

WOMEN IN LAW



Women Make Great Rainmakers

With the intensified push towards diversity, inclusion and equality, an increasing opportunity looms large for the women who want to rise up in their profession. Women have always been known to lift each other up and generally be more inclusive in interactions within their firms and with clients. For those who want to develop more business and increase their positions within their firms, as well as in the community, now is the time to step up business development efforts. Women rainmakers typically enjoy higher earnings, have more job control and influence at their firms.

As we move through this pandemic, all professional service providers look for new and meaningful ways to not only enhance client relationships, but also to build new ones. These days it's all about helping clients, referral sources and potential clients to solve their problems. This is not the time to push for new business. It is the right time to step up and find creative ways to help others unscramble their business issues. Not all of their problems may be legal – that is the point. This is the time to put skin in the game and your clients will not forget.



Merry Neitlich

Consider being the resource to whom others turn to for guidance and connections. Help amplify the voices of those who are struggling to be heard. Women tend to be more inclusive and open to hearing other's viewpoints. This is what inclusivity and diversity truly means. It is not just having faces of many colors within a firm or at the table. Be that person who encourages everyone's voice to be heard.

Consider involving clients and targets on social media. Share their content, make a genuine and meaningful comment about their posts – don't just "like" it. Make frequent short posts adding content and value that clients are seeking. Post fresh ideas; make new connections about information by synthesizing existing content. Consider interviewing others for quotes you can put in your posts or articles. Since LinkedIn is the number one social media platform for business be certain your Profile page is completed. Forbes reports 67% of individuals will check out your LinkedIn Profile before website bio.

We learned from the 2008 recession that those who stayed visible and helped others were the ones whom recovered the quickest and deepest. Be that woman.

Merry Neitlich is the founder and managing partner of EM Consulting. She is an award winning business development consultant inducted into both the Legal Marketing Association Hall of Fame and the College of Law Practice Management. Merry can be reached at merry@emconsulting.org, www.emconsulting.org or (949) 260-0936.



The Role of the Forensic Accountant in Dispute Resolution

by Deborah Dickson, CPA, CFF, MAFF, Managing Partner, Smith Dickson, Certified Public Accountants, LLP

For decades, plaintiffs and defendants alike have been motivated by having their day in court. This innate desire of human beings to prove themselves "right" has powered our justice system and made the legal profession one of the most demanding and rewarding. This has worked well until the Covid-19 pandemic hit and courtrooms across the nation began to close their doors. At first, many professionals in litigation support thought, "It's only a few weeks." Then, "It's only a few months." Now, along with attorneys, we must pivot and embark on a journey to the new normal.

As courts begin to re-open, many are backlogged, and matters are being re-prioritized to ensure what the court considers critical cases are addressed. Trial resolution for "non-critical" matters has become a daunting uncertainty. As a result, for many litigators the new normal involves a greater focus on other forms of dispute resolution. Those attorneys who are skilled in negotiation and mediation can benefit from understanding the powerful role a forensic CPA can play in the resolution process.



Deborah Dickson

The role of a forensic accountant is to transform complex financial data into calculations and a narrative that non-accountants can understand. Unlike lawyers, however, the rules governing the professional conduct of forensic CPAs forbid advocacy. Financial damages experts provide independent objective analysis, perform calculations, and report findings. This objectivity-based perspective allows the forensic accounting expert to offer impartial findings which enable both parties to more effectively resolve their differences and arrive at a resolution, often avoiding litigation in a courtroom setting. It is this independence, and the ability to clearly communicate damage calculations, that can make the forensic accountant a key player in dispute resolution.

Deborah Dickson, CPA, CFF, MAFF, Managing Partner, Smith Dickson, Certified Public Accountants, LLP (www.smithdickson.com) based in Irvine. The firm's Litigation Support Services include forensic accounting, expert testimony, intellectual property, fraud and embezzlement, real estate, trust and estate beneficiary disputes, employment law, and family law. Ph. (949) 553-1020.



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2020 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



NUHA A. ALOMAR

MEYER, OLSON, LOWY & MEYERS, LLP

Attorney Nuha Alomar brings a range of experience to her practice of family law. She helps clients with their challenges in divorce, child custody, domestic violence and support agreements. She offers a fresh and empathetic approach in her guidance of clients through every stage of litigation, including financial, legal and emotional issues that arise.

A graduate of Chapman University's School of Law, Alomar earned her undergraduate degree from University of California, Los Angeles. At Chapman, Alomar received CALI Awards for Highest Grades in Environmental Law and Trial Practice. She is a member of the Orange County Bar Association.

Alomar served as a certified law clerk with the Bette and Wylie Aitkin Family Protection Clinic in Orange, CA. While there, her work included counseling and interviewing clients, preparing protective orders and hosting educational sessions for clients representing themselves in legal hearings.

Concurrent to attending law school, Alomar gained experience as a clerk in several criminal law firms. She researched family law issues pertaining to custody, modification of settlement agreements and property disputes. She also performed legal research in the areas of real estate, trade and constitutional law.

Morgan Lewis



ELLEN S. BANCROFT

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP

Ellen Bancroft, a partner in the OC office of Morgan Lewis, has been consistently recognized as one of the leading corporate attorneys in Southern California. Bancroft has more than 25 years' experience in mergers and acquisitions, venture capital and private equity financings, IPOs and other public offerings. She has closed more than 70 public and private acquisitions, ranging in size from several million dollars to more than \$1 billion, and has advised clients in more than 50 registered public offerings. Bancroft's practice includes a broad range of corporate and securities transactional matters, SEC regulatory and compliance issues, as well corporate governance matters. Bancroft serves as outside general counsel to many of her clients and their management and boards of directors, helping to execute their business and legal strategies.

In 2019, Bancroft was named "Lawyer of the Year" by *Best Lawyers of America* in Securities/Capital Markets Law in OC and as the "Most Influential Woman in M&A Law" by *Acquisitions International*. She was also honored as the "IPO Lawyer of the Year" in both 2016 and 2018 by *Corporate LiveWire* and was the recipient of the 2018 Marcus M Kaufman Jurisprudence Award by the ADL. She has been included in the *Best Lawyers of America* since 2007 and as a California SuperLawyer by *Law and Politics Magazine* since 2009. Bancroft also received the OCBJ's Women in Business Award in 2012 and has been included in OCBJ's OC 500 since 2017.



AMANDA K. BEALL

MEYER, OLSON, LOWY & MEYERS, LLP

Family law attorney Amanda K. Beall has experience across all areas of family law, with a particular interest in contested custody cases. Beall began her career with Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers, where she is an associate. She previously served as an intern in the city attorney's office for the City of Corona.

In her representation of clients, Beall establishes an open line of communication and easy access for clients. She creates trust-based attorney-client relationships, working with clients to ensure they have clear expectations of possible outcomes in their matters.

Beall earned her J.D. from Chapman University, Fowler School of Law, where she received a merit scholarship. She is a graduate of University of California, San Diego, where she majored in political science. B.A.

A native of Orange County, Beall is a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. In addition, Amanda is a member of the Orange County Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division.

Stradling



CELESTE STAHL BRADY

SHAREHOLDER
STRADLING YOCOA
CARLSON & RAUTH

Celeste Stahl Brady helps public and private entities—including cities, housing authorities, and successor agencies—revitalize and develop affordable housing units, commercial spaces, and infrastructure projects to spur economic growth and achieve community goals throughout California. She has dedicated her legal career to planning, financing, structuring, and contracting for public projects, often through public-private partnerships that build, renovate, and operate projects funded by local, county, regional, state, and federal programs.

City attorneys, in-house counsel, and law firms consider Celeste their go-to special counsel for their most challenging development projects and programs related to affordable housing and economic development to revitalize retail, entertainment, auto dealerships, restaurant, and other businesses. Further, she skillfully advises clients on other public law matters, including land use planning, zoning, and entitlements; CEQA; acquisition and relocation; infrastructure financing; public records procedures and conflict-of-interest laws. Following the dissolution of California's redevelopment agencies in 2011-2012, Celeste continues to represent successor agencies in fulfilling their financial obligations and winding down their operations.

Mrs. Brady's expertise guides her and other Stradling clients through the hurdles of complex business transactions and legal issues, while she remains attentive to the intricacies of local laws and regulations. Celeste achieves effective and efficient results while balancing the demands of lenders, investors, and regulators—who often impose tight deadlines and other demands.

LATHAM & WATKINS



NIKKI BUFFA

LATHAM & WATKINS

Nikki Buffa is counsel in the Orange County and Washington, D.C. offices of Latham & Watkins and a member of the Environment, Land & Resources Department, and brings two decades of experience working on energy and environmental policy. Buffa focuses her practice on land use, energy and infrastructure, and environmental matters. A recent highlight of Buffa's work includes co-leading regulatory advisement of The Ocean Cleanup, a nonprofit committed to using advanced technologies to rid the world's oceans of trash. The Daily Journal bestowed a California Lawyer Attorneys of the Year (CLAY) award for legal work on the project, which it called "unprecedented in its scope and ambition."

Buffa rejoined Latham after serving eight years in the Obama Administration. As Deputy Chief of Staff at the United States Department of the Interior, she managed a diverse set of missions within the Department. Nikki Buffa was an associate at Latham (2006-2008) prior to joining the White House Council on Environmental Quality at the start of the Obama administration (2009-2011). She also served as the Deputy Director of Cabinet Affairs at the White House (2011-2013), and worked closely with senior White House staff and agency leadership at the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Energy, and Transportation.

Buffa currently advises developers, utilities, and other clients on all aspects of project development from initial permitting and entitlement strategy through governmental approvals incorporating legal, political, community and public relations issues. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the Irvine Ranch Conservancy and the National Parks Conservation Association.

Stradling



ALLISON BURNS

STRADLING YOCOA
CARLSON & RAUTH

Allison Burns has particular experience in local agency governance matters, civil rights litigation, eminent domain, general real estate litigation, contract disputes, and construction disputes.

Her experience also includes economic development; affordable housing litigation; land use and planning litigation and representation; relocation and acquisition disputes; conflicts of interest; Public Records Act and Brown Act challenges, compliance and litigation; environmental contamination and remediation cost-recovery actions; water rights; and the dissolution of redevelopment.

Burns serves as city attorney to the city of Lancaster and general counsel to the Chino Basin Desalter Authority, Emerald Bay Service District, Spalding Community Services District, San Juan Basin Authority, Antelope Valley Transit Authority, Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District and Santiago Aqueduct Commission.

Her litigation experience includes Constitutional and civil rights challenges to governmental programs and actions; Development agreement disputes; Eminent domain representing both condemnees and condemnors; Breaches of covenants, conditions and restrictions; Foreclosure of taxes, special assessments, and liens; Construction disputes; Contamination and remediation cost-recovery actions; Evictions; Challenges to bond issuances; Affordable housing disputes, including challenges to expenditures from low-and-moderate-income housing funds.

Latham Commends All of the Outstanding Women in Law



MICHELE JOHNSON
Partner, Securities Litigation
& Professional Liability



HILARY A. SHALLA
Partner, Real Estate



MICHELLE L.C. CARPENTER
Partner, Benefits
& Compensation



NIKKI BUFFA
Counsel, Project Siting
& Approvals



KRISTIN N. MURPHY
Counsel, Securities Litigation
& Professional Liability

Raising the Bar.

We are proud of these five lawyers and grateful for their unmatched contributions to the legal profession, our firm, and our communities. Each embodies the talent, character, commitment, and leadership that are foundational to the culture of Latham & Watkins. We are thrilled for their recognition here, and look forward to an inaugural *Profiles of Excellence in Law*.

2020 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



KRYSTLE CAPONIO

KRYSTLE CAPONIO, ESQ.

Krystle Caponio is a legal executive with a decade of experience in the commercial space industry. She specializes in regulatory compliance for space operations, international transactions, government and commercial contracts, as well as management and corporate governance.

Most recently, Caponio served as General Counsel at Tyvak Nano-Satellite Systems, Inc. in Irvine, California. Prior to this, Caponio worked at Space Exploration Technologies Corp. (SpaceX), during her tenure serving in the roles of Legal Counsel, Trade Compliance Officer, and Contracts Officer. Caponio's experience has enabled her to become a strategic leader with focus on building and managing legal and compliance departments within growing aerospace start-ups.

In 2018, Caponio received a prestigious First Chair Award as Top Compliance Counsel. The First Chair Awards recognizes America's most innovative and accomplished in-house counsel for their achievements and significant contributions to the legal community.

Caponio graduated with College Honors from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2003 with a Bachelor of Arts in English with a Philosophy minor. She went on to earn her Juris Doctor from Loyola Law School, Los Angeles in 2008, and was a recipient of the Dean's Merit Scholarship for all three years. Caponio is currently attending the Graziadio Business School at Pepperdine University, pursuing a Master of Science in Management.

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MICHELLE L.C. CARPENTER

LATHAM & WATKINS

Michelle Carpenter is a partner in the Tax Department and member of Latham's global Benefits, Compensation & Employment Practice, based in both the firm's Los Angeles and Orange County offices.

She advises clients on a broad range of executive compensation arrangements and employee-related matters across a variety of industries, with extensive experience working with both public and private companies, as well as private equity and venture capital firms.

In particular, Carpenter advises clients on the executive compensation and employee benefits aspects of their most complex and important transactions, from initial public offerings, to spin-offs, to mergers and acquisitions. Carpenter has deep experience advising public companies, and those going public, on a regular basis regarding ongoing executive compensation matters (including governance, as well as securities law reporting and compliance).

Carpenter is known in the marketplace for her thought leadership on clawback provisions in compensation packages, and she regularly presents on this topic at conferences and in client trainings. She is a recommended lawyer for Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation by *The Legal 500 US*, and was selected as "Southern California Rising Star" by *Super Lawyers* for Tax. Carpenter is a Board Member of Bet Tezdek, a nonprofit organization that provides free, comprehensive legal services for low income residents in Los Angeles.



SAMANTHA DOREY

EVERETT DOREY LLP

Samantha Dorey is a founding partner of Everett Dorey LLP, a full service civil litigation firm that represents multi-national corporations, non-profits, cities, public agencies and school districts in all aspects of litigation. She specializes in complex civil litigation with an emphasis in catastrophic injury, public entity defense, employment law, mass tort, asbestos litigation and environmental law. She also regularly advises clients on non-litigated matters, including development of risk management protocols and procedures related to property management and environmental issues.

As a leading litigation firm in California routinely retained as trial counsel in complex and challenging cases throughout the state, Dorey has shaped a firm of exceptionally talented litigators with diverse cultural and personal backgrounds, with particular focus on creating an environment that empowers female attorneys.

Dorey is an Adjunct Professor at Chapman University, Dale E. Fowler School of Law where she teaches a course on litigation strategy and civil procedure. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Public Law Center. She has received numerous industry awards, including her recent recognition as a 2020 Woman Entrepreneur under 40 by the National Association of Women Business Owners.



JENNIFER FARRELL

RUTAN & TUCKER, LLP

Jennifer Farrell is a partner at Rutan & Tucker, LLP, one of California's largest and premier full service law firms. She represents business and real estate owners, municipal governments and special districts with both transactional and litigation matters relating to election challenges, land use and zoning laws, medical marijuana dispensaries, the scope and jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission, the dissolution of redevelopment agencies, housing element law and property tax allocations.

She currently serves as assistant city attorney for the cities of Dana Point and Twentynine Palms, and assistant general counsel for the Morongo Basin Transit Authority. In these roles, she regularly attends planning commission, city council, and district meetings and advises these entities on a host of legal issues including but not limited to the Brown Act, Public Records Act, California Environmental Quality Act, election law, and cannabis related matters.

She regularly handles cases before the California Court of Appeal and has appeared before the California Supreme Court in a case involving the proper method by which to appeal a city council issued legislative subpoena. She has also handled several cases involving the appointment of a receiver to oversee the rehabilitation of substandard properties.

Farrell also serves as chairwoman of the Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce.



ANETA FERGUSON

AVANIR PHARMACEUTICALS

Aneta Ferguson, J.D. serves as executive director, general counsel for Avanir Pharmaceuticals, a pharmaceutical company

committed to delivering innovative central nervous system solutions. Under her leadership, the Law Department is responsible for counseling Avanir on FDA regulatory matters, product life cycle management, drafting and negotiating commercial and government contracts, employment law and corporate transactions.

Prior to joining Avanir in 2015, Ferguson was an associate attorney at a well-regarded Orange County firm where she served as corporate counsel to a variety of public and private companies with a focus on mergers and acquisitions, capital market transactions, securities matters and general corporate advice.

Ferguson has extensive experience advising and consulting with all levels of an organization, including senior leadership and boards of directors, to identify critical legal issues, assessing potential legal options and providing business teams with a range of possible legal solutions.

She earned a Master of Law from University of Silesia in Poland, and a Juris Doctorate from the University of California Los Angeles.



MONICA GOEL

TLD LAW

Monica Goel, with over twenty years of legal experience, is a Certified Legal Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law by the California Board of Legal Specialization. Her practice focuses on estate planning, trust administration, probate administration, conservatorships, elder law, trust and probate litigation. Her specialty in any legal setting is in handling sticky or complex situations. She primarily works out of the firm's Irvine and Long Beach offices.

She has been rated "superb" by AVVO, has been named as one of the top estate planning attorneys in 2019 and 2020 by Super Lawyers in Trusts and Estates, and is rated AV-Preeminent by Martindale Hubbell.

Goel is a published author in the Daily Journal and OC Lawyer Magazine. She is a frequent lecturer on trust administration, probate administration, court accountings, liability for fiduciaries, and legal ethics in estate administration.

Goel is a member of the PVP panel for the LA Superior Court and is routinely appointed by the court to represent incapacitated persons and advise the court regarding appointment of conservators.

She was previously an adjunct professor at Cerritos College in the Certified Paralegal Program and is currently on the Trustee Advisory Committee therein. In addition, she was an adjunct professor at UCI in the paralegal program in Estate Planning.

Goel received her B.A. in History from UCLA, and her J.D. from the University of Southern California.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of several overlapping geometric shapes in shades of blue and teal, creating a modern, abstract look.

Women In Law Make an Impact

Stradling is proud to honor the women of our firm who bring passion, experience and drive to help our clients, firm and communities. We honor their impact.

Celeste Stahl Brady

Allison Burns

Karla Kraft

Vanessa Legbandt

Carol Lew

Kathleen Marcus

We are a premier business law firm with 110+ lawyers in 10 West Coast locations. Top companies and municipalities count on us for the right team and skills to meet their toughest challenges 24/7, 365 days a year.

2020 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



JAIMI M. GROOTHUIS

BENTLEY & MORE

Jaimi Groothuis is a partner at Bentley & More whose practice focuses on product liability, premises liability, catastrophic personal injury, and construction site accidents. She came to Bentley & More with a strong passion for serving her community and those with special needs. Groothuis' career is highlighted by a series of significant cases and settlements. Such cases include a \$26 million settlement in a car accident case involving the wrongful death of one passenger and leaving another with a catastrophic brain injury and a number of premises liability cases. Groothuis also led a litigation team that obtained an eight-figure settlement on behalf of a group of clients injured by alleged product defects. Groothuis received her undergraduate degree from UCLA, where she focused on working with disabled individuals through the UCLA Autism Project and the LA Unified School District. Groothuis completed her law degree at night while working full-time. She graduated from Concord University in the top 10% of her class and was awarded the honor "Best Oral Advocate." Groothuis has served on the board of directors for both the state and local women lawyers associations. In 2018, she served as president of the Orange County Women Lawyers Association and continues to serve on the Foundation's board of directors. Groothuis was named a Rising Star by Super Lawyers Magazine in 2019 and 2020. She carries with her an undeniable passion for law & dedication to obtaining justice for her clients.



LISA HELFEND MEYER

MEYER, OLSON, LOWY & MEYERS, LLP

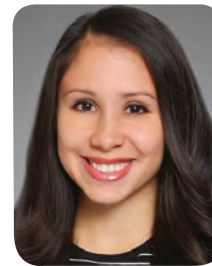
Family law attorney Lisa Helfend Meyer works hard to achieve unexpected outcomes for her clients in high-stakes divorce and custody disputes. Meyer has successfully tried complex family law matters in multiple states and involving international jurisdictions. Her strength in the courtroom and legal arena supports her clients' emergence as stronger and confident individuals.

Meyer is a certified Family Law Specialist, an elite designation conferred by the State Bar of California. She has built a reputation for taking on the toughest cases — matters other attorneys reject — and prevailing in high-asset and high-conflict family law matters.

Meyer represents both men and women, as well as their spouses in bet-the-company and complex divorce, custody and paternity cases. Her clients work in many industries including entertainment, finance, professional sports and technology, as well in the law, medicine and accounting. Meyer works discreetly to protect clients' rights and need for privacy.

As a media commentator, Meyer has expressed her expert opinion in the Associated Press, *Los Angeles Times*, Today Show, CNN, Court TV and Fox News and other media outlets. She gained national prominence for one case, in which she secured visitation rights for a mother of triplets who fell into a coma while giving birth.

After Meyer graduated from Loyola Law School, she began her career focused on domestic violence cases. Meyer has been recognized by *Super Lawyers* for the past 15 years, including as a top 50 women attorney in Southern California.



FRANCES HERNANDEZ

SHEPPARD MULLIN

Frances Hernandez grew up in Orange County, and earned her undergraduate degree from UC Irvine (where she was Captain of the UC Irvine Women's Soccer Team).

After graduating from UC Irvine magna cum laude, Frances attended Columbia Law School and was awarded the prestigious Hamilton Fellowship. She then joined Sheppard Mullin's Costa Mesa office where she has spent her entire legal career. Frances is the co-founder and co-chair of the firm's OC Families Group which regularly hosts unique family-friendly professional networking events for Sheppard Mullin's clients and their families.

Frances continues to live in Orange County with her husband and two children. She is dedicated to supporting local Orange County non-profits and serves on the Board of Directors for the Regional Center of Orange County, and as the Vice-Chair for the Board of Directors at Mary's Path.

Frances defends employers against lawsuits for discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, and individual and representative wage and hour actions.

Frances also advises employers re: wage and hour compliance, handbooks and personnel policies, employee hiring, discipline and terminations, leaves of absence, reasonable accommodations, and employment agreements. She has been a lecturer at the Professionals in Human Resources Association (PIHRA).



SHANNON M. JENKINS

TLD LAW

Shannon M. Jenkins, a seasoned employment defense attorney is the managing partner of TLD Law. She works with all sizes of employers and executives in business litigation and employment-related disputes.

She guides employers through individual and class action cases, administrative judicial forums including the Labor Commissioner, the Employment Development Department (EDD), the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and alternative dispute resolution. She successfully defends sexual and other harassment claims, alleged discrimination assertions, breach of employment, confidentiality unfair competition and trade-secret agreements (including prosecution to protect employer rights), wage and hour disputes, breach of confidentiality agreements, breach of fiduciary duty, wrongful termination and all manner of related tort and contract claims.

Representative clients include manufacturing, banking, software, construction, hospitality, staffing, medical and veterinary practices, trucking and all manner of professional services firms. Shannon is proud to represent these clients in common issues they face while also understanding and meeting their individualized and particularized needs. Shannon strives to solve employer problems utilizing an appropriately aggressive approach balanced with principles of fairness, diversity and inclusion both in the clients' workplace and in her practice.



JENNIFER R. JOHNSON

THE LAW OFFICE OF JENNIFER R. JOHNSON

Jennifer R. Johnson, of The Law Office of Jennifer R. Johnson has dedicated her life to helping others. She was raised in North

Dakota and South Dakota, the daughter of a pastor. Ms. Johnson's firm focuses on the representation of individuals injured due to the negligence of others.

Ms. Johnson was a registered nurse working in intensive care units prior to attending law school. After law school, Ms. Johnson moved to California where she passed the California Bar Examination. She has practiced law in California and other parts of the country ever since.

Ms. Johnson spent the first eight years of her career representing doctors and hospitals in medical malpractice cases. She then joined a Plaintiffs' firm dedicated to the representation of injured people where she worked for ten years on both medical malpractice and product liability pharmaceutical cases. In 2012, Ms. Johnson started her own law firm. She is AV® Preeminent rated by Martindale Hubbell, the organization's highest rating for legal ability and ethical standards.

In addition to being actively involved in her legal community, Ms. Johnson is a member of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Swim With Mike, a scholarship that provides education for athletes that became disabled as a result of illness or injury.



MICHELE D. JOHNSON

LATHAM & WATKINS LLP

Michele Johnson, global chair of the Litigation & Trial Department of Latham & Watkins, is one of the most renowned trial-minded litigators in the country. Her bet-the-company cases are among those most closely

watched by lawyers and business leaders, including securities fraud class actions, corporate governance challenges, shareholder derivative suits, insider trading claims, proxy contests, financial restatements, and other commercial disputes. This year, Johnson won summary judgment on behalf of the U.S. Soccer Federation as lead trial counsel in its litigation with the U.S. Senior Women's National Team regarding equal pay, in a win named Litigator of the Week by *The American Lawyer*.

Johnson was recognized by *The Daily Journal* for the California Lawyer Attorneys of the Year (CLAY) Award 2020, selected as a Top Rated Securities Litigation Attorney by *Super Lawyers* 2020, named one of Benchmark's Top Women in Litigation by *Euromoney* 2020, and honored as a Leading Lawyer for M&A Litigation by *The Legal 500 US* 2020. She was also recently named to the 25 Most Influential Women in Securities Law by *Law360*, the Top Women Lawyers list in California by the *Daily Journal*, and the Profiles in Diversity Journal's list of Women Worth Watching. A former member of Latham's Executive Committee and the former managing partner of the Orange County Office, Johnson serves on the boards of the Georgetown University Law Center, the Berkeley Center for Law and Business, the Public Law Center, and the Orange County Bar Foundation's Project Youth and is past President of the Orange County chapter of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers.

THE GOAL OF HELPING PEOPLE HAS ALWAYS BEEN **The Driving Force**



As a former nurse,

current lawyer and longtime advocate of social justice, Jennifer Johnson has dedicated both her personal and professional life to making a difference in her community. "Often, the people I represent wouldn't have a voice," she says, "and that's why it's such an incredible honor to represent them in the court of law."

In her legal practice, Ms. Johnson concentrates on catastrophic personal injury, wrongful death, medical malpractice and elder abuse, providing injured individuals with committed and compassionate representation in Southern California and many other parts of the country. "I focus on cases that cry out for justice, because I strongly believe that access to justice is not a privilege for the few, but a right for all," she says.

Prior to attending law school, Ms. Johnson served in one of the country's most trusted professions—nursing. And in establishing her own law firm, she drew on her experience in that field, as well as on her expertise from working first at two prestigious defense firms and then at a national powerhouse plaintiff firm. "People often ask why I became a lawyer after already being a successful ICU- nurse," says Ms. Johnson, who has practiced law since 1992. "As a nurse and a lawyer, my motivation has been the same: to make a difference in people's lives."



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2020 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES


BARBARA KLEIN

KLEIN FAMILY LAW

Barbara Klein is an experienced Family Law attorney who focuses her practice exclusively on Family Law matters, with an emphasis on high value asset divorces, in Orange County. She is a Certified Family Law

Specialist whose vast knowledge of the intricacies and fast changing laws, provides an advantage to her clients. Klein approaches each dissolution of marriage case as unique. First, identifying the issues and strategizing a plan for settlement or preparation for trial.

Klein started her practice with the goal to provide individual, personal representation to a small number of cases. Dissolution of Marriage matters involve personal relationships as well as the division of property. Klein tailors her representation of each client starting with a plan for resolution, by agreement or court intervention. Klein's experience results in the majority of her cases resolving by settlement. However, if resolution cannot be reached Barbara has extensive courtroom experience.

Klein's detail and taking initiative, in each and every case, to move the case along to resolution is what has supported Barbara's practice of client referrals and repeat clients. Barbara Klein's practice is unique and tailored to providing the best legal representation to steer a client through a dissolution of marriage which involves changes in personal relationships as well as financial.

Stradling


KARLA KRAFT

 STRADLING YOCCHA
CARLSON & RAUTH

In a career marked by professional relationships that are both lasting and durable, Karla Kraft is frequently asked to

litigate types of matters she has not previously encountered. This is a testament, not just to the trust placed in her by long-term clients, but also to her comfort level in facing new challenges. As a consequence, she represents clients across a broad range of complex commercial litigation matters.

Much of Kraft's work focuses on defending employment litigation, including both single plaintiff cases and wage-and-hour class actions. But she also tries trade secret disputes for technology companies, and defends class action suits against large consumer product companies and financial services providers.

Clients credit Kraft with an instinctive ability to balance the legal aspects of a lawsuit with the business considerations underlying them. She recognizes that the goals of each case are different, and that they don't necessarily fit within a standard win-or-lose scenario. Accordingly, she works with clients to define objectives up front, so that she can properly gauge the range of strategies available to achieve them. This approach leads to business-smart resolutions and ensures that matters are conducted efficiently, with small teams and reasonable amounts of research.

RUTAN RUTAN & TUCKER, LLP


GLORIA LEE

RUTAN & TUCKER, LLP

Gloria Lee is the Client Relations Partner at Rutan & Tucker, LLP, Orange County's largest and premier full service law firm. In her role, she spearheads the firm's strategic partnerships and growth of business

development opportunities for the firm. She has helped originate and manages over 100 institutional clients across industries including technology, retail, restaurants, real estate, banking and healthcare.

Lee spends a significant amount of time connecting leaders of the business and legal community through industry or innovative events. She regularly introduces companies to high profile job candidates and connects people to potential investors as well as public company and non-profit board seat opportunities.

Prior to becoming the firm's client relations partner in 2014, Lee represented developers, lenders, landlords and tenants in all aspects of real estate transactions and was named a Super Lawyer or Rising Star from 2012-2018.

Lee has received several state and national accolades for her community involvement including serving on five (5) local and national charitable boards and her efforts to diversify the legal profession.

Lee received her BA and MA concurrently in four years from Stanford University where she graduated with distinction and played on the three time national champion badminton team. She earned her JD from UC Berkeley School of Law and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the UC Berkeley Law School Alumni Association.

Stradling


VANESSA LEGBANDT

 STRADLING YOCCHA
CARLSON & RAUTH

Within California's complicated and heavily-regulated municipal debt framework, Vanessa Legbandt provides clarity for public agencies

that seek to raise financing for public facilities. Whether Legbandt is acting as bond counsel or disclosure counsel to public agencies, or as underwriter's counsel to a financial institution, her honest, straightforward approach helps clients make informed decisions in matters involving lease revenue financings, utility revenue financings, land-secured financings and tax allocation bond refundings. She also represents public agencies and developers in financing and structuring various economic development projects. She has advised numerous clients regarding the procedures and relative costs and benefits of forming and issuing debt through enhanced infrastructure financing districts.

Legbandt's experience as a public finance attorney, as well as representing public entities in connection with a variety of public private partnership arrangements, gives her a firm grasp on her clients' goals and objectives, and the perspective to explore alternatives to their legal restrictions. When her clients are faced with complicated or uncertain legal concerns, Legbandt thoroughly evaluates the factual circumstances against all applicable laws and regulations before presenting the options and approaches that best suit their needs. In less complicated transactions, clients appreciate her simple, straightforward transaction documents and her ability to resolve any issues quickly. Undaunted by the fast pace of municipal financings, Legbandt meets all required timeframes and staff transactions appropriately to ensure she obtains the most beneficial financing for her clients.

Stradling


CAROL LEW

 STRADLING YOCCHA
CARLSON & RAUTH

For state and local governments and nonprofit organizations raising money for public infrastructure and other projects, Carol Lew's proven tax advice is a critical piece of the

complex financing puzzle. With more than 30 years of federal tax law experience, Lew is nationally recognized for her ability to apply her in-depth knowledge of the Internal Revenue Code to tax-advantaged debt financings. The complicated tax analyses she undertakes keep issuers and buyers in compliance with all federal tax laws and help communities thrive.

Lew's sought-after tax advice helps states, highway authorities, water districts, housing authorities, hospitals, school districts and municipal agencies and nonprofits finance development projects through a variety of sources, including tax-advantaged and taxable bonds, and public/private partnerships. Many clients also rely on Lew for post-issuance compliance advice. If the IRS audits a bond issuer or buyer, she steps in to resolve any outstanding tax issues quickly. Lew also assists with voluntary closing agreements and private letter ruling requests.

When clients work with Lew, they get the full benefit of her cutting-edge insight and long-standing leadership in the organizations helping shape today's U.S. tax laws. She currently serves on the IRS IRSAC advisory committee that provides advice directly to the IRS Commissioner on a broad range of tax matters. Lew has also served as President of the National Association of Bond Lawyers and as Chair of The American Bar Association Taxation Section's Tax-Exempt Financing Committee.

MEYER-OLSON LOWY-MEYERS FAMILY LAW


DANA LOWY

 MEYER, OLSON, LOWY &
MEYERS, LLP

Founding partner Dana Lowy represents high net worth women and men in all types of family law matters, from prenuptial and postnuptial

agreements to marital dissolution actions. She protects her clients' financial interests while also considering the emotional aspects that often arise.

Lowy has guided multiple generations of dynastic families, high-profile entertainers, athletes, executives and remarried baby boomers in successfully negotiated agreements. These agreements protect assets and honor clients' wishes while focusing on each client's individual goals and needs.

Lowy eases the path to agreement from the beginning, helping clients communicate with their partners about the process and identifying key areas of protections under California law. She often coordinates with her clients' professional teams, such as business managers, advisors, accountants, and family offices, to ensure efficient and comprehensive strategies that result in fair and reasonable premarital agreements.

Lowy has managed the full range of family issues during her more than 25 years of practice, including mediated divorce settlements and/or resolution, contentious litigation, to post-divorce disputes and parentage actions.

A *summa cum laude* graduate of Southwestern Law School and University of California, Santa Barbara, Lowy is named among the "Top 50: 2019 Women Southern California Super Lawyers List." Lowy customizes her discreet, direct and personal approach to address clients' unique concerns over their financial futures and well-being.

2020 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



CLARE H. LUCICH

BENTLEY & MORE LLP

Clare Lucich is a partner with Bentley & More LLP in Newport Beach, California, and previously worked as a litigator at an AmLaw 100 firm. Her current practice includes personal injury, insurance bad faith, products liability, and governmental claims. Since 2013 she has worked on a number of high-profile cases and trials for plaintiffs throughout California. One of which includes a \$12 million wrongful death settlement against the City of Los Angeles on behalf of the family of Alice Gruppioni, an Italian newlywed tragically killed on her honeymoon when struck by a vehicle on the Venice Beach Boardwalk. Lucich has also secured monetary settlements and important safety improvements in multiple government entity cases including the implementation of a roadway improvement project. Currently, Lucich serves as a board member for the Consumer Attorneys of California and the Orange County Trial Lawyers Association. She received her Juris Doctor, magna cum laude, from Pepperdine University School of Law in 2012. From 2016-2020 she was named a Rising Star by Super Lawyers Magazine, and in 2020 was also named one of the top 25 up-and-coming Orange County Rising Stars and one of the top 50 up-and-coming Women Rising Stars in Southern California. She also earned one of the top 100 personal injury verdicts in California in 2018. Lucich is passionate about advocating for her clients and working to gain justice on their behalf.

SheppardMullin



JACQUELINE LUTHER

SHEPPARD MULLIN

Jacqueline Luther was born and raised in Orange County and currently lives in Huntington Beach with her husband, two daughters, and goldendoodle puppy. She has spent her entire legal career at Sheppard Mullin and her youngest daughter was born on the day that she made partner – definitely a memorable day!

Luther is an experienced trial lawyer who handles administrative, trial court, and appellate proceedings in both state and federal courts.

Luther represents businesses and financial institutions in enforcing secured and unsecured loan obligations, obtaining attachments, injunctions, restraining orders, receiverships, and other pre-judgment remedies. She also handles real property and UCC foreclosures, and defends clients against lender liability, sham guaranty, and unfair business practice claims. Luther is particularly skilled at enforcing and collecting judgments at both the trial and appellate court levels.

Luther also represents clients in trust and estates litigation. She prosecutes and defends disputes involving breach of fiduciary duty/surcharge actions, interpretation issues, will and trust contests, and entitlement claims, both in the court system and before alternative dispute resolution forums.

Luther received her law degree from Loyola Law School, cum laude, where she was Order of the Coif, and her undergraduate degree from U.C. Santa Barbara.

Stradling



KATHLEEN MARCUS

STRADLING YOCCA
CARLSON & RAUTH

Kathleen M. Marcus is co-chair of Stradling's Enforcement Defense & Investigations practice group. She also leads the firm's Compliance & Corporate Governance practice group. Marcus is also active in firm management as a member of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

As a former senior counsel with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission's Division of Enforcement, Marcus is experienced in representing and advising clients who become the target of government investigations. Marcus' practice focuses on government and regulatory enforcement defense, internal investigations, and compliance counseling.

Marcus routinely manages investigations before the DOJ, SEC, Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Communications Commission and various state agencies. She has substantial experience in matters involving accusations of fraud, the False Claims Act, accounting and disclosure issues, insider trading, the FCPA, investment advisor regulations, audit defense, cybersecurity, commodities, and violations of the Federal Anti-Kickback statute and other healthcare regulations.

Marcus regularly handles internal investigations for companies, boards of directors and special committees. As part of the investigation process, she guides companies through an analysis of potential risks, measures to reduce costs, strategies to avoid or limit sanctions, and issues involving attorney-client privilege.



Jennifer Farrell

Partner, Government & Regulatory



Gloria Lee

Client Relations Partner



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SANA F. MASHEDY

MEYER, OLSON, LOWY & MEYERS, LLP

Family law attorney Sana Mashedy has experience with a wide range of issues that arise in the course of divorces, custody disputes, litigation and related financial agreements. In her counsel, Mashedy adopts a client-centric approach throughout the process of marital separation, dissolution and its aftermath.

Mashedy recognizes that each client has a different story, and she creates individualized strategies to meet the needs of each client and to tell their personal story. Mashedy empowers clients by giving them knowledge, from basic information and descriptions of legal terms to appellate court rulings on specific issues. She adds further value to her representations through assiduous case preparation and presentation.

A native of Orange County, Mashedy earned her J.D. from Southwestern Law School following her undergraduate studies at University of California, Irvine. While in law school, Mashedy volunteered at domestic violence clinics. She applied compassionate listening skills throughout her practice, often curating them into aggressive litigation.



LAILA MASUD

MARSHACK HAYS LLP

"There really is no better time for women to enter the legal profession." Ruth Bader Ginsberg, February 2020.

Taking this saying to heart and always armed with a cup of coffee, Laila Masud litigates complex bankruptcy and creditor rights issues at Marshack Hays LLP in Irvine.

Masud, a graduate of UCI and Pepperdine, was admitted to practice in 2016. She previously served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Thomas B. Donovan and extern for the Honorable Vincent P. Zurzolo in the Los Angeles Division of the Bankruptcy Court. Masud currently serves as the youngest president of the OCBA's Commercial Law and Bankruptcy Section and is a member of the International Women's Insolvency & Restructuring Confederation.

Masud's typical quarantine-work day ranges from representing thousands of PG&E fire victims in the sixth largest bankruptcy in U.S. history to representing various Chapter 7 trustees. Masud's reputation for professionalism and integrity is impeccable, to the point where counsel who have opposed her on one case refer to her work in future cases. Advocating attentively, Masud's individual clients will tell you of her compassion while her business clients will tell you of her strategic thinking. To some of her clients, she is known as Madam President for her tactful diplomacy. Masud's poise, grace, and intellect serve her and her clients well.

Although it has been 100 years since the ratification of the 19th Amendment, there is certainly more glass to be shattered... and Ms. Masud packs a big hammer.



AMY MARTINEZ

RMO LLP

Probate litigator Amy Martinez practices in the Costa Mesa office of RMO, LLP. For more than a decade, Martinez has worked to forge client and business relationships built on empathy and common goals. Her approach gives her the confidence to hold her clients' hands through the litigation process, which often is a new, unfamiliar and frightening experience for them.

An experienced litigator, Martinez knows the emotional toll litigated disputes have on clients, not to mention the financial toll. For these reasons, In every case Martinez develops strategic litigation alternatives to maximize results and reduce litigation time and spend, including, as appropriate, early mediation and creative settlement options aimed at swiftly and economically securing favorable results for her clients.

Martinez concentrates her litigation practice in probate in representing beneficiaries and professional and corporate fiduciaries — administrators, executors, trustees, conservators, and guardians — in contested trust, estate, conservatorship litigation before local probate courts. Martinez was honored as valedictorian of her class at Chapman University School of Law. She also earned her undergraduate degree in political science, *cum laude*, at Chapman. Martinez serves as an adjunct professor at her law school alma mater.

Admitted to all district courts in California as well as the Supreme Court of California, Martinez is a member of the Orange County Bar Association, serving in the trusts and estates and business litigation sections, and a member of ProVisors.

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FELICIA R. MEYERS

MEYER, OLSON, LOWY & MEYERS, LLP

Felicia R. Meyers is a family law attorney who specializes in large marital estates and high-conflict custody matters. Meyers focuses on complex litigation and trials, leveraging her extensive background as a civil litigator. She has successfully championed efforts relating to family law issues, such as international move-away cases, custody cases and high assets cases.

In the past several years, Meyers has been involved in diverse, complex trials in courtrooms across California. She was the lead trial lawyer in a case of first impression in *IRMO Macilwaine* (2018) 26 Cal.App.5th514. The court of appeal held that stock options must be recognized as income for purposes of child support when granted and available to the employee, regardless of whether the spouse elects to exercise the option and sell the shares of stock.

In another matter, Meyers was one of the lead attorneys in the case *J.M. v. G.H.* (2014) 228 Cal.App.4th 925, as modified on denial of rehearing (Sept. 5, 2014), review denied (October 22, 2014), which was an international move-away case. Meyers most recently represented the husband at trial, in which the court deemed the foreign Judgment of Divorce was valid, denying the wife's claims for support.

Meyers is the former Chairperson of the Family Law Section of the Beverly Hills Bar Association and a recipient of its impressive President's Award for her service to the legal community. Meyers has been selected as a "Super Lawyer" for at least the past 10 years.

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KRISTIN N. MURPHY

LATHAM & WATKINS

Kristin Murphy is counsel in the Orange County office, and serves on the Women Enriching Business (WEB) Committee. She has also served on the firm's Recruiting Committee and Equal Employment Opportunity Board.

Murphy advises clients on complex business litigation, with an emphasis on securities and commodities fraud, mergers and acquisitions, shareholder derivative actions, and class action litigation. She has represented early and late-stage pharmaceutical companies, technology companies, energy companies, and real estate investment trusts. Murphy's recent representations include special committee engagements in controlling stockholder transactions, multijurisdictional litigation arising out of solicited and hostile takeover attempts, and investigations and litigation on behalf of special committees and boards of directors related to public company crises. She also recently represented a biotech company in a rare Section 10(b) securities class action trial in the US District Court for the Central District of California, defeating more than 95% of plaintiffs' claimed damages in a case named by the *Daily Journal* as one of the Top Verdicts of 2019 (*Hsu v. Puma Biotechnology, Inc.*)

Murphy was most recently named a Recommended Lawyer and Rising Star for M&A Litigation: Defense by the *Legal 500* and has actively contributed to several thought leadership pieces on US public company acquisitions.



DOREEN MARIE OLSON

MEYER, OLSON, LOWY & MEYERS, LLP

Family law expert Doreen Marie Olson offers a big-picture and realistic perspective that combines respect, compassion and clients' long-term well-being. Olson leads men and women through all aspects of divorce and asset dissolution. She has in-depth experience with child custody issues and has helped resolve the most contentious and complex custody fights during her 25 years of practice.

Olson is a California Certified Family Law Specialist, a designation earned by an elite group of attorneys. As part of her holistic representation, Olson draws from her network of professionals, including educational specialists, therapists and parenting coaches, to create custody agreements that support parents, children and the future of their families. She aims to make the process productive so clients can protect their families and move forward to the next, happier stage of their lives. A graduate of Whittier College School of Law and University of California, Los Angeles, Olson manages a range of client concerns. These include young parents and same-sex spouses in custody contests and post-judgment matters involving a move away and relocation issues.

Appreciated by clients for her responsiveness and emotional IQ, Olson has earned the trust of the family law community and formerly served as court-appointed minor's counsel. She is known for her thorough case preparation, respectful approach and effectiveness in court, during mediation and in settlement conferences.

In all of her representations, Olson provides clients with the critical tools to make informed decisions and chart a path toward a new quality of life.

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2020 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES

Knobbe Martens



WENDY PETERSON

KNOBBE MARTENS

Wendy Peterson is General Counsel to Knobbe Martens, Orange County's largest law firm. The firm's focus is in intellectual property and technology law, including litigation and prosecution. As General Counsel, Peterson handles all internal legal matters for the firm.

Prior to joining Knobbe Martens, Peterson was General Counsel of Wynn Oil Company and Assistant General Counsel of Parker-Hannifin. Before then, Peterson was Assistant General Counsel and Secretary of Wynn's International, a publicly-held corporation. Peterson began her career in 1985 as a corporate and securities lawyer with O'Melveny.

Throughout her career, Peterson has been devoted to giving back to the community. In addition to serving as Chair of the OCBA Corporate Counsel section and a member of the Professionalism and Ethics and Diversity Committees, Peterson has served on the board of the Legal Aid Society. She also has served on the boards of Human Options and American Heart Association—Orange County, and the Pacific Asian Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Hawaii.

A prominent member of the business and legal community, Peterson was named to the OCBJ's OC 500 as one of the most influential business people in Orange County in each of the past four years. She also received a 2011 OCBJ General Counsel of the Year Award, and last year was inducted to the Shidler College of Business Hall of Honor by her alma mater, the University of Hawaii. Peterson also produces films for her husband, most recently the Amazon award-winning film "Hello, My Name is Frank."



BROOKE M. POLLARD

TLD LAW

Brooke M. Pollard has been with TLD Law since 2007 and is a partner at the firm's Irvine office. Her practice focuses mainly on mergers and acquisitions of closely-held businesses, real estate transactional law, and entity use in estate planning. Brooke handles all aspects of stock and asset purchases, including letters of intent, due diligence, purchase agreement preparation and review, closings and earn-out strategies. She has a particular emphasis on counseling and implementing business transition and succession strategies between family members and working with clients in the construction, medical and manufacturing industries. Ms. Pollard's office maintains corporate records for over 500 closely-held businesses on an annual basis.

Ms. Pollard handles everyday matters for business owners including employee retention strategies, lease reviews, distribution agreements, tax saving strategies, corporate compliance, and asset protection. Her primary focus with her clients is on a "preventive law practice," which means preventing legal problems down the road by reviewing all potential areas of legal concern prior to issues arising.

Brooke has exceptional knowledge in the area of property taxes, property tax appeals, and claim-for-reassessment exclusions during transfer of real property into and out of legal entities. She processes and reviews commercial lease and purchasing agreements. Brooke is a member of CREW-OC, past chair of the Orange County Bar Association Business & Corporate Law section, and an Advisory Board member for CHOC—Mission Viejo. Brooke was born and raised in south Orange County, and currently resides in Laguna Hills with her husband, David, and twin boys.



TENNY ROSTOMIAN-AMIN

THE AMIN LAW GROUP, LTD.

Tenny Rostomian-Amin is co-owner and partner at TALG, The Amin Law Group, Ltd., a multijurisdictional law firm with offices in Irvine, Las Vegas, Dallas, and Raleigh. TALG recently celebrated its 15th anniversary.

Rostomian-Amin focuses her practice on Family Law, where she has over 17 years of experience in cases involving child custody and child support, spousal support, and the characterization and division of high asset and complex marital estates. Well-known for her effective and assertive representation, she has extensive trial experience and was recently accepted to the Master of Laws (LLM) in Dispute Resolution program at the Pepperdine School of Law and is working towards becoming a certified mediator.

Rostomian-Amin is an active member of the community, currently serving as President of the Orange County Chapter of the Society of Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR), a charitable organization providing humanitarian relief to orphaned children throughout the world. In addition, she is active in numerous professional organizations, including the National Association of Women Business Owners, the Orange County Bar Association, and the Los Angeles County Bar Association.

Rostomian-Amin has recently been nominated for two awards with the Orange County Business Journal, including the Women in Business award and will be an honoree at the 20th Annual Top Family-Owned Business awards in Orange County.



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HILARY A. SHALLA

LATHAM & WATKINS

Hilary Shalla is a key partner in Latham's market-leading Real Estate Practice, representing REITs, private equity sponsors and other institutional clients and individuals in a range of

sophisticated real estate transactions, including acquisitions, dispositions, joint ventures and financing of complex real estate portfolios, as well as the development of commercial real estate.

She is a go-to real estate lawyer for companies in the storage, distribution, hospitality, office, healthcare and senior living spaces, and handles an impressive body of work for repeat clients, who appreciate her strong technical skills and attention to client service. Shalla's prior experience as in-house counsel for a prominent real estate investor and developer has made her particularly attuned to clients' needs and focus on deal execution. Several recent notable deals include representation of the borrower/sponsor in connection with a \$2.35 billion commercial mortgage-backed securities (CMBS) loan, representation of the purchaser in connection with the acquisition of a portfolio of senior housing facilities, representation of the contributor in connection with the formation of a joint venture with a sovereign wealth fund and representation of a private real estate investor in connection with their conversion to a REIT.

Shalla serves as global chair of the firm's Mentoring Committee, and recently served for five years as co-chair of the Orange County office's Women Enriching Business (WEB) Committee.

RUTAN

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RACHEL SIMON

RUTAN & TUCKER LLP

Rachel Simon is a partner in Rutan & Tucker's Corporate and Tax department, where she represents a broad range of clients in the areas of taxation, business transactions, and

corporate law. She works closely with corporate clients at all stages in the business life in a variety of industries, including manufacturing, health care, food and beverage, real estate, and technology.

Simon has led clients in many high profile matters, and has particular expertise in structuring complex transactions to achieve optimal business goals with tax efficient approaches. These transactions include financings, mergers and acquisitions, tax free exchanges, tax and business succession planning for closely held businesses, and general corporate counseling.

She has extensive experience in the taxation of real estate investments, including qualified opportunity zone funds.

Simon also represents taxpayers in controversies with the Internal Revenue Service, the California Franchise Tax Board, and the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.

In addition to her law degree, Simon holds an LL.M in Taxation from Loyola Law School and an MBA from the University of Southern California.

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ATTORNEYS AT LAW



MICHELE M. VERCOSKI

MCCUNE WRIGHT AREVALO, LLP

McCune Wright Arevalo, LLP (MWA) Partner Michele M. Vercoski is an accomplished litigation lawyer. Leading the

firm's Orange County office and contingency commercial practice group, Vercoski has obtained excellent results for her clients. One of her many accomplishments is belonging to the elite club of lawyers admitted to the United States Supreme Court and arguing a business issue on her case before nine Justices in the highest court in the land.

Other accomplishments include Vercoski's role in the recent settlement of a \$70 million class action against TD Bank for unfair overdraft fees assessed against small business owners and consumers. Litigation was waged against one of the country's largest national banks and was hard-fought over four years of intense litigation before it was settled, after Vercoski and MWA were able to obtain an order from the Court certifying the case as a national class action.

MWA has obtained over \$1 billion for its clients and has over 100 cases where it has obtained over \$1 million for its clients, including a \$203 million verdict against Wells Fargo. The firm's Orange County office primarily focuses on representing mid-sized businesses in commercial litigation cases having claims for damages of over \$5 million but desire a contingency fee arrangement over an hourly fee rate to allow its clients to monetize their litigation assets.

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▼ **Michele Vercoski**
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