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LAWYERS®

2010 EDITION

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO LEGAL REPRESENTATION IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

SHERNOFF BIDART  
DARRAS ECHEVERRIA  
BATTLES UNLAWFUL  
INSURANCE RESCISSIONS

WHO ARE THE  
LAWYERS OF  
THE YEAR?



**PANISH SHEA & BOYLE**  
THE CRUSADE TO HELP AN  
INJURED IRAQI WAR VET

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THE WORLD'S PREMIER GUIDE



# PANISH, SHEA & BOYLE LLP



Brian Panish

Kevin Boyle

Adam Shea

**PANISH, SHEA, & BOYLE (PS&B)** will not accept simply letting its reputation speak for itself. The plaintiffs' lawyers decades of work and their legendary aggression have made a difference in the lives of the thousands of individuals and their families who have been harmed, either physically or financially, through corporations' negligence and disregard for human life. Whereas many firms work to reach a place where their name alone is enough to provoke a settlement offer, PS&B is not in the business of getting its clients anything less than maximum compensation. The firm's attorneys are there to go to court, and they make their intentions known from the start. "We push the ball down the field and always end up in the end zone," says Brian Panish.

**IT IS PRECISELY THIS REFUSAL TO ACCEPT** anything other than full and fair compensation for their clients that allows the lawyers at PS&B to devote their entire focus to seeking justice for those who have been catastrophically injured in plane, train, and automobile accidents, by defective products, harmful pharmaceuticals, and business fraud. Working on a contingency basis (that is, no fee unless they win), the firm represents a wide array of people and families, ranging from below-the-poverty line immigrants to entertainment industry moguls and titans of corporate America, all of whom are seeking the same mutual justice. "All of our clients have one thing in common: they have been put in awful situations but have the courage to fight," says Adam Shea.

**IT'S NO SECRET THAT PS&B RELISHES** seeing corporations and insurance companies pay for their wrongdoing; it's a combination of this satisfaction and an unrelenting confidence in the facts of their cases that drives the firm's attorneys to the courtroom where most other attorneys would settle. The defendants that the firm typically goes up against are wealthy and intimidating corporate and government entities, many of which have become blind to the implications of their actions (or inactions); PS&B refuses to be daunted by size or stature.

**THE AGGRESSIVE FIRM EMBRACES TRIAL** where most others would choose to seek settlement. The firm recently obtained a multi-million dollar verdict for the parents of a 39 year-old severely mentally and physically disabled man who choked to death when left unattended by a care facility (*Don Dino Dominguez v. SCLARC*). The firm also recently obtained a \$21 million verdict for a 29 year-old Iraq war veteran who was injured in an auto-accident shortly after returning home from the war (*Nelsen v. Hillyard*). The firm is currently preparing for trial in several high-profile aviation disaster cases, as well as serving as Lead Counsel for the victims of the Chatsworth Metrolink Train Disaster. "We would like to try them all, but the smarter defendants don't always let us get in front of a jury," says Kevin Boyle.

### FIRM FACT:

Among numerous other records, PS&B has obtained the largest product liability verdict in U.S. history and the largest single-plaintiff personal injury verdict in California history.

All three eponymous partners have been named for inclusion as the Los Angeles area's *Best Lawyers*®, to add to the other accolades they've collected over the years. Their lawyers have been named in the "100 Most Influential Lawyers in Nation" by *The National Law Journal*, Trial Lawyer of the Year by the Consumer Attorneys of Los Angeles, and the "Top 100 Lawyers in California" by *The Daily Journal*. The firm itself was the only Los Angeles-area law firm to be named a "Top 12 Plaintiffs Law Firms in the Nation" by the *NLJ*.



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Gregory L. Bentley

Michael J. Bidart

William M. Shernoff

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# SHERNOFF BIDART DARRAS ECHEVERRIA LLP

*“Navigating giant corporate bureaucracies is tough enough in the best of health”*



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**WILLIAM SHERNOFF** has been the crucial force in the evolution of bad faith law for many years. His many landmark decisions have included an \$86 million settlement related to the fire at Las Vegas’ MGM Grand Hotel and a jury verdict for the American Samoa Government for claims stemming from a hurricane resulting in payment of over \$100 million. Recently, his efforts resulted in large health insurers agreeing to pay over \$50 million in damages to people whose health insurance policies had been wrongfully canceled. Shernoff’s staunch refusal to be intimidated by even the largest insurance companies has helped earn him a premiere reputation in the field. “Navigating giant corporate bureaucracies is tough enough in the best of health. Try doing it right after you’ve just had open-heart surgery or been diagnosed with cancer,” he says.

**MICHAEL BIDART** leads the firm’s HMO Litigation and Property/Casualty Departments. Mr. Bidart has been a key player in many fundamental decisions that have shaped insurance law, such as the \$121 million jury verdict against Aetna (the largest jury verdict ever rendered against an HMO). Mr. Bidart is a Fellow of the American Board of Trial Advocates, American College of Trial Lawyers, and International Academy of Trial Lawyers. He has been recognized as one of the “100 Most Influential Lawyers in California” by the *Los Angeles Daily Journal* legal publication, as well as receiving annual recognition as one of the 100 top *Super Lawyers*.

**FRANK DARRAS** manages the disability and long-term care insurance department, which is the largest in the United States. Fielding referrals from all over the country, Mr. Darras has a diverse client list that ranges from sports figures and business professionals to pro bono clients. Listed as a Los Angeles County *Super Lawyer*, he is also a member of the Ten Million Dollar Rainmaker circle, a distinction given to attorneys generating more than \$10 million in annual legal fees.

**RICARDO ECHEVERRIA** handles liability, property and HMO cases. His distinguished trial record includes a \$7.2 million jury verdict in Minnesota Federal Court, a \$5.1 million jury verdict for 2003 wildfire victims, a \$3.6 million jury verdict for an active duty Marine whose insurance company denied a \$75,000 water loss claim, a \$1.9 million verdict on behalf of the City of Long Beach against their insurance carrier and a \$1.8 million jury verdict for a computer software developer. He has received nominations for the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles Trial Lawyer of the Year award in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, and was a finalist for the Consumer Attorneys of California Consumer Attorney of the Year award in 2007 and 2009.

The firm is not content just to recover the claim; they believe that the insurance company should be punished for its actions in the form of additional punitive damages. “People are uniquely vulnerable when they have suffered through these types of calamities. When an insurance company wrongfully denies coverage, it’s not enough to make it do what it should have done in the first place,” says Mr. Bidart.

**FIRM FACT:**

Founding Partner William Shernoff is credited with pioneering the practice of bad faith insurance law with his 1979 victory, *Egan v. Mutual of Omaha*. The firm has now recovered more than \$1 billion in verdicts and settlements for their clients.

**C**ORPORATIONS NOW MUST WORK HARDER than ever to cover their wrongdoings, as legendary plaintiff's personal injury firm Girardi | Keese continues to stand up for those individuals that have been seriously injured, whether by physical harm, property damage, or damage to economic interests.

**EVEN FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL SUITS** against the makers of harmful drugs such as Vioxx (which resulted in a \$4.85 billion settlement and the removal of the product from the shelves), the firm continues along the hauntingly familiar path of cleaning up the disasters left in the wake of the reckless conduct committed by companies out to turn a profit, as with its current litigation against the makers of Avandia, a diabetes drug known to cause heart attacks and strokes. "They're all based in the principle of corporate greed, which keeps replicating itself. It's the main motivating factor behind all of our cases," says founding partner Tom Girardi.

**GIRARDI | KEESE, WHICH IS MOST FAMOUSLY KNOWN** for its work in the contaminated drinking water class action suit that found notoriety in the movie *Erin Brockovich*, has continued to hallow its halls since its 1965 foundation, accruing some of the legal industry's most luminary figures and the country's most impactful decisions. The firm's ranks include the President Elect of the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Association, a member of the Board of Governors of the State Bar, and twelve members of the American Board of Trial Advocates. Mr. Girardi himself is an immediate past-President of the 500-member International Academy of Trial Lawyers, a past-National President of the American Board of Trial Advocates, and was most recently appointed to the Judicial Counsel, which acts as the governing body of the entire California court system.

**ON TOP OF THE CONTINUED LITIGATION** for a suit frustratingly similar to the PG&E case of the late 90s, which addresses the massive amounts of chromium that cement manufacturer TXI knowingly released near their plant in Riverside, the firm's energies and goodwill are now being channeled into helping the city of Carson assist its residents, whose homes were built atop tainted land sold to developers by Shell Oil. Though there is nothing to be done by way of repairs—the benzene levels in the area are 100,000x the recommendation—the firm is in the midst of doing what it does best: making sure that the company responsible for the damage is actually held responsible for the damage.

**"AS I GET OLDER, I REALIZE THAT THE ONLY THING** corporate America listens to is jury verdicts. The SEC is not protecting your stocks, and the FDA is not protecting you from the medicine you're consuming. Really, the only vehicle that helps people is these cases in which bad conduct can be viewed by jurors who say 'This is terrible,'" says Mr. Girardi.



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David R. Lira

**"I REALIZE  
THAT THE  
ONLY THING  
CORPORATE  
AMERICA  
LISTENS TO IS  
JURY VERDICTS"  
- THOMAS GIRARDI**

Thomas V. Girardi

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S BEST LAWYERS®

2010 EDITION

## A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S LEGAL TALENT

*Southern California's Best Lawyers®* helps take the mystery out of locating a high-quality advocate to protect you, your family, your business and all other assets. Keep this comprehensive guide available for those times when you need a first-rate advocate to assist you. The lawyers listed in *Southern California's Best Lawyers* are happy to help.

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**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S LAWYERS OF THE YEAR** PAGE 23

## METHODOLOGY

This list is excerpted from the 2010 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America®*, the preeminent referral guide to the legal profession in the United States. Published for more than a quarter of a century, *Best Lawyers®* lists attorneys in 79 specialties, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia, who have been chosen through an exhaustive survey in which thousands of the nation's top lawyers confidentially evaluate their professional peers. The 2010 edition of *Best Lawyers*, which was published in November 2009, is based on more than 2.8 million evaluations of lawyers by other lawyers.

The method used to compile *Best Lawyers* remains unchanged since the first edition was compiled more than 26 years ago. Lawyers are chosen for inclusion based solely on a vote of their peers. Listings cannot be bought, and no purchase is required to be included. In this regard, *Best Lawyers* remains the gold standard of reliability and integrity in lawyer ratings.

The nomination pool for the 2010 edition consisted of all lawyers whose names appeared in the previous edition of *Best Lawyers*, lawyers who were nominated since the previous survey, and new nominees solicited from listed attorneys. In general, lawyers were asked to vote only on nominees in their own specialty in their own jurisdiction. Lawyers in closely related specialties were asked to vote across specialties, as were lawyers in smaller jurisdictions. Where specialties are national or international in nature, lawyers were asked to vote nationally as well as locally. Voting lawyers were also given an opportunity to offer more detailed comments on nominees.

Voting lawyers were provided this general guideline for determining if a nominee should be listed: "If you had a close friend or relative who needed a real estate lawyer (for example), and you could not handle the case yourself, to whom would you refer them?" All votes and comments were solicited with a guarantee of confidentiality – a critical factor in the viability and validity of *Best Lawyers* surveys. To ensure the rigor of the selection process, lawyers were urged to use only their highest standards when voting, and to evaluate each nominee based only on his or her individual merits. The additional comments were used to make more accurate comparisons between voting patterns and weight votes accordingly. *Best Lawyers* uses various methodological tools to identify and correct for anomalies in both the nomination and voting process.

Ultimately, of course, a lawyer's inclusion is based on the subjective judgments of his or her fellow attorneys. While it is true that the lists may at times disproportionately reward visibility or popularity, the breadth of the survey, the candor of the respondents, and the sophistication of the polling methodology largely correct for any biases. For all these reasons, *Best Lawyers* lists continue to represent the most reliable, accurate and useful guide to the legal profession in the United States.

*Best Lawyers* lists are available at [www.bestlawyers.com](http://www.bestlawyers.com). "Best Lawyers" and "The Best Lawyers in America" are registered trademarks of Woodward/White, Inc.

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S BEST LAWYERS BY SPECIALTY

Administrative Law 10	Entertainment Law 22	Medical Malpractice Law 28
Advertising Law 10	Environmental Law 22	Mergers & Acquisitions Law 28
Alternative Dispute Resolution 10	Equipment Finance Law 22	Mortgage Banking
Antitrust Law 10	Ethics and Professional Responsibility Law 22	Foreclosure Law 29
Appellate Law 10	Family Law 22	Municipal Law 29
Banking Law 12	Family Law Mediation 24	Mutual Funds Law 29
Bankruptcy and	First Amendment Law 24	Native American Law 29
Creditor-Debtor Rights Law 12	Franchise Law 24	Natural Resources Law 29
Bet-the-Company Litigation 14	Gaming Law 24	Non-Profit/Charities Law 29
Collaborative Law: Family Law 14	Government Relations Law 24	Personal Injury Litigation 29
Commercial Litigation 14	Health Care Law 24	Private Funds Law 30
Communications Law 16	Immigration Law 24	Product Liability Litigation 30
Construction Law 16	Information Technology Law 24	Professional Malpractice Law 30
Corporate Governance and	Insurance Law 24	Project Finance Law 30
Compliance Law 16	Intellectual Property Law 26	Public Finance Law 30
Corporate Law 16	International Trade and	Railroad Law 30
Criminal Defense:	Finance Law 26	Real Estate Law 30
Non-White-Collar 19	Labor and Employment Law 27	Securities Law 31
Criminal Defense: White-Collar 19	Land Use & Zoning Law 28	Sports Law 31
Derivatives Law 21	Legal Malpractice Law 28	Structured Finance Law 31
DUI/DWI Defense 21	Leveraged Buyouts and Private	Tax Law 33
Elder Law 21	Equity Law 28	Technology Law 33
Eminent Domain and	Maritime Law 28	Trusts and Estates 33
Condemnation Law 21	Mass Tort Litigation 28	Venture Capital Law 34
Employee Benefits Law 21	Media Law 28	Water Law 34
Energy Law 22		Workers' Compensation Law 34

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Vincent Marella

Ronald Nessim

Terry Bird

Gary Lincenberg

**THE AMERICAN LAWYER** describes Bird, Marella, Boxer, Wolpert, Nessim, Dooks & Lincenberg as one of the nation's great specialty litigation firms. The firm's twenty-eight attorneys specialize in white collar criminal defense and civil business litigation.

**ON THE CRIMINAL SIDE**, Terry Bird, Vincent Marella, Ronald Nessim, and Gary Lincenberg are all regularly selected by their peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*®. They have well over one hundred trials among them. All four are alumni of the United States Attorney's Office, know how to try cases, and understand how their opponents think. The firm specializes in corporate internal investigations and has been particularly successful in killing cases before they are filed. There is no white-collar criminal case the firm cannot handle, from complex tax and securities fraud cases to environmental, health care, and intellectual property offenses. The firm's lawyers have recently won significant victories in the criminal arena, including recent acquittals and dismissals in health care fraud, money laundering, false statement, and contempt cases.

**THE FIRM'S BIGGEST WHITE COLLAR VICTORIES**, however, are the ones you do not hear about on television or read about in the newspaper. The ability to avoid charges or craft favorable settlements is critical, and for the attorneys at Bird, Marella, it is something they do time and again for the corporations, executives and other professionals they represent. Prosecutors are aggressive, and defense attorneys must be

more creative and stay in tune with the inner workings of the government to gain every edge for their clients.

**THE STAKES IN CIVIL CASES ARE ALSO HIGH.** Cost-effective lawyering at Bird, Marella means winning both the battle and the war for their clients, who pay reasonable fees for top flight legal counsel. In the civil litigation arena, Bird, Marella represents plaintiffs and defendants in securities, entertainment, class actions, real estate, professional negligence, and intellectual property disputes in state and federal courts. The firm also represents litigation committees for corporations facing derivative suits. The firm's lawyers have recently won major trial victories in entertainment, real property, contract partnership and shareholder disputes in the civil arena.

**THE FIRM BRINGS A HIGH LEVEL OF CREDIBILITY** within the judicial system. Mr. Bird has sat on the President's Judicial Advisory Committee. Mr. Marella and Mr. Nessim have served as chairs of the American Bar Association's White Collar Crime Committee. Mr. Lincenberg has served as the President of the Federal Bar Association in Los Angeles and is currently a National Vice Chairman of the American Bar Association's White Collar Crime Committee.

**WHEN SOPHISTICATED CLIENTS** find themselves in trouble and in need of criminal and/or civil representation, Bird, Marella is where they turn.

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Founded by acclaimed courtroom attorney Mark Lanier, The Lanier Law Firm maintains a national presence with offices in California, Texas and New York. In Los Angeles, the firm is led by preeminent litigator Dana B. Taschner, previously honored by the American Bar Association as the “Sole Practitioner of the Year” among a pool of more than 400,000 eligible U.S. lawyers. Mr. Lanier is a repeat honoree in *The Best Lawyers in America*®, and won a \$253 million verdict in the nation’s first Vioxx trial.

For more than 20 years, Mr. Lanier, Mr. Taschner and attorneys at The Lanier Law Firm have represented individuals and corporate clients in high-stakes legal actions in courtrooms throughout the United States and jurisdictions across the globe. Best known for record-setting cases involving pharmaceutical drugs and exposure to asbestos, The Lanier Law Firm also handles significant medical malpractice claims, serious personal injury matters, and maritime cases involving the Jones Act. The firm also represents select corporate clients in complex commercial litigation, bankruptcy litigation, and international arbitration matters.

“Our work in California has been an unqualified success because of the way that Dana and our attorneys approach every case,” says Mr. Lanier. “Many law firms are only inter-

ested in signing up cases, but that’s not the way we do things. Our clients know that a trial-tested lawyer is working on their case and keeping them informed every step of the way.”

Mr. Taschner is well-known in the international legal community based on his track record in cases involving defective products and dangerous pharmaceutical drugs, as well as representing corporate clients in commercial, intellectual property, and technology litigation as well as international arbitration matters. Mr. Taschner’s work in state and federal courtrooms has been the subject of media coverage from such well-known outlets as CNN, CNBC and CBS’ *60 Minutes*, among others. His efforts have resulted in nationwide product recalls, new case law, and significant changes in corporate and government policies.

Mr. Lanier is widely regarded as one of the top trial lawyers in the United States. *The National Law Journal* has named him among the country’s Top 10 Trial Attorneys on two different occasions as well as listing him among the 100 Most Influential Lawyers in America. A regular guest on CNBC’s *Squawk Box*, Mr. Lanier also serves as an expert legal source for such esteemed publications as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Los Angeles Times*.



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Dan Callahan covers all the bases for his clients. On the one hand, he is known and respected as one of the top trial attorneys in the nation. For example, he is the man responsible for the largest jury verdict in Orange County history, a \$934 million jury verdict in a breach-of-contact suit. Likewise, he recently obtained the largest personal injury settlement in United States history, a \$50 million settlement for two women in a complex municipal liability matter. On the other hand, in every case he handles, Mr. Callahan is always concerned first and foremost for his clients' finances. Although he has achieved more than \$1.5 billion in verdicts and settlements in the last five years alone, Mr. Callahan begins each case by sitting down and determining his clients' true objectives and needs. To that end, he wants his clients' judgment to remain as unclouded by financial concerns as possible. He and his colleagues go to great lengths to wield their experience in obtaining insurance coverage to defray as much of the legal expenses as possible.

A founding member of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers and managing partner of the 23-member boutique litigation firm Callahan & Blaine, Mr. Callahan and the other attorneys at the firm are also a rarity in the litigation field nowadays: they are lawyers that actually take both big personal injury cases and complex business litigation to trial, with little difference in their approach to either type of case. With clients that range from wronged individuals to companies such as 7UP and Ricoh, the firm tackles each case with the same level of comprehensive, high-quality work.

# RINGLER KEARNEY ALVAREZ, LLP



From Left: Paul G. Szumiak, Thomas A. Kearney, Jerome L. Ringler, Paul Alvarez, Thomas H. Peters

Although formed only four years ago, the success of the three name partners in Ringler Kearney Alvarez LLP is anything but recent. For almost 30 years, Jerome Ringler has achieved a record of success in the courtroom that is virtually unrivaled in California—and elsewhere. Consider this: Of the 76 cases Mr. Ringler has tried to verdict, more than 21 have resulted in awards in the seven- and eight-figure range. One class action verdict totaled \$160 million, a recent personal injury verdict went for \$12 million, and a misappropriation of trade secrets verdict was in the sum of \$16 million. But RKA's success is hardly limited to its first named partner.

In their more than 20 years together before teaming with Mr. Ringler, Thomas Kearney and Paul Alvarez specialized in complex and sophisticated business tort and class action litigation. In just the three years alone before RKA was formed, Mr. Kearney and Mr. Alvarez achieved settlements totaling more than \$60 million. Now, the champion trial lawyer and these hard nosed class-action litigators have joined to create a firm whose blend of talents is virtually unmatched in the state. Indeed, there may be a handful of law firms that can blackboard a list of verdicts comparable to Mr. Ringler's, and an equally select group of class action firms with success comparable to Mr. Kearney's and Mr. Alvarez's.

*Jerome Ringler  
has received  
jury verdicts  
in excess of  
\$250 million  
for his clients*

But no firm has the class action capability and trial skills that RKA offers. Illustrative of RKA's class action capabilities, just recently RKA achieved class certification in a business fraud class action where the damages exceed \$250 million.

Mr. Ringler has long been listed in The Best Lawyers in America and has been included on the Top 100 Southern California Super Lawyers list from 2004 to 2010. He has served as president of the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Association and is a member of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers. He has been honored as an ABOTA Diplomate and as a Master of ABOTA American Inns of Court. Mr. Ringler was named "Trial Lawyer of the Year" on two occasions, first by the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Association and later by Verdictum Juris. Mr. Kearney and Mr. Alvarez have both been featured in the Los Angeles County *Super Lawyer Magazine*.

Partners Thom Peters and Paul Szumiak are both seasoned litigators with diverse talents and experience that match the complex and significant cases that RKA handles. Now with Ringler Kearney Alvarez, there is a firm in town that can as readily whomp a defendant on the way to class certification as close the deal in front of a jury. And so it makes sense that the firm is highly selective in its choice of clientele, representing only plaintiffs in significant, high-stakes cases.



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# GRASSINI & WRINKLE



From Left: Lars Johnson, Roland Wrinkle, Kathleen Grassini, Larry Grassini, Don Liddy

Selected For  
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The only two personal injury lawyers from the San Fernando Valley selected by their peers for inclusion in the *Best Lawyers in America*®, Larry Grassini and Roland Wrinkle have offered their respective one-two punch of trial and appellate work throughout 34 years of practice together. The first page of the firm's biography really says it all. Entitled *Our History of Setting the Standards*, the page lists just a handful of the personal injury firm's successes, but they're pretty remarkable. The law firm of Grassini & Wrinkle can best be summed up by its firsts, including the largest personal injury award in the history of California, the largest personal injury award in the history of the United States, the largest punitive damage award affirmed on appeal, the largest sexual harassment award in California, the largest award for the death of an adult child. The list goes on—but the point is clear; the partnership between Larry Grassini and Roland Wrinkle has produced results for clients that are nothing short of amazing.

"We've certainly had some great successes over the years, and that's because we have combined our distinct talents for the benefit of the clients we represent," says Mr. Grassini. "It's an unusual combination, where we have a trial attorney with an experienced and well-respected appellate lawyer."

**Lawrence Grassini** is a member of the Inner Circle of Advocates, an invitation-only group of the top one hundred trial lawyers in the country, and last year was the ninth person inducted into the Los Angeles Trial

*"The best part of trying cases is knowing that we're able to change lives for the better."*

Lawyers Association Hall of Fame. He is also one of only two trial lawyers to be named twice as the Association's "Trial Lawyer of the Year." He was listed in *Los Angeles* magazine as one of the top 25 lawyers in the state and named as one of the 18 most respected plaintiff personal injury lawyers in *California Lawyer*, the official publication of the state bar.

**Roland Wrinkle** has received the Ted Horn Memorial Award for the education of trial lawyers by the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Association and was voted Appellate Lawyer of the Year by the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles.

At the end of the day, what motivates the pair the most isn't recognition. "The best part of trying cases is knowing that we're able to change lives for the better," says Mr. Grassini. "It's our badge of honor."

A Second Generation. The other four lawyers at Grassini & Wrinkle are no longer waiting in the wings. Don Liddy and Katie Grassini recently tried two wrongful death cases: a \$6,000,000 road design case and a \$1,650,000 trucking case for the death of a 90-year-old man. Lars Johnson and Katie won \$4,000,000 in a broken leg case arising out of the remake of the movie *Flight of the Phoenix*. Meanwhile, Katie was at her father's side last year while he received a \$12,000,000 wrongful death award for the mother of an adult daughter and a \$22,000,000 blockbuster in Ventura for a brain-damaged nurse. At the time of publication, the newest member of the firm, Jamie Kurtz, is assisting Mr. Grassini in the trial of an airplane crash case in Riverside.

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*“When you do well, you should do good.”*

This guiding philosophy, shared by Stacy D. Phillips upon co-founding the firm, is unsurprising at a firm that places such an importance on nurturing the needs and interests of its own members. Phillips, Lerner, Lauzon & Jamra has done very well indeed, having helped a long list of clients to resolve their family law issues in a reasonable and equitable manner, a list which includes many high-profile business professionals, entrepreneurs, and celebrities.

“Doing good” takes on many forms at Phillips, Lerner, Lauzon & Jamra (PLLJ), and benefits many people and areas of society. The past year has brought the publication of numerous scholarly articles authored by PLLJ attorneys, sharing their research with the legal and lay community and opening up various dialogues that could be productive for everyone. “We feel that in doing so, we are contributing not only to the legal community by highlighting and initiating a dialogue regarding issues and cases that are of special import, but we are also providing analysis and commentary which make such information accessible and relevant to the lay person” says partner Azita Avedissian.

The greatest example of the firm’s giving spirit and philosophy is its Adopt-A-Center program that was established eleven years ago. Through this program, the firm aims to aid specific local non-denominational non-profit organizations that help the less fortunate, particularly those organizations that offer services and care to families and children. Rather than merely write an additional check to the charity, all members of the firm, from staff to senior partners, contribute their time and get involved hands-on to improve and help the life

of others who are less fortunate or in need. “It is immensely rewarding to actually get to know the people you are helping, and to know the specifics about how you have helped to improve their lives. I was always taught that every individual with the means to do so should give back to the community. PLLJ very much adheres to this philosophy,” says partner Ram Cogan.

Each year, PLLJ invites organizations to submit their proposal for sponsorship, and a new beneficiary is voted upon by all members of the firm. In the Adopt-A-Center Program’s first year, the firm supported Vista Del Mar, a nearby residential community for children whose parents could not care for them because of illness, poverty, or death. PLLJ hosted a cocktail party fundraiser to drum up financial support, and members took turns visiting the community throughout the year. PLLJ also hosted monthly birthday parties at the center for the children and organized and participated in several beautification projects such as flower and tree planting. Following the firm’s adoption of Dispute Resolution Services, which teaches peer mediation to junior high and high school students in an effort to provide them with the skills to mediate rather than fight about their own disputes, the organization honored the firm for its contributions to the community. Always looking to affect as many people as creatively as possible, events in prior years have ranged from organized Dodger games for underprivileged children, to an auction of art created by children as part of their therapy.

The firm makes a concerted effort to revisit those organizations and individuals that have been touched by previous years’ efforts and to continue to remain involved with previously adopted organizations and to provide them support as needed.



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# HURT AFTER RETURNING FROM WAR

## PANISH SHEA & BOYLE'S CRUSADE TO HELP AN INJURED IRAQI WAR VET

**T**wo years ago, having just returned from his second tour of duty in Iraq with the United States Navy, Michael Nelsen, 29, was a talented and enthusiastic student at the California Art Institute looking forward to a career as a computer animator. Today, Nelsen is severely brain-damaged and requires 24-hour care, after a car in which he was a passenger was rear-ended by a van traveling 80 miles per hour.

Nelsen will get around-the-clock assistance since a San Bernardino, California jury awarded him more than \$21 million this October in a negligence suit against a supplier of cleaning equipment.

"Michael's family and a group of core friends have been doing their best to provide as close to 24-hour care as possible since the collision," says Spencer R. Lucas of Los Angeles trial firm Panish, Shea & Boyle, who tried the case with partner Brian J. Panish.

"With this award, Michael will be able to have the type of professional care he desperately needs."

After the August 2007 accident, Nelsen sued the supplier alleging that one of their drivers was negligent when he smashed his van into the back of the car in which Nelsen was a passenger. As a result of the impact, Nelson suffered a broken femur, other fractures, and a stroke, which resulted in permanent brain damage on the left side of his brain.

Shortly before trial began, the defense admitted liability, so the jury did not have to decide whether the defendants were negligent. The only issue left for the jury was the extent of Nelsen's injuries, especially those related to his brain function, and the amount of monetary damages to be awarded to him. The defense contended that Nelsen's cognitive impairment was not

as severe as the plaintiff claimed. For example, in its opening statement, the defense attorneys alleged that none of Nelsen's doctors recommended 24-hour care for him, which the plaintiff argued was untrue.

The trial, in the Superior Court of San Bernardino County, lasted three weeks. In Lucas's opinion, the most effective witness was Nelsen himself. Nelsen, who has a difficult time understanding much besides short, basic sentences, was on the witness stand for 20 minutes. "Michael was able to understand certain questions, such as, 'Did you like the Navy?,'" says Lucas. "However, when asked more abstract questions such as, 'Do you



Michael and Terry Nelsen

**T**HE JURY AWARDED HIM MORE THAN \$21 MILLION INCLUDING \$12 MILLION FOR PAST AND FUTURE PAIN AND SUFFERING

know what year it is?,' he did not understand. His ability to speak has been reduced to short and fragmented sentences."

Nelsen's mother, Terry Nelsen, testified that her son was an ambitious young man who—just before the accident—had been honorably discharged from the Navy after two tours in Iraq. She testified about her son's three-month hospitalization, and described that after waking from a coma, Nelsen did not recognize anyone, could not communicate at all, and was incontinent. She also said it took her son several months of acute rehabilitation to learn to form words, eat on his own, and begin to walk again.

In all, the plaintiff's attorneys called 25 witnesses to the stand, including Nelsen's treating neuropsychologist, and

his treating rehabilitation doctor. Countering the defense argument regarding Nelsen's medical needs, the pair testified that Nelsen does require 24-hour assisted living, and that they both had contributed to creating a life-care plan for him. The other witnesses also testified about Nelsen's injuries, in particular his mental functioning before and after the accident. They also described the pain and suffering that Nelsen has suffered so far, and the extent of pain and suffering he will face in the future.

After a day-and-a-half of deliberations, the jury agreed with the plaintiffs, finding that Nelsen has sustained significant brain damage as a result of the car accident. The jury awarded him more than \$21 million including \$12 million for past and future pain and suffering, and emotional distress damages.

The Nelsen case is the second recent case for an Iraqi war veteran tried by Panish Shea & Boyle. The firm obtained a \$13.5 million settlement for Army Chief Warrant Officers Juan Beltran and Ron Carns, who were severely injured on a maintenance test flight in Tikrit, Iraq, which is the largest settlement for military personnel injured in the Iraqi War.

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Wasser, Cooperman & Carter practices exclusively in the field of family law, focusing on cases involving complex property, valuation, support and custody issues. Many of the firm's clients are high profile and/or well-to-do professionals, executives, athletes, and celebrities. The 15-attorney firm is proud to have four of its attorneys selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*®.

**Dennis M. Wasser**, who founded the firm, has appeared in *Best Lawyers* for the past twenty years. Since 1967, Mr. Wasser has represented a veritable "who's who" of Hollywood, and is currently lead counsel representing Jamie McCourt in her divorce from Frank McCourt, in which the central disputed issue is the ownership of the Los Angeles Dodgers. Mr. Wasser is a Certified Family Law Specialist, and has served as a Chair of the Los Angeles County Bar Family Law Section.

**Bruce E. Cooperman** is a Certified Family Law Specialist with 32 years of experience. He and Mr. Wasser have successfully tried complex cases involving property ownership, spousal agreements and high earner support issues. Mr. Cooperman is a contributing editor to the Rutter Group California Practice Guide: Family Law, a treatise utilized statewide by family law attorneys, and frequently lectures at family law conferences. He has served as Chair of the Los Angeles County Bar Family Law Section.

**Laura A. Wasser** has developed an outstanding reputation for bringing the firm a full roster of celebrities for representation. Ms. Wasser is well-respected both in the courtroom and in the conference room, having handled a number of prominent celebrity settlements. Ms. Wasser has served on the Executive Committee for the Beverly Hills Bar Association Family Law Section.

**John A. Foley** is a Certified Family Law Specialist experienced in handling marital dissolutions involving disputed property, support and custody issues. Mr. Foley has served as a settlement officer for the Los Angeles County Superior Court and has lectured at various family law symposiums. Mr. Foley has also served as a member of the Los Angeles County Bar Family Law Section Executive Committee from 2003 to the present.



From Left: Dennis M. Wasser, Laura Wasser, John A. Foley, Bruce E. Cooperman

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## EXCEPTIONAL CASE

## WILLIAM SHERNOFF ON INSURANCE RESCISSION

## GETTING HEALTH INSURANCE IS ONLY HALF THE BATTLE

**H**ealth care is a hot topic these days. The debate has primarily focused on how to ensure that everyone *has* health insurance. But getting insurance is only the first step. Imagine having health insurance only to see it “rescinded,” or cancelled, at the very moment when you need it most. Unfortunately, rescission is all too common—and can drive people to bankruptcy and even death.

William Shernoff, founder and senior partner of Shernoff Bidart Darras & Echeverria LLP, has become an expert on rescission and is determined to eliminate this industry practice. In February, he settled the first class action lawsuit over unlawful rescission practices with Health Net of California. The insurer will ultimately pay out an estimated \$20 million, although such payments, under the settlement agreement, do not constitute an admission of liability or wrongdoing.

The insurance industry claims that rescission is needed to protect against consumer fraud. Shernoff says that when individuals buy health care policies, they are required to complete health history questionnaires, “very complicated forms” full of confusing and often “unintelligible questions” that may go back as far as 20 years. According to Shernoff, the questionnaires “are obviously designed so that people will make mistakes,” thus giving insurers an excuse to cancel their coverage.

The questionnaires are initially shelved. Insurers wait, Shernoff says, until a doctor or hospital submits a claim that triggers a rescission investigation because it either includes certain diagnostic codes, such as those for expensive procedures or long-term care, or leads the insurer to believe that the insured’s ailment is a pre-existing condition that should have been disclosed in his or her health history.

Only then does the insurer request the insured’s medical records and compare

them to his or her questionnaire, says Shernoff. If the insurer finds any discrepancy—even one that is minor or unrelated to the triggering claim—it rescinds the policy without giving the insured a chance to explain.

“Rescissions have been a profit center for so long that insurers are reluctant to give the practice up,” asserts Shernoff. In fact, insurers have actively promoted the practice with incentive programs that reward employees with bonuses based on their number of rescissions, he notes.



**“R**ESCISSIONS HAVE BEEN A PROFIT CENTER FOR SO LONG THAT INSURERS ARE RELUCTANT TO GIVE THE PRACTICE UP.” —WILLIAM SHERNOFF

The Health Net settlement is unique for several reasons. First, it actually settled two cases: the class action lawsuit filed by Shernoff on behalf of approximately 800 class members (*Invia Bet Joseph v. Health Net, Inc. et al.*) and a companion civil lawsuit filed by the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office on behalf of the state (*People v. Health Net Inc. et al.*).

Second, the settlement agreement states that Health Net will pay \$3.15 million in damages to class members—without their having to submit claims. In a typical class action, “the return on claims is very low, sometimes as low as 10%,” notes Shernoff. So automatic payments ensure that *everyone* who is entitled to payment gets it.

In addition, according to the settlement agreement, Health Net will suspend all rescissions for a year until it establishes a third party review process for rescissions, or new laws or regulations on rescissions take effect. The insurer also acknowledged in the

agreement that it already eliminated rescission-based bonuses.

Why did Health Net agree to these terms? In some ways, it was a perfect storm. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, in a prior lawsuit handled by Shernoff, an

arbitrator ordered Health Net to pay \$9 million to a hairdresser whose coverage was rescinded after she was diagnosed with breast cancer. On the heels of that highly publicized order, Shernoff filed the class action. The Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office then filed its civil case.

The Health Net class action lawsuit may have been Shernoff’s first in this area but it is not his last. He currently has similar class actions pending against Blue Cross

and Blue Shield based on their rescission practices. Shernoff hoped that the Health Net settlement would spur settlements in these cases, but he believes that those insurers are waiting for decisions on motions to certify their respective classes before they will seriously discuss settlement.

It is too soon to tell the impact of the Health Net settlement on industry practices in California and elsewhere. But rescission is part of the national debate on health care. For example, in President Obama’s recent remarks to a joint session of Congress, he condemned the practice. Meanwhile, back in California, the Department of Insurance has drafted proposed regulations on rescission. Although Shernoff likes them, he doubts they will ever be approved. Legislation on rescission was just passed and then vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger—despite his public statements against the practice. “It’s politics,” sighs Shernoff.

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# 2010 LAWYERS OF THE YEAR

BEST LAWYERS HAS NAMED INDIVIDUALS AS LAWYERS OF THE YEAR IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, BASED ON THEIR PARTICULARLY HIGH LEVEL OF PEER RECOGNITION.

## Bruce A. Broillet

*Greene Broillet & Wheeler*

PERSONAL INJURY LITIGATION

As a young boy in El Paso, Tex., Bruce A. Broillet watched the classic movie *Witness for the Prosecution*, and was immediately drawn to the world of trial law. "I was quite taken by the whole idea," says Broillet, who joined the speech and debate teams in high school and college to further his skills before enrolling at the University of Texas Law School. "I had found my niche."



Indeed, he had. Today, Broillet, who is based in Los Angeles, is one of the top personal injury litigators in the country, having been recognized numerous times by bar associations and publications for his extraordinary success in the courtroom over the past 25 years. The many seven- and eight-figure verdicts and settlements Broillet has landed in cases ranging from business litigation to personal injury and wrongful death include a \$3.3 billion settlement against tobacco companies on behalf of the County of Los Angeles; the largest legal malpractice verdict—\$45.6 million—in California history; and \$10.35 million in damages in a business fraud case against a major financial corporation.

"I think the most meaningful part of being a trial lawyer is that you're giving voice to people who cannot speak for themselves," says Broillet, who has endowed a number of college and law school scholarships to deserving students. "It's very exciting to pick up the cause of somebody that's been harmed in some way and talk to our fellow citizens about it—in the form of the jury—and work within the justice system to achieve fair results based on the facts and the law. It's just a very exciting thing to be doing."

Jury verdicts, says Broillet, "give meaning to safety. They force a corporation to consider safety because it's better to make products safe in the first place than to have to pay a jury award down the line."

—Rita Carroll

## Gerald L. McMahon

*Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek*

BET-THE-COMPANY LITIGATION

After more than 44 years of practicing law, Gerald L. McMahon believes that success is related to respect. McMahon, 74, learned this lesson early in his career.

One day McMahon received two very different phone calls. The first was from a lawyer who was working on the other side of a labor relations case.

"The first words out of his mouth were 'McMahon, I'm going to kick your ass,'" McMahon recalls. "After we hung up, I sat there vowing to move heaven and earth to make sure that I won this case."

When the phone rang again, it was another attorney working the other side of a class action case.

"He asked if he could call me Jerry, and told me 'You ought to be very proud to know that you have a terrific reputation in your community,'" McMahon says.

McMahon's reaction was completely different from the first call.

"Well, I was ready to reach into my wallet for the second guy," McMahon laughs. "The way you treat people is incredibly important. It's a lesson that I've never forgotten."

Before practicing law, McMahon was a naval aviator. In 1964, he graduated summa cum laude from the University of San Diego School of Law. McMahon has been a Best Lawyers honoree since 1988.

McMahon is proudest of his 52-year marriage to his wife, Donna.

To relieve stress, McMahon spars with a former boxer. "He doesn't hit me back, so it's a good deal," he says.

—Ashley Cisneros

## Mark P. Robinson, Jr.

*Robinson, Calcagnie & Robinson*

PERSONAL INJURY LITIGATION

As a boy, Mark P. Robinson, Jr. developed a love for the law by watching his father build a career as a trial lawyer.

Mark P. Robinson, who later became an Orange County Superior Court judge, encouraged his son to attend law school, even if he decided against being an attorney. But after Robinson, won Moot Court competitions for Loyola School of Law, he knew he'd follow in his father's footsteps.

Robinson, 64, has now been practicing law for more than 37 years since graduating cum laude from law school.

He served as lead trial counsel for the plaintiff in *Barnett v. Merck* in 2006, which resulted in a \$51 million jury award, plus the first verdict for a plaintiff in a federal Vioxx trial. Co-counsel litigation achievements include the \$4.9 billion verdict in *Anderson v. General Motors*, and the \$128 million Ford Pinto fire verdict, recognized by Association of Trial Lawyers of America as one of the 10 most significant civil trials of the past millennium.

Robinson attributes his triumphs to his resilience. "I've lost some cases and made some mistakes, but I have the ability to always come back the next day and try again," Robinson says.

While attorneys are often criticized, Robinson believes that law is a noble calling.

"There's always going to be someone who doesn't meet the respectability standards for any profession, but I think we're very lucky to have the judicial system that we have in this country," he says.

—Ashley Cisneros



### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LAWYERS OF THE YEAR

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## WYLIE A. AITKEN



## PERSONAL INJURY LITIGATION

Wylie Aitken, a nationally recognized Preeminent Trial Lawyer and founding partner of Aitken Aitken Cohn, was, at 35, the youngest president in the history of the State Trial Bar. He has received numerous honors including: "Franklin G.

West Award"—Orange County Bar Association's highest honor; Consumer Watchdog's Rage for Justice "Lifetime Achievement Award;" *LA Daily Journal's* "10 Leading Rainmakers 2009," and repeatedly included in the "Top 100" Lawyers in California; a California *Super Lawyer*; *Law Dragon* 500 Leading Plaintiff Litigators in America; Irish America's "The Legal 100" Irish American legal figures in America; and "Top Gun Trial Lawyer of the Year" award. He is the President of American Board of Trial Advocates Foundation and serves on the ABOTA National Board; Celtic Bar past president; and, member of Federal Judicial Advisory Committee. His significant trial and appellate accomplishments include multiple eight figure results: recently a high profile, precedent setting Federal Court case against the USA awarding a 9 year old girl over \$54 Million as a result of a collision caused by a federal employee; a major settlement with a national fast food restaurant when a young boy fell, sustaining severe traumatic brain injury, on its playground; and, a confidential settlement involving insurance bad faith and failure to defend a claim brought by plaintiff, incomplete quadriplegic, and an \$18 Million stipulated judgment.

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## STEVEN HEIMBERG, M.D.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE LAW,  
PERSONAL INJURY LITIGATIONProfessional  
Malpractice Law

Steven Heimberg is a physician and an attorney who has dedicated his legal practice to obtaining justice for victims of medical malpractice, HMO mis-

conduct, elder abuse and nursing home neglect. Dr. Heimberg's practice focuses on those who have suffered severe personal injuries, brain and spinal cord injuries, birth injuries, paralysis and death.

Dr. Heimberg has obtained for his clients numerous record-setting medical verdicts and settlements, including what were at the time the largest ever in California, Los Angeles County, Kern County, Riverside County, Ventura County and Santa Barbara County history.

As a result of his diverse background and his accomplishments, Dr. Heimberg is nationally recognized as a top trial lawyer, and has been selected by his peers as a Top 500 Leading Litigator in America, Top 500 Plaintiff's Attorney in America, one of Southern California's Top 100 *Super Lawyers*, and Los Angeles' Trial Lawyer of the Year.

Additionally, Dr. Heimberg is a longtime board member of both of California's top consumer attorney organizations.

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## JOHN F. DENOVE



## PERSONAL INJURY LITIGATION

Insurance Bad Faith,  
Medical Malpractice,  
Products Liability

For more than 30 years, John Denove's goal has been to become the best trial lawyer he can be. He has tried more than 100 civil cases before a jury. Mr.

Denove holds the designation of Diplomate, the highest rank of the American Board of Trial Advocates, has served as President of the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles, and has been on the board of governors and executive committees of several other prominent trial lawyer associations. Mr. Denove has received numerous awards for his trial successes and commitment to representing the rights of the injured. He has been recognized as Trial Lawyer of the Year, and a Southern California *Super Lawyer*. Despite his extensive individual accomplishments, Mr. Denove believes the interests of his clients are best served through a solid team effort by his entire firm, including attorneys and staff. He teaches trial practice to other trial attorneys, and has authored many articles on the subject. His firm's website is an educational tool for both attorneys and clients. Mr. Denove believes the more the client knows—the better choice the client will make.

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## PIERCE O'DONNELL

COMMERCIAL LITIGATION,  
PRODUCT LIABILITY  
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Pierce O'Donnell is one of the leading trial lawyers in the country. He has handled numerous complex cases, including antitrust, entertainment, environmental,

intellectual property, energy, securities, products liability, toxic tort, real estate, constitutional law, and finance. A graduate of Georgetown and Yale, he clerked for Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White and Ninth Circuit Judge Shirley M. Hufstедler. In recognition of winning numerous precedent-setting cases, O'Donnell was named one of the "100 Most Influential Lawyers in America" by *The National Law Journal*. O'Donnell served as lead trial counsel of a team of lawyers who obtained \$3.5 billion in settlements from Sempra Energy and other energy companies in the California Energy Crisis litigation. These are the largest class action settlements in U.S. history. O'Donnell serves as lead trial counsel for Hurricane Katrina flood victims, the State of Louisiana and major corporations in a lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers. O'Donnell served as lead trial counsel for the plaintiff in *Auerbach Acquisition Associates, Inc. v. Greg Daily*—a business tort case involving the 2000 theft of an investment opportunity in iPayment, Inc. A Los Angeles jury awarded \$350 million in damages to his venture capital firm client in May 2009.

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## W. DOUGLAS EASTON



## PERSONAL INJURY LITIGATION

Medical Malpractice,  
Products Liability

With more than 38 years of experience in personal injury litigation, Doug Easton represented insurance companies and learned their tricks during his first six years of practice; for

the past 32 years, he has used that knowledge against them and helped thousands of injured people maximize their meritorious claims. Mr. Easton received his bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University in 1967, his law degree from the University of California at Berkeley (Boalt Hall) in 1970, and was admitted to the California Bar in 1971. He has served as an Orange County Superior Court temporary judge, arbitrator and mediator and belongs to numerous trial advocacy and professional organizations and has lectured on trial advocacy skills. For 25 years he has had Martindale-Hubble's highest AV-rating for legal skill and ethical conduct. He has been selected by his peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® since 2007, has been recognized as a *Super Lawyer*, and has been named as *Strathmore's* Medical Malpractice professional of the year for 2008.

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## SUSSAN H. SHORE



## TRUSTS AND ESTATES

Sussan Shore is a Certified Specialist in Probate, Estate Planning & Trust Law by the California Board of Legal Specialization with 33 years of experience. She is a past-Chairwoman of the Probate, Trust &

Estate Planning Sections of the Beverly Hills Bar and Los Angeles County Bar Associations, and a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel. She has been selected by her peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® from 1995-2010. Ms. Shore was selected a *Super Lawyer* by *Law and Politics* from 2004-2009 and is recognized as a Southern California "Top 50 Female *Super Lawyer*." A graduate of UCLA and Loyola University School of Law, she is a frequent national lecturer and author of numerous articles, and has taught Estate Planning for UCLA Extension for 28 years. Ms. Shore is Managing Director of Weinstock, Manion, Reisman, Shore & Neumann, a pre-eminent estate planning firm in Southern California. For over 50 years, the firm has provided expert counseling in tax and estate planning, estate & trust administration, transactional matters, and estates and trusts litigation.

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## H. DEAN STEWARD



### WHITE-COLLAR CRIMINAL DEFENSE

#### Non-White-Collar Criminal Defense

Dean Steward's been a trial lawyer in federal court for almost 30 years, having tried more than 150 felony jury trials. His practice

centers on the defense of white collar crime allegations and narcotics cases. His former positions include Directing Attorney, Federal Public Defenders, Orange County, California; Chairman, California State Bar Criminal Law Advisory Commission and First Assistant Federal Public Defender, Honolulu, Hawaii. He is also a Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers, and a former lawyer delegate to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference. Among other accomplishments, Mr. Steward secured an acquittal in the B.N. Goldberg investment fraud case in Los Angeles. He routinely represents directors, managers and employees of companies under federal investigation, in fields such as health care, retail, banking and other commerce. He also succeeded in getting evidence suppressed in high profile indictments involving international adoptions and a case involving weapons and aircraft sales to foreign countries. Both cases were later dismissed. According to the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, March 14, 2006, in court Steward is "solid, prepared, intensely knowledgeable... unflappable and steady".

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## LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL GOLDSTEIN

For 30 years, Michael Goldstein has worked on behalf of clients who found themselves or their loved ones the victims of catastrophic injury or death. Through settlement and trial, he has recovered tens of millions of dollars for extraordinary medical care costs and loss of enjoyment of life for individuals with severe injuries, including brain and spinal cord injuries, caused by motor vehicle negligence, medical malpractice, or defective automotive and medical products.

Many of his clients suffered traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) that were not detected by MRI or CT. These so-called "mild" TBIs can have profound effects on every aspect of life, yet be difficult to prove because of the 'normal' MRI and CT. Mr. Goldstein works with Neuro-Radiologists using cutting-edge brain-imaging technology to confirm brain dysfunction in these challenging cases. Mr. Goldstein has also developed an expertise with respect to catastrophic injury claims in tire failure litigation, and has recovered more than \$70 million for the victims of defective tires.

Over the years, Mr. Goldstein's ability and character have been recognized repeatedly by his colleagues. A two-time recipient of "Outstanding Trial Lawyer Awards" from the San Diego Trial Lawyers Association for multi-million dollar verdicts in challenging catastrophic injury cases, he's also been awarded a Martindale-Hubbell AV-rating for the highest level of legal skill and ethical conduct. He's a member of the esteemed American Board of Trial Advocates, has been recognized by his peers for inclusion in *Best Lawyers in America*® and has been selected as a *Southern California Super Lawyer*. His extensive expertise has led to appearances in national media, including *20/20* and *The NBC Nightly News*.

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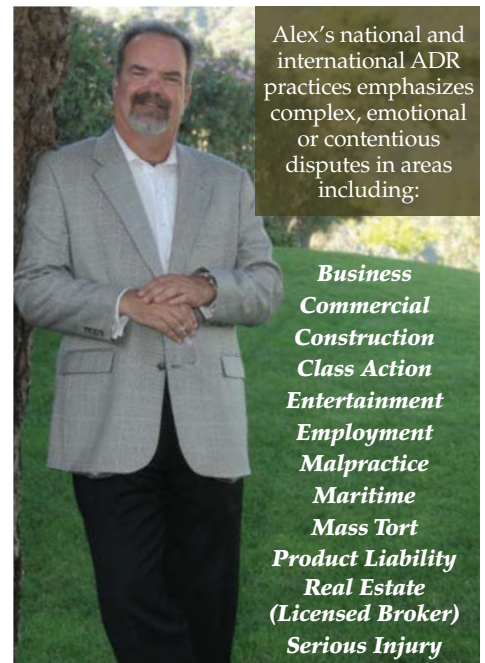
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A Professor of Law at USC, Alex designed a program emphasizing *Effective & Ethical Interest Based Negotiation*, and conducts negotiation skills training for corporations, law firms and Bar Associations.

His commercial arbitration practice includes domestic and international arbitration under ICC and UNCITRAL.

Alex has thrice been identified as one of the best neutrals in California by *The Daily Journal* newspaper, named in *Super Lawyers*, and is AV rated.

Written comments on Alex's practice include:

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Alex gives back to the community. He is on the Boards of the Public Law Center, the Bar Assoc. Dispute Resolution Services and the Legal Aid's Grand Cru fundraising event. He also volunteers as a Judge Pro Tempore.

Alex loves his work, has been married to Ellen for 29 years and he's proud of his daughter, Julie Firestone, who followed him into the profession and is a partner at Briggs Morgan. He describes himself as "the happiest lawyer I know" who loves every minute of the challenges unique to complex case ADR practice.

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Charles has tried cases as complex as trade secrets in aluminum roof vents involving international conglomerates and small vulnerable insolvent companies (*O'Hagin v. Redline Inc and Monair Inc*) and as innovative as imposing a duty of care on traffic officers (*Lugtu v. CHP*). From Santa Rosa in the north to Vista in the south, Barstow in the east and Santa Monica in the west, Charles has tried major jury trials in those Superior Courts and most counties in between and has many appellate decisions to his credit. The two framed quotes of his idol Sir Thomas More, the 1st on the Law from A Man for All Seasons; the 2nd on Jewels and

Wealth from Utopia, were given to him by Chief Justice Rose Bird in appreciation for his work on behalf of the Independence of the Judiciary. The watch on his right wrist a 'Patek Philippe' was given to him by a former client for his work in obtaining a \$20 million judgment in the first post Tameny wrongful discharge case in California (*McCullough v. S&H Green Stamps*). The client was a marine in the first wave on some of the major island campaigns in the Pacific in World War II, including the very island on which Charles was stationed when he was in the Marines. The watch is inscribed "your friendship is 4 stars on a Marine". The plaque is an honor bestowed on Charles in appreciation for "your outstanding contribution to the public interest through your work in *Wollersheim v. Church of Scientology*", which spanned 3 continents, over 25 lawsuits, and 25 years of litigation, without generating any fees for Charles. And that is what being a lawyer in the image of Thomas More is all about—OBTAINING JUSTICE WHICH OFTEN IS ITS OWN REWARD.

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During his forty years of practicing labor and employment law in Los Angeles, James Adler became an early advocate of resolving disputes through mediation and arbitration. His consistent approach has been as a problem-solver. After four part-time years as a neutral applying 11 major labor and employment laws to the employees of the United States Congress, he began to do neutral work as part of his practice at Irell & Manella. In July 2005, Mr. Adler withdrew from the active practice of law to become a full time mediator and arbitrator. As a mediator he has assisted parties in resolving a wide variety of employment and contractual disputes.

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Unlike many other neutrals, Emily Boyle's 30 years of legal experience has given her a unique perspective to dispute resolution from all sides of the conflict; that of *Fortune* 500 in-house employment counsel, defense counsel, plaintiff's counsel and appellate counsel. This background allows her to connect with attorneys, empathize with their clients, gain the trust of all parties and effectively bring the case to resolution. Ms. Boyle's focus for the past 7 years has been primarily to serve as a neutral in employment, wage & hour, contract, real estate and commercial litigation cases. She is available as an arbitrator and mediator privately and through the American Arbitration Association Employment Law/ Commercial panel and the Los Angeles Superior Court ADR program party pay panel.

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Sean earned a combined JD/MBA from USC Law and Business Schools in 1981. Since 1985, he has specialized in representing plaintiffs in catastrophic personal injury, medical malpractice, and product liability cases. He has obtained over \$60 million for his clients in the last 10 years. He holds an AV-rating from Martindale-Hubbell, is listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*, was rated in the Top 5 Lawyers in Orange County by OC Metro/Avvo, has been named a Southern California *Super Lawyer* for 6 years and was listed in the Top 50 Lawyers in Orange County for 2007 and 2009. He received the Top Gun Award for Medical Malpractice Trial Lawyer of the Year for 2005 and 2009 by the OCTLA.

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Peter Gelles acts as advisor to U.S. and international clients in regard to business and real estate matters. He received his law degree from Oxford University and is admitted to practice in California, the U.K. and Hong Kong. He is Chairman of InterCounsel, a network of international lawyers in North and South America, Europe and Asia, and a past Chair of the California State Bar's International Law Section, the Los Angeles County Bar's Real Property Section, and ABA Committees on International Real Estate Investment and Secured Transactions, and he is an advisor to the ABA's Task Force on Transactional Legal Practice. Mr. Gelles has been published and participated in numerous seminars at various venues in the United States, Europe and Asia, and he is a Board member and active supporter of numerous non-profit arts organizations.

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Frederick J. Glassman is a founding partner of Mayer & Glassman Law Corporation. He is President of the Los Angeles Collaborative Family Law Association and recipient of the 2008 State of California Collaborative Practice Eureka Award. Fred has authored local and national articles and teaches alternative dispute resolution courses in family law for UCLA Extension. Fred has appeared on Time Warner Public Television shows. He is a frequent speaker and panel member for the American Bar Association and the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals. Fred serves on the Board of Directors for the California Dispute Resolution Council and is an Official Registered Observer for the Uniform Collaborative Law Act. He is listed in Martindale-Hubbell's Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers with their highest AV-Rating in legal ability and ethical standards.

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Hersh is a past-Chair of the Beverly Hills Bar Association Family Law Section and is a member of Family Law Sections of the American Bar Association, State Bar and the Los Angeles County Bar. He is a member of the American and International Academies of Matrimonial Lawyers and is a sought-after lecturer. He has appeared on such shows as *Good Morning America*, *Larry King Live*, *The Today Show*, *AM Los Angeles*, *Dr. Phil* and *Celebrity Justice* and on networks such as CNN and CNBC. Mr. Hersh enjoys writing and has penned a comedy relating to family law which has been sold to a major movie studio.

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Toni Jaramilla is a labor and employment attorney whose office is based in Los Angeles. She believes in creating positive social change through tenacious advocacy on behalf

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Victor Sherman founded Sherman & Sherman along with Janet Sherman in 1984, having practiced law since 1966. Mr. Sherman has tried hundreds of cases in both federal and state courts. Recent victories in the last 18 months include acquittals in a federal wiretap case involving 65 kilos of cocaine, an acquittal by a Federal Judge in a complex RICO case, and an acquittal of an attorney in state court on six counts of fraud and perjury. Mr. Sherman has argued before the United States Supreme Court (United States v. \$8,850) and Court of Appeal in many federal circuits. Mr. Sherman conceived of and began sponsoring the yearly Aspen Advanced Criminal Law Seminar in 1980. He can be seen regularly on media outlets providing legal commentary on today's hottest cases.

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