WITH LOS ANGELES THE MELTING POT THAT IT IS, WE’RE TRULY A NATIONAL LEADER WHEN IT COMES TO INFLUENTIAL MINORITIES – AND THE FIELD OF LAW IS NO EXCEPTION. There are some particularly stellar minority attorneys in the LA region and we’ve alphabetically listed 50 of the very best of them here, along with some basic information about their careers, practice and some relevant recent successes they’ve achieved.

Congratulations to the attorneys who made this list and thank you for working to keep the people and businesses of Los Angeles on the right track!
WARRIORS WITH HEART.

HIGH-ASSET DIVORCE
COMPLEX MARITAL ESTATES
HIGH-CONFLICT CHILD CUSTODY
MOVE-AWAY CASES
PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENTS
POSTNUPTIAL AGREEMENTS
COHABITATION AGREEMENTS

MEYER, OLSON, LOWY & MEYERS, LLP

We congratulate MOLM partner Doreen M. Olson for being named to Los Angeles Business Journal’s 2018 Most Influential Minority Attorneys’ list

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Wade Ackerman
Partner
Covington & Burling LLP
Years Practicing: 13
Years with Current Firm: 1.5

Wade Ackerman is a leading national FDA regulatory and health policy lawyer based here in Los Angeles. With a combination of substantive life sciences expertise, a high profile in the industry, and significant federal government experience, Ackerman has a unique practice for the Southern California legal market. After starting his legal career in LA, Ackerman spent eight years in government service in Washington and returned to LA last year to join Covington as a partner.

Ackerman has deep experience working on FDA regulatory and public policy issues, both from within the last Administration (at the FDA) and on the Hill. Ackerman’s commitment to helping advance medical innovation and promote consumer safety has continued since joining Covington last year, and his counsel is highly sought after by companies and trade associations around the world. Until June 2016, he served as Senior FDA Counsel to the U.S. Senate Health Education, Labor & Pensions Committee and was involved in all federal legislation that affected the regulatory authorities of the FDA.

Semma Arzapalo
Partner
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP
Years Practicing: 12
Years with Current Firm: 12

Semma Arzapalo, a partner in Pillsbury’s Los Angeles office, represents large institutional investors in numerous private equity transactions ranging from initial due diligence to investing in limited partnerships. As a part of her private equity practice, Arzapalo also represents institutional investors in negotiating investment terms in private equity, hedge fund and real estate investments, in restructuring private equity investments and real estate investments, and in portfolio transactions. Her corporate and transactional practice includes advising clients on general corporate matters, including mergers and acquisitions and joint ventures.

Arzapalo was recently named a partner at Pillsbury at the relatively young age of 37. Over the past 18 months, a large public pension plan engaged Arzapalo in connection with a complete renegotiation of their 16-year strategic relationship with their non-discretionary investment manager in which the client committed $2 billion for investments in private equity funds. In connection with this engagement, Arzapalo and team secured beneficial business and legal terms for our client that were not originally obtained with the investment manager.

Marc André Bertet
Associate Attorney
Hersh Maneri LLP
Years Practicing: 15
Years with Current Firm: 7

Marc André Bertet brings substantial experience and a breadth of knowledge to the field of family law, having represented renowned members of the entertainment industry, politicians, and other high net worth individuals. An outspoken activist in the LGBTQ community in Los Angeles, Bertet is also a leader in Family Law on the topic of same sex marriage, registered domestic partnerships and dissolutions. He is recognized for his work on behalf of same sex couples in preparation and negotiation of premarital/post nuptial/marital settlement agreements and pursuit/defense of parentage actions (child custody), property rights, partner/spousal support, and taxation issues specific to same sex couples.

Creating awareness to other family law practitioners in representing LGBTQ clients, Bertet served as both key architect and panel expert at the Los Angeles County Bar Association’s 48th Annual Family Law Symposium in May 2016, where he lectured on the US Supreme Court ruling Obergefell v. Hodges and how the landmark decision effects same sex couples in dissolution proceedings.
JOSHUA BRIONES  
Managing Member  
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.  
Years Practicing: 18  
Years with Current Firm: 1

Few would expect a son of immigrant farm workers would someday grow up to be a managing partner of an AmLaw 100 Law firm, but that’s exactly what Joshua Briones did. Briones is a son of immigrant farm workers who came to the United States from Mexico to work in the fields of Northern California. Growing up, Briones met some inspiring people who saw his potential and encouraged him to pursue a legal education – a path he financed by working odd jobs. He ultimately achieved his JD degree at UCLA.

Briones is now a highly experienced trial lawyer with a national practice. He has received awards and national recognition for his innovative approach to the defense of bet-the-company class actions. He has served as lead defense counsel on over 200 alleged class actions in state and federal courts across the country. He has represented scores of clients in consumer protection matters for 18 years. His clients include the Lakers, Cleveland Cavaliers, eBay, PayPal, and H&R Block, among others.

KIMBERLY BUFFINGTON  
Partner  
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

Kim Buffington is known for both her leadership and track record in complex intellectual property, commercial class actions and insurance coverage matters. At the beginning of 2017, she became Managing Partner of Pillsbury’s 85-lawyer Los Angeles office upon her return from maternity leave. In her busy practice, she represents leading media and entertainment companies in IP litigation, and she recently co-led the team that represented a global manufacturing company in its successful opposition to a motion for class certification in multi-district litigation that involved a class of potentially millions of plaintiffs.

Buffington is also co-leader of the firm’s Internet & Social Media team, which is highly regarded for its blog posts. It consistently lands on Feedspot’s Top 100 Social Media Blogs & Websites on the web, has attracted over 15K page views in the past year, and some of the posts have been picked up by major news outlets, including Business Law News, Mondaq, Business Insurance, the Daily Journal and the Licensing Journal.

RALPH CAMPILLO  
Member  
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.

Ralph Campillo was just 10 years old when his parents said a tearful goodbye as they put him and his brother on a plane in Havana, Cuba bound for Miami. He had no idea if he would ever return to his native country or worse, if he would ever see his parents again.

Today that Peter Pan kid from Cuba is now a nationally recognized trial lawyer with more than 40 years of experience defending Fortune 500 companies. He has an unparalleled track record of success in high-profile cases involving product liability, mass torts, class actions, and other complex litigation matters. He is one of the nation’s top lawyers in products liability defense. He has defended prominent pharmaceutical and medical device companies and other top-tier enterprises in bet-the-company litigation, often managing their national dockets and serving them as lead trial counsel and as national or regional coordinating counsel. He has tried more than 75 cases to verdict in multiple jurisdictions.
CONGRATULATIONS TO PILLSBURY PARTNERS SEMMA ARZAPALO AND KIM BUFFINGTON ON BEING NAMED TWO OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MINORITY ATTORNEYS IN LOS ANGELES.
MARISSA M. DENNIS
Partner
Allen Matkins
Years Practicing: 11
Years with Current Firm: 11

MARISSA M. Dennis is a litigation partner in the Los Angeles office of Allen Matkins. Her litigation practice is focused on commercial, real estate and financial services litigation and she currently leads the firm’s FinTech Litigation Initiative. Dennis commonly represents commercial landlords, tenants and developers in a variety of breach of contract and tort actions, as well as national lenders and servicers in complex consumer finance litigation. She also has extensive experience representing technology companies in unfair competition and false advertising claims, including in multiple class actions.

In the last year and a half, Dennis has chaired three arbitrations involving real property disputes, and obtained dismissals of two separate class action cases at the pleading stage. Dennis is proud of her work as a board member of the California Minority Counsel Program whose mission is to promote diversity in the legal profession, and she is an active member of the Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance, the Thai American Bar Association, and the Association of Business Trial Lawyers.

CAMILO ECHAVARRIA
Partner
Davis Wright Tremaine LLP
Years Practicing: 20
Years with Current Firm: 11

Camilo Echavarria’s outstanding performance in his practice and his contributions to advancing his community are what distinguish him and make him the personification of leadership and influence. He defends employers in single and multi-plaintiff litigation and class action cases. He specializes in employment litigation with an emphasis on disability discrimination, sexual harassment, retaliation, wage and hour issues, and wrongful termination.

In the past 18 months, Echavarria has successfully defended over 30 lawsuits for some of the most prominent employers in the country. Clients include Bank of America, 24 Hour Fitness, Providence, Kaiser Permanente, United Airlines, and Alaska Airlines. Among his recent defense and class action accomplishments was a case where California Permanente Medical Group et al. He was co-lead trial counsel in a case brought by a longtime physician partner of Southern California Permanente Medical Group with 13 causes of action alleging, among other accusations, unlawful retaliation, violation of public policy, health and safety violations, defamation, and emotional distress. After a three-week trial, the judge returned a complete defense verdict for all defendants on all claims.

GREGORY EVANS
Partner
McGuireWoods LLP
Years Practicing: 28
Years with Current Firm: 2

After a stint at the U.S. Department of Justice and at the National Coalition for the Homeless in Washington, D.C., Gregory Evans returned to the L.A. community where he was raised. He achieved management positions in the most elite global law firms and stays deeply involved in pro bono and community affairs, including through his long-term board memberships in Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Constitutional Rights Foundation, YMCA, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Evans established McGuireWoods LLP’s downtown Los Angeles office and serves as its managing partner. McGuireWoods has more than 1,000 lawyers with offices in major cities in the U.S., as well as in London, Brussels and Shanghai. In 2017, Evans won high stakes appeals in the 10th, 5th and 9th U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals. In November, he completed a month-long trial in United States District Court against the Union Pacific Railroad Company, seeking over $100 million in environmental damages for copper mining giant American Smelting and Refining Company.
Haytham Faraj
Trial Lawyer
Carpenter, Zuckerman & Rowley
Years Practicing: 12
Years with Current Firm: 11

Haytham Faraj’s path to becoming a trial lawyer began as a Marine Corps infantryman and later a Marine Corps infantry officer. Since then, Faraj has tried more than eighty civil and criminal trials in the last ten years. Faraj was the lead trial lawyer in the case of United States v. Frank Wuterich, where Faraj represented the Marine squad leader accused of nineteen counts of first degree murder in the most famous war crimes trial since My Lai. He was also lead trial lawyer in the case of United States v. Trent Thomas. He acquitted his client who was freed after nearly two years in jail awaiting trial. Other notable victories include the acquittal of a man accused of spying for Saddam Hussein; the recent acquittal of a man accused of illegally exporting U.S. Defense Articles to South Sudan; a 2.2 million dollar verdict on a zero offer that was tried in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia; and the acquittal of Navy Seal Matthew McCabe.

Amber Finch
Partner
Reed Smith LLP
Years Practicing: 16
Years with Current Firm: 7

Amber Finch is a partner in Reed Smith’s Los Angeles office. A member of the firm’s Insurance Recovery Group since joining in 2011, she has quickly become a go-to lawyer for resolving disputes with insurance companies. With her commercial litigation and environmental background, she has recovered hundreds of millions of dollars in insurance proceeds for her commercial clients. She helps her clients negotiate better insurance coverage on the front end, tender and collect on insurance claims, and litigate insurance cases. Finch has been a force in the areas of general liability insurance, first party property insurance (including business interruption), environmental/pollution insurance, directors & officers insurance, errors & omissions insurance, mortgage insurance, product liability insurance, and media liability insurance. For her pro bono work, Finch successfully petitioned the Ninth Circuit to vacate her legal permanent resident client’s immigration removal order. In its published opinion, the Ninth Circuit granted the petition in its entirety and vacated the detention order.

Kevin Friedmann
Shareholder, Corporate Practice
Greenberg Traurig LLP
Years Practicing: 20
Years with Current Firm: 1 week

Kevin Friedmann is a shareholder in the Corporate Practice of Greenberg Traurig in its Los Angeles office. His practice focuses on corporate finance and mergers and acquisitions for publicly traded companies. He has wide-ranging experience representing emerging growth technology companies in complex mergers, acquisitions, and corporate finance transactions. Friedmann counsels issuers across the corporate finance field and represents early stage private companies in venture capital financings and going public transactions.

Friedmann counsels public and private companies across a broad spectrum of technology sectors, including digital media, data analytics, information technology, green technology, biotechnology and life sciences. He guides them through each phase of going public, mergers and acquisitions transactions, public and private offerings, and U.S. stock exchange listings.
Pejman Ben-Cohen

Haytham Faraj

CZR would like to congratulate Pejman Ben-Cohen, Haytham Faraj, & all the other nominees on being selected to the Most Influential Minority Attorneys List.
Luke Guerra is a partner in Kirkland & Ellis’ Los Angeles corporate group focusing in the areas of private equity, mergers and acquisitions, corporate securities and finance and corporate governance. He represents buyers, sellers, and private equity funds in a variety of corporate transactions, including leveraged buyouts, public and private mergers and acquisitions, equity investments, restructurings and recapitalizations. Guerra frequently represents private equity firms, including Clearlake Capital Partners, Industrial Growth Partners, Lion Capital, Lovell Minnich Partners, H.I.G. Capital, and Shamrock Capital Advisors, and their portfolio companies in a range of complex corporate transactions across industries such as technology, manufacturing, retail, hospitality, energy, health care and media and entertainment.

Guerra also has significant experience with respect to the management, acquisition and development of hotels, resorts, restaurants and mixed-use hospitality projects around the globe; including, without limitation, expertise in diligence, acquisition, development and management matters, and previously served as in-house counsel to The Walton Group, a privately owned group of real estate and asset management companies.

Marissa Román Griffith is one of the few female partners (and likely one of the only senior Latina attorneys in private practice) specializing in entertainment transactional matters. She is recognized as an industry leader for her representation of financiers, as well as borrowers, distributors and studios, involved in various aspects of the production, financing and distribution of film, television and digital content, including credit facilities (on behalf of the lead agent/lender and also the borrower), domestic and international co-financing agreements and slate transactions. Her recent transactions include leading the team representing Media Rights Capital (MRC) and its affiliates in connection with MRC’s financing activities in film and TV (including for the films Baby Driver, The Dark Tower and Mortal Engines and the TV series Counterpart, House of Cards, One Percent and Ozark), and MRC’s JPMorgan-led credit facility.

Griffith is also a trustee of the Mexican American Bar Foundation, and a member of the board of directors of Outfest, the leading organization showcasing, nurturing and preserving lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender film images and artistry.
YAKUB HAZZARD
Partner
Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp LLP
Years Practicing: 27
Years with Current Firm: 12

Yakub Hazzard is a partner in Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp’s Entertainment and IP Litigation practice group. Hazzard specializes in protecting high-profile matters involving intellectual property, right of publicity, privacy, breach of contract, profit participation, commercial disputes, and other media & entertainment-related conflicts across a wide range of industries. Hazard began his career at MSK in the 1990s, developing his entertainment litigation practice as the firm was representing the Recording Industry Association of America in the Napster dispute. Over his career, he has represented an array of entertainment industry clients, from Berry Gordy and the Ray Charles Foundation to Incubus and Weezer, in litigation spanning copyright, trademark, right of publicity and contracts. His clients have also included foreign distributors, leading video game companies, songwriters, musicians, actors, business and personal managers, independent record and music publishing companies, apparel companies, entertainment guilds, and beverage manufacturers. Hazzard has been involved in several profit participation and intellectual property cases for the firm.

JOHNNIE A. JAMES
Shareholder
Ogletree Deakins
Years Practicing: 29
Years with Current Firm: 7

Johnnie James has extensive experience in every aspect of employment law, including advising corporate clients on wage and hour issues, employee handbooks and related policies, employee hiring, terminations, mass layoffs, and non-compete agreements. James also defends corporate clients against employment claims brought under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the California Fair Employment & Housing Act, California Wage Orders, as well as other related state law claims. Prior to joining Ogletree Deakins, James was a partner at Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, and Manatt Phelps & Phillips, where he co-managed Manatt’s Labor & Employment Practice Group. James also spent several years in-house, serving as Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary of SAGE Publications, Inc., an international academic publishing company. James began his legal career at Alschuler Grossman & Pines, a litigation boutique firm in Los Angeles, where he became that firm’s first African-American partner.

JESSE JAUREGUI
Partner
Alston & Bird LLP
Years Practicing: 31
Years with Current Firm: 17

In his current practice at Alston & Bird, Jesse Jauregui utilizes his bi-lingual/bi-cultural skills and applies them to his litigation practice. Most recently, he obtained a successful settlement and final approval of a statewide wage and hour class action, involving an international money transfer entity that employs a largely Spanish-speaking workforce in California. In addition to age, race, and disability cases handled in 2017, Jauregui was co-trial counsel in a high-stakes trade secret/non-compete action litigated in federal court and involving two international manufacturing companies. After extensive and hard-fought litigation involving claims for injunctive relief and deposition discovery in four different states, the team prevailed on a motion for summary judgment. Jauregui also provides clients with ongoing advice and counsel on a variety of employment law issues – including electronic privacy rights in the workplace and WARN Act issues – and conducts workplace investigations. His clients include a national bank, health systems, Fortune 500 manufacturers, entertainment/media companies, and telecommunications providers. Jauregui devotes significant time to the Mexican American Bar Foundation and the California Minority Counsel Program.

Kirkland & Ellis congratulates partners Luke Guerra and Tanya Greene on being named to the Los Angeles Business Journal’s 2018 list of “Most Influential Minority Attorneys”
CHANNING D. JOHNSON  Partner  Leeb & Leeb LLP  Years Practicing: 40  Years with Current Firm: 8

Channing Johnson is a recognized leader in the Los Angeles legal and business community representing music, motion picture, television, digital media, retail and sports clients in connection with securities issuances, mergers and acquisitions, and joint venture and financing arrangements. Johnson’s earliest career capacities included roles as Vice-Chairman of the Pasadena Planning Commission, Deputy to a Los Angeles City Councilman, and President of Economic Resources Corporation. He made an early impact in policy and economic development by assembling private and government financing that created jobs, housing, and industrial and commercial facilities in underserved areas of Los Angeles.

Even in those initial stages of his career, Johnson knew that the practice of law was where he could make his greatest contribution, and he began to build a corporate practice that would focus on serving the region’s fast-growing service, technology, entertainment and media sectors. More than three decades later, he has become one of the most accomplished dealmakers in media, technology, entertainment and sports, with a long track record of helping clients succeed in these evolving industries.

SIDNEY KANAZAWA  Partner  McGuireWoods LLP  Years Practicing: 39  Years with Current Firm: 11

In May 2017, McGuireWoods partner Sidney Kanazawa succeeded in persuading the California Supreme Court to admit posthumously to the state bar Sei Fujii, a Japanese immigrant and activist barred from admission to the bar by immigration laws that from 1790 until 1952 allowed only “free white persons” and, later, “persons of African descent” to be naturalized citizens of the United States. Kanazawa represented the Little Tokyo Historical Society and the Japanese American Bar Association pro bono in petitioning the California Supreme Court, and worked tirelessly to gather the necessary political support. The admission occurred on the 65th anniversary of the high court’s decision to overturn California’s Alien Land Law.

The victory illustrates just one of the accomplishments of Kanazawa, who uses his extensive trial, crisis and negotiating experience to champion diversity and inclusion within his firm and community, while furthering these goals through his leadership and service with the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the Japanese American Bar Association and with McGuireWoods’ Asian Lawyers Network and Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

HELEN B. KIM  Partner  Thompson Coburn LLP  Years Practicing: 30  Years with Current Firm: 5

Helen B. Kim serves as the vice co-chair of Thompson Coburn’s Business Litigation group. Her clients have included global financial services firms, real estate investment trusts and investment companies.

Among the recent success stories is Kim’s decades-long representation and successful defense of Refco Inc.’s general counsel during the broker’s high-profile collapse. The many-layered litigation, which was prolonged for over 10 years, ended in July 2016 when Kim won a case that creditors had appealed to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. As her time working on the Refco cases was coming to a close, Kim’s successes with securities litigation powered on. She served as the lead attorney in defending a high-ranking executive of MF Global. She did so by obtaining the dismissal of the MF Global officer from a class action arising from improper transfers that caused the brokerage firm to collapse in 2011.

We are very proud that Marc André Bertet is among 2018’s Most Influential Minority Attorneys.

Congratulations, Marc.
You are fantastic!

Joe, Neal, Jim, Adam and all of us at

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HERSHMANNIS.COM

O’Melveny  warmly congratulates  William Pao and  Dimitri Portnoi

on their selection among the Los Angeles Business Journal’s Most Influential Minority Attorneys

At O’Melveny we are committed to advancing diversity within the legal community and beyond.
We join the Los Angeles Business Journal in honoring L.A. County’s Most Influential Minority Attorneys including our partner and friend Channing Johnson.

We salute your dedication to your clients and your commitment to enhancing diversity and inclusion at our firm and within our community.
Russ August & Kabat provides sophisticated, creative and cost effective intellectual property, business and real property transaction and litigation counsel to our clients.

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CONGRATULATIONS

Russ August & Kabat proudly congratulates our partners and colleagues, Irene Lee and Benjamin Wang, on being named among the 2018 MOST INFLUENTIAL MINORITY ATTORNEYS.
We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that recognizes the contributions of individuals with different backgrounds and experiences. We believe that our diverse legal team strengthens us as a firm and enhances our ability to serve our clients more effectively.

TOTAL COMMITMENT to Diversity & Inclusion

Thompson Coburn congratulates partners Helen Kim and Jennifer Post, named among the Most Influential Minority Attorneys in Los Angeles.

David McFarlane
Partner
crowell&morning llp
Years Practicing: 32
Years with Current Firm: Since last August

Kevin Masuda
Partner
gibson, dunn & crutcher llp
Years Practicing: 24
Years with Current Firm: Since last August

Mike Madokoro
Managing Partner
Bowman and Brooke LLP
Years Practicing: 28
Years with Current Firm: 24

Helen Kim, Business Litigation

Jennifer Post, Corporate Finance & Securities

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ANTHONY NGUYEN
Shareholder / Trial Lawyer
Shegerian & Associates
Years Practicing: 9
Years with Current Firm: 9

Anthony Nguyen is a Shareholder at Shegerian and Associates. Nguyen has a wide range of experience in employment law, having previously represented Fortune 500 companies in labor and employment disputes. He is particularly skilled in litigation matters related to discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and wage and hour issues, in both individual and class action cases. Nguyen also has significant experience with employment law compliance and employment agreements, and has represented clients in both the state and federal levels. As a Shareholder at Shegerian and Associates, Nguyen is primarily responsible for overseeing the firm’s cases and ensuring their successful litigation from pre-filing through resolution, including trial, alternative dispute resolution, and settlement.

Nguyen places special emphasis on actively attending to clients and providing a clear and simple understanding of the legal process. He has secured several verdicts as trial counsel throughout his tenure with the firm, including an $8.7 million disability discrimination award, a $7.1 million disability discrimination award, and a $500,000 failure to accommodate disability award, an $800,000 defamation award, and an $8.4 million whistleblower award.

DOREEN MARIE OLSON
Partner
Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers LLP
Years Practicing: 24
Years with Current Firm: 24

Doreen Marie Olson is a partner at Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers (MOLM) and certified as a Specialist in Family Law by the Board of Legal Specialization of the State of California, a distinction just .55 percent of the state’s attorneys achieve. Working exclusively in family law for 24 years, Olson has helped establish MOLM as one of the nation’s most respected firms working in the arena of high-asset and high-conflict family law matters.

Olson has extensive experience and expertise in all aspects of family law including complex marital dissolutions, spousal support, marital property division, business valuation, and parentage issues. A major focus of her work is in complex child custody cases. Olson has been instrumental in the growing number of domestic and international move-away cases that MOLM handles. Among her most recent successes is working a negotiated settlement of a more than five-year-long conservatorship involving the issue of adult child support in Probate Court. She is presently working on a complex move-away case involving children with special needs.

WILLIAM PAO
Partner
O’Melveny & Myers LLP
Years Practicing: 11
Years with Current Firm: 24

William K. Pao is a seasoned commercial litigator whose diverse practice focuses on three main areas: securities litigation, financial services litigation, and complex commercial litigation involving Chinese companies. Pao’s clients include companies across a wide spectrum of industries, including banking, technology, automotive, agriculture, education, fashion, and apparel. As a second to one of the nation’s largest banks, Pao managed a large portfolio of high-exposure, high-stakes consumer banking litigation. He also possesses domain expertise in securities litigation and regularly writes and speaks on securities issues. In addition, he has substantial experience advising and representing Chinese companies and US companies that operate in China. He speaks Mandarin, and has spent considerable time in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Prior to joining O’Melveny, Pao served as a law clerk to the Honorable Fortunato Benavides of the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and the Hon. David F. Levi, formerly of the US District Court for the Eastern District of California.

We are very proud that our V. Andre Sherman is among one of 2018’s Most Influential Minority Attorneys.

All of us at
GIRARDI KEENE LAWYERS

congratulate our dear pal and terrific lawyer,
V. ANDRE SHERMAN

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on being named one of LA’s
MOST INFLUENTIAL
MINORITY ATTORNEYS

DIMITRI PORTNOI
Counsel
O’Melveny & Myers LLP
Years Practicing: 10
Years with Current Firm: 6

Dimitri Portnoi is a
trailblazer, exploring
new areas of law,
expanding rights for
underserved groups, and
achieving precedent-
setting victories for clients. This
work has earned him recognition as one of
the Minority Corporate Counsel Association’s 2017
Rising Stars and one of
the National LGBT Bar
Association’s 40 Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40 in 2016. He
serves as the secretary of the LGBT Bar Association of L.A.

Among Portnoi’s recent practice highlights took place
last year when he helped file an amicus brief in the U.S.
Supreme Court and, other appellate courts, on behalf of
over a hundred national, state, and local groups that work
to end and support survivors of sexual assault, domestic
violence, and other gender-based violence; in the ongoing
litigation seeking to overturn anti-transgender legislation
passed in North Carolina. This is just one of many pro
bono areas Portnoi works in, which has included LGBT
rights, immigrants’ rights, reproductive rights, and the
groundbreaking challenge to California’s assisted suicide law.

JENNIFER POST
Partner
Thompson Coburn LLP
Years Practicing: 27
Years with Current Firm: 1.5

As a partner in
Thompson Coburn’s
Corporate and
Securities practice, Jennifer Post serves as primary
outside counsel to a variety of individuals, institutions
and companies, including entrepreneurs, startups
and investors, as well as domestic and international
public companies.

Dedicated to helping other
LGBTQ professionals succeed, Post founded FRX Advisors
Circle, a networking and resource group for LGBTQ
professionals in the financial industry. She also founded the
West Hollywood Chapter of Provisors. Additionally, she
serves as a member of the Steering Committee of StartOut
LA, an organization that provides resources and mentorship
to LGBTQ entrepreneurs to empower emerging leaders in
technology and related industries.

Post serves as Thompson Coburn’s ambassador to
Guangels Syndicate, a national angel investment syndicate
founded on providing early stage capital to growth companies
that have at least one LGBTQ founder, senior C-level
executive or board member. She hosts the LA Guangels
chapter meetings quarterly at the firm’s Los Angeles office.

ELSIA RAMO
Managing Partner
Ramo Law P.C.
Years Practicing: 15
Years with Current Firm: 12

In 2005 and only three
years out of law school,
Elsa Ramo decided the
best way to break into
entertainment law was
by starting her own law
practice. At the time,
many of her filmmaker
and producer friends were
making low-budget, digital
films. Also at that time,
Universal Pictures’ backlot
made available a few
trailers for officing independent, up-and-coming producers.
These producers invited Ramo to work on the backlot (out
of their trailers) to assist with the legal on their micro-budget
films. In the summer of 2005, Ramo officially opened her law
office on the Universal Studios backlot in a trailer.

Today, Ramo has established herself as an entertainment
transactional attorney, representing producers, financiers,
and production entities in film, television, VR and digital
content across all platforms. She leads her firm, Ramo Law
P.C., which has grown to be an eight lawyer law firm that
exclusively handles the production legal and financing for
over 90 independent films a year. The Firm’s three Partners
are all minority women.
Congratulations
Jason Kim
on being named to
Los Angeles Business Journal’s list of
Most Influential Minority Attorneys for 2018

Ekwang Rhow
Principal
Bird, Marella, Beecher,acob, Woodfill, Nussin, O’Keeffe, Lindberg & Rhow, P.C.
Years Practicing: 23
Years with Current Firm: 23

Ekwang Rhow is a principal at Bird Marella. Versed in all aspects of litigation and motion practice, Rhow has particular expertise in trial work and has first-chaired over 25 cases that were tried to verdict or award. Additionally, Rhow has previously served as the President of the Korean American Bar Association and a member of the Board of Governors and the Executive Committee of National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA).

Many of Rhow’s highlights and top cases of the last 18 months involve representing prominent Korean corporations and their subsidiaries. These include obtaining dismissal of consumer class action lawsuits against Hyundai and Kia relating to the keyless entry system feature in their vehicles. Rhow also successfully defended Emcore Corporation in an ICC arbitration involving the sale of one of its divisions to one of Japan’s largest conglomerates. Rhow’s current representations include defending the world’s largest plastic pipe manufacturer in a $3 billion qui tam action involving over 100 plaintiffs and multiple ongoing trials.

Esther K. Ro
Partner
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
Years Practicing: 11
Years with Current Firm: 7

Representing clients in high-stakes class actions, Morgan Lewis partner Esther Ro is rapidly building a reputation as one of LA’s top litigators. In the last calendar year, she helped lead Morgan Lewis teams to victory in a precedent-setting case closely followed in the legal community. Many major retailers across the country are facing litigation regarding the quality of merchandise sold at their outlet stores.

In Rubenstein v. Gap, plaintiff Linda Rubenstein alleged that Gap misled consumers by not informing them that items sold in Gap and Banana Republic factory stores were of lesser quality and not originally sold in traditional, non-outlet stores owned and operated by Gap. The trial court found that the plaintiff could not state claims under California’s consumer protection laws because she failed to allege a misrepresentation or an actionable omission on the part of Gap. The Rubenstein decision essentially helps put limits on what retailers need to affirmatively disclose to consumers about the provenance and quality of items sold at outlet stores.

V. Andre Sherman
Trial Lawyer
Girardi Keese
Years Practicing: 20
Years with Current Firm: 20

V. Andre Sherman is passionate about his clients and the law. He has successfully litigated many significant wrongful death, personal injury, pharmaceutical, employment and consumer class action cases throughout his career, obtaining impressive results totaling in the hundreds of millions in settlements and verdicts.

Sherman’s cases have resulted in improved legislative protections for unwitting consumers who have been unfairly targeted with substandard products that often cater to low-income families least able to protect their rights. Sherman has served as a member of several plaintiff steering committees on coordinated pharmaceutical multi-plaintiff actions throughout the state. He has also served as lead, liaison and trial counsel on numerous coordinated JCCP, MDL and class actions throughout California. Andre is driven to succeed on behalf of all those aggrieved clients he zealously represents. Sherman’s pro bono activities include work on behalf of the Public Justice Foundation and the Black Entertainment & Sports Lawyer’s Association.
Rhonda Trotter Partner
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP
Years Practicing: 24
Years with Current Firm: 1

An experienced trial lawyer with Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer in Los Angeles, Rhonda Trotter has broad trial experience in intellectual property, products liability, and other commercial disputes, and regularly prosecutes and defends high-stakes trademark, false advertising and copyright lawsuits. Her track record and experience have garnered significant recognition and praise from World Trademark Review, which noted that she enjoys the patronage of a diverse range of clients, and is an excellent trial lawyer with a real knack for communicating complicated concepts to a judge or jury.

Most recently, in 2017, Trotter was hired by longstanding client Experian to handle the Ninth Circuit appeal of a significant copyright and trade secret case concerning the copyrightability of Experian’s valuable marketing database. Also among her more significant legal accomplishments is her work on behalf of rock icon Prince. Trotter served as lead counsel for Prince and his entities in connection with all of his legal matters, including copyright infringement, trademark enforcement, contract, and employment matters. Trotter continues to provide intellectual property advice and manages copyright litigation matters for Prince’s estate.

Michael Tu Partner
Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP
Years Practicing: 20
Years with Current Firm: 1

Perhaps no recent case has defined the media industry more than Sumner Redstone’s battle for control of Viacom Inc. Orrick’s Michael Tu and team represented Sumner Redstone in this epic boardroom and courtroom battle, collaborating with Redstone counsel Rob Klieger of Houston’s Hennigan LLP. For Redstone, the outcome was a complete victory, as a settlement gave him virtually everything he sought to retain control of a multi-billion dollar media conglomerate that owns film and television assets ranging from Paramount Pictures to MTV. Tu and team served as the architect of the complex strategy crafted to shape the course of the closely watched corporate tag-of-war, working closely with Klieger, who was likewise integral to protecting Redstone’s interests in various courts around the country. With the Viacom battle unfolding under a media microscope, Tu quickly earned a reputation as a force to be reckoned with. One newspaper covering the conflict observed that any CEO or director opposed by anyone who has hired Tu “might want to lawyer up.”

Benjamin T. Wang Partner
Russ, August & Kabat LLP
Years Practicing: 14
Years with Current Firm: 7

Benjamin Wang is a partner at Russ August & Kabat. He is member of the firm’s general litigation, intellectual property litigation, trial and appellate groups. His practice focuses on representing clients in complex business and intellectual property disputes, particularly in patent and trade secret trials and appeals.

Despite a very challenging environment for patent plaintiffs, during the last 18 months, Wang has successfully obtained monetary settlements totaling over $29.8 million for his clients. Those settlements resolved various patent and trade secret claims on behalf of his clients, including cases where he represented Neurovision Medical Products in patent litigation against Medtronic and Healthtrust Purchasing Group, VIA Technologies in patent and trade secret litigation against ASUSTeK Computer Inc., Phoenix and LPL Licensing in patent litigation against numerous defendants, SDPX Technologies in patent litigation against iMotion Corporation, and many other clients asserting patent infringement claims. During the same time period, Wang successfully defended the validity of thirteen patents from various clients from patent eligibility challenges under 35 U.S.C. §101.

The Los Angeles Business Journal’s 2018 Most Influential Women Attorneys feature will be published on April 2. This supplement is dedicated to recognizing attorneys who exhibit excellence in their field as well as firms that are dedicated to supporting women’s initiatives.

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