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L.A.'s Top 100 Lawyers

LOS ANGELES is known as the capital for lawyers. After all, “L.A. Law” was the name of a television series years ago. But which of L.A.’s many lawyers are regarded as standouts? To find out, the Business Journal’s legal affairs reporter, Alexa Hyland, surveyed local recruiters, various legal experts and, of course, lawyers themselves to help her distill a list of the Top 100 Lawyers. They are presented on the following pages, grouped in 12 practice areas, such as litigation, real estate and (appropriately for L.A.) media and entertainment. Besides listing the requisite name, age and law firm, the Business Journal took the extra step of asking what’s on each lawyer’s bucket list and what their colleagues don’t know about them, among other questions. We discovered, for example, that Jeff Modisett prosecuted volatile boxer Mike Tyson, that Richard de Bodo once ran a career counseling program in Eskimo and Aleut villages in Alaska, and that Susan Fowler-McNally was one of the original Boogie-Boarders – and still rides one. Many more details of L.A.’s legal life emerge in this Who’s Who in Law section, which profiles local lawyers who are highly regarded by their peers.



KIRK PASICH, 54

FIRM: Dickstein Shapiro LLP

LAW SCHOOL: Loyola Law School

CLIENTS: Constellation Energy, Fox Entertainment Group, Frontier Oil Corp., Hansen Natural Corp., Limited Brands, NBC Universal, Northrop Grumman Corp., Sempra Energy, and Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.

YEARS IN PRACTICE: 29

Reason I’m a Lawyer: I debated in high school and law school and always thought this would be a fun and rewarding career.

Most Challenging Case: The most challenging case that I have tried recently is *Sempra Energy v. Marsh USA*. This case involved an alleged failure by Marsh to procure a political risk insurance policy a decade ago that covered certain natural gas licenses in Argentina. An arbitration panel ruled that the policy did not afford coverage. Thereafter, Sempra retained us to pursue its claims against the insurance broker. The jury returned a \$48.5 million verdict in October 2008. The matter is on appeal now.

Best Career Moment: Working with my colleague Linda Kornfeld in getting an insurance company to reverse a denial of coverage and pay for a bone marrow transplant for a pro bono client—which saved her life.

Worst: As a first-year associate, I missed a hearing because of a miscalculating. I ultimately got it set aside and a ruling in our favor on the demurrer.

If I Weren’t an Attorney: I would be a record company owner. I love music. I wrote rock reviews in law school, managed rock bands for a few years, and as a lawyer have represented record companies, recording artists, and songwriters.

Bucket List: Visit the Incan ruins in Peru, run a marathon in a time that starts with a 3 (as in “3 hours”), another canal cruise in France, and watching my children continue to grow.

My Colleagues Don’t Know: I’m the co-owner of The Mystery Bookstore in Westwood.

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