

# LEADERS OF INFLUENCE WOMEN IN LAW

CUSTOM CONTENT · August 25, 2025



## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



## HALEY AANESTAD

MANLY, STEWART &amp; FINALDI

Haley Aanestad is an attorney at Manly, Stewart & Finaldi and has practiced exclusively in the specialty of childhood sexual abuse since she was licensed in 2021. First joining the firm in 2018 as a law clerk, Aanestad has gone on to represent survivors of sexual abuse in cases involving religious institutions, healthcare providers, corporations, universities, fraternities, and public-school districts.



In the last year alone, Aanestad was a part of the team representing survivors in a nine-figure settlement against a public school district. Currently, Aanestad represents over one hundred survivors in their claims against various Roman Catholic Diocese and dozens of survivors in their claims against public school districts including Los Angeles Unified School District, Long Beach Unified School District, and Simi Valley Unified School District.

Advocating for survivors of sexual abuse is what drives her to work hard and hold institutions, both large and small, accountable. Aanestad is adamant that it is because of the brave survivors Manly, Stewart & Finaldi represents that institutions enabling sexual abuse are being held accountable for their systemic failures.



## CHRISTINE BARAN

FISHER PHILLIPS

Christine Baran is a partner in the firm's Irvine and Los Angeles offices where her practice is devoted to litigating employment related disputes. Baran's diverse practice includes litigating cases involving discrimination, sexual harassment, wage and hour claims (both individual and collective actions), unfair business practices, whistleblower claims, workplace violence, and wrongful discharge. She represents employers in both state and federal court as well as before state and federal agencies, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, and the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE).



Along with her litigation work, Baran counsels clients regarding appropriate handling of disciplinary matters, employee terminations, internal investigations, the development of preventive policies and procedures, compliance with state and federal laws relating to wages, leaves of absences, harassment, and discrimination. In addition, she regularly conducts compliance and management training and frequently lectures on employment issues for trade groups and associations as well as private employers.

In addition to employment litigation, Baran represents commercial property owners and property management companies in the defense of housing discrimination claims under the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), the Unruh Act, and the federal Fair Housing Act as well as disability discrimination claims under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

FERRUZZO

## CHERYL L. BARRETT

FERRUZZO &amp; FERRUZZO LLP

Cheryl L. Barrett is a partner within the Estate Planning and Trust Administration Practice Group at Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo LLP.



Barrett successfully built her practice by understanding that two words can explain what differentiates an attorney who does estate planning from an excellent estate planning attorney: Experience and Empathy. Barrett's long-time practice is people-oriented and she is highly sensitive to the fact that estate planning deals with the two subjects dreaded by most people: death and taxation. The gift that she brings to her clients is her ability to break down complex issues and move past the attorney and IRS lexicons in a manner that people can understand and apply to their personal goals and needs. When the need arises, Barrett's trust administration skills can be relied upon to carry out her clients' wishes, and in cases where probate is required, she is able to guide clients through the rigors of the process.

Highly visible in the charitable community, Barrett served as Board Chair for Goodwill Industries of Orange County. The service supported her affinity for the needs of the disabled community and furthered her interest in special needs trusts. Currently, she serves on the Board of the Orange County Women Lawyers Charitable Foundation.

Barrett has been quoted by financial editors at the Orange County Register, Los Angeles Times, Huffington Post, and Business Insider. She has been a guest on KABC and KCAA radio talk shows. When clients refer family members, there is no greater symbol of their confidence. Barrett has been helping families for years. Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo is rooted in relationships and Barrett is emblematic of that ethic.

## Holland &amp; Knight

## ANNE REDCROSS BEEHLER

HOLLAND &amp; KNIGHT

Anne Redcross Beehler is a seasoned litigator and trial attorney in Holland & Knight's Newport Beach office, representing companies and high-net-worth individuals in complex commercial disputes in California and New York. Her practice spans partnership and corporate governance disputes, contract and fraud claims, trade secret theft, securities litigation, and whistleblower actions.



Beehler handles cases from inception through trial and appeal, having first-chaired trials in both state and federal courts. She is also experienced in white collar criminal defense, guiding clients through investigations and trials. Before moving to California, she successfully tried a high-profile white-collar case in New York involving grand larceny and business record falsification.

A significant portion of her work focuses on the real estate industry. Beehler has represented a wide range of stakeholders, lenders, landlords, tenants, developers, Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), and receivers in disputes involving distressed properties and other complex real estate matters.

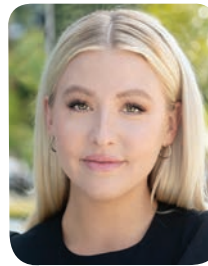
Beyond litigation, Beehler frequently counsels clients on compliance with state and federal criminal laws. Known for being practical, persistent, and meticulously prepared, she is deeply committed to helping clients find strategic solutions and minimize litigation whenever possible.



## KATIE BINKLEY

VETERANS LEGAL INSTITUTE

Katie Binkley is the deputy executive director at Veterans Legal Institute and assists in the management and strategy of the firm. She plans the annual fundraiser, Lawyers for Warriors, and advocates for VLI in the local legal and business community.



Binkley is the chair of the Legal & Re-Entry working group of the Orange County Veterans and Military Families Collaborative, a consortium of veteran organizations in Orange County. She also sits on the Executive Board of the Orange County Bar Association Family Law Section and is a member of the OCBA Pro Bono Committee. Binkley sits on the Board of Leadership Tomorrow, administered by the Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce, after successfully graduating from the program. Binkley is also a graduate of the Fieldstone Leadership Network's Class of 2024.

In the years of 2023 and 2021, Binkley was honored as one of Congressman Lou Correa's Women of the Year. She regularly pens articles for publications like Orange County Lawyer and U.S. Veterans Magazine.

Binkley is a graduate from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. During her time in law school, she was awarded the Judge Mary M. Schroeder Award for most pro-bono hours as a 2L student and graduated with the highest pro bono distinction. Binkley is experienced in the public sector, with stints at both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Arizona State Legislature. Serving veterans is important to Binkley as her late grandfather was a Korean War Era Army Officer.

## COX CASTLE

## KATHERINE C. BISSETT

COX, CASTLE &amp; NICHOLSON

Katherine C. Bissett (KC) is a partner at Cox, Castle & Nicholson and a leading attorney specializing in commercial real estate finance. She is recognized for her expertise in guiding both lenders and borrowers through complex transactions across the nation. Bissett has extensive experience structuring, negotiating, and closing sophisticated real estate finance transactions secured by a wide variety of asset types, including acquisition, bridge, and construction loans, ground lease financing, mezzanine loans, and secondary market transactions.



In 2024, Bissett advised clients on loan origination transactions totaling approximately \$990 million. She also managed numerous modifications, asset management, and enforcement matters, offering insightful and practical guidance to her clients as they navigated challenging market conditions.

Bissett is acknowledged as a thought leader in the industry. She participated as a panelist at IMN's Annual Winter Forum in 2025 and moderated panels at the USC Gould Real Estate Law and Business Forum Conference and the ULI Fall Conference in 2024. Her professional achievements have garnered numerous accolades, including recognition in Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch for 2023-2025, inclusion in the Los Angeles Times Studios' Banking & Finance Visionaries list in 2024, and being named one of the Los Angeles Business Journal's Women of Influence in Finance in 2024. Additionally, she received the Connect CRE Next Generation Award in 2022 and was recognized as one of Super Lawyers' Up-and-Coming 50 Women in Southern California for 2019-2020.

# Celebrating FBT's Orange County Women Attorneys

FBT actively supports leadership development, mentorship, and career advancement for women attorneys—creating a workplace where diverse perspectives drive innovation, results, and impact.



Pictured: Claudia Coleman (Senior Associate), Jillyn Hess-Verdon (Partner), Barbara Tang (Partner)  
Not Pictured: Holly Gilani (Partner), Nadeen Farra (Associate), Minh Hieu Vu (Associate)

## California Growth. National Strength.

With continued expansion in California, Frost Brown Todd (FBT) reinforces its long-term commitment to the region, offering innovative legal strategies and a stronger national presence. Our team works hard to build trusted relationships with our clients and community — honoring that trust through responsive service, legal practice discipline, and a client-first mindset.



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## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES

## Buchalter



## Holland &amp; Knight

## FARAH BHATTI

## BUCHALTER

Farah Bhatti is a shareholder and the chair of the firm's Trademark Law Practice and co-chair of the internet, e-commerce, and social media practice. She focuses her practice on all aspects of trademark prosecution and protection, including advising, counseling, and securing trademark protection for clients, with an emphasis on the worldwide selection and enforcement of trademarks. She also works closely with clients in formulating their domestic and international trademark protection and registration strategies and manages domestic and international trademark portfolios. Bhatti also counsels and works with clients on federal trademark litigation, as well as opposition and cancellation proceedings before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board. Bhatti has also argued several matters before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board.



Bhatti expertly navigates the complexities of issues within the areas of trademark registration and enforcement, drawing on experience in private practice as well as her previous position as a trademark examining attorney at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). While there, she examined more than 2,000 trademark applications and represented the USPTO before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB). She also has extensive experience in the enforcement of Internet and domain names, through the implementation of strategies ranging from cease-and-desist letters, Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) complaints, individual website complaint procedures, and trademark litigation under the Anticybersquatting Consumer Protection Act (ACPA) as well as other federal laws.

Bhatti has been recognized as a leader by the World Intellectual Property Review and is an active committee member of the International Trademark Association.

## CELESTE STAHL BRADY

## STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON &amp; RAUTH LLP

Celeste Stahl Brady specializes in revitalizing and developing affordable housing, commercial spaces, and infrastructure projects for public and private entities, including cities and housing authorities across California. With a career dedicated to planning, financing, and structuring community development initiatives, she is a trusted advisor in navigating complex public-private partnerships.



Recognized as a go-to special counsel by city attorneys, in-house counsel, and law firms, Brady excels in multi-party real estate transactions, land use planning, and compliance with public records, conflict-of-interest, and municipal law matters. Her expertise enables her clients to overcome intricate legal and business challenges while adhering to the nuances of federal, state, and local regulations.

Brady focuses on achieving efficient outcomes that balance the demands of lenders, investors, and regulators, often under tight deadlines. Her transactional experience encompasses a wide range of housing and commercial projects, skillfully negotiating partnerships to construct, renovate, and operate development funded by various public programs.

Additionally, Brady collaborates with cities to prepare and implement affordable housing strategies and programs. Following the dissolution of California's redevelopment agencies, she continues to support successor agencies in fulfilling their obligations and winding down operations. Brady's commitment to fostering housing and community development defines her impactful legal practice.

## CYNTHIA "CINDY" BRITAIN

## HOLLAND &amp; KNIGHT

Cynthia "Cindy" Brittain is a private wealth services attorney in Holland & Knight's Los Angeles and Newport Beach offices. With decades of experience, she advises high-net-worth individuals and families on domestic and international tax, estate planning, and business succession strategies. Her work spans cross-border wealth structuring, pre-immigration planning, international charitable giving, and compliance with global regulatory regimes.



Brittain is particularly sought after by multinational families and business owners facing complex, high-stakes planning challenges. Her international experience is deepened by having lived and worked in Hong Kong and London, providing key insights into U.S.-U.K. and U.K.-Asia estate and tax planning integration.

In addition, Brittain regularly advises clients on Sharia-compliant estate planning, the formation of private trust companies and family offices, and pre-liquidity event planning. Her domestic practice includes creating sophisticated estate plans, including grantor trusts, dynastic trusts, and charitable structures.

Brittain also works with financial institutions and corporate trustees on anti-money laundering compliance and enforcement issues, having helped develop anti-money laundering (AML) programs under the Bank Secrecy Act and USA PATRIOT Act.

Her recognitions include Chambers High Net Worth Private Wealth Law-California: Southern (2024-2025); Lawdragon 500 Leading Global Tax Lawyers (2025); Los Angeles Business Journal's Women of Influence-Attorneys (2025); and Southern California Super Lawyers (2023-2024) for Estate Planning & Probate, Tax (2023-2024).



## Buchalter

## EVERETT DOREY LLP

## ALLISON BURNS

## STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON &amp; RAUTH LLP

Allison Burns is a partner in Stradling's Public Law practice group, with extensive experience in local agency governance, civil rights litigation, eminent domain, and real estate disputes. She is well-versed in contract and construction issues, economic development, and affordable housing litigation, as well as land use matters and compliance with public records regulations. Her experience also includes relocation and acquisition disputes, conflicts of interest, Public Records Act and Brown Act challenges, compliance and litigation, environmental contamination and remediation cost-recovery actions, water rights, and the dissolution of redevelopment.



Burns has additional litigation experience across constitutional and civil rights challenges to governmental programs and actions, development agreement disputes, eminent domain (representing both condemnees and condemnors), breaches of covenants, conditions and restrictions, foreclosure of taxes, special assessments, and liens, construction disputes, contamination and remediation cost-recovery actions, evictions, challenges to bond issuances, affordable housing disputes (including challenges to expenditures from low-and-moderate-income housing funds).

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

## ROXANA K. CHAMOULLIÉ

## BUCHALTER

Roxana K. Chamouillé is a shareholder in Buchalter's Orange County office and a member of the firm's Real Estate and Real Estate Finance groups. For more than twenty years, Chamouillé has handled sophisticated commercial real estate transactions for property owners, purchasers, sellers, and local, regional, and nationwide lenders. Chamouillé's extensive real estate expertise includes conducting various due diligence and negotiating, preparing, reviewing, and closing loan and purchase and sale documentation for the acquisition, disposition, financing, and development of a wide range of commercial projects, including retail, office, industrial, multi-family, hotels, self-storage, and schools. Chamouillé has substantial experience in restructuring credit facilities and advising clients through loan modification and forbearance arrangements of various credit types. Prior to joining the firm, Chamouillé served as the chair of the finance practice group at a prominent law firm. Additionally, she was the founder and president of a law firm specializing in real estate transactions and litigation. In 2018, Chamouillé was selected as a member of "Top 100 Lawyers" by the Top 100 Magazine. She is also involved in various firm and community matters. She is a member of the firm's DEI Committee and volunteers her time for animal advocacy and rescue. She is a Gracie Jiu-Jitsu Black Belt and has helped empower numerous women and children through jiu-jitsu instruction.



## DIANA CHAO

## EVERETT DOREY LLP

Diana Chao is a litigation attorney with extensive experience in all facets of litigation. Her innovative case handling has benefited clients in pre-litigated and litigated matters. Chao's practice focuses on complex and catastrophic injuries, insurance coverage, public entity, and mass tort litigation. She also provides risk management services, focusing on transfer and elimination of risk.



Prior to law school, Chao graduated from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies. Chao earned her Juris Doctor degree from Chapman University School of Law. While in law school, she was a board member of the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association. Chao also participated in the AMVETS Clinic and the Family Violence Clinic during which time she successfully represented military veterans and victims of domestic violence. Chao is a member of Everett Dorey's Diversity Leadership Committee and is a former board member of the Orange County Coalition of Diversity in the Law (OCCDL).



# 50 Years of Impact and Excellence

For 50 years, Stradling has been a trusted legal partner. With skilled lawyers in 12 Western U.S. offices, we provide agile, results-driven counsel. From complex public financing transactions, to impactful corporate dealmaking and bet-the-company litigation, our commitment to excellence never wavers.

## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



# Buchalter

## BRITTANY A. CHARBONEAU

MANLY, STEWART & FINALDI

Brittany A. Charboneau is a Southern California native and first-generation attorney. After earning her undergraduate degrees in Political Science and Theatre Performance from Chapman University, Charboneau attended law school with the goal of pursuing a legal career as a means of effecting meaningful change in society.



As a law student, Charboneau clerked for the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, where both her passion for pursuing justice and commitment to making a positive impact in the legal field were solidified. Prior to joining Manly, Stewart & Finaldi, Charboneau's legal practice was focused on catastrophic personal injury cases.

Charboneau served as trial counsel in numerous jury trials, and she credits her trial success to sharpening her ability to effectively advocate for her clients. Charboneau has a strong belief in the power of the law to drive social progress and is dedicated to using her legal skills to make a lasting difference. She believes that it is a profound responsibility to represent survivors of sexual abuse. Charboneau is honored to stand with survivors in their pursuit of justice, challenging systematic injustices and helping create a culture where survivors are empowered to speak their truth, seek healing, and reclaim their lives.

## RAQUEL COOPER

MANLY, STEWART & FINALDI

Raquel Cooper is an attorney with Manly, Stewart & Finaldi. As a career sex crimes prosecutor, her practice is focused on representing survivors of sexual abuse, assault, and harassment. Before joining Manly, Stewart & Finaldi, Cooper served as an Orange County Deputy District Attorney for more than twelve years.



She conducted nearly 50 criminal jury trials during her career in the Orange County District Attorney's Office. Due to her overwhelming trial success, she was promoted to the role of Senior Trial Advisor. In this position, she supervised Deputy District Attorneys, elevating their trial skills, strategies, and techniques.

For more than half of her prosecutorial career, Cooper worked in the District Attorney's Sexual Assault Unit where she exclusively prosecuted felony sexual assault crimes. Cooper worked with law enforcement at the local and federal level, as well as agencies across the country and internationally to investigate sexual assault crimes, locate, apprehend and often extradite perpetrators to Orange County, where she then filed criminal charges, litigated pretrial motions, met with survivors, supervised child abuse forensic interviews and conducted jury trials and sentencing hearings. Cooper conducted sexual assault investigative trainings for the Orange County Sheriff's Department, the District Attorney's office, and other local law enforcement agencies.

Cooper currently leads the MSF team in cases against Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian and UC Irvine, wherein she represents nearly 200 survivors of sexual abuse suffered at the hands of physicians Dr. William Moore Thompson IV and Dr. John Carl Hoefs.

## CAROLINE DJANG

BUCHALTER

Caroline Djang is a shareholder at Buchalter, where she is co-chair of the Orange County Litigation Practice and is a member of the firm's Insolvency and Financial Law Practice Group. Based in Irvine, Djang is widely recognized for her strategic counsel in bankruptcy and financial restructuring, representing creditors, trustees, debtors, and committees in high-stakes litigation.



A certified mediator and Chapter 11 Subchapter V Trustee for the Central District of California, Djang combines legal precision with practical insight, guiding clients through debt recovery strategies and financial distress with clarity and confidence. She is a sought-after speaker on many topics, including the Small Business Reorganization Act.

Beyond her practice, Djang is deeply committed to the legal community. She currently serves as Immediate Past President of the Orange County Women Lawyers Association and serves on the Board of Directors for the Orange County Bar Association, the James T. King Bankruptcy Inn of Court, and the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society. Her previous roles include serving as a Lawyer Representative for the Central District of California and as an At-Large Member of the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference Executive Committee.

Djang's contributions and leadership have earned widespread recognition. She has been named among the Top 100 Southern California Attorneys, the Top 50 Women Attorneys, and the Top 50 Orange County Attorneys by Super Lawyers. Additional accolades include recognition by the Los Angeles Times as a Banking and Finance Visionary and inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America® for Litigation – Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights/Insolvency and Reorganization Law.

# EVERETT DOREY LLP

# FERRUZZO

# Buchalter

## SAMANTHA DOREY

EVERETT DOREY LLP

Samantha Dorey is a founding partner of Everett Dorey LLP and serves as trial counsel in high-impact cases in state and federal court. She specializes in complex civil litigation with an emphasis in catastrophic injury, employment law, habitability, mold, public entity defense, mass tort, asbestos litigation, and environmental law. Dorey represents multi-national corporations, non-profits, cities, public agencies, school districts, property owners, and property managers in all aspects of litigation. She also regularly advises clients on non-litigated matters, including development of risk management protocols and procedures.



As a leading litigator in California routinely retained as trial counsel in complex and challenging cases throughout the state, Dorey has shaped a firm of exceptionally talented litigators with diverse cultural and personal backgrounds, with particular focus on creating an environment that empowers female attorneys. She has received numerous industry awards for her work in the field, including but not limited to, 2024 and 2025 Top Women Lawyers, 2024 40 Under 40, and 2025 Leading Commercial Litigator by the Daily Journal. Dorey was recently recognized with the Advancement of Women Award by the Orange County Women Lawyers Association.

Dorey is an adjunct professor at Chapman University, Dale E. Fowler School of Law where she teaches a course on litigation strategy and civil procedure in state and federal courts. She serves on the board of directors for the Public Law Center, a nonprofit providing free legal services to low-income residents and other nonprofits in Orange County.

## MARISSA ECHELBERGER

FERRUZZO & FERRUZZO LLP

Marissa Echelberger is an associate attorney at Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo LLP and is a member of the firm's Corporate Practice Group where she advises clients on entity formation, corporate governance, and compliance. Her work includes drafting and reviewing contracts, conducting due diligence, and supporting corporate transactions ranging from business sales and acquisitions to the purchase and leasing of real property.



Before joining Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo LLP, Echelberger worked with nonprofit legal organizations, gaining experience in conservatorships, guardianships, and housing law. Additionally, her passion for the environment motivated her to focus her legal studies on real estate and land use law at Chapman University, Dale E. Fowler School of Law, where she earned her Juris Doctorate and a certificate in Environmental Law, Real Estate, and Land Use.

Echelberger graduated with honors from the University of California, Irvine, where she played NCAA Division I water polo as a four-year scholar athlete. The discipline, consistency, and teamwork she developed as a collegiate athlete now shape the detail-oriented, collaborative approach she takes to her legal practice, helping clients navigate corporate matters and ensuring transactions move smoothly from initial review through closing.

Born and raised in Orange County, Echelberger enjoys spending her free time surfing, hiking, and spending time with family and friends.

## ANNE MARIE ELLIS

BUCHALTER

Anne Marie Ellis is a shareholder in Buchalter's Orange County office, where she serves as the chair of the firm's Products Liability Practice Group in California and leads its Chemical Law and Prop. 65 Industry Group. With more than two decades of litigation and regulatory experience, she is nationally recognized for her work defending complex product liability and toxic tort claims, including catastrophic injury, wrongful death, class actions, and mass torts. Ellis represents a wide range of manufacturers, distributors, and retailers across the consumer products, chemical, pharmaceutical, automotive, and life sciences industries.



She is a trusted counselor to clients navigating high-stakes litigation, as well as government investigations and compliance matters involving state and federal agencies. Her practice also includes advising on all stages of the product life cycle, as well as high-stakes litigation matters. Ellis is known for providing strategic, practical solutions that align litigation and regulatory risks with business objectives.

Ellis is a recognized leader both within and outside the courtroom. She has authored numerous articles, spoken at national industry conferences, and guest lectured at law schools, helping shape the next generation of legal professionals. In recognition of her professional achievements and commitment to advancing women in the legal field, she was honored by the Orange County Business Journal as one of its 2024 "Leaders of Influence – Women in Law," a distinction shared with other outstanding Buchalter attorneys.

# RUTAN

## WOMEN IN LAW

*Leaders of Influence*

Congratulations to these remarkable women for their acknowledgment as impactful leaders within the OC Legal Community!

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Litigation & Trial

**Samantha  
Papuchis**  
*Partner*

## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



## LISA EYANSON

VETERANS LEGAL INSTITUTE

Lisa Eyanson is an accomplished criminal defense attorney with more than 30 years of litigation experience. Eyanson has dedicated her career to representing indigent clients, including over two decades in the Orange County Public Defender's Office. She is currently a senior staff attorney with the Veterans Legal Institute where she uses her legal experience to advocate on behalf of veterans and their families in need. Eyanson focuses primarily on assisting veterans with expunging and sealing criminal records, affording them better access to housing and employment, ensuring veterans access to all resources available to stay safe and secure. In 2023 alone, VLI assisted over one hundred Veterans to expunge convictions, many of which were a result of service-related trauma.



Eyanson received her Bachelor of Arts from Loyola Marymount University and her Juris Doctor from Western State University College of Law. Upon receiving her Juris Doctor, she was an associate with the Law Offices of William J. Kopeny, handling pre-trial motions and appeals, including capital case appeals at both the state and federal court levels.

In 1994, Eyanson joined the Orange County Public Defender's Office eventually serving as a senior deputy public defender, where the majority of her litigation experience was in the handling of serious, violent, and complex felony matters, including special circumstance and capital murder cases.



## ALYSSA FOGLE

VETERANS LEGAL INSTITUTE

Alyssa Fogle is an attorney at Veterans Legal Institute whose passion for public service is rooted in both her 12 years of service in the United States Air Force and a long-standing dedication to advocating for veterans and marginalized communities. An Orange County native, her commitment to veterans' issues began during her undergraduate studies at California State University, Fullerton, where she interned with a local Congressman to address concerns facing the veteran community. While attending the University of La Verne College of Law, she expanded her advocacy through multiple legal clinics, including the Criminal Appellate Advocacy Clinic and the Immigration Rights Clinic.



Since joining Veterans Legal Institute as a law clerk in 2022, Fogle has dedicated her legal career to protecting the rights of low-income and homeless veterans in the areas of housing and veteran's benefits. Within the housing department, she assists veterans in preventing and defending evictions, addresses habitability violations, and provides advice and consult on various other housing issues. Within the Veterans Benefits department, she assists veterans with the complex and often intimidating process of filing VA disability claims, discharge upgrades, and appeals, ensuring her clients have access to the resources and benefits they have earned. Now living in San Diego with her husband Sean, Fogle continues to serve the veteran community throughout Southern California. In addition to her work at VLI, she volunteers at unlawful detainer clinics in San Diego County, providing pro bono assistance to tenants facing eviction.

FERRUZZO

## ALYSE M. FREDERICK

FERRUZZO &amp; FERRUZZO LLP

Alyse M. Frederick is an associate at Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo LLP, where she is a member of the firm's Estate Planning, Trust Administration, and Probate Practice Groups. She is published by Thomson Reuters on the topic of working with clients with diminished capacity due to Alzheimer's dementia. Frederick represents clients in a wide variety of matters. Her practice focuses on estate planning, special needs planning, trust administration, probate administration, and conservatorships. She also advises clients in tax planning, corporate formation, and business-succession planning. Frederick enjoys using her expertise to create solid estate plans that preserve wealth and provide security for future generations. Frederick works closely with families experiencing life changes and trauma. She counsels clients and helps families navigate the trust administration and probate processes with sensitivity and discretion. Frederick's inherent passion for working with families also extends to protecting society's most vulnerable through conservatorships. She first discovered her passion for using her legal skills and acumen to help people experiencing difficult life situations while working as a law clerk in the Children's Court in Los Angeles while in law school. Frederick earned her BA in political science, with honors, from Chapman University, and her Juris Doctor degree, from Chapman University Fowler School of Law. Frederick is an Orange County native and can often be found at the beach enjoying time with her family.



## KELLY LUCINDA GALLIGAN

RUTAN &amp; TUCKER LLP

Kelly Lucinda Galligan stands at the forefront of corporate law, specializing in mergers and acquisitions, private equity, and corporate governance with a dynamic and strategic approach. Her expertise spans a comprehensive range of corporate transactions, where she adeptly navigates the complexities of stock and asset acquisitions, divestitures, privately held company mergers, joint ventures, and private equity investments. Focused on the middle market, Galligan has skillfully guided transactions valued between \$5 million and \$500 million, earning her a reputation as a trusted advisor in high-stakes negotiations.



As the trusted outside general counsel for numerous corporate clients, Galligan provides invaluable day-to-day guidance on transactional and governance issues, tailoring her advice to meet the unique needs of each company. Her practice seamlessly intersects with a diverse array of industries, from private equity to the worlds of apparel and beauty, financial services, food and beverage, health and wellness, logistics, manufacturing, construction, and entertainment, showcasing her versatility and deep market insight.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Galligan is deeply committed to community service and pro bono work. Through her involvement with the Public Law Center, she offers pro bono legal services, leveraging her legal expertise for the greater good. Galligan currently chairs the Orange County Bar Association Charitable Fund Golf Tournament and sits on the board of the Newport Beach Foundation, which fosters civic leadership through education and advocacy. Her past leadership includes serving as President of Project Youth OCBF, the Orange County Women Lawyers Association, the OCWLA Foundation, and the OCBA Young Lawyers Division.



## ARDELLE ST. GEORGE

ST. GEORGE &amp; CARNEGIE

As managing partner of her law firm, St. George & Carnegie, and solutions and licensing company, Nautilus Global Solutions, LLC, Ardelle St. George supports clients as general counsel, in transforming their businesses into the future economy. St. George is transitioning her executive certifications from Harvard into essential areas for businesses today—with significant programs, opportunities, and initiatives in each of her areas of certification: cybersecurity, experiential/digital transformation, sustainability, and artificial intelligence (including AR, VR, and mixed reality), enhancing her JD and MBA degrees. St. George has established these areas as pillars of her law firm and solutions and licensing company, and she provides a wide range of legal, business, and educator experience and services to assist clients with their experiential/digital transformation into the new economy. She has been launching The Wave Connection®, a multimedia platform to complement her legal and business practice, showcasing and commercializing the innovation and leadership of clients, and providing services for their transformation into the future economy.



St. George brings global experience for advanced technology/innovation, education, healthcare/medical technical devices, broadcasting and entertainment, real estate, renewable energy, aerospace, and other areas. St. George's legal/business/educator expertise includes general counsel, executive and board governance/compliance, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, intellectual property, brand management, regulatory, licensing, experiential/digital transformation, sustainability, M&A, real estate, and dispute resolution/litigation support, and strategy.



## MEGAN GESS

STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON &amp; RAUTH LLP

Megan Gess is a partner in Stradling's Corporate and Securities practice group, specializing in sophisticated M&A transactions across diverse industries, with particular expertise in the beverage alcohol, food and beverage, and technology sectors. Throughout her career, she has also advised on corporate governance, equity capitalization, shareholder matters, and material commercial transactions, successfully navigating complex challenges to help clients achieve their goals.



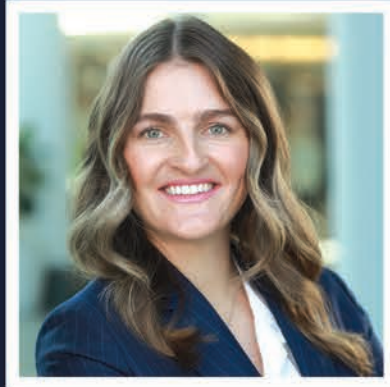
Gess's notable achievements in the beverage alcohol industry include representing Charles Smith Wines in its sale of select brands to Constellation Brands, J Vineyards & Winery in its acquisition by E. & J. Gallo Winery, St. Supéry Estate Vineyards & Winery in its sale to Chanel, Ole Smoky Moonshine's investment by Centerview Capital, Ste. Michelle Wine Estates in its acquisition of Patz & Hall Winery, Denner Vineyards in its sale to E. & J. Gallo Winery, and Booker in its sale to Constellation Brands.

Beyond the beverage alcohol sector, Gess's M&A experience includes substantial transactions such as RSI Home Products' \$525 million investment by Onex Corporation and NextGen Healthcare's sale of QSI Dental to Planet DDS. She has also spearheaded numerous leveraged buyouts and strategic dispositions for publicly traded companies, further solidifying her reputation in the field. Gess is dedicated to understanding her clients' needs and crafting innovative solutions that drive success.

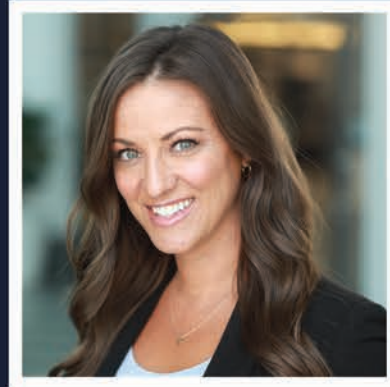
## EMPOWERING SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE



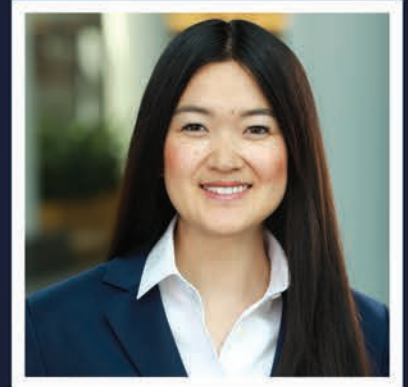
**COURTNEY THOM**  
PARTNER



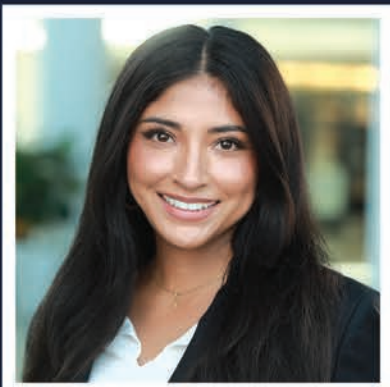
**HALEY AANESTAD**  
ATTORNEY



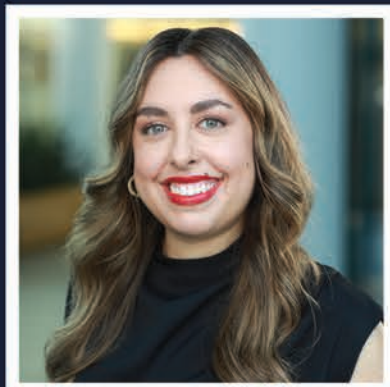
**RAQUEL COOPER**  
ATTORNEY



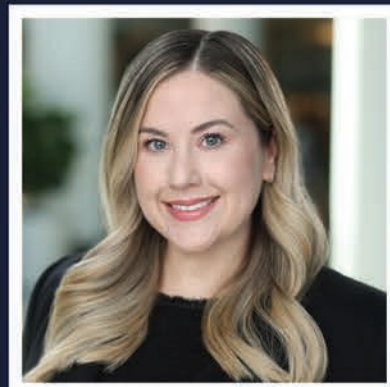
**JENNY LOURO**  
ATTORNEY



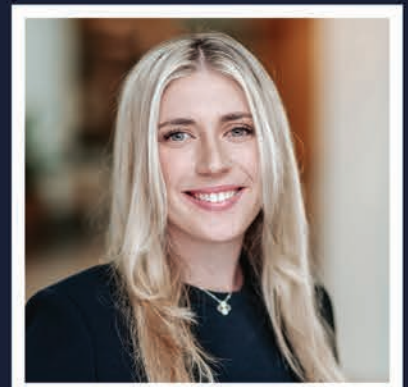
**ARIEL ROMERO**  
ATTORNEY



**CRISTINA NOLAN**  
ATTORNEY



**BRITTANY CHARBONEAU**  
ATTORNEY



**ALEXANDRA OGRON**  
ATTORNEY

### FIGHTERS FOR JUSTICE

“The women of Manly, Stewart & Finaldi go to work every day with one mission - to seek justice for survivors of sexual abuse and demand reform from the institutions that violated their trust. We are proud to honor their contributions to our firm and the legal profession.”

**John Manly, Founding Partner**

## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES

FERRUZZO

## ALISON C. GIBBS

FERRUZZO &amp; FERRUZZO LLP

Alison C. Gibbs is Counsel with Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo, LLP. She represents clients, big and small, in many industries including property management, financial services, retail, automotive, health care, hospitality, staffing, manufacturing, among other areas.



Gibbs advises employers in all aspects of employment law matters, including counseling employers on legal compliance, conducting internal investigations, audits, drafting transactional documents such as employee contracts, severance agreements, settlement agreements, independent contractor agreements, and employee handbooks. She practices the spectrum of employment matters, including disputes involving discrimination, harassment, retaliation, whistleblower, and wage and hour issues. Gibbs also represents employers and individuals in single-plaintiff, multi-plaintiff, class action matters, and representative lawsuits brought under California's Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA).

Throughout her career, Gibbs has represented employers in both state and federal courts as well as in matters before state agencies such as the California Department of Industrial Relations and the California Department of Fair Employment & Housing.

Gibbs earned her undergraduate degree from Pepperdine University, and her juris doctorate from Santa Clara School of Law. She resides in Newport Beach and enjoys Ohio State football, running, hiking, and spending time with her family and friends.

Fisher  
Phillips

## KARI GIBSON

FISHER PHILLIPS

Kari Gibson is a partner in the Irvine office of Fisher Phillips. Her diverse practice includes litigating cases involving discrimination, harassment, whistleblower retaliation, wrongful discharge, unfair business practices, and wage and hour claims. She represents employers within various industries including aerospace, manufacturing, hospitality, automotive dealerships, memory care and acute care facilities, and multi-family housing. Gibson has a wide range of litigation experience, focusing on single-plaintiff, PAGA, and class action litigation, and represents employers in both state and federal court as well as before state and federal agencies, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the California Civil Rights Department (CRD), and the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission (HCRC).



In addition to litigation, Gibson assists employers with complying with federal and state consumer/employee privacy requirements. Drawing on her experience as an owner of a fourth-generation family business, she advises clients on employment best practices and on drafting and implementing policies on issues such as leaves of absence, drug testing, confidentiality, anti-discrimination, and wage-and-hour compliance. Since 2023, she has taught an in-demand undergraduate course on Employment Law in the Business Administration department at Cal State Long Beach. Gibson is an effective and animated speaker, conducting virtual and in-person trainings to client managers and HR professionals.

Prior to entering the practice of law, Kari taught English at universities in California and Hawaii, with a research focus on workplace language policies. She also worked for several years in the entertainment industry, notably at a venerated music magazine and a multi-national film and television production studio. During law school, she served as a full-time extern to the Honorable Josephine Staton of the U.S. District Court, Central District of California.

RMO  
LLP  
PROBATE LITIGATION

## MEGHAN M. GLASPY

RMO LLP

As managing partner of the Orange County office of RMO LLP, Meghan M. Glaspy blends legal prowess with genuine empathy. RMO LLP is a leading probate litigation firm that resolves complex trust, estate, and conservatorship disputes for beneficiaries, trustees, executors, and heirs across California. The firm is known for its strategic advocacy and compassionate approach to high-stakes matters.



Glaspy manages the daily operations of the Orange County office while guiding clients through cases involving significant assets and sensitive family dynamics. She draws on extensive trial experience and a client-first philosophy to resolve disputes efficiently and with the care they deserve. Glaspy is also a dedicated advocate for women in probate disputes, especially as the "Great Wealth Transfer" accelerates and women are projected to inherit and control up to 70 percent of assets. She supports these clients as they take on fiduciary roles or the responsibility of managing substantial inheritances, helping them navigate legal complexities while building confidence in their new positions of authority.

Beyond her casework, Glaspy serves as secretary of the Orange County Estate Planning Council and is an active member of the Orange County Bar Association, the Professional Fiduciary Association of California, ProVisors, and Young Probate Professionals. She is also a board member of Orange County Animal Allies. Her leadership and results have earned multiple honors, including Lawdragon 500 X – The Next Generation (2025), Greater Irvine Chamber 40-Under-40 (2023), Super Lawyers Rising Star (2023–2025), and Women of Influence: Attorneys from the Los Angeles Business Journal (2022).

RUTAN  
RUTAN & TUCKER, LLP

## TALYA GOLDFINGER

RUTAN &amp; TUCKER LLP

With a practice focused on intellectual property and entertainment matters, Talya Goldfinger's clients have included some of the world's largest record companies and music publishing companies, movie and television studios, and multinational technology corporations. Equally representing plaintiffs and defendants, Goldfinger has experience representing clients in a variety of matters, including copyright, trademark, patents, false advertising, unfair competition, consumer class actions, and business disputes. Goldfinger aims to achieve swift, cost-effective results for her clients and has obtained wins at every stage of litigation. She has experience in both state and federal courts and has authored multiple successful briefs for the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Fisher  
Phillips

## GRACE HOROUPIAN

FISHER PHILLIPS

Grace Horoupiian is a co-regional managing partner in the Irvine office. Her practice is focused on representing employers in a variety of employment cases. Her diverse practice includes litigating claims involving discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wage and hour violations (both individual and collective actions), unfair business practices, whistleblower claims, workplace violence, and wrongful discharge.



She represents employers in both state and federal courts as well as before state and federal agencies, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, and the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE). Horoupiian also provides preventive counseling on subjects such as handling of disciplinary matters and employee terminations, internal investigations, the development of workplace policies and procedures, compliance with state and federal wage and hour laws, and leaves of absence. Horoupiian also frequently presents seminars, workshops, and trainings on employment issues for industry groups and private employers.

Horoupiian was the former Vice Chair and General Counsel of the Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce, where she was honored as "Member of the Year" in 2011. Horoupiian is "AV" Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell. She is also the former Chair of the firm's Associate Development Committee.

Buchalter

## PEGGY HOSKING

BUCHALTER

Peggy Hosking, a distinguished shareholder at Buchalter, is dedicated to helping clients reduce risk, build resilience, safeguard assets, maximize profitability, and preserve their legacies. Serving as outside general counsel, Hosking provides forward-thinking legal counsel that supports business owners throughout the full lifecycle of their enterprise—from inception and formation through expansion, sale, or generational transition.



Widely recognized for her unwavering integrity and deep expertise in business law, commercial real estate, and mergers and acquisitions, Hosking consistently delivers strategic, results-driven solutions tailored to her clients' goals.

Commended for her leadership and honored as both an OC Visionary and a Leader of Influence, Hosking also serves as co-founder and co-chair of Buchalter's Equine Law Industry Group—an area where she combines her legal acumen with more than 40 years of hands-on experience as a competitor in hunter/jumper, reining, and dressage, and a boutique breeder of Warmbloods. Hosking's unwavering commitment to excellence is evident in her distinguished track record—whether she's navigating complex multi-million-dollar ranch transactions, negotiating the strategic acquisition, or disposition of a business or advancing her community through her work with foster youth scholarship and veteran support programs.

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**PAUL NELSON, ESQ.**

**Paul Nelson** is the founder of **Nelson Kirkman Family Law Attorneys**, a premier California firm specializing in high-net-worth divorces. **Certified by the State Bar of California Board of Legal Specialization in Family Law**, Paul brings extensive courtroom experience and a deep command of California family law to every case. His strategic approach and relentless advocacy have earned him a reputation for securing exceptional results for business owners, entrepreneurs, and high-earning professionals navigating complex divorce proceedings.

Recognized among the legal elite, Paul holds the prestigious **AV Preeminent rating from Martindale-Hubbell**, boasts **twenty five-star ratings on Avvo**, and has been consistently

honored by **Super Lawyers**.

A thought leader in the legal community, Paul's insights have been featured in **Forbes**, **Fortune**, and the **Orange County Business Journal**. He is also the author of the **Amazon best-selling book, *The Dissolution Solution***, which provides a strategic roadmap for high-asset divorces.

Paul is an active member of the **Orange County Bar Association**, the **State Bar of California**, and the **J. Reuben Clark Law Society**.

With a practice built on discretion, precision, and results, Paul ensures his clients emerge from their legal battles positioned for success—both personally and professionally.

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*When the stakes are highest*



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## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



## JEANETTE JUNGREIS

VETERANS LEGAL INSTITUTE

Jeanette Jungreis is a graduate of University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Law, where she served as an articles editor on the North Carolina Law Review. She also has a B.A. in political science from Florida State University where she graduated summa cum laude. Jungreis is licensed to practice law in California and North Carolina, and she is accredited by the VA. Jungreis has experience across a wide array of legal disciplines in her career as a practicing transactional attorney, and she brings that diverse experience and knowledge to her advocacy as a staff attorney with Veterans Legal Institute's veteran benefits team.



Jungreis is also the mother of three children and the spouse of a retired Marine, and she has lived on military bases on both coasts of the U.S. Her drive to assist the veteran community comes naturally as she has always been focused on helping others and trying to do her part to improve the lives of everyone in her community—wherever that community may be. This dedication to service extends to all corners of her life, and she has served on various community and charitable boards over the years. She now brings that drive and passion to assisting veterans get the benefits to which they are entitled for their service.

## SARAH KELLY-KILGORE

HOLLAND &amp; KNIGHT

Sarah Kelly-Kilgore is a litigation attorney in Holland & Knight's Newport Beach and Los Angeles offices who focuses her practice on a wide variety of litigation matters. Kilgore has experience litigating cases in a broad range of practice areas, including employment litigation, fraud, business torts, defamation, securities and investments, real estate, contracts, federal agency enforcement actions, unfair competition, trade secrets, director and officer liability, fraudulent conveyance corporate governance disputes, and shareholder and consumer class action litigation. She has been lead counsel in a number of high-profile cases involving significant national and international public attention, including matters reported in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and The Boston Globe.



In addition, Kilgore regularly advises business entities on matters of employment law, including sexual harassment, discrimination, and wrongful termination. Her clients include public companies, private businesses, executives and celebrities.

She has regularly been recognized for her work by top legal publications, including by The Best Lawyers in America as "One to Watch" in Southern California in both Litigation – Securities and Commercial Litigation (2022-2025), as well as by Southern California Super Lawyers magazine (2020-2025).

## Holland &amp; Knight

## WENDY R. KOTTMEIER

HOLLAND &amp; KNIGHT

Wendy R. Kottmeier is a corporate attorney in Holland & Knight's Newport Beach office, advising clients on mergers and acquisitions (M&A), commercial contracts, and general corporate guidance. She is a trusted legal and strategic advisor to companies across a wide range of various sectors, including the technology, manufacturing, medical, beauty, and consumer products industries.



Kottmeier counsels clients through all stages of the corporate life cycle, with a focus on structuring and negotiating complex transactions. Her work includes representing buyers, sellers, and private equity sponsors in M&A deals, as well as advising on joint ventures, business restructuring and day-to-day operational legal matters.

Clients turn to Kottmeier for her practical approach, business-oriented mindset, and ability to guide high-growth and established companies through fast-moving transactions with confidence and clarity.



## KARLA KRAFT

STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON &amp; RAUTH LLP

In a career marked by professional relationships that are both lasting and durable, Karla Kraft is frequently asked to litigate a wide variety of matters across the litigation spectrum. She specializes in complex commercial litigation and has a significant focus on class action defense and employment-related issues, including defending against single plaintiff lawsuits, wage-and-hour class actions, and PAGA actions. She assists clients with pre-litigation disputes, strategic policy decisions, and negotiations of executive employment agreements and separation packages. Additionally, she has significant experience in various business litigation issues, such as enforcing restrictive covenants, handling trade secrets, addressing unfair competition, and tackling false advertising. Kraft also handles private company investment disputes, real estate development conflicts, business contract and tort disputes, and class action defense for consumer product and financial services companies.



An active member of the Orange County community, Kraft has been recognized with awards from multiple organizations including the Anti-Defamation League (the Marcus Kaufman Jurisprudence Award), recognition as a Best Lawyer in America from 2019-2025, and as a Super Lawyer for more than a decade. She is the immediate past president of the Board of Trustees at Harbor Day School and sits on the Executive Committees of the board of directors of the Public Law Center and the Segerstrom Center for the Arts. Kraft is also a past president of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers in Orange County.

## VANESSA LEGBANDT

STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON &amp; RAUTH LLP

Within California's complicated and heavily regulated municipal debt framework, Vanessa Legbandt provides clarity for public agencies that seek to raise financing for public facilities. Whether Legbandt is acting as bond counsel, disclosure counsel to public agencies, or as underwriter's counsel to a financial institution, her straightforward approach helps clients make informed decisions in matters involving revenue bonds and certificates of participation, water and sewer enterprise financings, transportation financings, school district financings, land-secured financings, and tax increment bond refunding. She also represents public agencies and developers in financing and structuring various public-private partnerships for delivery of infrastructure and economic development projects. She has advised numerous clients regarding the procedures and relative costs and benefits of forming and issuing debt through enhanced infrastructure financing districts.



Legbandt's experience representing public entities in connection with municipal financing and public private development arrangements gives her a firm grasp on her clients' goals and objectives, and the perspective to explore alternatives to their legal restrictions. When her clients are faced with complicated or uncertain legal concerns, Legbandt thoroughly evaluates the factual circumstances against all applicable laws and regulations before presenting the options and approaches that best suit their needs. Clients appreciate her simple, straightforward transaction documents and her ability to resolve any issues quickly, ensuring that her financing transactions proceed to closing on schedule.

## CAROL LEW

STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON &amp; RAUTH LLP

For state and local governments and nonprofit organizations raising money for public infrastructure and other projects, Carol Lew's proven tax advice is a critical piece of the complex financing puzzle. With more than 30 years of federal tax law experience, Lew is nationally recognized for her ability to apply her in-depth knowledge of the Internal Revenue Code to tax-advantaged debt financings. The complicated tax analyses she undertakes keep issuers and buyers in compliance with all federal tax laws and help communities thrive.



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

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

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## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



## JENNY LOURO

MANLY, STEWART &amp; FINALDI

Jenny Louro is a compassionate advocate hailing from the sunny shores of Southern California, where she was born and raised. Louro earned her undergraduate degree in International Development Studies at UCLA.



During her tenure at the University of San Diego, School of Law, Louro distinguished herself through her hands-on experience and commitment to public service. As an extern with the Honorable Judge Di Cesare at Orange County Superior Court, she gained invaluable insight into the workings of the legal system and honed her understanding of judicial proceedings.

In addition to her judicial externship, Louro took on a leadership role as the chair of the Pro Bono Legal Aid Clinic for Domestic Violence. Through her dedication to providing free legal services to survivors of domestic violence, Louro not only empowered her clients to seek justice but also played a vital role in breaking the cycle of abuse and promoting healing within the community.

Prior to joining Manly, Stewart & Finaldi, Louro gained experience in catastrophic personal injury litigation, where she refined her skills in advocacy. Now, as a seasoned attorney, she continues to carry forth this dedication into her practice, where she works exclusively in representing survivors of sexual abuse, harassment, and molestation against public and private entities. With a steadfast commitment to serving her community, Louro stands as a trusted ally for those in need. Whether navigating complex legal matters or providing compassionate support to survivors, she is unwavering in her pursuit of justice.

## KATHLEEN MARCUS

STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON &amp; RAUTH LLP

As a former attorney with the SEC's Division of Enforcement, Kathleen Marcus brings a deep understanding of the federal laws and government processes for clients facing regulatory and white-collar investigations. Marcus has secured more than 30 declarations for client facing enforcement actions and indictments from the SEC and DOJ. With significant experience before a host of agencies and regulators, including the SEC, DOJ, FINRA, FDA and the FCC, as well as number state agencies, clients rely on the trust she has built with regulators and her ability to interact with government agencies to reach a successful conclusion.



Companies, funds, investment advisors, municipalities, and executives rely on the trust she has built with regulators and her ability to interact with government agencies to reach a successful conclusion. Using her streamlined, careful approach, she has defended clients against accusations of fraud, accounting and disclosure discrepancies, insider trading, breaches of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and violations of the Federal Anti-Kickback statute. Marcus also defends regulatory investigations involving blockchain, cryptocurrency and token offerings. She has served repeatedly as an expert witness in matters involving complex securities law questions.

Clients often call on Marcus to lead internal investigations to fully assess risk and limit possible sanctions posed by looming government investigations. Her thorough, yet cost-efficient approach to fact-finding enables her to spot problems quickly, assess potential liability and offer solutions to navigate through challenging issues.

## DANA MARTIN

REEVES &amp; WEISS LLP

Dana Martin is a senior associate at Reeves & Weiss LLP in Irvine, where she focuses on complex commercial litigation. She represents clients in high-stakes disputes involving business torts, contract claims, and corporate governance. Known for her analytical precision and client-focused approach, Martin plays a central role in developing litigation strategy and delivering persuasive advocacy at every stage of the dispute process.



Martin earned her J.D. from Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, where she developed a strong foundation in trial advocacy and legal writing. She holds a B.A. from Saint Xavier University and was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 2017. Martin is licensed to practice in Chicago, where she gained broad litigation experience and was recognized for her pro bono contributions. In 2023, she received a Northern District of Illinois's Excellence in Pro Bono Service Award—an honor that reflects her commitment to access to justice and serving underrepresented communities.

At Reeves & Weiss, Martin is part of a litigation team known for "human-centric advocacy"—a philosophy that emphasizes not just legal excellence, but also storytelling and emotional intelligence in the courtroom. Her work exemplifies these values, combining sharp legal insight with a deep understanding of client goals.

Martin is a rising leader in Southern California's legal community and a standout among the next generation of women trial lawyers. She continues to build a career defined by integrity, intellect, and impact.



## AMANDA MCFALL

STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON &amp; RAUTH LLP

Amanda McFall is a partner in Stradling's Corporate and Securities Practice Group, representing many of the firm's public company and investment banking clients. Her practice focuses on capital markets transactions and public company matters, including Exchange Act reporting, SEC and FINRA compliance, stock exchange listings, and executive compensation and corporate governance matters, advising clients across various industries, including technology, life sciences, banking, and e-commerce. McFall has successfully guided numerous public company and investment banking clients through initial public offerings, follow-on offerings, secondary-market transactions, and private placements. She also has considerable experience advising on complex commercial agreements and licensing matters.



Before joining Stradling, McFall gained valuable in-house experience at Amazon, advising on strategic and regulatory issues encompassing antitrust, pricing, data sharing, intellectual property, finance, and marketing.

Her notable transactions include representing Marathon Digital Holdings in a \$1.5 billion at-the-market offering and serving as counsel to underwriters in the initial public offering of GEN Restaurant Group, the owner of the fast-growing GEN Korean BBQ chain. McFall also represented The Real Good Food Company in its \$64 million IPO, and Tandem Diabetes Care, Inc. in its \$288 million private placement of convertible notes and \$109 million follow-on public offering. She has also advised VolitionRx Limited in numerous public offerings, including its recent \$30 million at-the-market offer. McFall's extensive experience and strategic insight make her a valuable asset to her clients in navigating the complexities of the capital markets and SEC reporting.

## DAMARIS MEDINA

BUCHALTER

Damaris Medina is a shareholder in Buchalter's Los Angeles & Orange County offices. She is the firm's Chief Diversity Officer, co-chair of the firm's Health Care & Life Sciences Practice, and a member of the Board of Directors.



Medina represents hospital systems and a diverse array of other health care clients in high stakes litigation in federal and state court, as well as in arbitration. She has successfully litigated numerous large exposure reimbursement cases against major health plans and recovered millions of dollars on behalf of health care providers. She also advises hospital systems and other health care providers on managed care contracting, revenue cycle strategies, and risk and compliance issues. Medina routinely defends providers against both private and government payor audits, as well as in False Claims Act cases brought by federal and state agencies, including the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Medina routinely receives recognition as a leader in her field from numerous sources. She was recognized as one of Los Angeles' "Most Influential Women Attorneys" by the Los Angeles Business Journal, "Top OC Inspirational Women" and "DEIA Visionary" by LA Times B2B Publishing, "Top Women in Business" by the Orange County Business Journal and received the prestigious California Lawyer of the Year (CLAY) Award in 2017. She has also been named one of the Top Healthcare Attorneys by the Daily Journal, and one of the "Top Women Attorneys in Southern California" since 2014 by Super Lawyers Magazine.

## ANTOINETTE NADDOUR

VETERANS LEGAL INSTITUTE

Antoinette Naddour is the executive director emerita and co-founder of Veterans Legal Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing free legal services to veterans, active duty service members, and reservists who are homeless or low income. During her leadership, the organization empowered thousands of veterans to overcome legal barriers and rebuild their lives with dignity and support.



A former Major in the California State Guard, Naddour served with distinction in both strategic communications and legal support command as a reserve JAG officer. Her military service is a reflection of her lifelong dedication to public service and justice.

Naddour is a graduate of Chapman University, where she earned a degree in business administration, a Juris Doctor with a certificate in alternative dispute resolution, and an LLM in business and economics. She is also an alumna of the prestigious Presidential Leadership Scholars program and has been widely recognized for her work, including being named Attorney of the Year by the Orange County Women Lawyers Association (2022) and the Celtic Bar Association (2024).

Her passion for serving others is matched only by her devotion to her two sons, Pierre and George. They are the heart of her world and the inspiration behind her unwavering commitment to create a better future for all. Through her leadership, compassion, and resolve, Naddour continues to be a force for justice and a model of service-driven leadership.



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At Ferruzzo, we focus on solutions for our clients. Our energies and legal expertise are rooted in the power of partnership, ensuring the well-being and success for each client. We take immense pride in collaborating with our clients, leveraging our team of seasoned attorneys and staff to tackle challenges collaboratively and drive success together.

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## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



## CRISTINA NOLAN

MANLY, STEWART &amp; FINALDI

Cristina Nolan is a dedicated advocate for survivors of childhood sexual abuse, representing children, adults abused as children, and vulnerable adults. With a proven track record in high-profile cases, she has secured six-figure and multi-million-dollar settlements against prominent institutions, including Redlands Unified School District, Torrance Unified School District, Los Angeles Unified School District, Covina-Valley Unified School District, Anaheim Union High School District, Riverside Unified School District, USA Water Polo, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Her unwavering commitment to justice drives her to deliver transformative outcomes for her clients.



As a native Spanish speaker, Nolan is deeply committed to serving the Spanish-speaking community, often underserved and overlooked. She empowers survivors by guiding them through their legal options with compassion, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights upheld in pursuit of healing and justice.

Before joining Manly, Stewart & Finaldi, Nolan earned a B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Spanish from California State University, Fullerton, and graduated from Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law. During law school, she distinguished herself as a member of the Mock Trial Board, an ABA Arbitration Competition Regional Semifinalist, Vice President of the International Law Society, and a certified mediator. She also gained valuable experience as a judicial clerk for the Honorable Frederick Aguirre at the Central Justice Center Superior Court of California.

## LISA NORTHRUP

STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON &amp; RAUTH LLP

Lisa Northrup is a partner in Stradling's litigation practice. She specializes in complex commercial disputes, including contract conflicts, business torts, securities litigation, and class action defense. Her proactive approach helps to resolve issues at all stages of litigation, while her extensive trial experience equips her to advocate effectively for clients in both federal and state courts.



Among her notable successes is securing a dismissal with prejudice for two food companies facing allegations of violating Proposition 65. By effectively demonstrating the plaintiff's failure to meet pre-suit notice requirements, Northrup successfully moved for dismissal, minimizing her clients' exposure to litigation.

Northrup and the Stradling team also achieved a noteworthy outcome for a hydration product manufacturer in a federal court dispute with a former sales representative. After obtaining summary judgment on the declaratory judgment claim and narrowing the remaining contract-based claims for trial, the jury awarded nominal damages—which the court later set aside—awarding the client more than \$938,000 in fees and costs.

## LIZBETH "LIZ" OCHOA

FISHER PHILLIPS

Lizbeth "Liz" Ochoa is a partner in the firm's Irvine office. With more than 23 years' experience representing employers, Ochoa has experience litigating employment matters in state and federal courts, arbitration forums, as well as in state and federal administrative agencies such as the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE), the California Civil Rights Department, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and others.



She represents and counsels employers on various employment-related matters including, but not limited to, discrimination, unlawful harassment, wrongful termination, unfair business practices, wage and hour class, and PAGA actions and reductions in force. She also conducts various types of trainings including, but not limited to, anti-harassment supervisor trainings in Spanish and English.

Prior to joining Fisher Phillips, Ochoa gained invaluable experience working in a smaller firm where she represented employees and employers in various employment litigation matters. This experience has enabled her to have great success in defending employers because of her unique insight into employee claims.

In 2010, 2013 and 2014, Ochoa was selected for inclusion in Southern California Super Lawyers – Rising Stars. Ochoa is fluent in Spanish and sits on the firm's Diversity Committee. She is also an ambassador for the firm's Women's Initiative and Leadership Council.



## ALEXANDRA (ALEX) OGRON

MANLY, STEWART &amp; FINALDI

Alexandra (Alex) Ogron is an associate attorney at Manly, Stewart & Finaldi. A proud native of Newport Beach, California, Alex earned her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from USC's Marshall School of Business in 2021.



During her undergraduate studies, she enriched her education by spending her first three semesters studying abroad at The American University in Paris, France.

Ogron went on to earn her Juris Doctor from Pepperdine University Caruso School of Law in 2024. While in law school, Ogron joined Manly, Stewart & Finaldi as a law clerk in 2023, where she gained invaluable experience across all aspects of the firm's cases, contributing to the firm's continued success. Since joining the firm, Ogron has gone on to represent survivors of sexual abuse in cases involving healthcare institutions, religious organizations, and public-school systems.

She passionately believes that advocating for survivors of sexual abuse is not just about seeking justice, it's about restoring dignity, amplifying voices that have been silenced, and empowering individuals to reclaim their lives with the strength they deserve.

## MARIA OTERO

HOLLAND &amp; KNIGHT

Maria Otero is a private wealth services and tax attorney at Holland & Knight. She focuses her practice on international income tax planning and compliance for high-net-worth individuals, families, and multinational businesses with complex cross-border considerations.



Otero advises private clients on international estate and tax strategies, pre-immigration planning, and wealth transfers involving multiple jurisdictions. She also counsels corporate clients on minimizing global tax liabilities through tax-efficient financing, earnings repatriation, cash management, and transfer pricing strategies.

Her global perspective was shaped early by her experience at a Big Four accounting firm in Switzerland, where she advised executives, investors, and families with multijurisdictional tax exposure. She has collaborated extensively with corporate executives on international assignments, as well as multinational investors and closely held businesses seeking to optimize their global tax footprint.

Fluent in the technical and practical aspects of international tax law, Otero is known for delivering a clear strategic guidance to clients navigating increasingly complex global tax environments.

Otero is recognized in The Best Lawyers in America guide in Tax Law, Trust and Estates (2023-2025), Chambers High Net Worth guide in Private Wealth Law-California: Southern (2024), and Southern California Super Lawyers magazine in Tax (2023-2024).

## SHANNON C. PAPAZIS

FERRUZZO &amp; FERRUZZO LLP

Shannon C. Papazis is a partner at Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo LLP and is the chair of the firm's Contested Probate and Trust Administration and Litigation Practice Group. Papazis represents clients in a wide variety of civil litigation matters in both state and federal court. Her practice is primarily focused in the areas of trust and probate litigation, inclusive of elder abuse, conservatorship, and guardianship matters representing corporate, private professional, and individual fiduciaries, as well as beneficiaries.



The variety of extensive trial experience Papazis gained early in her career while externing at the District Attorney's Office, and later expanding into the family law and civil realms, has enhanced her ability to truly excel as an effective litigator and trial attorney who applies her passion for the law and dedication to obtaining justice for her clients to achieve successful results. Her strength in the courtroom and compelling advocacy provides her clients with the fortitude and confidence necessary to withstand an intra-family dispute.

As a partner in a leading trust and probate litigation firm in Southern California, Papazis has shaped a team of exceptionally talented litigators with diverse and particularized skill sets designed to promote each client's individual need, while gaining and maintaining their trust. Papazis understands the unique challenges that clients face while participating in estate litigation with their family members and strives to promote reunification and early case resolution wherever possible.

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Aspiring attorney Varsha Torpunuri chose IVC for its outstanding honors and paralegal studies programs – and its impressive transfer rates. Now, she has graduated with top honors, earning four A.A. degrees in liberal studies, social and behavioral sciences, anthropology and paralegal studies, along with an ABA-approved Certificate of Achievement in Paralegal Studies. Multi-talented, driven and insightful, Varsha's hard work and dedication have paid off – she's headed to UC Berkeley this fall.



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## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



### SAMANTHA PAPUCHIS

RUTAN & TUCKER LLP

Samantha Papuchis is a litigator whose strong work ethic has quickly made her a rising star at Rutan. Since joining Rutan in 2015, Papuchis' practice has been diverse and has touched on a variety of industries and practice areas, including complex business disputes involving fraud, breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, business interference claims, product liability, real property, and construction contracting and defects. Papuchis also has extensive experience defending consumer class actions, assisting clients with product recalls, and handling litigation involving probate and trust disputes. Some of her notable wins include: securing a \$8,000,000+ judgment for a real estate investment limited liability company against its former manager for mismanaging company funds and converting profits for personal gain; and defeating through motion practice a large, multi-district consumer class action before class certification.



Before heading to law school, Papuchis graduated magna cum laude from Louisiana State University in 2012 with a B.A. in History. During her time in college, Papuchis was an All-American swimmer who broke several school records and finished her career with three NCAA Championship appearances. Following her collegiate career, Samantha attended the University of California, Irvine School of Law, where she graduated magna cum laude in 2015. Papuchis joined the firm after serving a one-year federal clerkship from 2015 to 2016 for the Honorable Ronald M. Gould at the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in Seattle, Washington.

### LISA PETERSON

FISHER PHILLIPS

Lisa Peterson represents employers of all sizes on a full spectrum of labor and employment matters, from providing counseling and advice to pre-litigation negotiations, and all the way through trial. Her diverse practice includes litigating claims involving wrongful termination, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, whistleblower claims, and wage and hour class, and PAGA actions. She represents clients in a variety of industries, with a focus on the hospitality, restaurant, and retail industries.



Peterson also provides preventative counseling to employers on subjects such as handling of employee terminations and discipline, internal workplace investigations, development of various workplace policies and procedures, and compliance with state and federal labor laws. She is a proven trial attorney and has successfully tried several cases to verdict in jury trials.

Peterson currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce (GICC) Board of Directors. She is also the General Counsel for GICC. Peterson is also on the Board of the Orange County Chapter of the California Restaurant Association.

### STELLA POGOSYAN

VETERANS LEGAL INSTITUTE

Stella Pogosyan is a dedicated trial attorney who graduated from Southwestern Law and was licensed to practice law in California in December 2011. She began her legal career at the Orange County Public Defender's Office and the Orange County Alternate Defenders Office, dedicating eight total years and gaining substantial experience in criminal law representing adult and juvenile indigent defendants facing felony and misdemeanor charges.



In 2020, Pogosyan established herself as a solo practitioner, specializing in criminal law. She also began to expand her practice areas to mediation, family law, education law, and estate planning. Her strategic approach and dedication to her clients has earned her a reputation as a fierce and compassionate advocate. In 2024, she brought her skills to Veterans Legal Institute, where she happily assists veterans with housing issues, family law, and other legal matters.

Outside of her professional life, Pogosyan is an avid rock climber, mountain biker, and lover of plants and her puppy Winston. She volunteers as a Park Ambassador with OC Parks, reflecting her commitment to community service and the great outdoors.



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Everett Dorey is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion, cultivating a workplace culture where every employee feels valued, and empowering women to excel in the legal field. Our firm is comprised of 55% women attorneys, and 57% of leadership positions are held by women. Recognized annually by the Orange County Register, Orange County Business Journal, and Orange County Coalition for Diversity in the Law, Everett Dorey will continue to address challenges faced by women in law and champion meaningful change.



Samantha E. Dorey  
Partner, Co-Founder



Diana T. Chao  
Partner



## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES

### FERRUZZO

#### MELISSA J. RHEE

FERRUZZO & FERRUZZO LLP

Melissa J. Rhee is counsel at Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo LLP and a member of the firm's Litigation Practice Group. Rhee represents clients in a wide variety of civil litigation matters in both state and federal court. Her practice is primarily focused in the areas of representing business owners in Real Estate Disputes and General Business Litigation—and holding her Real Estate Broker License since 2018 has enhanced her ability to truly understand the complexities of real estate law and contract disputes before, during, and after the litigation process.



Rhee was raised in South Korea, Argentina, and in various U.S. states, giving her appreciation for diverse cultures. She began her law career as a Korean legal assistant to a sole practitioner in landlord-tenant issues. During law school, she served as a certified legal intern with the San Diego District Attorney's office.

Rhee's understanding of the business disputes is also shaped by her personal background—growing up in a family who operated various small businesses. This first-hand exposure to the challenges and demands of business ownership allows her to better relate to and advocate for her clients.

Rhee's personal, educational, and professional background gives her a unique understanding of client needs and expectations. She works closely with her clients who rely on her advice and counsel, knowing that she is their true advocate in running their businesses and helping them avoid costly and time-consuming mistakes.



#### MICHELLE ROBINSON

VETERANS LEGAL INSTITUTE

Michelle Robinson has been the managing attorney at Veterans Legal Institute (VLI) since 2021, supporting close to 25 staff members, who advocate providing pro bono legal services and access to justice to Veterans and active service members in need. As managing attorney, Robinson is dedicated to representing low income, disabled, homeless current and former military service members, in an array of practice areas, to foster client self-sufficiency. As the mother of five, one of whom is a Marine Corp. veteran, she is deeply connected to the Veteran-focused mission of VLI.



Robinson has more than 27 years of experience as an attorney at the Orange County Public Defender's Office and the District Attorney's Office. During her time at the Public Defender's office, Robinson worked with clients from all backgrounds, representing them throughout the criminal court process under highly emotional, stressful, and intense circumstances. She has negotiated and resolved thousands of mental health, juvenile, misdemeanor, and felony cases. Her passion revolves around representing clients in collaborative courts, aiding them in rehabilitating themselves to become productive citizens.



#### ARIEL J. ROMERO

MANLY, STEWART & FINALDI

Ariel J. Romero is an attorney at Manly, Stewart & Finaldi. She was part of the litigation teams in the high-profile cases involving former USC gynecologist George Tyndall and former UCLA gynecologist/oncologist James Heaps.



In Tyndall, MSF was Plaintiffs' Liaison Counsel and obtained an \$852 million global settlement, the largest sexual abuse settlement against a university in history. These complex, multi-plaintiff litigations provided Romero with extensive knowledge in litigating physician sexual abuse. She is also part of the trial team at MSF in cases involving minor children abused by their teachers and coaches.

Romero is passionate about her work in representing survivors and brings a unique perspective given she is a survivor of trauma. As a victim of mass gun violence, she understands and is compassionate about the struggles victims face daily, particularly minority victims. Having worked on Tyndall and Heaps, where legislation was critical to success, Romero intends to advocate for legislative changes to help survivors.

Romero grew up in Los Angeles and graduated from Loyola Marymount University, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis in Business Law. As an undergraduate student, she clerked for the District Attorney's office at Airport Courthouse in Los Angeles. Romero continued her higher education at Chapman University's Dale E. Fowler School of Law, where she was involved in the First-Generation Scholars Program both as a student and mentor, became Managing Editor of the Chapman Law Review and received The National Order of the Scribes Award upon graduation in 2021.

## AI and Opportunists: Beware of Traps and Tricks

With the advent of artificial intelligence (AI), opportunists are using AI-driven sweeps to drum up questionable claims.

Various sources use AI to scour the web for would-be violations of copyrights and trademarks. This could be in the context of images, music, photography, fonts, quotes, brand usage, and more. In some cases, the alleged violations may be legitimate. In other cases, the AI driven sweep often exaggerates or mischaracterizes the claims and rights, pressuring the recipient to pay quickly to avoid litigation.

Additionally, generative AI has been used to create official-looking correspondences and legal-style notices with the goal of having the recipient pay a quick fee to secure their rights. Predatory 'watch' services fool businesses into thinking someone is holding their domain name hostage; predatory invoices mislead companies into believing their trademark rights are on the verge of surrender to an infringer unless a fee is paid; fake notices purport to be from a governmental agency; spoofing emails are sent to mass-customer lists diverting business or otherwise creating chaos and customer confusion, and more.

Likewise, opportunists have used AI to drum up threats of litigation regarding violations tied to purported gaps in website compliance looking for a quick pay-out.

When faced with a sudden demand letter, unexpected notice, or unsolicited update regarding your rights, double check the validity of the demand or claim. Involve counsel. Careful evaluation, human discernment, and advice from your lawyer may make all the difference in avoiding traps and tricks of AI-opportunists.

**Deborah Gubernick** is a partner in Snell & Wilmer's Orange County office and a member of the firm's intellectual property and commercial litigation practice groups. She helps small and large clients protect and defend their brands and business in the U.S. and abroad. Gubernick can be reached at [dgubernick@swlaw.com](mailto:dgubernick@swlaw.com).



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## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



## LAUREN ROSEMAN

FISHER PHILLIPS

Lauren Roseman is a partner in Fisher Phillips' Irvine office committed to providing employers of all sizes and types fast, innovative, and practical employment law advice. She defends employers in employment litigation including wage and hour class and PAGA actions, and discrimination, harassment, and retaliation claims. Roseman works closely with her clients to implement employment practices that help prevent costly litigation at the outset.



Roseman loves public speaking and takes pride in making employment law digestible for her clients. She graduated from the University of San Diego School of Law and for her undergrad, she double majored in finance and philosophy at the University of Notre Dame.

Outside of work, Roseman enjoys playing at the park and taking long walks with her toddler, dog, and husband.



## LINDLEY ROUND

REEVES &amp; WEISS LLP

Lindley Round is a senior associate at Reeves & Weiss LLP. Her practice focuses on complex commercial litigation. A member of the State Bar of California and the State Bar of New York, Round has substantial experience litigating and resolving legal disputes in a variety of forums, including arbitration and appellate proceedings.



Round advises clients in complex, high-value disputes concerning contract issues and business torts, among other areas. Recognized for her sharp analytical skills and commitment to client objectives, Round is deeply involved in shaping case strategy and providing effective advocacy throughout all phases of litigation.

Prior to joining Reeves & Weiss, Round was an associate attorney at Theodora Oringher, where she handled complex business cases and employment disputes across multiple industries. In addition to her civil litigation experience, she has also litigated criminal matters. As an assistant district attorney in Manhattan, she personally handled felony and misdemeanor prosecutions and secured numerous guilty pleas and verdicts, including by jury trial.

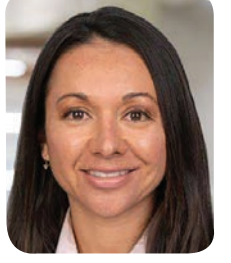
Round graduated cum laude from Fordham Law School in 2020, where she was a member of the Fordham Law Review and served on the executive committee of the Fordham Fashion Law Society. In 2017, Round earned her bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University with majors in political science and human and organizational development.



## CAROLINE SCALA

FISHER PHILLIPS

Caroline Scala is a partner in the Irvine office. She has defended hundreds of employment cases including employee claims of harassment, retaliation, disability, wrongful termination, and wage and hour. Scala is an aggressive litigator and has obtained favorable settlements, rulings, and trial verdicts for her clients. Recent successes include obtaining complete summary judgment in a disability discrimination case and successfully defending against two employees' bids to seize nearly \$800,000 in unpaid wages.



Scala also helps employers minimize risk and provides advice on employee terminations, accommodations, and discipline, among other employment-related matters. She also drafts and reviews company policies and provides employee and supervisor training on a variety of topics.

Scala attended law school on a full merit scholarship. During law school, she served as an articles editor for the Chapman Law Review and judicial extern to the Honorable William F. Rylaarsdam of the California Court of Appeal. Scala was also a member of the Mock Trial Honor Board, where she obtained a perfect score as defense counsel in the ABA National Criminal Justice Trial Advocacy Competition in Chicago.



## JAMIE L. SPRAGUE

COX, CASTLE &amp; NICHOLSON

Jamie Sprague is a leading real estate and business litigator in the Irvine office of Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP. She represents developers, investors, owners, and operators in high-stakes disputes across California. Known for her practical, business-oriented strategies, Sprague efficiently resolves conflicts and provides aggressive representation in court when litigation is unavoidable.



With more than a decade of experience in complex commercial litigation, Sprague handles everything from breach-of-contract and partnership disputes to multi-plaintiff mass torts involving nuisance, trespass, negligence, and environmental claims. She has defended large-scale matters with hundreds of plaintiffs, coordinating strategy and navigating the unique procedural, evidentiary, and public relations challenges these cases present.

Sprague's track record includes successfully arguing before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to uphold a jury verdict, serving as first chair in multi-million-dollar cases, and leading teams through trials, arbitrations, and appeals.

Recognized by clients as a trusted problem solver, Sprague works closely with transactional counsel to help real estate companies avoid disputes before they arise. Whether negotiating a pre-litigation resolution or leading a team through trial, she is committed to achieving the best possible outcome while keeping her client's business goals front and center.



## ROBIN R. TAYLOR'S

VETERANS LEGAL INSTITUTE

Robin R. Taylor's goal is to make California the first state where no veteran goes without legal help. As incoming executive director of Veterans Legal Institute (VLI), she is building on the foundation created by Antoinette Naddour to deliver comprehensive legal services to veterans in collaboration with the Tierney Center.



Taylor led global justice programs as executive director of Lawyers Without Borders and has raised more than \$6 million for justice and rule-of-law initiatives. She spent nearly a decade overseas with U.S. European Command, serving on a senior interagency advisory team to the Commander on complex security and legal issues. From U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Indonesia, she served as a Resident Legal Advisor, advancing anti-corruption and financial crime enforcement.

A former federal prosecutor, Taylor launched her district's first cybercrime unit and led complex fraud and national security prosecutions. She was appointed to California's Judicial Nominees Evaluation Commission, served as president of the Sacramento Federal Bar Association, and helped create the national civics program Protect & Defend as part of a multi-member committee. She began her career practicing law in Sacramento and has been part of the American Inns of Court.



## COURTNEY THOM

MANLY, STEWART &amp; FINALDI

Partner Courtney Thom brings invaluable experience as a career sex crimes prosecutor to her practice. Before joining Manly, Stewart & Finaldi, she served as a Deputy District Attorney for Orange County. In this role, Thom zealously represented the People of California in the prosecution of criminal cases, including sexual assault, rape, child molestation, and child pornography, among others. She conducted more than 50 criminal trials, many of which garnered significant media attention. Notably, Thom worked in the District Attorney's Sexual Assault Unit where she exclusively prosecuted felony sexual assaults, including child molestation, and forcible sex crimes.



She worked tirelessly alongside law enforcement agencies to investigate sexual assault crimes, filed criminal charges, met with survivors, and skillfully conducted jury trials and sentencing hearings.

Thom's unwavering commitment to serving survivors has been recognized by Waymakers, a prestigious Orange County foundation, which honored her with the Sexual Assault Victim Service Award in 2019. Additionally, she has played a pivotal role in enhancing community safety by providing Sexual Assault Investigations training to the Orange County Sheriff's Department and serves on the Board of Directors of CASA, an organization dedicated to serving children who have been abandoned, neglected, and abused.

Due to her unparalleled expertise in both criminal and civil litigation on behalf of survivors, Thom is exceptionally adept at navigating complex legal proceedings, including serving as Marsy's Law representation. Moreover, she actively advocates for legislative reforms aimed at bolstering protection for individuals most vulnerable to sexual abuse.

## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



### JENNY TRAN

STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON & RAUTH LLP

Jenny Tran is a trusted counselor to closely held businesses, owners, and entrepreneurs, with an interdisciplinary practice focused on Mergers & Acquisitions, complex tax structuring, corporate transactions, and governance. As a partner at Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth, she brings over a decade of experience advising on mergers and acquisitions, restructurings, and business succession, delivering practical, business-driven solutions that protect legacy and optimize after-tax results.



Recognized for her ability to bridge the gap between sophisticated tax law and strategic business goals, Tran routinely structures middle-market transactions and navigates complex issues involving risk, governance, and state and federal tax regimes. Her clients span industries such as technology, manufacturing, online communities, residential and business services, real estate, and healthcare.

Tran is equally committed to advancing the profession and the community. She mentors junior attorneys, leads women's business development initiatives, and is active in organizations that promote inclusion in the legal field. She served as a director for UC Irvine's Alumni Association from 2021 to 2005. She is a donor to the Asian Women Leadership in Philanthropy Fund and is a frequent speaker on tax planning and deal structuring. Her leadership style blends sharp technical acumen with a collaborative, relationship-driven approach, qualities that have earned her the trust of clients, colleagues, and the business community.



### GRACE WINTERS

HOLLAND & KNIGHT

Grace Winters is a real estate attorney in Holland & Knight's Newport Beach office, representing clients in high-value real estate transactions across all asset classes nationwide. Her practice includes acquisitions, dispositions, joint ventures, development, ground and commercial leasing, financing, construction, and 1031 exchanges.



Winters counsels property owners, developers, capital providers, landlords, tenants, and investment fund managers in projects involving multifamily, office, industrial, and commercial assets. She has deep experience in negotiating and closing complex agreements, including purchase and sale contracts, joint ventures, leases, development agreements, construction contracts, property management agreements, and covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs). She also serves as real estate counsel in corporate mergers and acquisitions (M&A) involving substantial property holdings.

Clients value Winters' collaborative approach, as she works closely with internal legal teams, risk and compliance departments, third-party operators, lenders, consultants, and government agencies to move deals forward efficiently. She also regularly advises clients on affordable housing projects, navigating regulatory frameworks at the local, state and federal levels.

Winters' accomplishments have earned her national and regional recognition. She has been ranked in Chambers USA for Real Estate in California: Southern (2022-2025), including "Up & Coming" in 2021. She was named Orange County Visionary and Commercial Real Estate Professional Services Advisor Visionary by the Los Angeles Times in 2024 and was recognized among Connect CRE's 2025 Women in Real Estate.

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Fisher Phillips celebrates the advancement of women both within the firm and within the community.

## 2025 WOMEN IN LAW PROFILES



### FBT Wealth Planning & Family Office: Tailored Solutions for Generational Success

Frost Brown Todd (FBT) delivers more than legal services—the firm offers a full-spectrum partnership for high-net-worth individuals and closely held business owners. With more than three decades of experience in estate and business planning, Jillyn Hess-Verdon leads FBT's nationwide Family Office Practice with strategic vision, unique insight, and a personal commitment to excellent service.

The FBT team has earned a reputation for guiding high net worth families and individuals through the wide-ranging complexities of generational wealth. Hess-Verdon's ability to coordinate seamlessly across disciplines—including tax, real estate, and general business matters—ensures that every client receives holistic, forward-thinking solutions and benefits from the collective knowledge spread across other firm practice groups and offices.

Celebrating differences, championing equitable opportunities, and maintaining an inclusive environment are a part of the fabric of FBT and things the firm views as essential to driving great results and delivering exceptional client value. Beyond her legal acumen, Hess-Verdon is a passionate advocate for women in law, mentoring rising professionals, and fostering a culture of empowerment and inclusion across the firm. FBT actively supports leadership development, mentorship, and career advancement for women attorneys—creating a workplace where diverse perspectives drive innovation, results, and impact.

FBT's Family Office Practice's core service offerings are designed to meet the evolving priorities and strategic goals of business owners and families with complex financial and legal needs.

#### Estate & Succession Planning

FBT crafts sophisticated estate plans using tools such as living trusts, dynasty trusts, and family partnerships. For business owners, the firm provides succession planning that ensures leadership transitions are smooth, tax-efficient, and aligned



with long-term goals. Probate and trust administration services are delivered with empathy and precision—helping families navigate legal complexities during emotionally challenging times. The team also assists with postmortem tax planning and court filings, ensuring every detail is handled with care.

#### Outside General Counsel Services

FBT's Outside General Counsel (OGC) Practice offers a flexible alternative to in-house counsel. The OGC team advises on contracts, compliance, intellectual property, HR, litigation, and more—empowering business owners to focus on growth while FBT handles legal complexities. This model allows clients to access high-level legal guidance tailored to their specific needs, backed by a team that understands their business inside and out.

#### Mergers & Acquisitions

FBT's M&A team advises clients on wide-ranging transactions, from exit planning to acquisitions. The firm coordinates tax planning, QSBS structuring, and wealth transfer strategies—ensuring every deal supports the client's vision and values. The team brings a meticulous, business-oriented approach with a wealth of valuable experience to every transaction.

#### Real Estate & Charitable Planning

FBT supports clients in managing and expanding their property portfolios through acquisitions, financing, leasing, 1031 exchanges, and intergenerational transfers. The firm delivers strategies that help sophisticated developers and families inheriting investment real estate preserve wealth and minimize tax exposure. FBT also advises on charitable giving strategies, including foundations and charitable trusts, helping clients align philanthropy with personal values and long-term financial goals.

For more information, visit us at [frostbrowntodd.com](http://frostbrowntodd.com).

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A litigator's success often depends on presenting irrefutable evidence, which is why we help transform financial data into clear, court-admissible reports that can withstand scrutiny. We break down complex transactions, making them accessible to judges and juries. Our ability to reconstruct financial records helps attorneys establish liability and damage claims with precision.

#### UNCOVERING FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

Our forensic accountants apply years of auditing experience to help detect fraud, misrepresentations, and discrepancies. Whether in civil/commercial litigation, probate matters, or fraud investigations, we inspect financial records to identify inconsistencies that can strengthen a litigator's arguments, helping secure favorable outcomes.

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#### PROVIDING EXPERT TESTIMONY

Accustomed to high-stakes litigation, our accountants regularly testify as expert witnesses, lending credibility to financial claims. We understand courtroom dynamics and the importance of conveying complex financial matters in a clear and convincing manner, especially while under cross-examination.

#### CONCLUSION

For litigators handling complex financial cases, partnering with an experienced forensic accountant is paramount. By leveraging their expertise, litigators can strengthen their arguments, protect their clients' interests, and enhance their chances of success.