors, smells or sounds) can be a trademark, so long as they serve "to identify and distinguish" you from your competitors

per the Trademark/Lanham Act. For example, Farmers Insurance has trademarked not only their name but also the slogan "We are Farmers" and the accompanying jingle. The first step to trademark protection, then, is to think creatively about what makes your products or services stand out.

A unique name is a great starting place and has some obvious benefits as a potential trademark. For one, a name that is not being used by others will stand out from what else is on the market. Ideally, you could come up with a completely new word, as "Pepsi" did for soda, or apply a word that already exists to something that it's not normally used for, like "Apple" did for computers. In trademark law, we refer to these kinds of "fanciful" (i.e. made-up) and "arbitrary" (i.e. cross-applied) marks as having the most "conceptual" strength, as distinguished from "commercial" strength. A conceptually strong trademark is one that will stand out the most in the marketplace based on the name alone.

(2) **Investigate** The Marketplace

The next step after brainstorming words, slogans, imagery, etc. that will stand out is to check to make sure the trademarks you have come up with are, in fact, not being used by others. Early on in the process, you can check the United States Patent and Trademark Office's ("USPTO") public registry ([tmsearch.uspto.gov](http://tmsearch.uspto.gov)) for business names registered in the state(s) in which you plan to do business, as well as run internet searches to see what else may be in the marketplace, just not registered.

It is important to remember that even unregistered trademarks will have priority – and potentially be able to sue you for infringement – if you start using the same or a similar trademark. As such, it is best to have a trademark lawyer or clearance service conduct a comprehensive search.

(3) **Protect** What's Unique

Once you come up with a distinctive trademark and make sure it is not being used by others, you can protect it by registering it, using it, and making sure others do not use it. You can seek to register a trademark even before you start using it by filing an "intent to use" application with the USPTO, which secures your priority date as of when you filed the application. Even without registering a trademark, it will be protected as of the date you start using it in commerce, so you want to keep track of that date and evidence related to it, such as sales documents. But registering a trademark with the USPTO provides additional legal rights, making it easier to enforce your rights against infringers and to license your trademark to others.

What should you seek to register as a trademark? Again, potentially anything can serve as a trademark, but to ensure your application is successful – and the resulting trademark is as useful as possible – look to register what is most distinctive about your brand. While you can build up the commercial strength of a trademark over time by investing in marketing, the conceptual strength of a mark is basically fixed when you apply for it. A distinctive trademark is more likely

to be registered, while one that is too descriptive of a product or service may not even function as a trademark at all. This makes it all the more important to select and seek to protect a conceptually strong mark from the start.

(4) **Seek** Sound Advice

Ultimately, there is no substitute for sound trademark advice from an experienced practitioner, ideally providing strategic insights for the long term based on understanding your brand and overall business. This article cannot provide that kind of tailored legal advice, but it is designed to give brand owners an overview of key steps to building a strong brand from a trademark law perspective. Make sure to seek help from a practitioner who has experience applying for trademarks to make sure your application is not held up, and that your mark is as valuable as possible when registered.

MEREDITH WILLIAMS  
(SIVAKUMAR)  
Partner  
Litigation and Trial



*Meredith Williams, partner at Rutan & Tucker, LLP, focuses on representing and advising clients in protecting their intellectual property rights. Her practice emphasizes trademark and copyright litigation, trade secret misappropriation, false advertising, and unfair competition while advising clients how to promote and defend their brands and IP.*



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# Building Positive Impact in Our Communities

**N**ow more than ever, it is paramount for businesses across industries to partner together to create a meaningful impact in our communities. With recent economic volatility and housing insecurity, companies including Nixon Peabody LLP and Genesis LA have committed to a positive impact by partnering on important initiatives that address the growing needs of our communities.

Economic conditions often present development challenges and disruptions. However, by teaming with community groups, public agencies, and private organizations, Nixon Peabody has helped devise creative alternative financing to move projects forward. This work is about much more than buildings – it's

about creating spaces where vulnerable people in local communities can feel at home, learn and flourish.

One transformative example is a development underway along the Vermont/Manchester corridor. Nixon Peabody has worked with Genesis LA, the Los Angeles Development Fund, and additional stakeholders to help finance generational change in a South LA community blighted since the 1992 civil unrest. These transit-oriented developments (TODs) will serve as a valuable resource for this underserved community.

Building on a decade-plus relationship between Nixon Peabody, Genesis LA and the Los Angeles Development Fund, these projects began in 2021 with key financing combining new markets tax credits (NMTCs) and

additional loans totaling approximately \$95 million for SEED School of Los Angeles County (SEED LA), the first charter college-prep boarding school in California. SEED LA is part of the first phase of the LA County and LA Metro Vermont Manchester Transit Priority Project, which will transform an underutilized site the size of two city blocks.

Welcoming its first class of students in Fall 2022, SEED LA serves approximately 400 at-risk and resilient students from the South LA community to provide intensive education. Grades 9–12 curriculum focuses on career readiness in transportation, infrastructure, STEM and the humanities, with mentorships supporting future careers.

More recently, Nixon Peabody represented the Los Angeles

Development Fund and Genesis LA, securing \$135 million in financing utilizing NMTCs and other debt and equity facilities to fund Evermont, an under-construction development that includes 180 affordable housing units as well as grocery and retail. The site includes the SEED LA school, a transit plaza and a Metro training facility.

Evermont will transform a dirt lot into a community hub with affordable housing. Achieving objectives such as this requires collective buy-in and strategic financing options. We are committed to creating a positive impact in our communities and are proud to be a part of the team that helps move these developments forward in LA and beyond.

– *Sonia Nayak, L.A. Office Managing Partner, Nixon Peabody LLP*

## ABA RELEASES REPORT ON BAR PASS DATA BY RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER

**This April, the Managing Director's Office of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar released a new set of bar pass data for American Bar Association-approved law schools.**



@fizkes / Adobe Stock

The data provide national “ultimate” and first-time percentage pass rates based on race, ethnicity and gender.

The charts, which are incorporated into the section's Legal Education Statistics, include aggregate data in

nine different ethnicity categories for information collected in 2022 and 2023 broken down by gender. The data was reported to the ABA by the 196 law schools accepting new students in their ABA Standard 509 questionnaire, which covers

about a dozen categories, including employment and bar passage outcomes, among other areas.

Under the 2019 revisions to the bar passage rule known as Standard 316,

ABA-approved law schools must have 75% of their graduates who take the bar examination pass within two years of graduation or face the potential

*[Continued on page 35]*

# CARLTON FIELDS



## Congratulations to **Steven Weisburd** for being recognized in the L.A. Times B2B Publishing *Business of Law* Magazine as a **2023 Legal Visionary**

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# IN-HOUSE COUNSEL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

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# LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The In-House Counsel Leadership Awards was held on May 4, 2023 at the Beverly Hilton. Here are some select photos from the night's festivities, which featured a cocktail mixer, an informative and fascinating panel, and the leadership awards ceremony honoring dedicated legal professionals.



- 1.** Tanja Olano of the LA28 Olympic & Paralympic Games is the honoree for non-profit counsel.
- 2.** The Change Home Mortgage table celebrates during the In-House Counsel Awards.
- 3.** Victoria Kettnitz of Ameriprise Financial and Njeri Mutura of Microsoft Corporation enjoy the event.
- 4.** Shawn White, General Counsel of Smith Family Circle, LLC and Desiree Talley, founder of Talley Law Group PLLC.
- 5.** Erin Fay of Atrispek and Arun Kurichety of Petalfast join nominee counsel Rasika Vasant Rathi of Specialty Enzymes & Probiotics and Anuj Bhalla of MIT.
- 6.** Attendees enjoy the cocktail reception prior to the panel and awards.
- 7.** Rob Rader of Ovation LLC joins honoree Jackie Hayes of Warner Bros. Discovery and Ismael Bautista of SoCal Gas.
- 8.** Melineh Ohanian of Fender accepts the award for honoree Aarash Darroodi from presenter Gloria Lee.
- 9.** The group from University of West Los Angeles, including panel member Robert W. Brown Esq, poses before the awards ceremony.
- 10.** Attendees await the fascinating panel session and dinner.
- 11.** Carita Shanklin Walker of Shell Recharge Solutions displays her award for small public company counsel.
- 12.** Jason Weintraub of the Jacuzzi Group smiles with Phillip and David Spector of ThirdLove.



# What Influence Will AI Have on the Legal Profession?

During the In-House Counsel Awards presentation, attendees were treated to an expansive and fascinating conversation about one of the hottest topics affecting the legal world and beyond: the adoption and proliferation of AI in the commercial sphere. The panel was filled by three visionary experts on the topic: Dan Czerwonka of Varda Space Industries, Joshua Walker of System Legal, and Robert W. Brown of UWLA, and was moderated by Gloria Lee of Rutan & Tucker, LLP. Below are the need-to-know insights from the discussion.



## MODERATOR Gloria Lee

*Client Relations Partner*

Rutan and Tucker, LLP

**G**loria Lee is the client relations partner of Rutan & Tucker, LLP, one of California's largest full-service law firms. She has been named a Super Lawyer for 10 years and one of Southern California's most powerful and influential leaders by the California Diversity Council. Lee is a graduate of Stanford University and UC Berkeley School of Law. In addition to serving on several national nonprofit boards, she serves on the public company board of directors for Hanmi Bank.



## PANELIST Robert W. Brown

*President*

University of West Los Angeles

**R**obert Brown is the president of the University of West Los Angeles and its School of Business and School of Law. UWLA offers access to opportunities in higher education for those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. During Brown's tenure, he's overseen an overhaul of the university's mode of providing quality legal and business education – effectively democratizing education.



## PANELIST Dan Czerwonka

*General Counsel*

Varda Space Industries

**D**an is the General Counsel of Varda Space Industries, the newest space start-up from Peter Thiel's Founder's Fund that will be launching its first spacecraft on June 10. Prior to joining Varda, he spent several years overseas building Zipline, the first drone company to achieve unicorn status and currently valued at \$3 billion. Today, Zipline delivers thousands of critical medical supplies daily in eight countries on three continents.



## PANELIST Joshua Walker

*CEO and author of "On Legal AI"*

System.Legal

**J**oshua Walker is the CEO of System.Legal and the author of "On Legal AI" (Fastcase 2019). He also co-founded and originally led Lex Machina and CodeX: The Stanford Center for Legal Informatics. He received his A.B. from Harvard and his J.D. from The University of Chicago Law School. Walker has been trying to use data and law to help folks since he was fifteen, starting with human rights projects in Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Rwanda.





## Shared Insights *from the* EVENT

### How is AI affecting the practice of law in which you work?

**Brown:** In the education industry, we're trying to determine what the impacts are going to be. Ironically among educators, believe it or not, it's very difficult to break down the resistance to AI. So one of the first things that I did was convene a meeting with our faculty to challenge them on how we should employ AI into our curriculums so that we can help our students.

**Walker:** This has been a long time coming. We've been seeing AI applications in litigation and contracts for maybe 10 years, 15 years, or so. But I think there's a storm coming – there are some changes that are going to be happening and you have to maintain the best of what you're doing and be at the very cutting-edge of what's going on.

**Czerwonka:** As a large language model, AI is only as good as what it takes in – a lot of times it can give you really interesting things that sound right, but they're actually just flat wrong. You can have it draft a form for you and it likely gets 60% right, but then you still have to go in and put in what you want.

### How do regulators expect to keep up with the speed and scale of AI in real time?

**Walker:** I think that there's big dangers with regulation. One is overregulating – if you regulate something too much, you can wipe out trillions of dollars of economic activity. The other side is not regulating at all, and you have dangers for kids and other people who are vulnerable – these programs speak with great authority.

**Brown:** Part of the problem with AI right now is that it's still in such infancy that we don't know which parts of our lives are really going to be affected. So, it's first and foremost trying to determine how it is going to evolve.

### What are the implications of AI when it comes to intellectual property and privacy concerns, both corporate and personal?

**Czerwonka:** On a business level, the first thing I would say is to anonymize what you put into any prompt, whether it's your data or your clients' data. This is doubly true of trade secrets or any other sensitive data. The other issue is that if you want to maintain trade secrecy, it has to, of course, stay a secret. So if you put it into a program like AI and other people see it, then you've lost that advantage.

**Walker:** Engineers in South Korea have been using ChatGPT to redesign proprietary circuitry – apparently, it did a really good job. But unfortunately, that specialized data is taken and it goes back into this gristmill that is used to help the AI work better in the future. AI is just math, and that data is the information that it's ingesting.

### Are there any real fears to face when it comes to AI implementation?

**Czerwonka:** I think GPT and AI programs are going to just support lawyers, and I don't think there's anything to be afraid of in the legal world. If we're talking about the bigger picture, I think it is kind of interesting that AI has figured out how to ask third-party programs to hire people to do things that the program itself is not allowed to do – that's pretty weird, and I don't know where that goes.

**Walker:** There's no question if lawyers just bury our heads in the sand and ignore this stuff, I think that's dangerous. The other big fear I have is that we don't. If we don't grasp our ability to help people much more and at a much better scale – according to analysts, 80% of legal demand in California is not met. So if you have a super machine that's going to improve your ROI or your ability to deliver for your corporate clients you have to use it – but also we have to think about how to do that responsibly.

### What are some other examples of how our audience can take advantage of these technologies?

**Brown:** Bringing our professors up to speed on how to actually teach the law or teach business, as in the case in our business school, there's a pedagogy that goes along with actually learning how to teach, and I think that AI will be very instrumental in helping our professors. There are a lot of people who are subject matter experts, but perhaps don't have great teaching skills. I believe that AI will be very effective and instrumental in bringing those subject matter experts up to speed on how to actually be a professor.

**Walker:** A lot of the big traditional New York law firms have started to use AI much more productively now, and I think that's a sea change. If you can get your prices down, you can do twice as much work. Audit companies and consulting companies can review contracts about eight times faster now – actually, it's probably more than that. If you can be eight times more productive for the second- and third-year associate level, you kind of have to do it. In the long run, it's dangerous not to take advantage of that.



# In-House Counsel Awards

## Private Company: **Small** 0-100 Employees



**HONOREE**

**Kiran Jain**

*Chief Legal Officer*

Replica, Inc.

*Georgetown University*

**K**iran Jain is an effective, strategic business and legal leader with broad executive experience in the technology and government sectors. In addition to serving as chief legal officer of an Alphabet-backed technology venture, she has served as COO, chief strategy officer, board member, and investor (Third Sphere) at several other government and climate technology companies, as well as a senior deputy city attorney (City of Oakland) and CEO of a non-profit organization (Oakland Fund for Public Innovation) focused on innovative public-private partnerships.

Early in her career, she served as the founding attorney for Kiva.org, the world's first internet microfinance platform, which has raised over \$1 billion to alleviate poverty. Jain designed the legal strategy that allowed the company to come to market quickly and safely.

For nearly three years, she has served on Replica's founding team, which focuses on providing privacy-first mobility, demographic, land use, and economic data to drive better decision-making around the built environment. In the past 12 months, as Chief Legal Officer, Jain has created and executed the company's public policy strategy, including its legislative and policy agenda, to support the company's

strategic business priorities and help direct millions of federal dollars to data-driven state and local infrastructure projects. In the last 12 months, she developed and recruited a government affairs team to directly manage local, state, and federal relationships and identify business risks and opportunities from pending policy, legislative, regulatory, and procurement initiatives. Today, GAPP's efforts cover nearly 20 states in the U.S. representing over \$100 million in business opportunities.

Jain is a motivated problem solver. For the past five years, she has focused her legal and policy skills to build technology products that improve government operations and efficiency. Her legal work has ranged from designing resilient financing strategies, deploying affordable broadband, decarbonizing California's housing sector, and producing safe and reliable data needed to deliver more equitable and resilient infrastructure. Through this work, Jain was recently appointed to the State of California's Green Bond Market Development Committee by the State Treasurer to more intentionally inform environmental, social, and governance practices for the \$4 trillion municipal bond market in the United States.

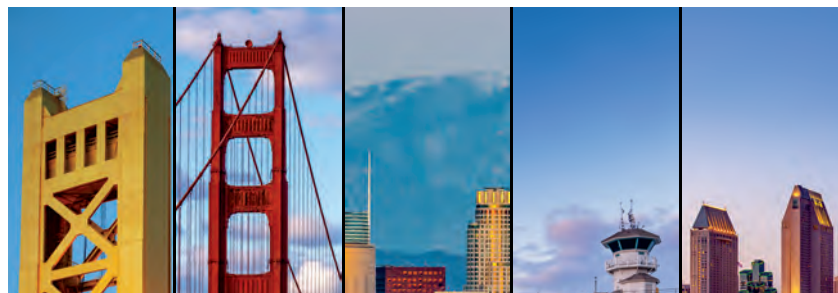
Congratulations to  
Wendy Pizarro, Esq., our  
Chief Legal Officer &  
Chief Diversity Officer



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## In-House Counsel Awards

## Private Company: Small - Finalist

**Wendy Pizarro**

*Chief Legal Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Diversity Officer and Corporate Secretary  
Calidi Biotherapeutics, Inc.  
Harvard Law School*

**W**endy Pizarro has served as Calidi's chief legal officer, chief diversity officer, chief administrative officer, and corporate secretary since 2021. She is considered a role model for women and people of color as a seasoned corporate attorney, business leader, and digital health advocate. She is passionate about Calidi's mission to cure cancer and fight disease using its innovative stem cell delivery platform.

In her hybrid roles on Calidi's executive leadership team, Pizarro is responsible for the company's global legal strategy and implementation. Furthermore, she is the company's lead in shaping external and internal policies in recruitment and marketing related to furthering principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the company's strategic plan and clinical trial design, and development.

**Todd Rosen**

*General Counsel  
Main Street Advisors  
University of  
Pennsylvania Carey  
Law School*

**T**odd Rosen has a broad legal and finance background. He started as a corporate and tax lawyer, then left law for a few years to work as an investment banker. He returned to law joining Munger, Tolles & Olson, where he became a partner. After 14 years at Munger, he joined Main Street Advisors as the firm's first general counsel.

Main Street Advisors serves as a strategic advisor to and invests capital for some of the most influential and accomplished people and businesses in media, music, entertainment, and professional sports. During his almost five years at Main Street, Rosen has been involved in all aspects of the firm's investment and legal functions and instrumental as Main Street has grown from ~\$4.0 billion of AUM to over ~\$8.5 billion of AUM, including the recent closing of the firm's second private equity fund with over \$1 billion of committed capital.

**Melissa Slawson**

*General Counsel and VP of  
Government Affairs and Education  
GeoLinks  
California Western  
School of Law*

**W**ith more than 15 years of legal experience in the telecommunications regulatory field, Melissa Slawson is the general counsel and vice president of government affairs and education at leading enterprise-level telecommunications company GeoLinks. Since 2017, she has been the company's general counsel, overseeing all legal and regulatory matters. As part of her role, she tracks policies and legislation that may affect GeoLinks' business and advocates before various regulatory bodies such as the FCC.

Slawson has had a significant impact on GeoLinks' accelerated growth and success. Beyond single-handedly pioneering the entire in-house legal department and company legal policies, she has also been solely responsible for developing expertise regarding FCC broadband deployment funding auctions.

**Jason Weintraub**

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

**J**ason Weintraub is chief legal officer and general counsel of Jacuzzi Group. Providing innovative wellness solutions to customers in more than 60 countries, Jacuzzi Group is the premier manufacturer of hot tubs, swim spas, bathtubs, saunas, and other products for the home and outdoors. He excels at building, developing, and inspiring his legal team.

Jacuzzi Group has grown dramatically over the past few years, and Weintraub has managed to restructure the department and add talent while keeping headcount growth to a minimum, all while establishing benchmarks for the company. He has led the deal team on multiple acquisitions, including taking a deal from start to finish in his first three months at Jacuzzi. This deal allowed Jacuzzi to enter the bath remodel business, which is now one of its fastest-growing segments, with revenue growth over five times since the deal closed less than two years ago.



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## In-House Counsel Awards

### Private Company: Midsize 101-300 Employees



**HONOREE**

### Phillip Louis Spector

*General Counsel, CLO*

ThirdLove, Inc.

*Harvard Law School*

**P**hill Spector was born to a working-class family in Los Angeles and grew up reading every page of the Los Angeles Times. He quickly rose in high school (valedictorian) with a full scholarship to UC Santa Barbara and then onward to Harvard Law School, where he was both the Supreme Court note editor and Harvard Law Review editor. He served eight years as the GC and board member of Intelsat out of Washington DC, an organization with thousands of employees and billions in revenue. Spector successfully guided the organization to raise billions of dollars and two different sales to private equity.

Spector joined ThirdLove initially to help the company out during a period of rapid break-neck growth, but quickly it was apparent he was needed full-time and very much in an operating role helping to build the company, playing a role that encompasses much more than a typical GC. For much of his tenure at ThirdLove, he concurrently served in the role of helping lead HR and strategy and guiding board members, founders and the CEO on the best path forward for a variety of business decisions – decisions far beyond those typically addressed by a general counsel.

In the past two years, Spector has guided the company in a variety of litigation and employment matters. Being a \$100+ million-dollar revenue business, mostly online but with 10 stores across the country all requiring their own unique employment laws and raising \$70 million in venture capital (Spector also handles all IR), ThirdLove finds itself in the crosshairs of numerous litigations, employment matters, and investor issues. Currently and interestingly, a high-profile personality is suing ThirdLove for breach of contract despite there never being a “contract” in place with her to be an influencer for the brand. Also, the company has sued one of its main manufacturing partners for millions of dollars and successfully settled after going to federal court. This was a highly complex case that required Spector to carefully maneuver the organization through. The company manufactures massive amounts of product annually, requiring complex contracts with the Chinese which Spector handles.

### Private Company: Midsize - Finalists



### Stephen Daryl Chu

*Chief Legal and People Officer*  
InStride  
*Columbia Law School*

**S**tephen Chu graduated from Columbia Law School in 2009, clerked for Central District Judge Gary Fees in Los Angeles, worked a few years at the Los Angeles office of Gibson Dunn, went in-house at CBRE under Stephen Ballas (Deputy GC) and Larry Midler (Global GC) and became a general counsel in 2018 at Zwift, a VC-backed start-up based in Long Beach that gained unicorn status during his time there. The company grew from 125 employees to over 600. Chu was the first person in Zwift’s legal department, grew the team to 10 legal and compliance professionals in 2022 as he managed all legal, compliance, and risk matters.

Chu moved to InStride as chief legal and people officer in August 2022, a TPG-backed start-up based in Downtown Los Angeles. InStride has 160 employees total, and Chu manages a small three-person legal team and an 11-person HR department.



### Jason Lee

*Chief Legal and Compliance Officer*  
Lido Advisors  
*Santa Clara Law*

**J**ason Lee joined Lido Advisors, an SEC-registered investment manager, as a partner in 2017 and currently serves as the firm’s chief legal and compliance officer. When he joined Lido, the firm employed about 30 people, primarily in Los Angeles, and managed about \$27 billion in assets. Now, Lido has offices throughout the country, 150 employees, and manages about \$12 billion in assets. Lee has played critical roles in Lido’s tremendous growth and development and has overseen the firm’s administrative, operational, legal, and regulatory functions.

Lee has dedicated his professional career to public service. As president (chair) of the State Bar of California, he was instrumental in securing diversity and inclusion efforts in the agency’s core mission. Prior to his service at the State Bar, he served as chair of the Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation, presiding over the body responsible for vetting and rating trial and appellate appointments.



### Holly Jean Logue

*General Counsel*  
Holmusk  
*The University of Michigan School of Law*

**H**olly Logue received her law degree from the University of Michigan and her MBA from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She has leveraged this dual training to advise innovative companies on both legal issues and business strategy throughout her career. As general counsel, she practices across a broad range of legal areas but has focused her practice for over two decades in the healthcare space, including data science, biotech, pharma, medical device, and diagnostics companies.

Logue is currently the general counsel and an executive team member at Holmusk Technologies, a global, real-world evidence and data analytics company that seeks to revolutionize research and care delivery for behavioral health. She is committed to guiding Holmusk in realizing its mission by leading the legal function of the company.



### Delphina Yuen

*General Counsel*  
Outschool, Inc.  
*Syracuse University College of Law*

**D**elphina Yuen’s career has centered around making the world a smaller place through technology. After her clerkship for the Superior Court of Delaware and a short stint at a boutique litigation firm, she joined her first technology start-up. She then joined Lyft, Inc. in 2015 where she helped to shape, execute, and build a global legal strategy for Lyft’s products and services.

Yuen’s current role as general counsel of Outschool, Inc. integrates her background and passion for both education and technology. Outschool is an education technology company with a mission to inspire kids to love learning. In her first year, she tackled complex legal and policy issues around the gig economy and education to bring supplemental education opportunities to kids around the world. Her team also worked to build an innovative privacy and safety program to keep kid data secure and kids safe on the platform.



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## In-House Counsel Awards

### Private Company: Large 301-1,000 Employees



**HONOREE**

### John L. Erikson

*Senior Vice President and Head of Legal*

Wedbush Securities  
UCLA School of Law

**J**ohn Erikson is currently senior vice president, assistant secretary, and corporate counsel for Wedbush Securities Inc., a Los Angeles-based full-service securities broker-dealer. He is an integral part of a five-attorney in-house legal department that handles most of the firm's 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.

Erikson was born in San Mateo and moved to Los Angeles in 1982. He went to college at UCLA, majoring in English, and graduated cum laude. He spent two quarters studying in (then) Leningrad (and was there when they voted to change the name to St. Petersburg). After college, he went to the UCLA School of Law, graduating in 1996. He spent the next 14 years at the law firm of Jones, Bell, Abbott, Fleming & Fitzgerald. At Jones Bell, Erikson spent seven years as an associate and seven more as a partner, with a general practice focusing on securities litigation. His father had been general counsel for Los Angeles-based Great

Western Bank, and he followed in his footsteps in 2011 by going in-house with Wedbush.

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. Highlights include dismissal of a \$4-million FINRA arbitration claim on a motion to dismiss; dismissal of a \$750,000 insurance procurement claim in federal court; complete defense verdict in an employee/independent contractor misclassification claim; highly favorable decision in a \$5 million constructive discharge claim; and a \$0-settlement of a \$1-million case of purported whistleblowing filed in both state and federal court. In addition, although most cases are handled by the firm's legal department, Erikson manages some matters referred to outside counsel.

### Private Company: Large - Finalists



**Bernadette Michelle Chala**  
*Chief Legal Officer*  
Arbonne  
UCLA School of Law

**B**ernadette Chala started her career as a judicial law clerk, moving to private practice, and then began her career as general counsel to help steer her company through a strategic transaction. Upon successfully closing the transaction, she moved to Arbonne International where she became the chief legal officer and once again steered her company through a successful transaction.

Currently, Chala leads the legal, compliance, government relations and policy, and scientific affairs teams at Arbonne. She successfully converted Arbonne to a for-profit public benefit company and was part of a team that obtained B Corp recertification in 2023 – achieving one of the highest scores of any company in Arbonne's industry at 119 points. Believing that every team can do its part to support Arbonne's B-company philosophy, Chala spearheaded a project to ensure that all legal vendors demonstrated a commitment to DEI.



**Derek Huoth**  
*General Counsel*  
Tastemade  
University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School

**D**erek Huoth is general counsel and secretary at Tastemade, a modern media brand that creates award-winning video content and original programming in food, home, and travel primarily for millennial and GenZ audiences. In addition to all legal and business affairs, he has also been involved in people operations, corporate development, and international matters at Tastemade. He's an active participant in the company's mentorship program, which he helped design.

Huoth is a leader, a coach, and an overall force within Tastemade. He has made it his personal mission that his internal clients at the company feel that working with Tastemade lawyers is as enjoyable as watching their content, putting extra emphasis on storytelling, community, and ownership of outcomes.



**Alan Wayne Lindeke**  
*Chief Legal Officer & General Counsel*  
Change Home Mortgage  
Washburn Law

**A**lan Lindeke is a strategic, results-driven counselor with an extensive background in contract negotiations, mortgage banking, corporate law, and regulatory compliance. With more than 20 years of industry experience specializing not only in the legal aspects of the mortgage business, he also has extensive knowledge of every aspect of the mortgage business including origination, underwriting, funding, and secondary market transactions.

In his current role as general counsel and chief legal officer for Change Home Mortgage, he maintains direct oversight over legal, vendor management, quality control, licensing, and compliance. He also represents his clients in connection with secured financings, structured warehouse facilities, and whole loan and mortgage servicing rights sales.



**Colin Morris**  
*General Counsel*  
Tebra Technologies, Inc.  
UC Berkeley School of Law

**C**olin Morris is a highly competent leader with in-depth public and private company experience in all matters that could conceivably arise during the lifetime of a corporation. This includes mergers and acquisitions, equity and debt financings, initial public offerings, technology agreements, intellectual property portfolios, compliance in regulated industries, human resource matters, activist investors, proxy contests, and shareholder class action lawsuits.

Over the last two years, Morris has guided Tebra through a major period of transition, culminating in a merger of equals. This process included such challenges as re-aligning equity plans, securing new financing amid a tumultuous economy, and navigating increased scrutiny of the medical SaaS industry by government regulators. He has demonstrated the highest levels of integrity, ethics, and business acumen drawing on over 20 years of experience, including 11 years as a public company general counsel and over eight years as a corporate securities attorney.

## In-House Counsel Awards

**Private Company: Enterprise** Over 1,000 Employees



**HONOREE**

**Aarash Darroodi**

*EVP & General Counsel*

Fender

*Georgetown University*

Aarash Darroodi brings a wealth of knowledge and global experience to Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC), one of the world's leading musical instrument manufacturers, marketers, and distributors, transforming music history since 1946. In his current role as executive vice president and general counsel at FMIC, he is responsible for all global legal needs across FMIC, including mergers and acquisitions, compliance, litigation, intellectual property, corporate governance, advocacy, and risk management. Darroodi continues to serve as an officer on the board of directors for FMIC. In 2022, he was appointed as president of the Fender Play Foundation, the brand's public charitable organization on a mission to equip, educate, and inspire the next generation of players through music education.

At the mere age of seven, Darroodi had already visited or lived in over 35 countries, shaping his global and cultural knowledge. He has applied this wealth of life experiences to work seamlessly within FMIC across multiple countries and cultures, including the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Australia. Bringing these diverse perspectives to his role as EVP and general counsel, his work has

led to the largest acquisition in FMIC's history of PreSonus Audio Electronics, support of the \$800-million California Proposition 28 Music and Arts Education Ballot Measure, and spearheading legislative initiatives to bring about changes to CITES and other compliance requirements for the company's global manufacturing, logistics, and sales operations. Furthermore, he negotiated and inked deals with all major music publishers in support of Fender's online digital learning application, Fender Play, including Universal Music, Warner/Chappell, Sony Music Publishing, and BMG, and also led the organization's global COVID-19 compliance program by navigating one of the most challenging regulatory environments impacting all aspects of Fender's business globally including manufacturing operations, supply chain, and employment operations.

A big proponent of technological change and innovation, Darroodi is currently focused on expanding the reach of Fender Play and other digital initiatives across the borders of the U.S. and Europe, including entry into untouched territories such as Japan, China, and South Korea.



**Waymaker congratulates Zag Entertainment's Benjamin Johnson and all In-house Counsel Leadership Award nominees.**

  
WAYMAKER





## In-House Counsel Awards

### Private Company: Enterprise - Finalists



**Bill Berry**  
General Counsel  
Verkada  
University of Virginia  
School of Law

**B**ill Berry is general counsel at Verkada, a disruptor in the physical security space that is valued at more than \$3.2 billion. He brings two decades of experience leading legal teams at Tesla and Google, as well as at Quinn Emanuel and the SEC. He built Verkada's legal department from the ground up and has played an integral role in Verkada's rapidly growing business.

Shortly after joining, Berry had an immediate impact when Verkada secured two big wins in pending patent litigation with Motorola (effectively resulting in a certain victory for Verkada on all material aspects of the case) and an early dismissal of a patent troll lawsuit. He also spearheaded the company's patent strategy, securing its first patents, and laying out a strategic roadmap to expand its portfolio. Also, Berry played an important role in Verkada's Series D fundraiser in 2022 just months after he started at the company.



**Mauricio Fux**  
Senior Executive Vice  
President & General Counsel  
Curacao  
Stanford University  
Law School

**M**auricio Fux has had over 36 years of legal experience and since 1999 acted as general counsel for Curacao, the largest Hispanic-serving retailer on the West Coast, with department store locations in California, Nevada, and Arizona. As senior executive vice president and general counsel for Curacao, he leads all aspects of the company's legal department in addition to various ventures and investments. He also heads the company's real estate division, supervising and managing Curacao's expansion, and acquiring new retail properties, including two locations in San Diego, California and Tucson, Arizona set to open in 2023.

From both a business and legal perspective, Fux has led the company through several rounds of financing, corporate transactions, and growth. In addition, he has been responsible for successfully managing significant and complex litigation. He also has over 20 years of experience in consumer finance and retail.



**Ashley Wilson**  
Global General Counsel  
Lifelong Learner  
Holdings  
Ohio State University

**A**shley Wilson has been practicing as a corporate attorney since 1997 and has worked for companies with financial sponsors (private equity and home office) since the late 2000s. During this time, she became a generalist with experience in tech, retail, privacy, compliance, HR, and more. She has been a GC since 2012 but counts her current position as global general counsel at Lifelong Learner Holdings as her most challenging and gratifying.

Lifelong Learner currently holds two companies – PSI Services and Talogy – both of which are testing companies for over 70 years and operate worldwide. When Wilson joined the company, it had just doubled its size due to two major acquisitions. She was able to build a global team to service the companies while it was in hyper-growth mode. She headed 21 acquisitions over two years, increasing EBITDA by nearly 40%, and headed up the security and compliance group for two years.



**Vanessa Wu**  
General Counsel  
Rippling  
UCLA School of Law

**V**anessa Wu is general counsel at Rippling, where she oversees legal and compliance. At Rippling, she has been one of the driving forces behind its global expansion, advising on compliance and hiring practices across the United States, Canada, EMEA, and APAC as the company has grown from 100 to nearly 2,000 employees across a dozen countries.

Over the past few years at Rippling, Wu realized that being a multi-national company is no longer just an enterprise-level concern, but also an issue for small- and medium-sized businesses. She has worked closely with product teams to transform these learnings into the development of Rippling's Global Payroll, Employer of Record, and HRIS products, which allow customers to compliantly hire and manage global workforces without extensive legal, tax, accounting, and HR resources. Previously only available to enterprise companies, this functionality has democratized talent and infrastructure for companies of all sizes.

### Education and Non-Profit - Finalists



**Carla Ford**  
General Counsel  
U.S.VETS  
Georgetown University

**W**ith more than 30 years of experience, Carla Ford has a background in diverse industries. For 16 years, she served as an assistant United States attorney in the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles, where she represented the government in varied civil litigation practices. Afterward, she worked at Walmart Stores, Inc. as a senior member of its field-based Environmental Compliance and Ethics Team. Ford has also been in private practice at law firms in Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Pasadena.

Now, as general counsel for U.S.VETS, Ford uses the knowledge and networks she acquired in a broad variety of areas that include employment and human resources, risk management, litigation oversight, governance, contract formation, real estate development, and intellectual property. She is a trusted advisor to the board of directors and officers and a close partner with employees in U.S.VETS' mission to end veteran homelessness.



**Nejmah Rabah Haddad**  
Country Representative  
Rebuilding Alliance  
Birzeit University

**A**ttorney Nejmah Haddad plays a key role in Rebuilding Alliance as a country representative. There are three parts to her work: (1) managing Rebuilding Alliance's program grants, convening meetings with each of its Palestinian NGO partners, drafting and monitoring project grant agreements; (2) research and analysis to formulate Contact Congress requests for intervention; (3) representing Rebuilding Alliance in the U.N. Cluster forums, which are interagency efforts to develop a common strategy and rights-based analysis of the protection, shelter, health, or education needs of Palestinian communities.

Haddad is usually the first to respond to alerts from attorneys who represent the Palestinian villages and neighborhoods in the West Bank when urgent matters occur. As a lawyer, she readily communicates with lawyers and works with the towns and families who are directly impacted.



**Jessica Waybright**  
General Counsel  
Genesis LA  
UC Law San Francisco

**A**s in-house counsel for Genesis LA – a community development finance organization serving Los Angeles County – Jessica Waybright fuels the deals that help neighborhoods flourish. She is a savvy attorney and a consummate team player who doesn't shy away from complex legal challenges. Her leadership, knowledge, and deep commitment to the city of Los Angeles make her an ideal candidate for the LA in-house counsel leadership awards.

Waybright has focused much of her career on real estate law. After earning her JD, she worked as a real estate and transactional attorney where she drafted and negotiated agreements for businesses looking to buy, sell, or rent residential and commercial properties. This made her a natural fit for an in-house role at Genesis LA. There, she parlayed her business prowess into underserved and underinvested communities, providing a path toward greater equity and prosperity for local residents.

## In-House Counsel Awards

## Education and Non-Profit



HONOREE

**Tanja Olano***Chief Legal Counsel*

LA28 Olympic &amp; Paralympic Games

*The George Washington University Law School*

**T**anja Olano is a trailblazing commercial attorney known for melding exceptional precision with extraordinary creativity.

In her current role at the organizing committee for the LA28 Olympic & Paralympic Games, she leads work that is foundational to LA28's success, including commercial transactions, intellectual property, corporate governance, and real estate negotiations, plus oversight of the organization's human resources.

From operations to marketing to impact, her leadership touches every functional area in the organization and is instrumental in positioning LA28 to deliver fiscally responsible, low-risk Games that leave a positive impact on Los Angeles. Olano joined LA28 in 2015 and served as the deputy general counsel for the LA 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Candidature Committee. This year she was appointed head of LA28's Human Resources department.

In her current role, Olano reports directly to LA28 CEO Kathy Carter and works closely with chair Casey Wasserman on board-related matters. In the last year, she has carefully architected one of the industry's leading legal teams, growing it from just four people to 13 and counting. She oversees every legal aspect of the organization, including commercial

contracts covering sponsorships, licensing, and e-commerce; hospitality; Games planning and venue use agreements; and all organizational governance for the LA28 Board of Directors (including its committees) and the Board of United States Olympic and Paralympic Properties, LLC. Over the course of this past year, Olano has shown incredible growth and versatility as an executive, first overseeing the finance department during a period of executive transition, and then taking on oversight of human resources – doubling the team she leads and gaining responsibility for the ultimate hiring of thousands of employees over the life of the organizing committee.

Beyond her executive contributions, Olano has been fundamental to the commercial partnerships for the organization. In 2021, she drove contractual negotiations exceeding \$1 billion in deal value, including the Comcast, Deloitte, and Salesforce sponsorships and for the first time ever, a deal with the IOC, IPC, and other organizing committees, to establish Endeavor's OnLocation as the global hospitality provider for the Games. In 2022, Olano oversaw the partnership negotiations with Hershey and global merchandise leader Fanatics.



# Positive impact

Nixon Peabody congratulates Jessica Waybright for being named a **2023 Finalist**, and our NP LA Office Managing Partner, Sonia Nayak, on being recognized as a **2023 Legal Visionary**.

NP is proud to team with our clients to advance developments that make a positive impact on the LA community.



Nixon Peabody LLP, 300 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA  
nixonpeabody.com | @NixonPeabodyLLP



## In-House Counsel Awards

### Public Company: Small Under 1,000 employees



**HONOREE**

### Carita Shanklin Walker

*General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer*

Shell Recharge Solutions  
UC Berkeley School of Law

**C**arita Walker is a strategic executive who provides operational and risk-based guidance to the CEO and members of executive leadership teams. She delivers expertise in environmental and regulatory compliance, permitting, and non-technical risks associated with multi-billion-dollar capital projects, corporate governance, and risk management. She also has numerous years of experience in commercial contracting, M&A, legislative and market development in nascent and novel industries, and technologies. Walker is passionate about creating scalable, innovative business solutions, building compliant, safe, and inclusive cultures, and the advancement of ESG (environmental, social, and governance).

Walker is the chief legal officer at Shell Recharge Solutions (formerly Greenlots) – a Shell company dedicated to unlocking the possibilities of the electric mobility future by delivering game-changing software and services at scale. She is an enabler of legal digitalization, innovation, and transformation to cement Legal's contribution to the scaling of the business.

In the two years that she has been in this role, Walker has achieved a number of notable

accomplishments, including creating a legal team of five attorneys and a legal operating system to assist the business in meeting its goals. She routinely serves as a mentor to numerous other attorneys.

Previously based in Doha, Qatar, she led commercial transactions for Shell's operations in Qatar including Pearl GTL, the world's largest source of gas-to-liquids products, and was a member of the governance team for the Qatargas 4 LNG joint venture, a fully integrated liquefied natural gas project. She started her professional career because of her dedication to environmental justice. Today, she is part of the solution aiding Shell in the energy transition. Walker is also an acknowledged thought leader and active participant in DE&I efforts and is one of the architects of the Shell Global Legal DE&I Plan.

Walker did her undergraduate studies at Xavier University of Louisiana (a Historically Black College and University), studied at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA, and obtained her law degree from the University of California at Berkeley School of Law.

### Public Company: Small - Finalists



**Vivian Kim**

*General Counsel, Corporate Secretary, and Chief People Officer*  
Hanmi Bank  
UC Berkeley School of Law

**V**ivian Kim began her law career as an associate at Dykema Gossett, LLP in 2011, where she managed a wide range of complex business and intellectual property litigation matters, including patent, copyright, trade secret and right of privacy claims, class action defense, and real estate disputes. While at Dykema, she became involved in the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach.

After nearly six years at Dykema, Kim transitioned in house and began her career with Hanmi Bank and Hanmi Financial Corporation as corporate counsel. Over the past seven years, she has been promoted several times and expanded her role at Hanmi beyond serving as corporate counsel. Today, in addition to managing all legal operations for the bank and its holding company, Kim has taken a leadership role in advancing the company's public profile and philanthropic initiatives. She has also spearheaded the bank's ESG efforts.



**Jeff Plumer**

*General Counsel*  
Evolus  
UC Davis School of Law

**J**eff Plumer serves as general counsel of Evolus, Inc., a performance beauty company with a customer-centric approach focused on delivering breakthrough products. He first joined and served as the vice president of legal since Evolus' initial public offering in 2018. He has been instrumental in achieving key company milestones, including the Evolus IPO and subsequent financing rounds to fund the commercial launch of its product, Jeuveau.

Plumer transferred to Evolus upon its IPO after serving as the vice president of legal to Evolus' sole stockholder from 2014 to early 2018 and was promoted to general counsel in October 2020. He has navigated challenging waters with the pandemic. His guidance was instrumental in an international product launch in 2022 and continues to assist with future launches.



**Rasika Vasant Rathi**

*Vice President & General Counsel & Secretary*  
Specialty Enzymes & Probiotics  
University of Michigan Law School

**R**asika Rathi is a highly accomplished lawyer and board member of Specialty Enzymes & Probiotics, a group company of Advanced Enzyme Technologies. In her current role as general counsel of Advanced Enzymes, she has been instrumental in leading major projects and deals in the multi-billion dollar biotech/enzyme industry. She has played a key role in several successful acquisitions, including those of SciTech, Biomedic Labs, JC Biotech, and Evoxx (a German R&D firm), demonstrating her ability to navigate complex negotiations and regulatory compliance issues while enhancing the capabilities of her firm.

One of Rathi's most significant achievements has been taking Advanced Enzyme Technologies public. She played a critical role on the strategy team driving the company's IPO, which was oversubscribed by more than 116 times and received an overwhelming response from investors.



**Franco Tenerelli**

*General Counsel*  
Landsea Homes Corporation  
Loyola Law School

**F**ranco Tenerelli is a proven business leader with a track record of strategic, practical, and professional counsel to Fortune 500 companies and start-ups. He has a depth of experience advising executives and boardrooms in a variety of legal disciplines including corporate governance, mergers and acquisitions, litigation, compliance, and risk management. At his current employer, Landsea Homes, he is a member of the Landsea Executive Team, advising on all corporate initiatives. He is also a member of the Executive Land Committee, which oversees all real estate transactions, joint ventures, and financings.

Tenerelli created the Landsea Homes Legal and Risk Management departments from the ground up, setting the company's legal vision and implementing the requisite systems and procedures to handle exponential nationwide growth and entry into the public market.

## In-House Counsel Awards

## Public Company: Midsize 1,001-10,000 employees



## HONOREE

## Allen Z. Sussman

*General Counsel*

FAT Brands Inc.  
Boston University

Allen Sussman became general counsel of FAT Brands Inc. in March 2021, after a 30-year career with the federal government and at major law firms. He initially served five years in government, first as a lawyer supervising savings and loans with the U.S. Department of Treasury, and then as an enforcement lawyer with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington, D.C. At the SEC, Sussman worked in the task force that investigated and prosecuted violations in the banking industry. During his time in the government and law school, he also published articles on regulation and reform of the banking industry and an analysis of the regulation of junk bond investments in the Annual Review of Banking Law.

After five years of government service, Sussman entered private practice in Los Angeles in the mid-1990s. In private practice, he developed a recognized corporate transactional and securities practice in Los Angeles as a partner at Manatt Phelps & Phillis, Morrison & Foerster and most recently at Loeb & Loeb. In October 2017, Sussman handled the initial public offering of FAT Brands on NASDAQ, and in March 2021 joined as the company's first general counsel.

Since becoming general counsel of FAT Brands in 2021, Sussman organized a new legal department and managed the company's tremendous growth, during which time FAT Brands acquired multiple restaurant brands for over \$1 billion and raised nearly \$1 billion in new financing. The company has over 2,300 locations and is now a top 25 restaurant company with 17 iconic restaurant brands, including Round Table Pizza, Fatburger, Johnny Rockets, Marble Slab Creamery, Fazoli's, Twin Peaks, and Hot Dog on a Stick.

In 2022, Sussman also played a role in the founding of the FAT Brands Foundation, created to uplift and unite the communities in which FAT Brands operates. While the company's 17-brand portfolio is deeply rooted in charitable initiatives both locally and nationally, FAT Brands, as an organization, is seeking to magnify those efforts further. The 501(c)(3) organization is aimed at partnering with local non-profit organizations to provide essential programs to help families and communities thrive.

## Public Company: Midsize - Finalists



## Elina Avakian

*Associate General Counsel*  
Snap Inc.  
UCLA School of Law

Elina Avakian is an associate general counsel on the Platforms & Technology Commercial Legal team at Snap Inc. and has been with the company for over six years. Snap Inc. is the company that owns Snapchat, Bitmoji, and Spectacles and has over 5,000 employees worldwide. During her long tenure, she has worked on a broad range of commercial transactions that expanded across advertising, technology, hardware, gaming, partnerships, and others. She currently supports some of the most cutting-edge products in the tech space, including Snap's AR Enterprise Solutions, AR Mirrors, Snap Tokens, product partnerships, payments, and e-commerce.

As part of her work across Snap during the last 24 months, Avakian advised the company on a number of new product launches and partnerships, such as the launch of Snap Tokens, and negotiated deals with a variety of important partners, including Snap's partnerships with Tiffany & Co., Pinterest, and Spotify.



## Gregory Jackson

*Vice President, Litigation, Labor, and Regulatory*  
NuVasive  
Penn State University,  
Dickinson School of Law

Greg Jackson has over 20 years of experience in law and has spent the past seven years dedicated to the medical device industry. He came to NuVasive in 2016 after accumulating corporate and commercial litigation experience in private practice at DLA Piper and as a partner at Bowman & Brooke. He learned early on the value of being a true advocate for your client, being responsive, and putting yourself in your client's shoes.

Jackson has supported and launched innovation within NuVasive – the largest spine-focused company in the world with more than \$1 billion in net sales – which, in turn, has helped further advance the global spine market with the advancement of less invasive surgery. With seven years under his belt at NuVasive, he has proven himself an influential executive partner with a strong reputation for leading the litigation, labor, and regulatory teams with a people-first mindset.



## Natalie Prescott

*General Counsel*  
Fulgent  
Duke University  
School of Law

Natalie Prescott joined Fulgent Genetics, a public company with well over 1,000 employees, in early 2022 in order to help start and build its legal department. Within six months, she was quickly promoted to GC. Under her leadership, Fulgent completed two significant acquisitions in 2022 and today has numerous subsidiaries under its umbrella.

Prescott quickly hit the ground running, building a brand new department from scratch, with a heavy focus on legal, compliance, and privacy issues. A seasoned litigator, trial lawyer, and certified privacy professional with IAPP and Privacy Law Specialist with the ABA, her legal and privacy skills have proven invaluable in fostering Fulgent's success and growth. With five direct reports, Prescott oversees a legal team that daily faces cutting-edge legal issues in the most complex areas of law, ranging from compliance to regulatory to cybersecurity and privacy to employment.



## Pamela Anne Sergeeff

*Chief Legal Officer & General Counsel*  
Freshworks Inc.  
UC Berkeley  
School of Law

Pam Sergeeff joined Freshworks as chief legal officer and general counsel reporting to CEO and founder, Girish Mathrubootham, in April 2021. She leads the company's worldwide legal organization, responsible for corporate strategy, governance, securities law and product compliance, data protection, privacy, litigation, and intellectual property. Her team of 17 supports nearly 5,400 employees in 12 countries.

Prior to Freshworks, Sergeeff was the executive vice president, general counsel, and chief compliance officer at TiVo, leading worldwide legal affairs and operations. Bringing her 25 years of experience to Freshworks has positively impacted the company's transformation from a high-growth private start-up to a public company. Upon joining, she developed a plan of transformation to get Freshworks ready for operating as a public company.



## In-House Counsel Awards

### Public Company: Large **Large** Over 10,000 employees



#### HONOREE

### Jackie Hayes

*Executive Vice President of Legal  
for Studios & Networks*

Warner Bros. Discovery  
*Harvard Law School*

For 25 years, Jackie Hayes has played a vital role in shepherding the legal team for one of Hollywood's most iconic and oldest-running studios. As Executive Vice President of Legal for Studios & Networks at Warner Bros. Discovery, she provides strategic counsel to the company's leaders. Based in Los Angeles, she reports to Savalle Sims, general counsel of Warner Bros. Discovery.

Hayes' legacy WarnerMedia team navigated the intricate legal landscape surrounding AT&T's sale of WarnerMedia assets to Discovery, Inc. to form the new company, Warner Bros. Discovery. In a process that began in May 2021, she worked with legacy Discovery teams to achieve critical milestones and develop an integration process to bring the two companies together to create the premier, standalone global entertainment powerhouse.

In April of 2022, upon completion of the merger, Hayes' purview was expanded and now includes oversight of the legal function for Warner Bros. Pictures, Warner Bros. Television, the HBO and HBO Max programming units, as well as the Turner and Discovery Networks and programming units. She also supports the Worldwide Theatrical Distribution & Marketing, Warner

Bros. Global Brands & Experiences, and the WB Games business units.

Prior to her role at Warner Bros. Discovery, Hayes served as executive vice president and general counsel of WarnerMedia Entertainment where in 2020 she was instrumental in launching the industry's newest streaming platform, HBO Max, during a pandemic nonetheless. Named to this role in August 2019, she was responsible for all of WarnerMedia Entertainment's legal affairs, including the linear businesses of HBO, TNT, TBS, and truTV, as well as Otter Media and HBO Max.

Joining Warner Home Video in 1998, Hayes provided legal support for the then-nascent DVD business. She went on to become a primary legal steward of Warner Bros' transactional and subscription digital businesses – leading the first content clearance, digital licensing, and content protection initiatives for the online distribution of Warner Bros. titles – and was eventually named senior vice president and general counsel of Warner Bros. Home Entertainment in 2015.

Hayes obtained her Juris Doctorate at Harvard Law School.

### Public Company: Large - Finalists



#### Ivana Cingel

*Chief Corporate Litigation  
Officer, Global Head of Insurance,  
and Senior Vice President*  
AECOM  
*Yale Law School*

Ivana Cingel is an experienced litigator who serves as chief corporate litigation officer, global head of insurance, and senior vice president at AECOM, the world's trusted infrastructure consulting firm delivering professional services throughout the project lifecycle – from planning, design, and engineering to program and construction management. She is a proud immigrant to the United States whose life and outlook have been shaped in large part by her experience as a child war refugee and as a young immigrant to the U.S.

As the chief litigator at one of the AEC industry's largest firms, Cingel sets and executes strategies for resolving the company's highest-value claims and litigation in a wide range of disputes covering multiple business lines – including transportation, water, power, oil & gas, and environment – around the world. She has delivered numerous successes that build on her reputation as one of the finest litigators in the industry.



#### Barbra Williams Diallo

*Legal Director, Labor &  
Employment*  
CBRE  
*UC Law San Francisco*

Barbra Diallo graduated from law school in 2006 and has had an impressive legal career since then. After working in law firms for about 12 years, she went from in-house to CBRE in November 2016, where she is currently responsible for global labor and employment matters for all business segments, including advisory services, global workplace solutions, and real estate investments.

Diallo also manages Affirmative Action/EEO compliance professionals, resolution of pre-litigation matters and employment charges; labor arbitrations; internal audits; OFCCP audits; drafts agreements and updates to policies and procedures; provides training and strategic counsel to corporate leaders and partners in the People, Talent Acquisition, Compensation & Benefits, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Compliance functions on a broad range of legal issues.



#### Lara Mackey

*Senior Vice President,  
Legal Affairs*  
Paramount Global  
*Loyola Law School*

Lara Mackey is a senior vice president in the legal affairs department at CBS Studios, which she joined in 2019. She works closely with departments across the company including business affairs, labor relations, participations, litigation, and distribution on a variety of legal issues including those involving new media, accounting, and intellectual property. In particular, she has taken on significant leadership responsibilities within multiple cross-functional/cross-disciplinary teams addressing cutting-edge, complex business, legal, and finance issues involving content distribution. In addition, over the last two years, Mackey has acted as the lead negotiator, closing several major settlements.

Prior to joining CBS Studios, Mackey was vice president in the litigation department at Sony Pictures Entertainment, working in areas from intellectual property rights to general corporate matters.



#### Njeri Mutura

*Assistant General  
Counsel, Strategic  
Pursuits & Partnerships*  
Microsoft Corporation  
*University of Windsor*

The in-house legal team that Njeri Mutura leads is tasked with supporting the top-tier strategic and complex technology transactions for the Americas at Microsoft Corporation, which typically translates to the largest deals the company sees globally. Her team is thoughtfully set up to enhance and support the objectives and priorities of the business. They ensure the rhythm of their operations is synchronized and aligned to that of the business and therefore actively participate in the cadence of key meetings so that they are walking in lockstep with their clients.

Mutura and her team have frequent touchpoints so that they understand and contribute to Microsoft's strategic discussions and have a view of established priorities, execution plans, and the deal pipeline. This puts her in a position to provide timely, effective counsel in a manner that contributes to optimal business results.

In-House Counsel Awards

Rising Star



**HONOREE**

**Annie Cheng**

*Vice President - Associate General Counsel*

Hines

*University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School*

Annie Cheng is a real estate lawyer at Hines who across her career has represented real estate companies and private equity firms in buying, selling, financing, and entering joint ventures in connection with properties across various asset classes, including industrial, multifamily (including student housing), self-storage, office, and hospitality.

She was born in Chengdu, China and immigrated to the U.S. at age seven. She grew up in Southern California and became the first "professional" in her family. As a teen, Cheng had wanted to be a corporate attorney after participating on her high school's mock trial team. But after interning at the Orange County Public Defender's Office at age 16, she decided she didn't want to practice criminal law. Instead, after attending the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School for a J.D. – where she graduated cum laude and was senior editor of the Penn Law Review – she decided on real estate law.

Cheng explained, "I saw Superman Returns, a pretty terrible movie that explores land issues. Land is a limited good, and humans cannot create more land unless they're Lex Luthor

or otherwise exorbitantly wealthy." She realized as long as there is humanity, there will always be transactions involving land and real estate. "That disappointing movie had a big impact on me."

After graduation, she worked for nearly five years as a real estate associate at Latham & Watkins, before moving to Kirkland in 2017 to help Kevin Ehrhart establish the West Coast real estate practice of Kirkland & Ellis. Cheng was made a partner at Kirkland in 2018, then moved to Hines in September 2021 to take on the role of the firm's U.S. West Region's first legal in-house counsel.

It's been a busy first year at Hines. Cheng has headed the settlement of a years-long lawsuit, helped close several acquisitions, ventures, and financings across the West Region, started the legal intern program in the West Region, and launched a region-wide joint venture database. She also supported crisis management on several unprecedented events in 2022 that will lead to Hines having a stronger crisis management response program going forward.

**GIBSON DUNN**

congratulates

**Lara Mackey,**

a most deserving In-house Counsel Awards Nominee, for her amazing career and leadership.

- |              |           |               |                  |
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## In-House Counsel Awards

### Rising Star - Finalists



**Ismael Bautista**  
Senior Counsel  
Southern California Gas Company  
UCLA School of Law

**I**smael Bautista is senior counsel at the Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas), the nation's largest natural gas utility, where he provides invaluable strategic advice and counsel to mid- and senior-level management on matters ranging from clean energy projects to supplier diversity; he also represents the company before the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). He has been instrumental in supporting SoCalGas's sustainability strategy which includes a bold commitment to achieve net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in its operations and delivery of energy by 2045, mirroring California's own climate change goals. He has been his company's lead counsel in key matters and projects supporting such objectives.

For instance, Bautista represents SoCalGas in the CPUC's Biomethane Proceeding focused on (1) establishing procurement targets for renewable gas, which would displace traditional natural gas, and (2) whether hydrogen should be blended into the gas system.



**Carter Goetz**  
In-House Counsel  
Del Mar Seafoods  
DePaul University  
College of Law

**C**arter Goetz began his law career in mergers & acquisitions (M&A) at Howard & Howard Attorneys PLLC. In addition to his work as a corporate lawyer, he was also the legal partner for the Founder's Institute – a business incubator with chapters in over 180 cities, dedicated to turning ideas into successful businesses. At Howard & Howard, he was introduced to Del Mar Seafoods as a client and joined their team after falling in love with the company and the seafood industry. He was given a unique opportunity to come into a 40-year-old business as it started to transition its business model and pave the way for future growth.

As in-house counsel for Del Mar Seafoods, Goetz single-handedly worked to restructure the company's debt, reducing annual debt payments by 70%. His innovation, passion, and background in start-up environments have been instrumental to how he approaches and solves problems.



**Greg Kerber**  
Divisional Vice President,  
Lead Counsel, and Assistant  
Secretary at TriNet  
TriNet Group, Inc.  
UC Berkeley School of Law

**G**reg Kerber is divisional vice president, lead counsel, and assistant secretary at TriNet and leads its corporate team within TriNet's legal, risk, government affairs, and compliance department. He has overall responsibility for the legal and corporate governance functions. He is a member of the senior leadership team and in that capacity helps plan and execute on TriNet activities in support of the company's mission and vision. Kerber has had a critical and far-reaching role at TriNet in his support of the board of directors and various subsidiary entities and in advising on a range of critical matters.

Kerber elevates his team and the organization through his exceptional work ethic, strong leadership, and innovative strategies to help TriNet mitigate risk and leverage opportunities. He is known for being detail-oriented, efficient, hands-on, business-oriented, reliable, and diligent.



**Brandee Lattimore Strothers**  
Legal Counsel,  
Americas and APAC  
Neutron Holdings, Inc.,  
d/b/a Lime  
Emory University School of Law

**A**s a seasoned litigation attorney, Brandee Strothers is adept at identifying opportunities to explore and paths to mitigate risk, ensuring alignment with applicable legal and compliance requirements. With uncompromising integrity, she uses her industry experience and subject matter expertise to navigate challenging business climates, work with diverse stakeholders and clients, and represent her company, Lime, and clients with pragmatic optimism.

Strothers is a strong and personable, but also strategic business partner with over 14 years of firm and in-house litigation experience. She works hard as an assertive litigator who drives favorable results from her outside counsel. She provides data-supported advice to mitigate risk in the company and is organized, supportive, and builds culture with her teammates. She also makes efforts to strengthen and support Lime's culture by participating in employee ERGs and mentoring

[Continued from page 6]

onboarding process associated with ALSPs can cause issues, especially when organizations need a quick turnaround to set up a regulatory intelligence program," said Sworek.

### 3. In-House Staff

In-house staff have deep institutional knowledge and a high degree of business acumen. They understand which regulations are important and what processes and policies need to be changed or created to meet new regulatory requirements. Using in-house staff also eliminates third-party involvement, creating more control over the process and ensuring flexibility during high-change periods.

"It seems like an ideal solution, except that without a much bigger pool of in-house resources than most legal and compliance functions possess, the scale of the task tends to overburden in-house staff," said Sworek.

"A 2021 Gartner study showed that over half of lawyers were at least moderately exhausted since the pandemic, so leaders must evaluate their staff responsibilities to ensure this is a sustainable option."

### 4. Regulatory Intelligence Technology

Some vendor-provided tools automatically track and notify of regulatory changes without human input. Through a variety of capabilities, regulatory tracking software aims to automate the regulatory tracking aspect by allowing them to track specific topics and/or regulations and by sending notifications when something changes (e.g., a regulatory agency adds a new rule to an existing regulation that an organization is tracking).

"These tools are cost-effective for many organizations and offer a long-term solution to staying on top of regulatory volatility, while reducing



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the burden on in-house staff. They can also open opportunities to delegate parts of the regulatory intelligence program to business risk owners," said Sworek. "However, such tools

still require a human to manage them, and the staff responsible will still face a potentially burgeoning workload as they integrate these tools into their workflows."

## In-House Counsel Nominees

## Private Company: Small



**Casey Hinline Kempner**  
*General Counsel*  
 P&P Imports LLC  
*UC Davis School of Law*

**C**asey Kempner has changed the game for P&P Imports LLC, and its headliner brand GoSports. Since joining the company in 2018, he was instrumental in building an immense intellectual property portfolio of patents, trademarks, and copyrights to give the company as many tools as possible to protect its innovations. Peter Tanoury and Peter Engler, the owners of P&P, are serial inventors that develop new products in the outdoor games and sporting goods space at rocket-ship speed. The constant innovation has seen Kempner expand the legal department to include a dedicated patent attorney and litigation counsel.

Kempner and his team ensure product integrity and take action against intellectual property infringement to keep unfair competition at bay. By understanding the product landscape, he provides the company with a clear path to build quality products in the Wild West of e-commerce where knockoffs run rampant and copycat companies stifle innovation.

## Private Company: Small



**Arun Kumar Kurichety**  
*Co-Founder + COO/*  
*General Counsel*  
 Petalfast  
*Washington University*  
*School of Law*

**A**run Kurichety is a seasoned leader, corporate executive, and attorney with an entrepreneurial mindset. He possesses more than 15 years of corporate transactional/restructuring experience with a focus on the cannabis/CBD industry. As a cannabis industry veteran, he has advised numerous cannabis companies, from start-ups to public, in an ever-shifting regulatory landscape.

In 2020, Kurichety achieved his lifelong dream of starting his own company when he co-founded Petalfast, a go-to-market accelerator that helps cannabis brands achieve rapid growth and scale. As COO and general counsel for the privately held company, he bridges the gap between the legal and business spheres by "leading with the law" in the day-to-day management of the company. He has worked on structuring all aspects of the business, including notably leading four equity raises, several debt transactions, as well as over 50 customer partnership agreements in less than two years.

## Private Company: Small



**Kristyn K. Molina**  
*Chief Legal Officer*  
 GALT Aerospace  
*The George Washington*  
*University Law School*

**K**ristyn Molina is the chief legal officer and acting director of contracts for GALT Aerospace. She was involved initially as an outside legal advisor, then as an employee since the company's inception in 2015. She takes great pride in helping to grow a start-up company, particularly in bringing on talented employees to build a successful team.

Within the last 24 months, Molina has continued building the legal department within a rapidly-growing Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned-Small-Business (SD-VOSB). Among other things, she led the policy efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic, created a new parental paid leave policy, and is developing an employee-centered intellectual property protection program. She also handles all litigation and pre-litigation matters, managing outside counsel, and balancing business needs to best protect the company. Molina has successfully drafted, negotiated, and executed many lucrative prime contracts, as well as numerous subcontracts.

## Private Company: Mid-size



**Jay DeGooyer**  
*General Counsel*  
 TigerConnect  
*UC Law San Francisco*

**J**ay DeGooyer has proven himself to be a tremendous asset as the general counsel of TigerConnect. He hit the ground running in November 2021 and has been an integral part of the team that made incredible progress over the past two years. In his role, he works hand-in-hand with TigerConnect's Executive Leadership Team to cost-effectively address any number of issues, including corporate governance, ethics and compliance, cybersecurity and data privacy, intellectual property, labor and employment, dispute resolution, and initiatives related to insurance and risk management.

DeGooyer's diligence and hard work were rewarded when Vista Equity Partners invested in TigerConnect less than three weeks into his tenure. Not only did he handle the due diligence for this transaction, but he also created a thorough post-transaction plan for learning and implementing Vista's best practices. DeGooyer is always evaluating and measuring potential risks, looking to see what's around the corner.

## Private Company: Mid-size



**Jonathan Michael Franz**  
*Head of Legal*  
 Crunchbase, Inc.  
*The Ohio State University*

**D**espite being under 40, Jonathan Franz has already played a pivotal role in making major entertainment and architectural projects possible for clients like Warner Bros, Lionsgate, NBCUniversal, Google and Alibaba, and guided entities through significant financings, plus periods of exponential growth (including Crunchbase's 5.5X nnARR acceleration in software sales).

When he joined Crunchbase in May of 2020, the start-up was fresh off the heels of a \$30 million Series C and was primarily a Data-as-a-Service provider. Franz partnered with the executive, marketing, product, and engineering teams to quickly pivot to the more profitable sales prospecting space with a multi-billion-dollar total accessible market. He helped the company close its recent \$50 million Series D financing (Franz led legal due diligence and helped negotiate the Stock Purchase Agreement/Schedule of Exceptions). In addition, he closed licensing deals worth \$6 million in nnARR over a span of two quarters.

## Private Company: Mid-size



**Todd Hamblet**  
*Chief Legal Officer and*  
*Corporate Secretary*  
 Fundbox  
*UC Law San Francisco*

**T**odd Hamblet is the chief legal officer and corporate secretary of Fundbox. He oversees all aspects of legal operations at Fundbox and provides strategic advice to senior management. His responsibilities include corporate governance, strategic transactions and partnerships, product development, HR matters, government and regulatory affairs, and regulatory compliance.

Hamblet's early career spanned 14 years at international law firms where he maintained a general corporate practice with a focus on global capital markets, M&A, public company reporting and compliance, and corporate governance. He has advised on successful transactions throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia, and Africa. In 2014, he joined Uber as its first corporate lawyer where he built a team that executed all of Uber's capital markets and global M&A transactions, including raising billions of dollars in equity and debt transactions, and closing transactions and joint ventures in the U.S., China, Europe, India, and Southeast Asia.



## In-House Counsel Nominees

### Private Company: Mid-size



**Benjamin C. Johnson**

*Senior Vice President/  
Head of Legal*  
ZAG Entertainment  
*Brigham Young University  
Law School*

**B**en Johnson is a highly experienced corporate and litigation attorney with a proven ability to deliver outstanding results for demanding clients in intellectual property and business litigation matters and provide sound general business advice across a broad spectrum of issues including risk management, employer liability, privacy, due diligence, and compliance. After a number of years as a firm attorney, he took his talents in house, joining MGA where he worked to protect the company's numerous valuable properties, including Bratz and LOL Surprise.

Two years ago, Johnson left MGA and moved toy companies to join ZAG Entertainment, a growing toy business. At ZAG, he manages all legal matters, domestic or international. He enjoys all aspects of legal work and at ZAG deals with a variety of legal issues ranging from employment to contract to intellectual property. Having overcome adverse circumstances growing up has helped Ben have perspective and understanding today.

### Private Company: Large



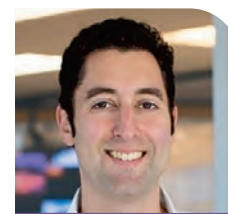
**Derek Michael Dahlin**

*Associate General Counsel*  
ClickUp  
*University of San Diego*

**A**fter the start of COVID, Derek Dahlin began working for ClickUp – a hypergrowth productivity management company valued at over \$4 billion. At the time, ClickUp was a scrappy, self-funded start-up with fewer than 50 employees, but it had already begun challenging and beating its public company rivals. He joined ClickUp full-time as its general counsel a few months later, shortly after the company's Series A fundraising round, at which point ClickUp began to experience tremendous growth. Over the next few years, ClickUp quickly grew from a small start-up to an international enterprise, with subsidiaries in four countries and over 900 global employees.

Dahlin led the company through both its Series B and Series C financings (totaling over \$500 million of investment from tier-one VC funds such as Andreessen Horowitz, Tiger Global, and Craft Ventures) and was instrumental in managing its expansion both internationally and domestically.

### Private Company: Large



**David Eisler**

*Chief Legal Officer*  
NEOGOV  
*Boston University*

**F**rom 2003 through 2011, David Eisler was a corporate associate focused on mergers and acquisitions, securities, venture capital, and general corporate matters at Dorsey & Whitney (2003-2005) and DLA Piper (2005-2011). Since then, he has served as general counsel at a number of public- and venture-backed companies in the SaaS-based software, e-commerce, healthcare, and fintech sectors. From April 2019 through December 2021, he also served as

the first general counsel at Quid, which grew from about \$100 million in assets under management to over \$1 billion during that time.

Eisler joined NEOGOV in 2021, where he currently serves as chief legal officer. NEOGOV is a SaaS-based software company serving clients in the public sector and is backed by Warburg Pincus and Carlyle. He is also a founding member of TechGC, a peer-to-peer legal network for general counsels, and a board advisor to CounterTen, an NFT platform.

### Private Company: Large



**Christopher Ghazarian**

*Corporate Counsel*  
DreamHost  
*Southwestern Law School*

**F**rom the time that he signed on with DreamHost in 2013, Chris Ghazarian has always had an eye toward protecting not just the interests of our business, but also the privacy of our hundreds of thousands of customers around the globe. He has worked to weave his legal team into all operations and products across the organization from the time he signed on to be their corporate counsel. He helps guide all DreamHost's projects from the beginning vs. the usual "let's hit up Legal at the end of the project before going live" style that most companies employ.

Ghazarian has put the privacy of the company's 400,000-plus customers' data at the heart of every policy decision. His approach to using data systems and building a homegrown in-house compliance program to limit customer data exposure to outside parties has likely saved DreamHost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

### Private Company: Large



**Erik Graham-Smith**

*General Counsel*  
FloQast  
*Harvard Law School*

**A**s FloQast's general counsel, Erik Graham-Smith is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the company's legal, compliance, HR, and recruiting teams. Prior to joining, he practiced law at Kleinberg, Kaplan, Wolff & Cohen, PC, where his practice concentrated on investor activism, M&A, and general corporate and securities law. He began his career as an associate at Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP where he worked in the corporate department on M&A, corporate governance, and shareholder activism.

In the last 24 months alone, Graham-Smith raised Series C and Series D funding rounds, an aggregate of \$150 million. He ran a Tender Offer for all employees and shareholders. He also oversaw HR and recruiting as the company scaled from 160 to 560 employees, including building out an internal operations department that he oversaw for six months until it was up and running.

### Private Company: Large



**Elliot Rozenberg**

*Vice President & Assistant  
General Counsel*  
FabFitFun  
*USC Gould School of Law*

**E**lliot Rozenberg has been an in-house attorney specializing in commercial contracts since graduating from USC Law in 2013. For the past six years, he has overseen the commercial legal work at FabFitFun, a lifestyle membership and shopping experience company. During that time, he has led negotiations with many of the world's most renowned beauty companies including Estée Lauder, L'Oréal, and Shiseido. He also supported the rapid and impressive growth of FabFitFun's influencer marketing program, which is one of the most well-known in the country.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rozenberg handled all the force majeure-related issues that arose and provided support to their operations and business teams who faced numerous challenges with respect to supply chain and logistics. He started the first student-run endowment fund at USC Law. The fund generates annual scholarships for LGBTQ+ law students and those pursuing LGBTQ+ equality in the law.

## In-House Counsel Nominees

Private Company: **Enterprise**

**Camilla Eng**  
*General Counsel*  
 LaserAway  
 UC Law San Francisco

**C**amilla Eng is the general counsel of LaserAway, the nation's leading medical spa specializing in aesthetics services utilizing cutting-edge technology in 40+ locations. She advises on corporate legal strategy and implementation, and guides the company's legal department in managing a range of issues, from patent and employment law matters to contracts, claims, and real estate, to insurance and risk management matters and compliance.

In the last couple of years, Eng helped her company work on a partnership with private equity group Ares Management. The strategic investment made by Ares will help fuel LaserAway's continued nationwide expansion, drive loyalty through its rewards program LaserLove, and advance its proprietary skin care products line, LA Beauty. Previously, she served as EVP of sales & marketing at JM Eagle, the world's largest plastic pipe manufacturer. She also served as a deputy city attorney for several agencies in Los Angeles.

Private Company: **Enterprise**

**Roy Hadavi**  
*General Counsel & Corporate Secretary*  
 Flynt Management Group  
 Southwestern Law School

**A**fter several successful roles in solo, in-house, and law firm scenarios, in 2021, Roy Hadavi transitioned into the entertainment world. As General Counsel of Flynt Management Group, he oversees all legal matters for the Larry Flynt empire, including the Hustler brand, the various LFP magazine and broadcasting operations, Hustler Casino and Lucky Lady Casino, and Hustler Hollywood stores.

Hadavi is spearheading the project to open three additional casinos in California. He has expanded the internal workload of the legal department. He has onboarded new systems to manage legal matters more efficiently and effectively for the company. And, in a very difficult situation, he was on the ground in person within an hour when two armed robbers opened fire on the Hustler Casino. Hadavi guided staff to ensure both their safety and that of patrons, got the situation under control, and got the casino back open.

Private Company: **Enterprise**

**Victoria K. Harvey**  
*Senior Vice President & Chief Legal Officer*  
 Smile Brands Inc.  
 Whittier Law School

**V**ictoria Harvey joined Smile Brands in 2014 as associate general counsel and was appointed senior vice president and chief legal officer in April 2015. She has over 25 years of experience in corporate and law firm settings, including over a decade with the law firms of Loeb & Loeb LLP in Los Angeles and Theodora Oringer Miller & Richman in Costa Mesa. Prior to Smile, she spent six years with a national restaurant chain and food manufacturing company where she handled all the company's legal functions.

In her capacity at Smile Brands, Harvey oversees all legal affairs, including corporate governance, regulatory compliance, intellectual property, risk management, government affairs, insurance portfolio, M&A, litigation, and strategic legal matters. She works closely with all the company's departments, including HR, operations, real estate, procurement, marketing, IT, and finance with respect to various legal and compliance-related issues.

Private Company: **Enterprise**

**Kendall Jones**  
*General Counsel*  
 California Pizza Kitchen  
 Vanderbilt Law School

**K**endall Jones has been with California Pizza Kitchen for more than three years. During her time as head of the legal and risk departments at CPK, she was an integral part of the team that expanded the brand's retail offerings, as well as the team that launched the company's domestic franchise program. She negotiated and drafted the contracts that sealed those deals and also helped shepherd the company through COVID, a bankruptcy restructuring, and a full debt refinance.

Jones has been an attorney for over 27 years. After graduating with honors from Vanderbilt Law School, she joined the highly regarded international law firm of Alston & Bird in Atlanta. She worked for large law firms and her own firm for over two decades as a civil litigator and business attorney. Jones has never lost a jury trial and has prevailed in over 90% of her bench trials.

Private Company: **Enterprise**

**A. Joel Richlin**  
*General Counsel/Vice President*  
 Prime Healthcare  
 Loyola Law School

**J**oel Richlin is the vice president and 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.

His leadership ensures consistent and sound legal advice to Prime Healthcare's hospitals and medical groups. Throughout the pandemic, Richlin has led the legal department's response and provided tremendous support to the health system and its front-line caregivers. With a team of 30 attorneys across the country, the delivery of legal services had to be reinvented to coordinate amongst a geographically dispersed department with a mix of on-site and remote attorneys. Through Richlin's dedicated leadership, the legal department was able to partner even more closely with its front-line caregiver clients to meet an ever-changing regulatory environment. This enabled Prime Healthcare to maintain access to care through an unprecedented spike in the need for services.

Private Company: **Enterprise**

**Michael Speaker**  
*General Counsel*  
 City National Bank  
 University of Virginia School of Law

**I**n 2019, Michael Speaker took the reins as general counsel for City National Bank – a company known as the "Bank to the Stars" and one of LA's most important institutions. He has successfully navigated new legal and regulatory waters as the bank has transformed, nearly doubling in size to \$95.3 billion in assets from \$51 billion when he joined.

Speaker's Legal and Corporate Administrative Group also has expanded since he took over the team. As City National has grown, the bank has become subject to increased legal and regulatory expectations. The scope and demands of Speaker's role are very complex, and he plays an instrumental role in helping City National's parent company, Royal Bank of Canada, navigate its regulatory and legal environment, too. Another business priority he leads is City National's investments in underserved communities through the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA).



## In-House Counsel Nominees

### Private Company: Enterprise



**Natalie Swanson**

*Senior Director, Associate General Counsel*  
Riot Games  
*Pepperdine University School of Law*

While the legal team at Riot Games is responsible for compliance, regulation, litigation, and other typical external matters, the team's vision is to unlock "Rioters" so they can create big, bold experiences for players. Natalie Swanson has been a champion of this for a long time. Right out of law school in 2010, she joined the company when it was still a start-up and League of Legends, the industry's first free-to-play game, was just a year old. She took the leap and has been with the company ever since.

Today, Swanson manages the global labor and employment practice, which supports 4,500-plus Rioters. From a team of one, the labor and employment team is now five attorneys in the U.S., and several more internationally with Swanson leading. Her fingerprint can be found on nearly every major People program, office expansion, and company milestone that have shaped Riot into what it is today.

### Private Company: Enterprise



**Raúl E. Zermeno**

*General Counsel*  
Traffic Management, Inc.  
*USC Gould School of Law*

Raúl Zermeno serves as the first-ever general counsel for Traffic Management, Inc., handling all legal matters, including employment issues with HR for TMI's 2,000+ workforce. He audits and implements new policies and procedures, performs wage & hour audits, creates strategies for new business opportunities, reviews and finalizes contracts with customers, as well as lease agreements for rental properties, and deals with collections. He also manages relationships with outside counsel and oversees claims brought against the company.

As the majority of TMI's work is done as a subcontractor, Zermeno spends a significant amount of time negotiating terms in master service agreements. He has drafted and improved language in these contracts with a focus on the indemnification provisions, to put TMI in a more equitable position. He is intricately involved in negotiating collective bargaining agreements, auditing pay practices to ensure compliance with CBAs, and defending against union grievances.

### Public Company: Small



**Michael Jaffa**

*General Counsel & COO*  
Genius Brands International  
*New York University School of Law*

For nearly 30 years, Michael Jaffa has had an extensive career in law with over 20 years dedicated to entertainment law, serving in senior executive positions for high-profile entertainment companies based in Los Angeles. Currently, he serves as general counsel & chief operating officer for Genius Brands, where he has negotiated millions of dollars in licensing deals and executed in excess of \$400 million of M&A and financial transactions in the past four years.

In April 2018, Jaffa was recruited by the board of directors to join Genius Brands to oversee the negotiating and shaping of business transactions in the areas of development, production, licensing, finance, and distribution of the company's IP catalog, including Shaq's Garage, Stan Lee's Superhero Kindergarten, Wolfgang Puck's Secret Chef Academy, Warren Buffett's Secret Millionaire's Club, Llama Llama, Rainbow Rangers, Thomas Edison's Secret Lab, Baby Genius, and more.

### Public Company: Small



**David Katz**

*Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, and Corporate Secretary*  
RadNet, Inc.  
*Loyola Law School*

As an attorney, David Katz has practiced for 33 years in the areas of securities and mergers and acquisitions. Today, he serves as executive vice president, chief legal officer, and corporate secretary for RadNet, Inc., an American radiology firm. The company operates outpatient diagnostic imaging centers and is the largest provider of outpatient imaging services in the United States. Katz serves as the head of the legal department at RadNet, Inc. and built it from two people in 2021 to eight people in 2022. He is responsible for all M&A, risk management, board of director relations, and strategy, and also co-responsible for the company's European expansion that began in 2022.

While at RadNet, Inc., he has completed 45 acquisitions in under three years, including three international-based acquisitions in 2022 alone. Katz has also been a reserve Los Angeles County deputy sheriff for 33 years doing search and rescue.

### Public Company: Small



**Rob Rader**

*General Counsel and Corporate Secretary*  
Ovation LLC  
*Harvard Law School*

Rob Rader is general counsel and corporate secretary at Ovation TV, America's only arts cable network, which is distributed to approximately 50 million U.S. households. At Ovation TV, he has direct responsibility for all business and legal matters and human resources, including production, distribution, marketing, litigation, intellectual property, real estate, and corporate affairs.

Among Rader's accomplishments for Ovation has been his work handling all business affairs, production, and clearance for over 300 annual hours of internal productions from all major studios in the U.S., U.K. and Europe and creating new "over the top" (Internet-based direct-to-consumer) and "FAST" (free advertising-supported television) channels, including obtaining programming rights and negotiating platform agreements with numerous distribution platforms such as Apple, Android, and Roku.

### Public Company: Midsize



**Hadiss DeWitt Sisson**

*Senior Director/Senior Attorney*  
Dun & Bradstreet  
*Southwestern Law School*

Hadiss Sisson's legal guidance incorporates ideology extending to business, customer service, and ethics - always keeping her "do-good" mentality when developing and providing guidance that benefits customers, especially small business customers.

Sisson started her legal career in entertainment law and from there entered the world of data, marketing, product, and technology at Dun & Bradstreet, where she has been thriving for the past 11 years working directly with product, technology, and marketing teams to develop and launch products to help businesses. As the lead small business and e-commerce attorney for Dun & Bradstreet, she is responsible for product parity, messaging, and enablement and works diligently to ensure that all teams are serving the end customer. During the pandemic, Sisson was instrumental in helping launch new emergency solutions to support over 2.4 million small businesses in the United States.

# In-House Counsel Nominees

**Private Company: Large**



**Veronique Daniella Vernot**  
*Legal Counsel*  
 Apple Inc.  
 West Virginia University  
 College of Law

**V**eronique Vernot is an internationally recognized attorney who serves as legal counsel for Apple Inc. While there, she focused on product integrity, product safety, and AppleCare. Her previous role with the company focused on global supply chain transactions and environmental technologies. For her efforts, she was selected as the 2022 Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD) Pathfinder.

In her past ventures, she served as a litigator for Mercedes-Benz USA where she handled class actions and product liability matters. She also represented the IRS Office of Chief Counsel in U.S. Tax Court. As a law student, Vernot was awarded the W.E.B. DuBois Fellowship for her scholastic and community service achievements. Additionally, she served her law school as a member of the Moot Court Team, a student ambassador with the Office of Admissions, and a student representative with the Visiting Committee.

**Rising Star**



**Tina Ansari pour**  
*Corporate Counsel*  
 Phonexa  
 Southwestern Law School

**T**ina Ansari pour acts as corporate in-house counsel for five different companies and leads each individual company's legal and compliance departments. As corporate in-house counsel, she is involved with strategic development, contract negotiations and administration, corporate transactions, employment law matters, corporate governance, and a range of other legal matters relating to each respective business.

Ansari pour provides counsel to companies on regulatory compliance matters, specifically the state and federal laws surrounding privacy and data security considerations. During her time at Phonexa, she has assisted in the implementation of two new tech solutions that provide a streamlined optimization feature for clients to utilize and also spent her time restructuring internal cybersecurity policies and procedures to keep the company compliant through its fast-growing expansion of services provided.

**Rising Star**



**Sally Brammell**  
*VP of Legal*  
 PAX  
 Tulane University

**S**ally Brammell has been a pillar in the cannabis space for years – both as an advocate on behalf of children with special needs and their families and as a leading attorney, shaping emerging industries and establishing sustainable cannabis programs that destigmatize and advance safe, responsible use. She has forged a career rooted in helping others.

Brammell joined PAX, a leading global cannabis brand enhancing lives through exceptional cannabis experiences, in 2017 to advocate for cannabis reform from within the industry. She has made a resounding impact, navigating a challenging space that is state-legal but remains federally illegal. In her role, Brammell leads myriad facets of the business from protecting PAX's innovation and IP to shaping public policy, ensuring compliance against a patchwork of state laws and regulations, establishing a robust youth prevention program, and shaping a go-to-market in constantly evolving states where PAX operates.

**Rising Star**



**Trisha Newman**  
*Chief Legal Officer*  
 Women's Flat Track Derby, Inc. (WFTDI)  
 Southwestern Law School

**T**risha Newman began her legal career as a Los Angeles County Public Defender. During these years she discovered and embraced the sport of roller derby as a way to stay fit. The league she joined experienced significant growth and had some contracts to review for television and film projects. She left the Public Defender's office to pursue a solo practice of appellate and small business practice and became the general counsel for the Los Angeles Derby Dolls and later the international governing body of women's roller derby, the Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA), which represents more than 400 member leagues on six continents.

Newman handles legal matters for the WFTDA as it sets international standards for rankings, rules, and competition each year, providing guidance and resources to the sport. She is also of counsel at the firm of Manning & Kass, Elrod, Ramirez, Trester, LLP.

[Continued from page 12]

of being found out of compliance. The section maintains both percentage pass rates for first-time takers and the two-year aggregate figure, known as the "ultimate" pass rate.

This is the third consecutive year that the section is releasing this data in response to concerns about the lack of national data on bar passage by members of different racial and ethnic groups.

"Several years ago, we promised to collect and publish such aggregate data and consider whether the requirements of Standard 316 needed to be reviewed in light of what we collected," said Bill Adams, ABA managing director of accreditation and legal education. "We will continue to evaluate the annual data and consider any changes as appropriate."

The council, or governing board of the section, is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the national accreditor of law schools. In that capacity, the council serves as an independent arm of the ABA.

The following charts present the performance of the various racial and ethnic groups based on data submitted in the 2022 and 2023 Bar Passage Questionnaire (the "BPQ"). The left column reports the Ultimate Pass Rate for the graduating classes after two years. The middle column reports the Ultimate Pass Rate for the graduating classes in that year after one year. The right column reports the First Time Pass Rate for that year's graduating classes. The reported information does not depict differences in bar passage rates based on any other background variables.

2023 BPQ Aggregate Data			
	2020U	2021U	2022FT
TOTAL Graduates	34,188	35,600	35,732
Total Takers	31,118	33,049	33,721
Total Passers	28,464	28,844	26,217
Total Pass Rate	91%	87%	78%
Diploma Privilege	1,461	580	398
Pass% + DP	92%	88%	78%
Ethnicity Data (includes DP)			
White	94%	90%	83%
Black	81%	72%	57%
Hispanic	88%	81%	69%
Asian	89%	86%	75%
Native American	80%	79%	60%
Hawaiian	76%	51%	69%
Non-Residents	93%	89%	81%
Race Unknown	91%	86%	73%
2 or more	91%	85%	74%



# LEGAL VISIONARIES

**S**outhern California continues to maintain its status as a center for thought leaders and power brokers in the legal space. With so many superb law firms in the region, to be named as a standout attorney in what is surely one of the most impressive regional fields in the industry is quite an achievement.

Based on submitted nominees, the Los Angeles Times B2B Publishing team has

alphabetically listed IOI of the very best of them here, along with insights and information about their careers, practice, and some relevant recent successes they've achieved.

The criteria used to determine who made this year's selection included average success rate; settlements and verdicts won in the last three years (2019-2022); leadership positions within the firm and community; and board affiliations and recognitions.

## Clifton W. Albright

*President and Founding Partner*  
Albright, Yee & Schmit, APC  
*Loyola Law School*  
**Labor & Employment**



Clifton Albright is the president of Albright, Yee & Schmit, APC, and a graduate of Loyola Law School. As a Downtown Los Angeles attorney, he specializes in labor and employment law. Albright was the first attorney to win a lawsuit against the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regarding its Public Health Service training program. The case was *United States of America v. Robert Alfred St. Thomas, MD*.

In December 2010 and March 2014, President Barack Obama appointed Albright to the International Trade Advisory Committee (ITAC II). He was reappointed to (ITAC 9) in February 2018 by President Donald Trump and is currently being considered for reappointment by President Joe Biden. A sought-after speaker, Albright conducts continuing education programs for attorneys, executives, and employees in such areas as employment and labor law, business management, and complex litigation. In addition, he is licensed to practice before the United States Supreme Court.

## Blake Alsbrook

*Partner*  
Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP  
*University of Michigan Law School*  
**Bankruptcy**



Blake Alsbrook acts as a receiver and counsel for prominent receivers throughout California appointed to general equity, family code, rents and profits, health and safety code, and regulatory receiverships. He also provides legal counsel for and acts as a partition referee, successor trustee, and provisional director in matters involving property and business disputes.

In addition to advising fiduciaries on the impact of California and federal law, Alsbrook has significant civil litigation experience defending and prosecuting actions on behalf of receivers and businesses, and regularly practices and argues before the California Courts of Appeal and the United States Bankruptcy Court. Recently, he acted as a court-appointed receiver for an over \$250-million real estate empire in a contentious Orange County divorce action. He also acted as a successor trustee in a trust fraud case where the beneficiary was deprived of tens of millions in profits from a business.

## Matthew F. Baker

*Partner*  
Freeman Freeman & Smiley, LLP  
*Fordham University School of Law*  
**Litigation**



Matthew F. Baker is a partner in the Trust and Estate Litigation Department at Freeman Freeman & Smiley. His practice is focused on advocating for the rights of beneficiaries and fiduciaries' conduct in trust and estate matters. Whether it is contesting the validity of a trust or will or representing a fiduciary in a breach of trust claim, he is equipped to handle a wide range of legal issues.

In 2021, Baker was selected as an associate fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America, an honorary society composed of less than 0.5% of American lawyers. He has also been included in the Southern California Rising Stars list from 2018-2022 by Super Lawyers Magazine, an honor earned by only 2.5% of attorneys under the age of 40. Baker received the Public Counsel Pro Bono Award for the Foster Youth Project in 2016.

## Ryan Baker

Partner  
Waymaker LLP  
Harvard Law School  
Litigation



One of California's elite trial and appellate lawyers, Waymaker LLP Founding Partner Ryan Baker wins trial verdicts and appeals in high-profile and high-stakes cases across the country. Skilled with cases involving intellectual property and innovative or disruptive technology, he built Waymaker (formerly Baker Marquart LLP) into one of the nation's premier trial and litigation boutiques. The firm is known for its success in litigation at the intersection of innovative technology and complex legal issues.

Waymaker, which Baker managed from inception, has a stellar record of achievement at both trials and appeals. The firm he has built over the past 17 years is widely recognized for its excellence in many areas, with a particular focus on complex litigation, intellectual property, and fintech/cybersecurity. Baker successfully guided Waymaker through the turmoil of the pandemic and in 2021, the firm changed its name to reflect its growing diversity and commitment to a collaborative culture.



## Jeff Cohen

Partner and Co-Founder  
Cohen Gardner LLP  
UCLA School of Law  
Entertainment and Sports

Cohen Gardner LLP, the transactional entertainment law firm that Jeff Cohen co-founded with Jonathan Gardner in 2002 is celebrating its 20th year in the entertainment industry. His clients Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan won many awards for their remarkable work in "Everything Everywhere All at Once." Yeoh has recently wrapped

shooting on Kenneth Branagh's "A Haunting in Venice" and is currently shooting "Wicked" for Universal. Quan has recently wrapped his work on the feature "The Electric State" for Netflix starring Millie Bobby Brown and Chris Pratt. Additionally, he will appear in the upcoming season of Marvel Studios' "Loki" for Disney+.

A fun fact is that both Quan and Cohen have been friends for almost 40 years – since they appeared in the film "The Goonies" together back in 1985. Cohen also represents Lil Rel Howery, the actor and comedian from the critically acclaimed and NAACP Award-nominated HBO comedy special, "I Said It, Y'all Thinking It!"

## Lara Compton

Member  
Mintz  
Pacific McGeorge School of Law  
Life Sciences & Healthcare

Mintz member Lara Compton is a trusted advisor to clients ranging from traditional healthcare providers to disrupter digital health platforms as they navigate the practical and regulatory challenges in healthcare. Her unique depth of knowledge across HIPAA privacy and other regulatory issues governing the use of data, state and federal fraud and abuse laws, business planning, and operational issues has led colleagues to describe Compton as the "Swiss Army Knife" of healthcare problem-solving.

As a successful healthcare attorney, Compton has worked on some noteworthy matters in the past 24 months, including serving as the lead healthcare regulatory counsel to Fulgent Genetics, Inc., a technology-based genetic testing company focused on transforming patient care in oncology, infectious and rare diseases, and reproductive health, in its \$170-million acquisition of Inform Diagnostics, a leading national independent pathology laboratory based in Texas.



## Oren Bitan

Shareholder  
Buchalter  
Loyola Law School  
Litigation



Oren Bitan has an extensive legal background that includes business, real estate, banking, receivership, consumer product, and commercial litigation. He is known for his ability to solve complex business disputes for his clients. He is a trusted advisor who guides his clients through their day-to-day legal concerns and has particular expertise in matters involving real estate, banking and lending, creditors' rights, wine, beer, liquor, cannabis, and intellectual property.

Bitan's representative clients include banks and financial institutions; private lenders; state and federal receivers; private investors and investment funds; private equity groups; real property developers; breweries; wineries; distilleries; cannabis businesses; consumer products companies; and corporate entities large and small. He is co-chair of Buchalter's Cannabis Industry Law Group and advises cannabis businesses on regulatory advice; banking; lending; financing; intellectual property; receivership; real property development and leasing; and assembling teams of attorneys to provide corporate and employment advice.



## Morgan Chu

Partner  
Irell & Manella LLP  
Harvard Law School  
Intellectual Property

Morgan Chu has secured many of the world's largest – and in some cases precedent-setting – verdicts, judgments, and settlements, resulting in actual payments totaling more than \$9 billion. His decades-long career stands apart for its impact and influence. Defense representations have comprised an equal share of his career,

and he has scored a series of wins that have been named top defense verdicts of the year.

In just the past year, Chu has obtained nearly \$3.3 billion in awards for VLSI Technology in patent trials against Intel involving microprocessor technology. In November 2022, he convinced a jury to award VLSI \$948 million plus running royalties, and in a separate case in April 2022, secured a \$2.3-billion judgment for VLSI – the largest patent judgment in U.S. history. His strategy included ensuring technical issues surrounding the infringement was easily understandable for jurors.



## Carmen Jeannine Cole

Squire Patton Boggs  
Partner  
Pepperdine University  
School of Law  
Labor & Employment

Carmen J. Cole is an experienced litigator who provides legal

counsel to employers in various industries on compliance with employment laws. She has experience in human resources, which gives her a unique perspective on clients' issues. She handles restrictive covenant litigation, discrimination, harassment, and whistleblower litigation for Fortune 50 clients nationwide. Also, she conducts third-party investigations into employee claims of discrimination and harassment.

In recent years, Cole has achieved several accomplishments, including defeating United's request for a preliminary injunction and obtaining dismissal of the plaintiff's claims for defamation. She has received several professional awards, including "Top Women Attorney" by the Daily Journal, and serves on the board of directors for St. John's Community Health. Cole graduated from Pepperdine University School of Law in 2001.





## Theresa Conduah

*Partner*  
Haynes and Boone  
*Fordham Law*  
**Intellectual Property**

Theresa Conduah is a partner in the Intellectual Property Practice Group in the Orange County office of Haynes and Boone, LLP. Her practice focuses on advising clients on trademark disputes, patent litigation, and technology transactions, among other matters.

Conduah has broad-based experience helping companies protect their intellectual property on a global scale, including providing strategic counsel on trademark and copyright portfolios; design patents; brand protection; and anti-counterfeit programs. She has served as an in-house IP counsel at United Airlines, Toyota Motor North America, Inc., and, most recently, at dosist, a health and wellness company. Previously, as a lawyer in private practice, she counseled clients in the technology, financial services, entertainment, and sports industries about IP prosecution and enforcement matters. Conduah is a frequent speaker, volunteer, and advocate for diversity in law issues. Born in Ghana in West Africa, she faced adversity merely by her place of birth.

## Michelle Cooke

*ArentFox Schiff LLP*  
*Partner*  
*University of Virginia School of Law*  
**Intellectual Property**



Michelle Cooke is an intellectual property advisor and legal strategist. She is a thought leader in digital rights creation, specializing in the expansion of established and emerging brands in developing mediums such as the metaverse and Web 3.0. She joined ArentFox Schiff (AFS) in 2022 as co-leader of the media and entertainment practice.

Her clients are from a wide range of industries, including entertainment, technology, consumer products, and fashion.

Cooke is responsible for negotiating licensing, distribution, development agreements, and policies for the creation and use of IP, social media activity, user-generated content, and personal data. She also leads global IP enforcement and litigation strategies. Among the recent major projects Cooke has led are the KCETLink merger with PBS SoCal and handling all legal needs for LivOn Laboratories, Inc., Offspring Beauty Co., and a major film franchise for a major film studio. She has also handled the first NFT launch for a fashion conglomerate and acted as lead counsel for all IP and tech-related agreements for a new social media platform.

## Emahn Counts

*Managing Attorney*  
Counts Law Firm PC  
*Loyola Law School*  
**Litigation**



Emahn Counts is the managing attorney of Counts Law Firm PC, where he practices business, family, and real estate law. He

has been licensed for nearly 20 years and is recognized for his practical approach to problem-solving and improving quality of life for his clients. His clients' cases typically involve business, family, or real estate contractual disputes, and he has personally handled over 1,000 litigation matters throughout every major courthouse in Southern California.

Among his recent achievements was a situation where Counts' client purchased a \$4-million home in Pasadena and after an argument, the client's neighbor spitefully cut down over \$50,000 worth of property line trees. After an eight-month battle, Counts won a \$100,000 settlement for his client including penalties. Prior to opening Counts Law Firm, he was the managing attorney of the Los Angeles office of a nationwide consumer litigation firm where he represented blue-chip clients.



## Anthony Consoli

*Co-Founder and Managing Partner*  
Massumi + Consoli LLP  
*UCLA School of Law*  
**Corporate**

Anthony Consoli is a co-founder and managing partner of Massumi + Consoli LLP, a boutique private equity-focused transactional firm with offices in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. The firm counts among its elite client roster some of the most discerning and respected investors in the country as it fulfills its mission of exceeding client services of the most recognized international law firms at an unmatched value proposition.

Consoli and his co-founder, Peter Massumi, have driven MCLLP's growth into one of the largest private equity and M&A practices on the West Coast. Since last year's submission, the firm has continued its rapid expansion and now deploys a full in-house specialist team to provide clients with full-service transactional support – a unique value proposition from a boutique firm. At the foundation of Consoli's individual practice is a commitment to dealmaking through a focus on the highest standards of excellence.

## Sandra Crawshaw-Sparks

*Partner*  
Proskauer  
*Fordham University School of Law*  
**Entertainment and Sports**



A well-known and respected entertainment industry litigator with 34 years of success, Sandra (Sandy) Crawshaw-Sparks represents the most iconic names in music on recording, publishing, licensing and management contracts, copyrights, trademark rights, unfair competition claims, and the rights of privacy and publicity. While she fiercely fights high-profile battles for her entertainment clients and wins some of the most visible cases in the media today, she also routinely negotiates pre-litigation resolutions of highly sensitive and confidential entertainment-related disputes, protecting her clients and their reputations from unwarranted media scrutiny and creative distraction.

Notably, Crawshaw-Sparks is the deputy national legal counsel for the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, Inc. (the not-for-profit organization responsible for the GRAMMY Awards) and has long served on the board of directors of the GRAMMY Museum's Entertainment Law Initiative, which promotes discussion and debate about the most compelling legal issues facing the music industry.

## Adam Peter Daniels

*Principal*  
Polsinelli  
*University of Connecticut School of Law*  
**Intellectual Property**



Adam Daniels, a former aerospace engineer, is an attorney in Polsinelli's Intellectual Property practice group. His practice spans all aspects of intellectual property, with a focus on patent and trademark litigation, patent prosecution, post-grant challenges before the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), licensing, and investment funding. He represents clients of all sizes, from small start-ups to established big tech and financial institutions. Also, he is valued by clients and colleagues alike for his creative perspective, attention to detail, and his unique blend of technical and legal experience.

Daniels' most notable recent achievements relate to his ongoing representation of a start-up client, Power2B, Inc., a Los Angeles-based company that developed and patented innovative interface technologies for smartphones and related consumer electronic devices. He leads the Polsinelli litigation team asserting Power2B's patents in two ongoing district court litigations in Texas.

Congratulations



**MICHAEL M. PURPURA**  
**CHRISTY V. RAYBURN**

**2023 Visionaries**

—*L.A. Times B2B Publishing*  
*Business of Law Magazine*





**Rodney Diggs**

*Director*  
Ivie McNeill Wyatt Purcell & Diggs  
*Howard University School of Law*  
**Labor & Employment**

Rodney Diggs became a partner at Ivie, McNeill & Wyatt in 2016, and in 2019, became a named partner when the firm changed its name to Ivie McNeill Wyatt Purcell & Diggs. He has obtained over \$200 million in verdicts and settlements on behalf of his clients in his 11 years of being an attorney. In addition to his corporate practice, he has had notable successes with assisting individuals in need of representation.

Diggs' significant achievements include recently obtaining a \$25-million verdict as lead counsel in an employment retaliation lawsuit, possibly the largest retaliation verdict against a school district. He obtained a \$9.1-million verdict in a wrongful death case against the City of Long Beach. This was the largest verdict in history against the city and the second-largest verdict in a wrongful death case within the Central District of California.



**Robert K. Dixon**

*Partner*  
Sanders Roberts LLP  
*USC Gould School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Robert K. Dixon, a partner at Sanders Roberts LLP, is an experienced trial attorney who specializes in defending high-profile

corporate clients in product liability, personal injury, and consumer litigation in state and federal courts throughout California. He represents clients from a variety of industries, including automotive, pharmaceutical, construction, and retail.

The cases Dixon litigates run the spectrum from single-plaintiff/defendant cases to multiple-party complex matters. He is experienced in managing matters from inception through trial as well as navigating matters through the arbitration process. He is a former in-house counsel where he was tasked with, among other things, managing hundreds of toxic tort cases concurrently. His corporate counsel experience provides him with unique insights that are critical for ensuring that litigation and corporate objectives are always aligned. Throughout the years, he has achieved successful results for his clients both in the courtroom and through the negotiation of favorable resolutions.

**Jeffrey Erdman**

*Shareholder*  
Scali Rasmussen  
*Southwestern Law School*  
**Litigation**



Jeffrey Erdman is a senior litigation and trial attorney with nearly 25 years of litigation experience practicing in both the state and federal courts of California. He has extensive courtroom and trial experience, both as plaintiff's and defense counsel, successfully arguing cases before the California Courts of Appeal. His litigation experience spans many areas of business, including the insurance, manufacturing, and service industries, as well as all variety of real estate disputes.

Before joining Scali Rasmussen, Erdman was managing partner of Bennett & Erdman for 16 years, where he served both as litigation counsel and as outside general counsel to various business entities and entrepreneurs. He has also provided pro bono legal services in a variety of matters impacting disenfranchised individuals, for which he was recognized with the State Bar President's Pro Bono Services Award in 2008.

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**JEFF B. COHEN, ESQ.**

on being named a  
**2023 Legal Visionary**  
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L.A. Times B2B Publishing



### Terrence Mark Franklin

*Partner*  
Sacks, Glazier, Franklin & Lodise LLP  
*Harvard Law School*  
**Litigation**

Terrence Franklin had been practicing trusts and estates litigation for nearly 25 years before he discovered that his legal career was the path to his mission in life, to "Help Bend the Arc of History Towards Justice" by sharing the story of his family's experience escaping from slavery, nearly two decades before the end of the Civil

War. In dozens of presentations throughout the U.S., media interviews, and articles, he has retraced his journey to uncover his fourth great-grandfather's will and the unexpected will contest that threatened to keep his fourth great-grandmother Lucy and her children and grandchildren enslaved. His goal is to widely educate others and push back against dehumanization and racism.

Within his practice, Franklin has over three decades of experience handling some of the most significant and complex trusts and estates disputes, regarded as one of the top litigators in the U.S. by clients and colleagues.

### Alan Friel

*Squire Patton Boggs*  
Chair, Data Privacy, Cybersecurity & Digital Assets Practice  
*Northeastern University School of Law*  
**Cybersecurity**



Alan Friel is the chair of Squire Patton Boggs' Data Privacy, Cybersecurity, and Digital Assets Practice, which is ranked among the top 20 data firms worldwide. He has expanded the firm's capabilities and grown its profile for data and technology services, adding new hires in the U.S., EMEA, and Asia-Pacific regions. He has over three decades of experience and is a thought leader in digital media, intellectual property, data privacy and protection, and consumer protection law. Friel advises clients on practical and informed business decisions and helps them navigate the opportunities created by disruptive technology.

His professional accomplishments include successfully defending businesses before the Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general, representing the interests of multiple clients in the digital advertising sector while working with the Internet Advertising Bureau and negotiating television and film development, production, and distribution agreements. Friel is also recognized for his philanthropic and educational initiatives.



### Michael Freedman

*Founder and Principal*  
The Freedman Firm PC  
*UC Law San Francisco*  
**Litigation**

Michael Freedman founded The Freedman Firm in 2021 and has quickly established himself as one of the region's top criminal

defense and trial attorneys. Drawing on his background as a former federal prosecutor, his criminal practice runs the gamut of cases in both state and federal court. He routinely represents clients in white-collar fraud investigations and prosecutions and is set for trial in a federal honest services prosecution this June. In addition to white-collar fraud matters, he routinely represents clients facing other criminal charges, including assault, firearms, drugs, and sex crimes.

Freedman is also a go-to asset forfeiture attorney and has won the return of millions of dollars of client funds seized by the government. He also has a robust civil litigation practice, defending individuals and businesses against government regulators and in business disputes as well as representing plaintiffs in select matters.

## ERVIN COHEN & JESSUP LLP

Congratulations to our Partners  
**Chris Manderson and Blake Alsbrook**  
for being recognized in the L.A. Times  
B2B Publishing, Business of Law Magazine  
as **2023 Legal Visionaries.**



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### Daniel M. Goldberg

*Partner and Chair of the Privacy & Data Security Group*  
Frankfurt Kurnit  
*USC Gould School of Law*  
**Cyber Security**

Daniel M. Goldberg is chair of Frankfurt Kurnit's Privacy & Data Security Group. Widely considered one of the top privacy and data security lawyers in the U.S., he has been consistently recognized by top legal rating organizations. He has been a leading voice on the interpretation and implementation of the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) and worked with more than

100 companies, ranging from multi-national corporations to start-ups, on various aspects of their CCPA compliance.

Goldberg's projects involve, among other things, addressing consumer requests, implementing "Do Not Sell" obligations, data mapping, updating contracts and policies, employee training, and responding to attorney general inquiries. He is also considered a leading expert on California's new privacy law, the California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA), and now actively helping clients address CPRA compliance obligations and prepare for new comprehensive state privacy laws from Virginia, Colorado, Utah, and Connecticut.

### Michael Gomez

*Partner*  
Frاندzel Robins Bloom & Csato  
*Loyola Law School*  
**Bankruptcy**



Michael Gomez is an AV Rated lawyer who focuses his practice in the areas of bankruptcy, debtor and creditor rights, commercial litigation, and business litigation; debt workout negotiations, restructuring and documentation of commercial lending transactions, and personal property and real estate-secured credits. He has represented various entities, including debtors, creditors' committees, hedge funds, indenture trustees, equipment lessors, receivers, landlords, bankruptcy trustees, judgment creditors, private lenders, and institutional lenders in out-of-court workouts, federal and state court litigation, and chapters 7, 11, 12, and 13 bankruptcy cases.

Gomez routinely moderates and speaks at educational presentations before clients and trade groups concerning bankruptcy, enforcing judgments, financing distressed borrowers, and agricultural lending issues. Among his achievements, he has successfully resolved multiple disputes under Articles 3 and 4 of the Commercial Code. He is also the recipient of the Judge Barry Russell Award presented by the Federal Bar Association, Los Angeles Chapter.

### Jeremy S. Goldman

*Co-Chair and Partner*  
Frankfurt Kurnit  
*Benjamin N. Cardozo*  
*School of Law*  
**Intellectual Property**



Jeremy S. Goldman is co-chair of the Blockchain Technology Group and partner in the Litigation Group at Frankfurt Kurnit, where he focuses on intellectual property, blockchain, technology, entertainment, media, commercial, and privacy law.

Over his 17-year career as outside counsel, Goldman has developed a unique and substantial practice at the intersection of intellectual property and technology. He began his legal career in New York, starting at "Big Law" firm Fried Frank in 2005, then transitioned to media and entertainment powerhouse Frankfurt Kurnit in 2008, where he has proudly worked for 15 years. In 2015, Goldman co-founded the firm's Century City office, which he helped grow from two to 20+ lawyers. Leveraging his understanding of tech, passion for copyright law, and experience in IP law, he has become a published legal expert in the world of NFTs and blockchain technology, speaking extensively and helping clients navigate the field.

Congratulations

## Theresa Conduah

on being recognized as a visionary  
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2023 Business of Law Magazine.



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# Congratulations

King & Spalding salutes  
**Amanda Hayes-Kibreab** and  
**Kelly Perigoe** for being recognized  
as 2023 Legal Visionaries.



Amanda  
Hayes-Kibreab



Kelly Perigoe

kslaw.com



## Valerie Goo

*Crowell & Moring LLP*  
Office Managing Partner  
*UCLA School of Law*  
**Intellectual Property**



Valerie Goo, the managing partner of Crowell & Moring's Los Angeles office, has been representing leading companies in complex litigation for over two decades. She has tried numerous cases across the country and has a successful record in representing clients in commercial litigation and intellectual property matters. Currently, she represents large companies in intellectual property, commercial disputes, and trade secrets cases between competitors.

One of her recent successes was as trial counsel in the high-profile trademark infringement case for Molson Coors defending MillerCoors, a subsidiary of Molson Coors Brewing Co. and maker of Keystone Light Beer. The jury awarded only \$56 million to Stone Brewing, which had sought nearly \$1 billion in total damages. She also won a commercial and trade secrets litigation matter for a leading aeronautics company, obtaining a trio of summary judgment rulings for the company and two co-defendants on all causes of action. Goo was selected as a "Leader of Influence: Litigators and Trial Lawyers" in 2020 and 2022 and recognized as one of the "Most Influential Intellectual Property Attorneys" by the Los Angeles Business Journal in 2017.

## Mira Hashmall

*Partner*  
Miller Barondess, LLP  
*USC Gould School of Law*  
**Labor & Employment**



Mira Hashmall is an accomplished trial lawyer with a record of success in federal and state courts and in arbitration. She began her practice at a large, international law firm representing clients in complex litigation matters and defending employers in labor and employment disputes. Since joining Miller Barondess, she has continued to diversify her practice and has achieved Top Verdict recognition on both the plaintiff and defense sides. She represents clients at every stage of litigation, from pre-litigation counseling to appellate proceedings, and is sought out to handle complex litigation involving business matters that have a broad legal impact.

In addition to her complex business practice, Hashmall defends private and public employers in high-stakes litigation involving claims of harassment, discrimination, retaliation, wage and hour, and wrongful termination. She also defends cases involving disability discrimination and accommodation, and family and medical leave rights.



## Julia Haye

*Partner*  
Greenberg Glusker LLP  
*UCLA School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Directly out of law school, Julia Haye began her legal career at Greenberg Glusker, where she has built a practice that encompasses every genre of entertainment and media, including studio and independent motion pictures, television, music, dance, and online and digital media. She has represented Marvel Entertainment in various matters involving intellectual

property disputes and profit participation rights, the holder of the rights to The Beatles, the owner of the Friday the 13th movie franchise, and has resolved a complex business partnership dispute involving the remake of "Last House on the Left."

Haye has assisted Greenberg Glusker in building an industry-wide reputation for groundbreaking profit participation litigation. Through her extensive work in major profit participation cases on behalf of talent, artists, and rights holders, including Marvel and the rights holders to Winnie the Pooh, she has become fluent in the unique language of Hollywood accounting.

# Baker McKenzie.

Baker McKenzie congratulates  
**Perrie Weiner** on his inclusion into the  
LA Times B2B 2023 Business of Law:  
**Updates, Trends & Visionaries  
Magazine!**

Over the past two years, our Los Angeles office  
has grown from 4 to over 40 lawyers.

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**Partner-in-Charge of Baker McKenzie's  
Los Angeles office and Chair of the Firm's  
North America Securities Litigation Group**



## Amanda Hayes-Kibreab

*Partner*  
King & Spalding LLP  
UCLA School of Law  
Life Sciences & Healthcare



Amanda Hayes-Kibreab focuses on complex business litigation, arbitration, and dispute resolution on behalf of healthcare providers, with an emphasis on managed care litigation. As a healthcare litigator, she has extensive experience managing large multi-party, multi-million-dollar disputes, litigating business contract and tort disputes, prosecuting and defending actions against large healthcare payors on behalf of hospital providers, and providing advice on a variety of current healthcare law topics.

Hayes-Kibreab is a must-have counsel to health systems, provider groups, surgery centers, and other healthcare providers and advises these clients on the full scope of disputes as well as federal and state healthcare laws. She regularly appears in federal and state trial and appellate courts as well as multiple arbitration forums on behalf of healthcare clients in various types of commercial litigation actions including contract disputes, commercial torts, unfair business practices, fraud allegations, and intellectual property disputes.



## Bradford G. Hughes

*Member and Co-Member-in-Charge of San Diego Office*  
Clark Hill PLC  
University of San Diego School of Law  
Litigation

A capital member of Clark Hill at merely 38 years old, Brad Hughes is an exemplary leader within Clark, the industries he serves, and the community. Voted "Mentor of the Year" by firm associates for his tireless work in training young litigators to become trial attorneys and client advocates, he has also been lauded for his sophisticated and pragmatic approach to the COVID-19 pandemic, guiding hospitality, retail, and commercial businesses to safe, prosperous futures.

Underlying Hughes' success is his awareness that clients think like businesspeople, not like lawyers, and his application of unique skills, knowledge, and problem-solving to craft creative and business-focused resolutions for them. He works with clients to identify, manage, mitigate, and educate them on the ever-increasing risks which threaten their business. He surrounds himself with a diverse team of brilliant attorneys who cohesively learn from each other while representing clients in negotiations, settlement discussions, or jury trials.

## Robbin Itkin

*Partner*  
Sklar Kirsh LLP  
USC Gould School of Law  
Bankruptcy



Robbin Itkin is a partner and leader of Sklar Kirsh's Bankruptcy and Financial Restructuring practice group. Her experience restructuring billions of dollars of debt includes insolvency resolutions in chapter 11 cases and numerous restructurings outside the courtroom. As a mediator, she uses her problem-solving strength to advise both healthy companies and those in distress, leading them to negotiate effectively with their own creditors and counterparties who are in fragile economic straits.

Experienced at representing a range of parties in the bankruptcy process, Itkin has protected the claims and interests of debtors, creditors, equity and bondholders' committees, purchasers, trustees, and Ponzi scheme victims in corporate restructurings and bankruptcies. Her industry experience spans real estate, entertainment, sports, retail, transportation, manufacturing, and hospitality. Many of her clients are high-profile individuals in entertainment, sports, and business. She discreetly guides them through out-of-court workouts and financial transactions.

## Brian Horne

*Partner*  
Knobbe Martens  
University of Michigan  
Intellectual Property



Brian Horne is the managing partner of the Los Angeles office of IP law firm Knobbe Martens and an industry-recognized leading trial lawyer who litigates headline-grabbing cases in Southern California and throughout the country. He has won trials involving a wide range of disputes, including patent, trade secret, trademark, trade dress, and breach of contract.

Horne's trial teams have won more than \$1 billion cumulatively, and his teams have been featured in The National Law Journal's list of Top 100 verdicts on multiple occasions. He manages teams of attorneys of all levels to reach favorable results for his clients. At the firm, Horne holds several positions of management and leadership. In 2022, he became the managing partner of the Los Angeles office after more than two decades at the firm. He sits on the firm's litigation and executive committees, where he mentors the firm's up-and-coming litigators.



## Robert Hudock

*Founding Attorney*  
Hudock Employment Law Group  
University of San Diego School of Law  
Labor & Employment

Robert Hudock founded Hudock Employment Law Group in 2015 to deliver tailored legal services to California companies that thrive in vibrant, creative work environments. His clients are often companies looking at new markets and competitive opportunities that want to recruit the best talent available while avoiding distracting workplace

issues or lawsuits.

Hudock is an experienced litigator with over 21 years of practice and has devoted his career to employment law for businesses for the last 16 years. He spent several years in "Big Law" and has experience managing large litigation teams. He was drawn to the "human side" of employment law, helping clients overcome challenges presented by difficult issues and sparing them the angst of conflict and worry. Known for his careful case analysis and preparation, thoughtful counsel, and leadership skills, Hudock is a disciplined advocate and tenacious litigator for his clients.



## Andrei Iancu

*Partner*  
Irell & Manella LLP  
UCLA School of Law  
Intellectual Property

Before returning as a partner to Irell & Manella LLP in April 2021, Andrei Iancu served as the undersecretary of commerce for

intellectual property and director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), a position to which he was unanimously confirmed by the Senate. In this role, he oversaw one of the largest IP offices in the world, an agency with approximately 13,000 employees and an annual budget of more than \$3.5 billion.

At Irell, Iancu focuses on IP litigation and counseling. Prior to his government service, he served as the firm's managing partner from 2012 to 2018, the maximum allowable tenure. He has represented clients in a variety of high-profile matters in district courts, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, the U.S. International Trade Commission, and the USPTO. In addition to litigation, Iancu has been involved in all other aspects of IP practice.



### Julia Jayne

*Founder*  
Jayne Law Group  
*UC Law San Francisco*  
**Litigation**

Julia Jayne is an experienced and accomplished trial lawyer who concentrates her practice on both white-collar and general criminal defense in felony and misdemeanor cases. She has over 20 years of experience in complex criminal matters in federal and state courts as well as over 40 jury trials under her belt.

Jayne represents a broad array of individuals and companies in state and federal court, at the investigative, pre-trial, and trial stages. Her successes range from outright case dismissals to extremely favorable plea agreements to acquittals. Her white-collar criminal defense matters include prosecutions involving mail and wire fraud violations, bribery and kickbacks, securities fraud (insider trading), bank fraud, environmental crimes, money laundering, alien harboring, money smuggling, anti-trust, immigration crimes, false statements, identity theft, criminal contempt, tax evasion, extradition matters, and prosecutions with significant asset forfeiture implications.

### Richard Kaplan

*Founding Partner*  
Kaplan Marino  
*Pepperdine University School of Law*  
**Litigation**



Criminal defense attorney Richard Kaplan manages serious criminal charges that threaten the livelihood and reputations of white-collar clients, including high-net-worth individuals, entrepreneurs, entertainers, corporations, and their officers and executives. His creative strategies during negotiations with authorities have led to numerous acquittals, no-charges-filed, probation, and record expungement outcomes for clients.

Kaplan's experience includes a range of allegations: fraud, narcotics, DUI, vehicular manslaughter, and domestic violence, among others. Several recent representations have involved #MeToo allegations, road rage, building code violations, and overcharging claims issued by weights and measure agencies. He has built productive relationships across the legal profession, from the Los Angeles County and City Prosecuting Agencies to the U.S. Department of Justice to the National Conference of Bar Presidents. During more than 30 years of practice, Kaplan has assembled a formidable team of professionals and deep resources that support his alternative approaches and customized defense advocacy.



### Roland Juarez

*Partner*  
Hunton Andrews Kurth  
LLP  
*Columbia School of Law*  
**Labor & Employment**

Roland Juarez is a thought leader among the labor and employ-

ment team at Hunton Andrews Kurth. He regularly advises and mentors young associates with practical career advice and often authors with associates to help guide their legal writing and analysis while supporting their distinct voices. In the past year, he published a number of items and guided associates through the publishing process as a legal author and insider. Juarez is able to connect with labor and employment associates on a number of trending issues, offer his experienced advice, and help build the confidence and writing skills of this associate team.

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

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## Stephen Kaufman

*Principal*  
Kaufman Legal Group  
*UC Law San Francisco*  
**Litigation**



Stephen Kaufman founded Kaufman Legal Group in 1996. A recognized authority in the field of campaign finance and election law, he represents elected officials, candidates, PACs, labor unions, corporations, nonprofit organizations, ballot measure campaigns, political parties, major donors, lobbying firms, and government agencies on a wide variety of campaign finance, election, and governmental ethics matters.

Kaufman is an expert on voting systems and election procedures. He was a recount attorney for the Gore-Lieberman campaign in Florida following the 2000 Presidential Election, and in 2001, he was appointed chief counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Caucus Special Committee on Election Reform. He currently serves as chair of the State Voting Modernization Board and previously served on the City of Los Angeles Municipal Elections Reform Commission. Kaufman is a former president of the California Political Attorneys Association and served on many other nonprofit boards.



## Daniel Lee Kim

*Managing Partner*  
Daniel Kim Law Group  
*UC Berkeley School of Law*  
**Corporate**

Daniel Kim is managing partner of Daniel Kim Law Group, which services NASDAQ-listed companies, a top-ranked children's hospital, and mid-size Los Angeles-based companies. He specializes in contract drafting and review, using modern legal design and technology to accelerate contracting. An advocate for lawyers eschewing complicated

and unhelpful negotiating habits, he instead takes a reasonable and user-friendly approach to contracts. He also believes strongly in companies investing in legal operations roles.

Over the past two years, Kim has worked closely with his client, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, to streamline its contracting processes. Throughout the course of reviewing hundreds of vendor contracts, he has identified major bottlenecks and pain points in the intake and approval process for technology contracts. As a result, the review of contracts by legal, as well as related privacy and information security departments, has become both more robust and more efficient.

## Michael Klein

*Partner*  
Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP  
*Pacific McGeorge School of Law*  
**Life Sciences & Healthcare**

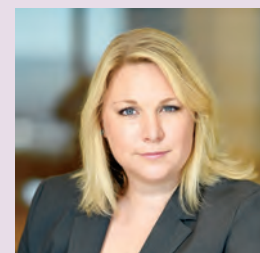
Michael Klein is a partner at the firm and chairs the firm's marketing committee. From 2000 to 2002, he served as outside general counsel to National Staff Specialists, Inc. Klein's practice focuses on the representation of clients involved in business, consumer, and class action litigation in a broad range of industries with an emphasis on serving clients in the healthcare, managed care, insurance, transportation, and real estate sectors. He has successfully litigated a multitude of high-stakes matters.

In addition to his litigation practice, Klein provides regulatory and governance advice to clients in the healthcare and insurance industries. He also regularly assists healthcare clients in compliance matters and governmental investigations involving EMTALA, consent issues, Medicare/Medicaid billing, fraud and abuse, and transactions impacting the Stark and Anti-Kickback laws, as well as the False Claims Act.



## Sarah Kelly-Kilgore

*Managing Partner, Los Angeles Office*  
Greenberg Gross LLP  
*Georgetown University Law Center*  
**Litigation**



The leader of Greenberg Gross LLP's Los Angeles office, Sarah Kelly-Kilgore has built a reputation as a skilled, innovative trial and appellate lawyer with the ability to persuade judges and juries in cases with the highest stakes. She has a diverse litigation practice that spans business litigation, employment disputes, securities, and white-collar defense. Clients have come to know Kilgore for her ingenuity, skill, and leadership, with one of the firm's most high-profile clients praising her as a "platinum attorney who performs well beyond [her] experience."

Kilgore is co-lead counsel in landmark lawsuits filed for the Trustee of the PG&E Fire Victim Trust to pursue assigned claims against former PG&E vegetation management contractors and major management consulting firms for their responsibility in contributing to the causes of deadly wildfires of 2017-2019 in Northern California. The Trust will distribute funds to the 70,000 victims who lost their homes and businesses.

## Christianne Kerns

*Managing Partner*  
Hahn & Hahn LLP  
*USC Gould School of Law*  
**Corporate**



Christianne Kerns is the first female managing partner of Hahn & Hahn LLP, a well-respected law firm in Pasadena that has been serving the Southern California area since 1899. Under her leadership, the firm has transitioned from being one of Southern California's elite, white shoe boutique firms to most recently earning the prestigious

Women's Business Enterprise National Council's certification as a majority Women-Owned Business with more than 85% of the firm's personnel identifying as women and/or members of traditionally marginalized groups.

As managing partner, Kerns is responsible for strategy and leading the firm; developing, implementing, and driving organizational goals, procedures, and policies; managing all aspects of the firm's operations as well as firm lawyers and the firm's executive director; collaborating with other partners; and business development and maintaining positive client relationships. In addition, she still maintains her practice as a member of the firm's business law department.



## Taisuke Kimoto

*Partner and Co-Lead of the Japan Practice*  
Covington & Burling LLP  
*UCLA School of Law*  
**Corporate**

Taisuke Kimoto co-leads Covington's Japan Practice, which advises a number of Japan's largest corporations as well as individuals, trade associations, and governmental agencies on their most sensitive and complex legal challenges in the United States, Europe, China, and elsewhere. Drawing upon his long-standing relationships and robust business and legal networks in Japan, he serves as an ambassador of the firm to the Japanese business community and global companies with interests in the Japanese market.

Kimoto is a corporate lawyer whose practice focuses on M&A transactions, general corporate matters, and real estate transactions for companies based in Japan. He also serves as an outside U.S. general counsel for a number of Japanese companies and in that capacity provides advice in many areas, including dispute resolution and employment. In 2021, Chambers Global recognized him among the leading lawyers for Corporate/M&A: Deals in Asia.



### Dana A. Kravetz

*Firm Managing Partner*  
 Michelman & Robinson, LLP  
 Southwestern University School of Law  
 Labor & Employment

Dana Kravetz is one of the most sought-after employment lawyers in Los Angeles. He is also the firm managing partner of LA-based Michelman & Robinson, LLP, where he represents some of the most admired companies in Los Angeles. He brings a unique vantage point to his work on their behalf – that of a manager and business owner – and assigns practical applications to the employment issues confronting clients.

It is Kravetz's breadth of practice area knowledge and his solutions-based approach to employment law that makes him so effective. He is also a hospitality industry authority, which explains why so many companies in that sector look to him for counsel. At the helm of M&R, Kravetz has positioned the firm as a go-to service destination for clients in the advertising & digital media, banking & financial services, energy, insurance, music & entertainment, retail & apparel, sports, technology, and hospitality spaces.

### Aaron M. Lewis

*Partner and Vice Chair of White Collar Defense and Investigations*  
 Covington & Burling LLP  
 University of Michigan School of Law  
 Litigation



General counsel and boards of directors call on Aaron Lewis to conduct their most sensitive internal investigations and defend their businesses and senior executives in their most serious enforcement matters. A founding member of Covington's Los Angeles office and vice chair of the firm's White Collar Defense and Investigations practice, he returned to Covington in 2015 after six years of service in the Department of Justice, first as counsel to Attorney General Eric Holder and later as an assistant United States attorney in Los Angeles.

Few recent developments have had a greater impact on public companies and their boards of directors than the increasing number of shareholder proposals calling for civil rights or racial equity audits. Lewis has been a leader and innovator in this rapidly evolving frontier at the intersection of ESG and traditional internal investigations since it first emerged in 2016.



### Geoff Lee

*Senior Associate*  
 Ramo Law PC  
 Pepperdine University  
 School of Law  
 Entertainment and Sports

Drawing on his background as a creative producer, Geoff Lee focuses his legal practice on facilitating his clients' vision, providing them with the legal tools to actualize their ideas for mediums of all types. He is general counsel for unscripted and premium docuseries production companies and negotiates lucrative network deals for his clients' large-scale productions.

As production counsel, Lee specializes in high-profile, talent-driven productions such as "Legendary" on HBO Max with Keke Palmer and Jameela Jamil, "The Big Brunch" on HBO Max hosted by Dan Levy, "Rennervations" with Jeremy Renner on Disney+, and "Welcome to Wrexham" via FX following Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenny's purchase of a Welsh football team. He also focuses on securing strategic branding opportunities between the consumer products and film/television industries, representing high-profile clients as well as structuring financing of entertainment projects through sales of NFTs.

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## Margaret Glahn Lodise

Partner

Sacks, Glazier, Franklin & Lodise LLP

UCLA School of Law

**Litigation**



In her 30-plus year career, Meg Lodise has established an impressive reputation for successfully handling some of the most complex and high-dollar trusts and estates disputes.

Among her high-profile representations and underscoring her respect in the trusts and estates community, Lodise was appointed by the Probate Court as Guardian Ad Litem for the minor children of entertainer Michael Jackson, a responsibility she carried out soon after his death in 2009 and concluded in February 2020 with his youngest child, Prince Michael Jackson II, turning 18. In November 2021, she was requested by Mark Klaver, counsel for the Government of Canada's Trade Law Bureau, to act as an expert and testify. She produced a comprehensive written report and testified in a five-day arbitration on California trust law in connection with a NAFTA Chapter II dispute, where the parties' standing to make a multi-million-dollar claim centered on whether an oral trust was validly formed under California law.



## Todd Matthew Malynn

Partner, Intellectual Property Litigation  
Blank Rome LLP

Loyola Law School

**Intellectual Property**

As an experienced and well-respected trial attorney in both the Los Angeles area and nationally, Todd M. Malynn aggressively seeks to identify solutions – whether through settlement or trial – and combines his IP and business transactional experience to help identify, protect, defend, and monetize his client's rights and interests. He represents clients in a wide range of intellectual property matters, from patent, copyright, and trademark infringement to false advertising, unfair competition, misappropriation of trade secrets, and covenants not to compete. Another element of his active litigation practice includes arguing matters under the Federal Trade Commission Act and the Medical Device Regulation Act.

Outside of the courts, Malynn manages his clients' patent and trademark portfolios. He also represents clients before the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) in approval proceedings. His work spans numerous industries, including cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, manufacturing, and entertainment.

## Jeffrey Margulies

Partner-in-Charge, Los Angeles and San Francisco

Norton Rose Fulbright

Villanova University School of Law

**Litigation**



Jeff Margulies, partner-in-charge of both the Los Angeles and San Francisco offices of Norton Rose Fulbright, focuses his practice on litigation, compliance, and regulatory issues regarding consumer products and the companies that manufacture, distribute, and sell them. He defends companies in consumer class-action litigation matters relating to false advertising, product compliance, and privacy issues. His regulatory practice involves a variety of state, federal and international environmental, product safety, chemical management and related regulatory issues, advertising, and labeling requirements, as well as consumer privacy and encompasses compliance, enforcement, and litigation.

Margulies has extensive litigation experience in complex commercial, consumer, and personal injury litigation, including federal and state jury and bench trials in cases involving pharmaceutical product liability, asbestos, false advertising and privacy consumer class actions, environmental contamination, and regulatory litigation, including CEQA, administrative rulemaking, and California Proposition 65 enforcement actions. He also has an active appellate practice.

## Samuel R. Maizel

Director

Dentons U.S. LLP

The George Washington University Law School

**Bankruptcy**

Samuel Maizel leads Dentons Distressed Healthcare efforts nationwide as a partner in Dentons' Los Angeles office. He is a nationally recognized expert in the unique issues that arise in the restructuring of healthcare industry entities. Maizel co-led the representation of Verity Health System of California, Inc., and 16 related entities in their chapter 11 cases – the second largest nonprofit hospital bankruptcy case in American history with more than \$1.4 billion of debt. The Court approved the sale of Verity's hospitals and senior living facility and confirmed the joint plan of liquidation, which resolved complex litigation and created a liquidating trust for the benefit of creditors.

Previously, Maizel was a partner in a national bankruptcy firm headquartered in Los Angeles and previously a trial attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice's Commercial Litigation Branch, in addition to representing the federal government in U.S. bankruptcy, district, and appellate courts.



## Michael Mallow

Managing Partner

Shook Hardy & Bacon

The George Washington University Law School

**Litigation**

When large companies, particularly in the automotive industry, are facing complex, multi-faceted challenges, Michael Mallow is often the first attorney they call. He has practiced law for more than three decades and is on the short list of lawyers with the ability to get a class action lawsuit resolved before it becomes a multi-million dollar or reputational problem. Clients describe him as deeply knowledgeable and extremely creative in resolving their issues.

Currently, Mallow serves as managing partner of Shook, Hardy & Bacon's Los Angeles office and as co-chair of the firm's Class Action and Appellate Litigation practice group. In 2019, Shook recruited him to launch the firm's Los Angeles office and help expand Shook's California presence where class action cases are most often filed. Prior to joining Shook, Mallow headed the Consumer Class Action Defense Practice at Sidley Austin, an international firm.

Currently, Mallow serves as managing partner of Shook, Hardy & Bacon's Los Angeles office and as co-chair of the firm's Class Action and Appellate Litigation practice group. In 2019, Shook recruited him to launch the firm's Los Angeles office and help expand Shook's California presence where class action cases are most often filed. Prior to joining Shook, Mallow headed the Consumer Class Action Defense Practice at Sidley Austin, an international firm.



## Chris Manderson

Partner

Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP

UCLA School of Law

**Corporate**

Chris Manderson is a partner and co-chair of the Business, Corporate, and Tax Department at Ervin Cohen & Jessup. He specializes in mergers & acquisitions, venture capital, debt and equity financing, distressed and restructuring transactions, and preserving and utilizing Net Operating Loss (NOL) tax assets. He also advises public and private company boards and executives on all aspects of corporate governance.

In addition to mainstream M&A, venture capital, and corporate finance transactions, Manderson specializes in distressed and restructuring transactions. In the wake of the 2009 Financial Crisis, he reorganized companies preserving over \$2 billion in NOL tax assets in Chapter 11 bankruptcy cases, including Real Industry, Inc. (formerly Fremont General Corporation, a subprime mortgage lender with NOLs over \$900 million) and Triad Guaranty, Inc. (formerly an insurance holding company with NOLs over \$1.1 billion). He has represented both public and private companies, private equity funds, and individuals.



### Nina Marino

*Founding Partner*  
Kaplan Marino  
*University of LaVerne School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Nina Marino's complex litigation and white-collar crime practice is national in scope. She regularly negotiates with and litigates against the U.S. Department of Justice, local district attorneys, and other government agencies in her defense of people investigated or charged with matters involving healthcare fraud, international extradition, cybercrime, money laundering, customs violations, tax crimes, Ponzi schemes, public corruption, and regulatory issues involving cryptocurrency.

Right from the start, clients understand that Marino takes their cases as personally as they do. Her presentations to prosecutors introduce new perspectives, compelling context, and workable paths to resolution. Her unconventional combination of care, integrity, and formidable lawyering has earned her a national reputation and recognition. She discovers the shades of gray behind prosecutors' black-and-white arguments to shine new light on her clients' circumstances. Marino's team-driven, meticulously prepared strategies have repeatedly helped clients reach their objectives – from staying out of prison to defending allegations in trial.

### Jordan Matthews

*Business Trial Lawyer and Litigator*  
Weinberg Gonser LLP  
*Pepperdine University School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Jordan Matthews is a business trial lawyer and litigation partner at Weinberg Gonser Frost LLP since 2018 with broad experience in the entertainment industry and business community. He has litigated or otherwise been involved with matters pending in California, Nevada, and Massachusetts, argued before the Ninth Circuit of the U.S. Courts of Appeals, and been involved in high-profile litigation.

In December 2020, after a thorough investigation, Matthews filed a civil RICO case in the Central District of California on behalf of Angelica Limcaco and against Steve Wynn, et. al. over alleged attempts to use improper payments and influence to elevate Wynn Las Vegas' counsel to the position of a judge in the Nevada District Court and dismiss her case. Matthews and his team alleged a pattern of improper influence under the RICO statute, which directly coincided with Wynn's alleged involvement in lobbying the prior administration.



### Peter Massumi

*Co-Founder and Managing Partner*  
Massumi + Consoli LLP  
*Harvard Law School*  
**Corporate**



Peter Massumi is a co-founder and managing partner of Massumi + Consoli LLP, a boutique private equity-focused transactional law firm with offices in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. Founded in 2015 as a spin-off from the Private Equity and M&A group of Kirkland & Ellis, MCLLP delivers market-leading counsel to private funds and other financial institutions, along with their portfolio companies, and other acquisitive private and public companies on complex private equity, M&A and debt financing transactions, and ongoing corporate matters.

Massumi and the firm count among their elite client roster some of the most discerning and respected investors in the country as they fulfill a mission of exceeding the client services of the most recognized international law firms at an unmatched value proposition. The firm continues its rapid expansion and now deploys a full in-house specialist team to provide its clients with full-service transactional support.



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## Dwayne McKenzie

*Managing Partner*  
Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP  
*UCLA School of Law*  
**Labor & Employment**

Dwayne McKenzie is managing partner at Cox, Castle & Nicholson and has a 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 industry-wide master labor agreement negotiations and 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 individual unions and building trades union councils. McKenzie has also been involved extensively in prevailing wage law legislation, interpretation, and litigation for over 20 years and is active in public works, prevailing wage, skilled and trained workforce, and related labor-related issues.



## Sanford L. Michelman

*Co-Founding Partner & Chairman*  
Michelman & Robinson, LLP  
*Southwestern University School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Sanford Michelman is one of the most celebrated litigators in Los

Angeles and continues to be the attorney C-suite executives and business leaders turn to when faced with "bet the company" litigation matters considered to be the most challenging. He is also a dynamo in boardrooms nationwide, representing insurers, brokers/agents, underwriters, private equity groups, banks, and advertising and media companies. He is known for being among the most prolific rainmakers in the country.

At Michelman & Robinson, LLP, Sanford oversees a business that is thriving despite economic headwinds. Where other law firms are treading water or scaling back, he is engineering measured growth throughout M&R's seven offices spanning California, Texas, Illinois, and New York. The firm now boasts a roster of approximately 80 lawyers, a number that is slated to meaningfully increase this calendar year. He has established himself as one of the most notable lawyers in Los Angeles.

## Alissa Miller

*Partner*  
Akin Gump  
*UC Berkeley School of Law*  
**Entertainment and Sports**

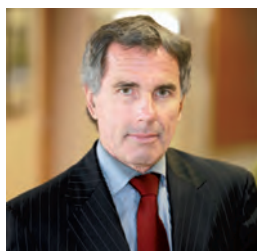


Consistently regarded by eminent local and national media outlets as being among the entertainment industry's top lawyers and dealmakers, Akin Gump Entertainment and Media Partner Alissa Miller is widely recognized as a leader in her field for handling some of the industry's highest-visibility deals between independent movie production companies and financial institutions, as well as for her innovative media and entertainment-focused pro bono practice.

A leader within the firm and the industry, last year, Miller assumed the role of partner in charge of Akin's Los Angeles office and has served as a committed advocate for the entertainment industry during one of the most tumultuous times in recent memory: the COVID-19 pandemic. She co-led Akin's cross-practice efforts to assist a coalition of more than two dozen independent production companies in seeking COVID-19 relief aid to counterbalance pandemic-related shutdowns.

## Skip Miller

*Partner*  
Miller Barondess, LLP  
*UCLA School of Law*  
**Litigation**



Skip Miller is an accomplished trial lawyer with victories for high-profile clients, including successfully representing investors who put a billion dollars into internet incubator Idealab; winning a \$7-million judgment against musician Michael Jackson in a jury trial in Santa Maria; and prevailing in the Ninth Circuit and district court in a series of civil rights cases brought against the City of Los Angeles, the City of Beverly Hills and their mayors, chiefs of police, and city council members.

Miller also prosecuted trade secret/unfair competition cases for a manufacturing conglomerate, a private equity company, and the top hotel in Beverly Hills; defended the maker of Seven Jeans in a multi-hundred-million-dollar partnership dispute; and represented high-tech and manufacturing companies, including a public company in China with over 500,000 employees for which he won a \$46-million jury verdict.

## Mark Mizrahi

*Partner*  
Freeman Freeman & Smiley, LLP  
*USC Gould School of Law*  
**Intellectual Property**



Mark Mizrahi is an accomplished intellectual property attorney with an impressive track record of success. Throughout his career, he has specialized in patent, trademark, and copyright litigation, and built a reputation as a trusted advisor to businesses across a variety of industries.

When an opportunity arose at his current firm, Freeman Freeman & Smiley, LLP, his dedication to growing the intellectual property practice and, most importantly, supporting and growing his own practice made it a unique opportunity. Since being with Freeman Freeman & Smiley, the congenial and supportive attitude, and the willingness to invest in growing the intellectual property practice has paid off well. As a trusted advisor to clients, Mizrahi has provided counsel on a wide range of intellectual property issues, including trademark and copyright applications, intellectual property agreements, and patent applications. He is known for his ability to help businesses protect their intellectual property rights.



## Michael Mortenson

*Co-Founding Partner*  
Mortenson Taggart Adams LLP  
*Case Western Reserve University School of Law*  
**Litigation**

In July 2019, Michael Mortenson launched Mortenson Taggart Adams LLP. Since its inception, the firm has grown to 25 attorneys and staff. The firm represents Fortune 500 companies, innovative start-ups, emerging companies, and high-net-worth and high-profile individuals in a variety of matters. Since founding the firm, he has achieved

numerous successful outcomes. In 2019, Mortenson secured a multi-million verdict following a two-week jury trial for a pro bono client that was recognized by Top Verdicts as one of California's Top 100 jury verdicts.

Mortenson has also won numerous precedent-setting summary judgment motions for Ford Motor Company in state and federal court. And just recently, he represented Rivian Automotive in a class action lawsuit that resulted in a complete pre-trial dismissal of the entire class action complaint along with Rule 11 sanctions. Throughout his career, Mortenson has also devoted himself to representing clients in pro bono matters.



## Ann Marie Mortimer

*Firm Partner, Managing Partner, Los Angeles Office; Head of Commercial Litigation Practice*  
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP  
*UC Berkeley School of Law*  
**Cybersecurity**



Ann Marie Mortimer heads Hunton Andrews Kurth's commercial litigation practice and served as first chair defending Yahoo! in class actions stemming from reportedly the largest data breach in history with over three billion accounts impacted. She is the founder and managing partner of the firm's Los Angeles office.

Mortimer is at the forefront of novel cybersecurity litigation threatening the fundamental business of global brands, counseling Fortune 50 companies on the novel challenges, and regulation endemic, including Fortune 1 big box retailer Walmart and name brand retailer Bath & Body Works, Inc., in some of the first alleged California Consumer Privacy Act actions in the state of California. She won a pivotal victory for Walmart in a putative class action including alleged violation of CCPA – one of the first decisions dismissing a CCPA claim on the merits that went on to impact other CCPA claims.

## John Nadolenco

*Managing Partner, Los Angeles Office*  
Mayer Brown LLP  
*American University Washington College of Law*  
**Litigation**



John Nadolenco has a successful civil litigation and trial practice focusing on high-stakes cases and class action defense, including defending consumer class actions, employment and anti-trust cases, and challenging inappropriate government regulations. He has defended companies in cases alleging improper consumer charges and practices, false and misleading advertising, defective products, unauthorized call recordings under California's Invasion of Privacy Act, violations of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, internet privacy violations, and improper tracking via computer-based cookies and improper use of smartphone and tablet applications.

In addition to managing Mayer Brown's Los Angeles Office, Nadolenco is passionate about creating a more diverse and inclusive legal community. He runs the Summer Fellowship Diversity Program through the American University College of Law. In partnership with eBay, Mayer Brown gives diverse students insights into what it means to work at a law firm and in-house at a company.

## Sonia Nayak

*Managing Partner, Los Angeles Office*  
Nixon Peabody LLP  
*Pacific McGeorge School of Law*  
**Corporate**



Throughout her 18-year career at NP, Sonia Nayak has taken on a variety of leadership roles within her practice group, her office, and the broader firm. She serves as the office managing partner of the L.A. office and leads the firm's New Markets Tax Credits team, lending her knowledge on new capital for businesses looking to operate in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Nayak's practice focuses on real estate development and financing, and she has extensive experience with commercial lending, tax credit finance, and affordable housing. Much of her work is centered on leveraging alternative financing tools to make private capital available for much-needed community development projects nationwide. Nayak is inspired by work that translates into tangible results for clients and communities.

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**We proudly congratulate Valerie Goo and Jennifer Romano for being selected to the L.A. Times B2B Publishing's "Firm Attorneys" list, which recognizes their legal vision and leadership.**

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### Kristen J. Nesbit

*Partner*  
Fisher Phillips LLP  
*Loyola Law School*  
**Labor & Employment**

A powerhouse lawyer with a record for successfully handling high-stakes matters, Kristen Nesbit is a trusted partner to her clients, including Fortune 500 companies, billion-dollar corporations, and public entities. She has handled numerous single-plaintiff and class action lawsuits, seeing them through to verdict. Her triumphs in the labor and employment arena, combined with her active community involvement, prestigious award recognitions, and commitment to championing diversity and equality make Nesbit a legal industry leader.

Committed to helping diverse business owners succeed, Nesbit regularly assists Disability-Owned Business Enterprise, Minority Business Enterprise, Women Business Enterprise, and Veteran Business Enterprise employers. Within Fisher Phillips, she serves as co-chair of the firm's California Litigation Practice Group and is one of the youngest practice group co-chairs within the firm, in addition to being the youngest female to co-chair a firmwide practice group at the time she was appointed to this role in 2019.

### Arameh Zargham O'Boyle

*Member*  
Mintz  
*Pepperdine University School of Law*  
**Litigation**



Arameh Zargham O'Boyle is a trailblazer and the first female partner in Mintz's growing Los Angeles office. In her 15-plus years of practice, she has become one of the most sought-after attorneys product innovators and manufacturers rely on.

O'Boyle is a litigator who focuses her practice on defending product manufacturers in complex product liability and consumer class action litigation. She represents businesses in a variety of industries including cosmetics, personal care products, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, over-the-counter drugs, food, retail, and electronics. She regularly advises clients on product labeling and advertising strategies to navigate the requirements of the FDA's Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and mitigate challenges under California's consumer protection laws. O'Boyle represents companies in high-profile litigation and has extensive experience managing and coordinating complex class action and multidistrict litigation. Her clients regard her as strategic and creative; they trust her commonsense approach to problem-solving and appreciate her ability to resolve disputes efficiently.

### Michael M. Purpura

*Partner*  
Hueston Hennigan LLP  
*Columbia Law School*  
**Litigation**



Michael Purpura's unique blend of public and private sector experience allows him to provide clients with multi-dimensional counseling on the most complex legal issues. He has served as an adviser to two presidents, navigating the many tricky separation-of-powers issues involving the executive and legislative branches in high-profile legal and political battles. In prior work as a commercial litigator and as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of New York, he successfully tried many cases and argued numerous appeals.

Purpura is currently handling a series of very high-profile matters, including representing former White House counsel Pat Cipollone before the House Jan. 6 Committee and the Department of Justice. He is also representing former WWE Chairman and CEO Vince McMahon in investigations related to \$12 million in payments to various women. The investigation is complex and has many components, including the DOJ, the SEC, and the WWE Board of Directors.



### Christopher Ng

*Managing Partner*  
Gibbs Giden  
*Caruso Pepperdine School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Christopher Ng is an equity partner, executive committee member, and managing partner of Gibbs Giden. He primarily represents companies in a wide range of business, commercial and construction negotiations, and disputes. He is a member of the State Bars of California and the District of Columbia and is licensed to practice in all California state and federal courts. Also, he is an educator, active speaker, published author, and frequent contributor to local, regional, and national legal publications.

Ng is nationally recognized in the field of construction law and regularly pens articles and contributes to treatises for construction industry professionals and other lawyers. In addition to his current position as an adjunct professor of business law at the School of Business and Economics at California State University Northridge, he has taught the Legal Environment of Business at Pepperdine University and been a guest lecturer of construction law at Loyola Law School.

### R. Rex Parris

*Founding and Managing Partner*  
PARRIS Law Firm  
*Southwestern School of Law*  
**Litigation**



In the last 12 months, R. Rex Parris has helped obtain a multi-billion-dollar settlement, a \$120-million verdict, and another roughly \$50-million verdict. Few attorneys can boast such accomplishments over their entire career, let alone in a six-month period as the world is pulling out of a once-in-a-century pandemic.

He has achieved outstanding results in the courtroom over the span of his career. He obtained the first million-dollar verdict in California's Kern County as a young lawyer and, years later, obtained a historic, record-breaking defamation jury verdict in Los Angeles for \$370 million. In between, Parris has obtained dozens of seven-, eight-, and nine-figure verdicts and settlements. His success is hardly happenstance – Rex prepares every case for trial using the latest science in persuasion skills. Everything from metaphoric choices, word selection, and visuals is tested and re-tested before each trial.



### Kelly Perigoe

*Partner*  
King & Spalding LLP  
*UCLA School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Kelly Perigoe has over a decade's worth of experience in federal and state courts, from the pre-litigation to appellate phases, for clients throughout the U.S. and internationally. She is regularly tapped to draft dispositive motions involving thorny issues and leads appellate strategy in clients' critical matters.

She led a Ninth Circuit appeal for VNG involving complicated jurisdictional issues after successfully obtaining dismissal in the trial court. Following a panel decision reversing the district court's dismissal, Perigoe will lead the team in filing a cert petition before the Supreme Court. She also led the briefing and strategy in a Seventh Circuit appeal for Molina Healthcare, Inc. from a dismissal with prejudice that she obtained in the Northern District of Illinois in an important False Claims Act qui tam action. After a split decision in the Seventh Circuit, Perigoe handled a cert petition raising two important circuit splits under the FCA.



## Edward Francis Quigley

*Co-Chairman and Partner*  
Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP  
*UC Berkeley School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Ed Quigley is a litigation attorney with vast experience in handling complex

litigation, including construction claims, insurance coverage disputes, and general commercial litigation.

Quigley is co-chairman of Cox Castle and is the chair of the firm's litigation department. He represents developers, lending institutions, property owners, lessees, managers, real estate investors, and others involved in the real estate industry. He has extensive experience litigating a broad range of commercial disputes, including construction claims and disputes, partnership/corporate governance disputes, fraud & breach of fiduciary duty claims, valuation disputes, lease disputes, unfair business practice claims, insurance coverage litigation, breach of contract and easement disputes, and non-disclosure claims. Quigley's experience extends into state court, federal court, private arbitration, and public works arbitration. Recent cases include his work prosecuting an \$85-million construction claim for a project involving a hotel with 420 condominium units, entertainment venues, bars, and restaurants.



## Scott Rahn

*Founding Partner*  
RMO LLP  
*University of San Diego School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Scott Rahn resolves contests, disputes, and litigation related to trusts, estates, and conservatorships, creating a welcome peace of mind for clients. He represents heirs, beneficiaries, trustees, and executors. He utilizes his experience to develop and implement strategies that swiftly and cost-effectively address the financial issues, fiduciary duties, and emotional complexities underlying trust contests, estates conflicts, and probate litigation.

Driven by a commitment to provide relief to people grieving the loss of a loved one, Rahn collaborates closely with clients. He pursues and defends claims involving incapacity, incompetence, undue influence, breach of fiduciary duty, and other similar areas of dispute. His advice and counsel include prevention and remediation of financial elder abuse. Rahn is known for in-depth financial investigations and deftly handling intra-family dynamics and decades-long family friction. He has extensive experience in courts, arbitration, mediation, and dispute resolution forums.

## Christy Von der Ahe Rayburn

*Partner*  
Hueston Hennigan LLP  
*Harvard Law School*  
**Intellectual Property**

Christy Von der Ahe Rayburn litigates high-profile, high-stakes technology disputes for companies of all sizes, including Amazon.com, Monster Energy, BlackBerry, ClearOne, and Acorn Technologies. Described by clients as "a fierce advocate" and "intensely brilliant at understanding the detail and complexity of the subject matter, while retaining a clear view of the big issues and impact on strategy," she has experience in patent, copyright, and trade secret litigation at every stage.

Rayburn is a force in the courtroom, having recently obtained a summary judgment of non-infringement in favor of Amazon.com, Inc. against claims for patent infringement brought by serial patent litigant MasterObjects, Inc. In 2021, she also won two trials and a Federal Circuit appeal. In May 2021, she won a \$25-million trial victory for Acorn Technologies in a patent infringement case. Rayburn is deeply invested in her clients' cases, paying close attention to strategic decisions at every step.



## Zev Raben

*Partner*  
Ramo Law PC  
*Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law*  
**Entertainment and Sports**

Providing guidance and advice to financiers and distribution companies, Zev Raben brings his depth of legal experience to bear for his clients in all aspects of their varied businesses. While his practice is primarily focused on representing financiers and distribution companies, he also assists producers in all areas of their creative pursuits. He has worked with producers whose films have been recognized by the Sundance Film Festival and SXSW. His past experience as an entertainment litigator makes him well-equipped to identify potential issues early on in transactions.

Over the last couple of years, Raben has done financing legal work on Anna Kendrick's directorial debut "Dating Game" (currently in post-production); "Sweetwater" (2023) starring Cary Elwes, Eric Roberts, and Richard Dreyfuss; the 2022 Sundance Film Festival world premiere of "Dual;" "Paradise City" (2022) starring Bruce Willis and John Travolta; and "National Champions" (2021) starring J.K. Simmons.



## Brenda K. Radmacher

*Akerman LLP*  
**Partner, Litigation, Construction**  
*USC Gould School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Brenda Radmacher is a distinguished litigation partner at Akerman LLP with over 25 years of experience in construction law. She has helped resolve complex disputes through mediation, negotiation, arbitration, and litigation for construction companies, developers, design professionals, and owners in California, across the United States and internationally.

Radmacher has also assisted her clients with regulatory compliance issues concerning California's Proposition 65, ADA, OSHA, and employment and COVID-19 issues. She played a key role in the litigation of the Champlain Towers South Condominium case, which involved over 40 parties and non-parties and required extensive investigation, testing, and sampling, leading to a settlement in excess of \$1.1 billion.

Radmacher has also contributed to the construction industry as a speaker and writer, sharing her insights on various legal issues affecting the construction industry. She has received numerous accolades and recognitions for her hard work and dedication, including being recognized as one of the Top 100 Lawyers in California by the Daily Journal, a "Woman of Influence" by the Los Angeles Business Journal, and a finalist for the 2023 Jerrold S. Oliver Award of Excellence.



## Kelly Megan Raney

*Partner*  
Greenberg Glusker LLP  
*USC Gould School of Law*  
**Labor & Employment**

Kelly Raney, a partner in Greenberg Glusker's Employment Group, counsels and defends employers and management in the full range of employment law issues at the state and federal levels. She represents and advises clients of all sizes, from start-ups and high-net-worth individuals to Fortune 500 companies on matters ranging from employment policies, practices and compliance, pre-litigation disputes and investigations, and all stages of litigation. She has also litigated high-stakes intellectual property and commercial contract disputes, which included state and federal trials, authoring briefs, and appearing at the federal appellate level.

Raney applies her high-stakes litigation skills and degrees in economics and business to strategically advise and protect her clients' interests, with an understanding of her clients' priorities and goals. She has a proven track record of successfully resolving matters to her clients' satisfaction and has the experience to see a dispute through to the end.





## Angela Reddock-Wright

*Employment Mediator & Arbitrator*  
Reddock Law/Signature Resolution  
*UCLA School of Law*  
**Labor & Employment**

Recently inducted into the prestigious College of Labor & Employment Lawyers, Angela Reddock-Wright is an employment mediator, arbitrator, workplace, and Title IX investigator. She has practiced as an employment and labor law attorney for 26 years. After working as an employment litigator for 15 years, in 2011, she opened the Reddock Law Group and transitioned to becoming a full-time neutral. In addition to having her own firm, she is a member of the panel of mediators and arbitrators at Signature Resolution, a private dispute resolution firm with offices throughout California.

Reddock-Wright is also a published author, trainer, speaker, and legal commentator. Her mission is to help employers and employees create great and healthy workplaces. She hosts her own radio show on Tavis Smiley's KBLA Talk 1580 titled "Legal Lens with Angela Reddock-Wright," for which she interviews top attorneys, legislators, policy, and change makers.



## Jennifer Romano

*Crowell & Moring LLP*  
Partner  
*UC Berkeley School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Jennifer Romano is a litigation partner in Crowell & Moring's Los Angeles office, co-chair of the firm's litigation & trial department, and a member of the firm's management board. She represents clients as both plaintiffs and defendants in state and federal courts, as well as in arbitration and mediation, and focuses her practice on defending companies against consumer class actions, litigating on behalf of healthcare companies, and representing companies in high-stakes litigation matters. Romano has an active pro bono practice and serves on the board of the Berkeley Law Alumni Association and Bet Ztedek.

Over the past two years, Romano was lead counsel on a number of successful cases, including defending Enterprise against claims of negligence and negligent hiring; representing the University of California in a case challenging the DHS's announcement to rescind visas of international students if they were enrolled in only online classes; and obtaining a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction on behalf of Planned Parenthood in its challenge to restrictions on abortion in Kentucky. Romano also represents UnitedHealth Group and its affiliates in numerous cases alleging violation of the Mental Health Parity Act.

## Christian Scali

*Founder & Managing Shareholder*  
Scali Rasmussen  
*The Ohio State University College of Law*  
**Litigation**



Christian Scali has a diverse practice that includes advice and counsel, and complex and high-stakes litigation. His clients are in a variety of industries, including restaurant and hospitality, property management, entertainment, clothing manufacturing, and e-commerce, but the majority of them are in the retail automotive industry. Scali is known for his work on behalf of the retail automotive industry in a series of advertising lawsuits brought against it under California's Unfair Competition Law.

Scali also regularly assists clients with mergers and acquisitions. While he is always a fierce advocate for his clients, when he is engaged in a buy/sell his focus is on making the deal. Years of litigating buy/sell and commercial lease disputes on behalf of his clients have made him an effective transactional attorney. Scali also creates effective corporate compliance and ethics programs for his clients.

## Todd B. Scherwin

*Regional Managing Partner*  
Fisher Phillips LLP  
*USC Gould School of Law*  
**Labor & Employment**



Fisher Phillips' Todd Scherwin is a powerful and effective advocate for Los Angeles-area business clients facing thorny employment

issues and perilous lawsuits. One of California's premier labor and employment attorneys, he has blazed a trail in the ever-evolving world of California employment law through highly successful advocacy – including a track record of victories for employers and, recently, sitting at the counsel table before the U.S. Supreme Court. He has also led the firm's burgeoning Los Angeles office since 2013, opened a Woodland Hills office in 2021, and founded (and co-chairs) the firm's Sports Industry Team.

Scherwin recently won a summary judgment in Los Angeles Superior Court for a leading restaurant chain against a former employee's wrongful termination, harassment, and discrimination claims and served as Counsel of Record in the U.S. Supreme Court for amicus curiae Restaurant Law Center, a public policy organization affiliated with the National Restaurant Association.

## Leonora "Lenny" M. Schloss

*Partner*  
Jackson Lewis, P.C.  
*Columbia University Law School*  
**Labor & Employment**



Leonora "Lenny" Schloss is a partner in the Los Angeles office of the national labor and employment law firm, Jackson Lewis, P.C. She is a first-generation American, her parents having fled World War II in Eastern Europe. Navigating the fine print for her family from a relatively young age influenced her desire to become an attorney. After several years of defending general business litigation, Schloss solely concentrated her practice on employment law defense. She is skilled in providing advice, counsel, and training to clients. Also, she is the leader of the California Wage and Hour Internal Audit Subgroup at her firm and a frequent speaker at human resources and other organizations on minimizing employment law liability and other employment-related topics.

Schloss' style has been characterized as "thoughtful aggression." It is through her litigation and several published decisions that she has helped shape California employment law.

## Joshua Schneiderman

*Partner*  
Snell & Wilmer  
*UCLA School of Law*  
**Corporate**



Joshua Schneiderman is a corporate and securities partner in the Los Angeles office of Snell & Wilmer. He advises clients on a wide range of transactional matters, including mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, and public and private offerings of debt and equity securities. He also advises clients on matters related to franchising as well as

public and private companies on corporate governance matters.

Schneiderman is an instrumental member of the corporate and securities practice group who was voted into the partnership after just two years with the firm. He has served as lead counsel on sophisticated mergers and acquisitions and financing matters, assisting clients with access to much-needed capital in turbulent financial markets. He is excellent at managing a deal team and serving as the point person to coordinate the flow of work and responsibilities among investment bankers, accounting firms, public relations firms, and legal specialists.

## Dominique Shelton Leipzig

*Partner*  
Mayer Brown LLP  
Georgetown University  
Law Center  
Cybersecurity



Dominique Shelton Leipzig joined Mayer Brown in 2022 to lead the firm's global data innovation team that is devoted to providing special counsel to officers and directors in the Fortune 500 and late-stage private companies regarding data innovation through strategic attention to data privacy, cybersecurity, and algorithmic fairness. She also leads the firm's AdTech privacy and data management team, where she advises Fortune 500 companies on navigating through the disruption in the \$500 billion digital advertising ecosystem stemming from privacy and data protection laws in 150 countries.

Leipzig uses her knowledge and influence to shape how companies use and think about data and make companies understand data privacy is more than a compliance issue – it is a business imperative. With 160 data protection laws now in place, she has become the tech industry's go-to lawyer on evolving data privacy issues.

## Miwa Shoda

*Partner and Co-Chair of the Japan Practice*  
Jenner & Block LLP  
University of Chicago Law School  
Corporate



Born and raised in Japan, Miwa Shoda passed the country's bar exam when the passing rate was only 2.5%. She began her career at one of Japan's premier law firms and with the blessing and support of that firm, she traveled to the United States for her LLM degree and passed the California and New York bar exams in her second language.

She then made the unheard-of transition from visiting attorney to associate followed by partner at an AmLaw 100 firm.

Since joining a U.S. firm with no Asia footprint, Shoda has been pivotal in representing Japanese companies facing legal issues in the U.S. Calling on her international education and understanding of the business cultural differences, she developed her skills for navigating Japanese clients through domestic issues. She has a strong ability to articulate complicated legal concepts and strategies across practice areas in complex litigation and sophisticated transactions.

## Jeffrey Sklar

*Co-Chairman*  
Sklar Kirsh LLP  
Loyola Law School  
Corporate



Jeffrey Sklar is a co-chairman of Sklar Kirsh LLP, the chair of the firm's corporate department, and a member of the management committee. His clients range from individuals and early-stage companies to large corporations. Sklar advises clients in a variety of industries including advertising, alternative energy, apparel, consumer products, entertainment and media, manufacturing, medical devices, restaurants/hospitality, social media, and technology. His principal areas of practice are corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, partner dispute resolution, and executive compensation.

Sklar is active in the Los Angeles community and serves on the advisory board for the Transactional Lawyering Institute of Loyola Law School as well as the board of directors of Friends of the Israel Defense Forces Western Region, de Toledo High School, and Stephen S. Wise Temple. He is also a volunteer with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in its Election Protection program.

# MusickPeeler

We congratulate our Partners  
**Michael Klein** and **Daniel Taylor**  
for their dedication and commitment to clients.



Michael Klein



Daniel Taylor

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**ALFRED SMITH**  
Partner  
Water Group

Nossaman salutes **Alfred Smith**,  
Chair of the Firm's Water Group.  
Congratulations on being recognized  
as a 2023 Business of Law Visionary.

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## Alfred Smith

*Chair, Water Law Group*  
Nossaman  
*Harvard Law School*  
**Corporate**



Alfred Smith, chair of Nossaman's Water Group, is a recognized expert in water, environmental, transportation, and public agency law. A graduate of the Harvard Law School, he has successfully litigated multiple water rights adjudications, and secured more than \$750 million worth of contamination settlements in favor of his clients.

Smith is a trusted advisor on matters involving water rights, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, Colorado River and Pueblo rights, recycled water, water resource development, contamination remediation, groundwater adjudications, water transfers, desalination, conjunctive use, climate change, and environmental regulatory compliance. He has also developed urban water management plans, water supply assessments, and environmental impact reports for a wide range of residential and commercial developments. An experienced general counsel to multiple government agencies, Smith is an expert on all aspects of public agency governance and operations. He has successfully litigated at all levels.



## Brian Sun

*Partner*  
Norton Rose Fulbright  
*USC Gould School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Brian Sun is a seasoned trial lawyer, experienced in complex business litigation, white-collar criminal defense, and multi-jurisdictional investigation matters. A fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, his litigation practice covers a range of areas, including matters involving unfair competition, intellectual property, commercial

bribery, public corruption, entertainment, shareholder rights, contractual disputes, fraud, and cross-border issues.

Sun's clients include Global Fortune 500 institutions and high-profile individuals embroiled in high-stakes litigation. Over the years, he has represented such clients as Hon Hai Precision Co. (Foxconn), Mattel, Emerson Electric Co., Air China, Ltd., EFG Bank AG, Sanofi-Aventis, the City of Los Angeles, and a number of individuals, including former Orange County Sheriff Michael Carona and Dr. Wen Ho Lee in his successful civil lawsuit against the U.S. government. Sun served as a deputy general counsel to the Christopher Commission, which recommended sweeping reforms of the Los Angeles Police Department.

## Daniel Taylor

*Partner*  
Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP  
*USC Gould School of Law*  
**Litigation**



Daniel Taylor is a partner with the Musick, Peeler & Garrett's Los Angeles office. He is a member of the firm's Litigation Practice Group with extensive experience representing clients in complex litigation in state and federal court. He has tried several cases to successful verdicts and successfully argued cases on appeal before the California Courts of Appeal and Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Taylor's practice focuses on commercial litigation; trademark, copyright, and trade secret litigation and counseling; unfair competition litigation and counseling; product liability litigation; healthcare, technology, software, cybersecurity/data privacy, Internet-of-Things (IoT), and automation matters. He represents clients of all types and sizes including publicly traded companies, middle-market and small businesses, government entities, start-ups, and individuals. On the intellectual property side, he successfully enforced copyright claims on behalf of digital artist collectives against sellers of digital tokens.

## Chris Staton Spicer

*Partner*  
Akin  
*Georgetown University*  
**Entertainment and Sports**



Akin Partner and Entertainment Practice Head Chris Spicer is among the preeminent film finance lawyers in the country, regularly leading some of the industry's highest-visibility deals between independent movie production companies and major financial institutions for household-name film and television projects. Often finding creative solutions to complex issues, he has been instrumental to financial institution clients given the rapidly changing landscape for content creation and consumption, and a challenging, competitive environment for financial institutions, specifically within the last two years.

For example, Spicer, in coordination with the firm's corporate practice, advised HPS Investment Partners, a leading global investment firm, in connection with a multibranch \$550-million credit facility to Kobalt Music Group, one of the world's largest music publishers, featuring artists such as Childish Gambino, Elvis Presley, Paul McCartney, and Stevie Nicks. He led the Akin team that structured a highly complex first-in, last-out loan to Kobalt.



## Julia B. Strickland

*Managing Partner,*  
*Los Angeles Office*  
Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP  
*UCLA School of Law*  
**Litigation**

For more than three decades, Julia Strickland has been at the forefront of counseling, advocating, and dispute resolution within the financial services sector, having litigated a myriad of individual, class action, and bet-the-company cases. As chair of

Stroock's Financial Services Litigation, Regulation, and Enforcement Group, a member of Stroock's national Executive Committee, and managing partner of its Los Angeles office, she has amassed a diverse and talented team of litigators who service the most sophisticated global financial services entities.

Strickland's significant professional accomplishments have resulted in many honors and awards. Chambers wrote that Strickland "is routinely sought after by clients for her compliance counseling and representation in regulatory proceedings, in addition to her general commercial litigation work. She is smart, effective, well-connected, and well-regarded by judges." Her clients say she has an "uncanny ability to anticipate opposing counsel" as well as being "very customer-focused and practical."



## Craig Taggart

*Co-Founder and Trial Attorney*  
Mortenson Taggart Adams LLP  
*University of San Diego*  
*School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Craig Taggart is a partner at Mortenson Taggart Adams LLP. He is a trial attorney who has worked

on high-profile litigation matters in California and throughout the country in addition to being involved in some of the biggest cases in Southern California. Taggart focuses his practice on automotive, securities, and general business litigation. He has been active in litigating cases for automobile manufacturers. In 2020, Taggart represented Rivian Automotive in a class action lawsuit that resulted in a complete dismissal.

Taggart has been actively involved in representing clients in pro bono matters and has been particularly active in representing California foster care group homes. Indeed, he represented group homes in a landmark case that resulted in the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit finding that California violated the Child Welfare Act by underfunding group homes.



### Yael Tobi

*Partner*  
Munck Wilson Mandala, LLP  
*Loyola Law School*  
**Litigation**

Yael Tobi is a partner at Munck Wilson Mandala, practicing in the firm's IP and complex litigation groups. As a former professional tennis player who spent most of her childhood traveling around the world, she gained great insight and understanding of various cultures. This ability to relate and acclimate globally has been a critical factor for MWM's U.S. expansion.

Tobi's cultural intelligence has enabled her to provide effective, successful representation to numerous foreign and domestic clients, including Fortune 500 corporations, public and private companies, law firms, and high-profile individuals in complex high-stakes matters.

Tobi also has her real estate license and has boosted MWM's efforts to expand services to real estate clients. As a partner in the firm's LA. office, she specializes in representing businesses and individuals in a broad range of commercial litigation disputes focusing on intellectual property, entertainment, labor and employment, securities fraud, and white-collar criminal defense.

### Perrie Michael Weiner

*Partner in Charge of the Los Angeles Office, and Chair of the Firm's North America Securities Litigation Group*  
Baker McKenzie  
*Loyola Law School*  
**Litigation**



Perrie Weiner is the partner in charge of Baker McKenzie's Los Angeles office and chair of the firm's North America Securities Litigation Group. He joined the firm less than four years ago when there were only four lawyers in the LA. office.

While under his leadership, and despite these early and significant challenges, the Los Angeles office has seen tremendous growth, becoming one of Baker McKenzie's fastest-growing office locations. Opened in 2018 with four lawyers, the LA. office has grown under Weiner's leadership to 51 attorneys and professional staff providing notable expertise in securities litigation and SEC enforcement, lease litigation and restructuring, employment & compensation, M&A, capital markets, tax, consumer and privacy class actions, products liability, privacy compliance, and cybersecurity. With more than 30 years of experience, Weiner's practice focuses on securities litigation and enforcement matters, and complex business litigation.



### Jenifer C. Wallis

*Co-Managing Partner*  
Munck Wilson Mandala, LLP  
*Samford University*  
*Cumberland School of Law*  
**Intellectual Property**

Munck Wilson Mandala partner Jenifer Wallis is the co-managing partner of the Los Angeles office, making her the first woman at the firm to hold a managing partner title. Since joining the firm in 2019, her commitment to growth and professional excellence has helped MWM expand through business development and recruiting efforts. She has helped the firm grow from five to 14 attorneys in the LA. office in the past two years.

MWM's executive committee considers Wallis a trailblazer. She has demonstrated the highest commitment to expanding the firm brand in the LA. market and her knowledge of the culture has placed the firm's LA. office in the lead ahead of other firm offices in both attorney headcount and DEI initiatives. Through her effective recruiting, business development, and mentorship efforts, the LA. office boasts the highest percentage of female attorneys and an increased number of minority attorneys.



Willkie is proud to congratulate our partner **Alex Weingarten** on being recognized as a **2023 Visionary** by *L.A. Times B2B Publishing*

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**Buchalter**  
*congratulates*

Shareholder  
**JEREMY WEITZ**

Recognized as a  
2023 Visionary in  
The Business of Law

by L.A. Times B2B Publishing



## Alex M. Weingarten

*Managing Partner, Los Angeles Office*  
Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP  
*Georgetown University*  
**Litigation**



Alex Weingarten serves as managing partner of Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP's Los Angeles office and chair of the firm's Entertainment Litigation Practice. He is a leading commercial trial lawyer who represents clients in all facets of entertainment, probate, and business litigation. Clients look to Weingarten to handle "bet-the-company" cases, protect their integrity during the very public litigation process, provide a fresh approach, and suggest novel and overlooked strategies. He is aggressive in optimizing results and prides himself on finding the most direct route to victory. Weingarten is known for his tenacity and zealous advocacy on behalf of clients.

In addition to serving his clients, Weingarten joined Willkie as managing partner of the new Los Angeles office and co-led its launch and rapid expansion. On behalf of Selena Gomez, he is suing the developers of the game "Clothes Forever" for their unauthorized use of her name and likeness.

## Steven B. Weisburd

*Shareholder and Managing Partner of the Los Angeles Office*  
Carlton Fields, LLP  
**Litigation**



Known as the "case killer" for his success in securing defense verdicts, judgments, dismissals, or favorable settlements, trial and appellate lawyer Steven B. Weisburd has more than 30 years of experience litigating complex civil disputes, mass tort cases, and class actions for major corporate clients and product manufacturers, including high-profile cases of national and international significance. He has developed a reputation for winning the unwinnable and has become a go-to lawyer for clients seeking to derail bet-the-company litigation.

Among his successes, Weisburd was a lead legal architect behind Philip Morris' victory against virtually all odds in the foreign courts for the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), a former U.S. territory, which filed suit to recover all money spent by the RMI in treating smoking-related illnesses after the tobacco industry defendants settled similar lawsuits filed by the 50 states for hundreds of billions of dollars.

[Continued from page 10]

- 56% of corporate lawyers and 45% of law firm lawyers report increased demands for ESG guidance over the past year. Most say their organization is not very prepared to keep up.

Also, clearly established in 2022 is the trend on changes in how legal work gets done and who is doing it with each area showing increases over prior years:

- For corporate legal departments: 84% report greater use of contract staff; greater use of non-legal staff to perform work; and greater use of alternative legal service providers.
- For law firms: 81% report greater use of third-party or outsourced resources; 78% report greater use of non-legal staff to perform work and greater use of contract staff; and 77% report more client self-service.

The 2022 findings also build on prior years' survey results relating to performance trends, which show that across a wide range of areas legal organizations that fully leverage technology outperform organizations that do not.

- Law firms that fully embrace technology were once again

more profitable than those that do not: 63% of technology-leading firms report their profitability increased over the past year compared to 46% of other firms.

Legal organizations felt the impact of the "great resignation" over the past year, and based on survey findings, more talent challenges are coming:

- 86% of corporate lawyers and 70% of law firm lawyers say the great resignation has had a very or somewhat significant impact on their organization.
- 70% of corporate lawyers and 58% of law firm lawyers say they are very or somewhat likely to leave their current position in the next year.

Organizations are not well-prepared to handle the talent churn. Only:

- 33% of legal departments are very prepared to recruit/retain legal staff; 36% are very prepared to recruit/retain technology staff.
- 28% of law firms are very prepared to recruit/retain legal staff; 33% to recruit/retain technology staff.



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Technology is crucial to talent:

- 87% of corporate lawyers and 83% of lawyers in law firms say

it's extremely or very important to work for a legal organization that leverages technology.



### Michael R. Weiss

*Akerman LLP*  
Office Managing Partner  
*Santa Clara University*  
*School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Michael Weiss is the office managing partner at Akerman's Los Angeles office, overseeing over 50 attorneys and responsible for the day-to-day operations. He is an experienced litigator who guides clients through complex disputes, including real estate litigation, commercial and business disputes, and complex insurance insolvency matters. He is a member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum and has been recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal as a "Leader of Influence—Litigators & Trial Attorneys."

In 2022, he obtained a summary judgment on the eve of trial in favor of a multi-billion-dollar international salmon filet distributor and obtained a prejudgment writ of attachment and multi-million-dollar settlement on the eve of trial in a breach of contract case involving a failed real estate development project. He also obtained a summary judgment in favor of another multi-billion-dollar group of companies in two related commercial class actions. Additionally, Weiss fosters a culture of pro bono service, and the Los Angeles office collaborates with local organizations such as Our Big Kitchen Los Angeles to fight food insecurity.



### Jason T. Yu

*Partner*  
Snell & Wilmer  
*Loyola Law School*  
**Labor & Employment**

Jason Yu is a labor and employment and commercial litigation partner in the Los Angeles office of Snell & Wilmer, a full-service business law firm with more than 450 attorneys practicing in 16 locations throughout the United States and Mexico, including three offices in California. His practice focuses on a broad spectrum of employment liability, commercial litigation, intellectual property, and transactional work.

Yu has significant experience in cases involving debt collection, labor and employment law matters, and trade secret misappropriation. His clients are individuals and corporations, including major manufacturers, banking and financial institutions, transportation and shipping companies, import and export logistics companies, clothing manufacturers and retail clothing businesses, professional partnerships, and technology companies. As a labor and employment litigator, he offers his clients comprehensive advice relating to labor and employment law matters. He counsels clients regarding state and federal regulations affecting employers.

### Jason Ziven

*Of Counsel*  
Sanders Roberts LLP  
*University of Miami*  
**Entertainment and Sports**

Jason Ziven represents Fortune 500 companies, entrepreneurs, and high-profile entertainers in complex business litigation matters. He also advises live entertainment companies, digital native talent, musicians, and directors on transactional matters. His diverse background in business provides him with unique knowledge and relationships that benefit individuals and businesses when they are navigating legal and business issues. He also serves as a senior advisor to Ballard Partner, one of the largest national bipartisan public affairs firms.

Ziven's diversified high-level experiences and set of relationships in entertainment, real estate, financial, and political ecosystems provide him with a unique ability to advise his clients in both complex and highly sensitive litigation and transactional matters. Recently, many of the leading real estate and sports companies in Los Angeles, as well as high-profile talent and producers, have retained him to represent their interests in complex and sensitive business and employment litigation matters.



### Jeremy Weitz

*Shareholder*  
Buchalter  
*Loyola Law School*  
**Corporate**



Jeremy Weitz is chair of Buchalter's Corporate Practice Group and co-chair of the firm's Mergers & Acquisitions Practice. His expertise covers mergers and acquisitions, private equity, publicly and privately traded securities, venture capital, corporate maintenance and formation, corporate finance, and licensing. He represents clients in a variety of industries, including apparel, retail, beauty, food, fitness, technology, software, e-commerce, aerospace and defense, manufacturing, and entertainment that range in size from small start-ups to multi-billion-dollar publicly traded corporations. Weitz routinely serves as outside general counsel for his corporate clients.

He represents both buyers and sellers in merger and acquisition transactions. His mergers and acquisitions practice is focused on the middle market with transaction values ranging between \$10 million to \$3 billion. Weitz routinely lectures on mergers and acquisitions and the apparel industry. He has also served as a faculty lecturer for the Practising Law Institute.



### Bart H. Williams

*Partner, Chair of the Litigation Department*  
Proskauer  
*Yale Law School*  
**Litigation**

Bart Williams is one of the nation's most sought-after trial lawyers and commercial litigators. A leader within the Proskauer firm, he is the chair of the litigation department and heads the Los Angeles office. A strategic, diligent, and persuasive litigator with a wealth of experience across commercial litigation, white-collar criminal defense, and internal corporate investigations, Williams is equally expert at counseling clients on the management of their most complex litigation crises and trying their most important cases before juries and judges. He frequently is called in just months or even weeks before a trial to deliver the win.

Among Williams' recent notable representations has been his work as lead trial counsel for Gilead Sciences in various California state and federal product liability actions brought by ~20,000 plaintiffs related to Gilead's HIV prevention and treatment drugs.



### Richard J. Wittbrodt

*Partner*  
Gibbs Giden  
*Caruso Pepperdine School of Law*  
**Litigation**

Richard J. Wittbrodt is an equity partner at Gibbs Giden. He is recognized as a leading construction lawyer and a prolific speaker and author, including co-author of the seminal construction law treatise, *California Construction Law*. He has been a member of the governing committee for the ABA Forum on Construction Law, the largest organization of construction lawyers in the world.

Wittbrodt's primary emphasis is in construction litigation, including prosecuting and defending claims of delay, design issues, breach of contract, warranty of plans and specifications, prompt payment requirements, contract interpretation issues, lost profits, disruption, defective construction, mechanics lien, and stop notice foreclosure actions, for both public and private projects. He has experience representing owners, designers, general contractors, and subcontractors on multi-million-dollar complex cases involving hospitals, hotels, commercial structures, educational institutions, and transportation and other infrastructure projects. He is also a mediator and arbitrator with the American Arbitration Association.





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