



SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

2020

Women in Law



Rhonda Crandall
Seltzer Caplan
McMahon Vittek



Julia M. Dunlap
UC San Diego Extension



Sarah Evans
Schwartz Semerdjian
Cauley & Evans



Candice Fink
Sony Electronics Inc.



Shannon R. Finley
Pettit Kohn Ingrassia
Lutz & Dolin



Karen Hawkes
Hawkes Trademark Law



Whitney Hodges
SheppardMullin



Priya Huggett
Brixton Capital



India Jewell
Sony Electronics Inc.



Jennifer N. Lutz
Pettit Kohn Ingrassia
Lutz & Dolin



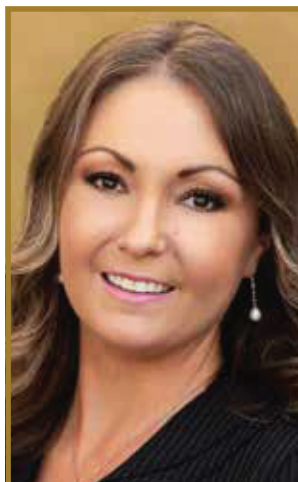
Megan McCarthy
Sony Electronics Inc.



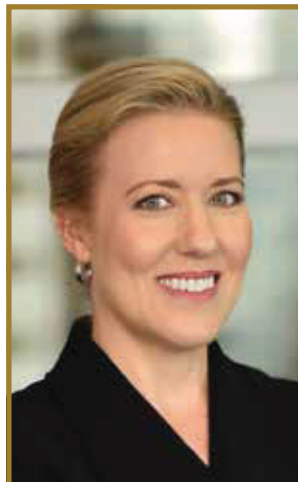
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Ryan-Cruz Law, APC



Kimberly Simms
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Raelynn Stattner
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Cheryl Dunn Soto
Franklin | Soto LLP



Jonah Toleno
Shustak Reynolds & Partners



Janice Y. Walshok
Pettit Kohn Ingrassia
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2020 WOMEN IN LAW

Women Leaders in Law: Tracing 35 Years of County Bar Leadership



Hon. Melinda Lasater
San Diego Superior
Court Judge



Johanna Schiavoni
2020 SDCBA President

In 1985, Melinda J. Lasater – now a Superior Court judge here in San Diego – became the first woman to serve as president of the San Diego County Bar Association. She was appointed to the Municipal Court bench in February 1987 and, three years later, to the San Diego Superior Court bench, where she has served for 30 years.

In December of last year, appellate lawyer Johanna Schiavoni, whose legal career includes clerkships with the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and more than a decade as an appellate specialist attorney, took the gavel as the SDCBA's 113th president. She is the 14th woman to hold the position.

A total of 35 years separates Judge Lasater's groundbreaking tenure as SDCBA president and Schiavoni's term this year. Attorneys Jim Crosby and Renée Stackhouse, president-elect of the SDCBA for 2021, sat down with Judge Lasater and Schiavoni to trace the progression of women in the legal community in San Diego County over that time and to discuss their respective paths to leadership.

Contents have been condensed for brevity and clarity from the original San Diego County Bar Association's Meet and Confer podcast interview. To hear the entire conversation, please click here.

Q: Judge Lasater, what was it like for women in the legal profession and to serve on the County Bar Board when you took the reins as president in 1985?

Judge Lasater: It was a time when if you were a woman on the board, you needed to be working hard. You needed to excel and develop the friendships, to develop the networking links, that were necessary to succeed. We were still definitely in the minority within the profession. Today, when I am presiding over a trial, I'll frequently see both sides represented by women. The bailiff and the court reporter may be women and virtually everybody in the courtroom may be women. It wasn't that way back then at all. We were still a bit unusual. The jurors actually watched us more closely, and if you were smart, you could work that to your benefit. But at the same time, you couldn't make too many mistakes either. It was a time of growth and it was a time where I think we made major headway. Frankly, it was also a lot of fun.

Q: What did being president of the SDCBA signify for you at that time?

Judge Lasater: Well, it was part of a process; there were other women who had gone before me who had made

the run at the office and deserved to be elected. When I first was elected to the SDCBA board, I honestly never even thought about running for president...When I was eventually elected president, I recognized that it was a major step for women. It wasn't about me though; it was about progress that we were making. I got, I think, very good exposure and an education about our profession as a whole, which is why the San Diego County Bar Association still is very near and dear to my heart.

Q: Have you seen a change in how female litigators and trial lawyers are treated by their opposition and by colleagues over the years?

Judge Lasater: Definitely, yes! I also see women are in positions of leadership because they deserve it – not as tokenism. If you look at the women leaders in our legal community, they're there because they're good at what they're doing. They deserved it. They work for it. And they're well respected. But as far as the acceptance over the years, it took quite a while to get to where we are today.

Q: How has the treatment of women progressed over the last 10 to 15 years?

Johanna Schiavoni: We're still fighting some of the same battles as the last four decades, including seeking equal pay for female attorneys, removing bias from evaluations and progression decisions, and the fair distribution of credit for generation of client matters. I came from a background in BigLaw and worked at a large global firm on and off for six years. There are some entrenched ways of thinking in large law firms. While many clients of are pushing for change, firms themselves have been slow and resistant to change. There is expert scholarship around the idea that for culture shift to happen in organizations, it should happen rapidly so that people believe in the commitment to change. In the legal profession, I'd like to see the pace accelerated and hope we engage in a period of rapid change toward gender equality.

When I was a newer lawyer in New York, I had just finished a federal clerkship in the district court in Los Angeles where I worked on various intellectual property cases. So, in New York, I was scooped up by the IP practice group at my firm and became a patent litigator. I don't have a science background, but I'm not intimidated by science and enjoyed serving as a bridge, a translator of sorts between the technical language and a legal audience. I relished the role, but looked around and there were no other women—the clients, inventors, experts, or lawyers. I had some early experiences of overt gender bias, particularly from opposing counsel. But, to Judge Lasater's point, sometimes you have to let people underestimate you and just prove them wrong.

Q: How important has mentorship been to you as you've progressed in your careers? Who have been important mentors for you?

Judge Lasater: There were so many...like Judy Keep, Nap Jones, and Dick Huffman. Lynn Schenk was phenomenal. I didn't understand politics; I was so naïve. And she was just a wonderful educator, friend, and mentor. I just really benefited from a number of people across the board who were willing to tell me when I was wrong, and who gave me ideas and advice about how I could approach things. And when I was president, I couldn't have done it without my vice presidents.

Schiavoni: There have been so many mentors for me as well, but one of the most significant has been Ninth Circuit Judge Margaret McKeown. She is the reason I came to San Diego. After my first clerkship in Los Angeles and a couple of years practicing in New York, I applied for appellate clerkships across the country and had the great fortune of securing a job with her in 2006 in San Diego. She encouraged me to get involved with Lawyers Club and the County Bar. And, I had the great honor of her swearing me in when I became president of the SDCBA. She treats her law clerks as family, and I have tried to do the same for those I've mentored over the years.

Q: We are obviously living in a really incredible time. The COVID-19 pandemic halted nearly all court proceedings back in March, and we're only now seeing a real return to court hearings and regular processes (though they're now mostly virtual). How do you think women are uniquely situated to lead through crises like these?

Judge Lasater: Women are exceptional problem solvers and are not afraid to think outside the box. They don't just accept something as immutable. If they encounter an obstacle, they solve it and don't give up. I see the women thinking outside the box and being comfortable with trying new things. They're truly taking on difficult tasks and making it look a little easy.

Schiavoni: Women have absolutely excelled throughout the current crisis. At the SDCBA, we're in a period where we've had four women Presidents in a row, from Kristin Rizzo to Lilys McCoy to me, and then Renee Stackhouse, who will inherit the mantle for 2021. I don't think that's an accident. Our boards have recognized that we bring to the table consensus-building, empathy, and a desire to listen and hear people sincerely, and to help our members navigate the law and the profession. We don't lead with those characteristics simply because we're women, but those characteristics are amplified and, frankly, probably given more value now than they were previously.

Q: What advice do you have for female lawyers today?

Judge Lasater: Learn from your experiences and build on each day. Keep looking forward and don't take things personally.

Schiavoni: To women who may consider leaving the profession because of challenging gender dynamics and barriers, I would say this: don't let anyone else decide the course of your career. Don't leave the profession because of what someone else expects you to be in your life. I eventually left BigLaw because I found my niche in appellate practice, where I am well suited to providing a 10,000-foot view, developing legal strategy, briefing, and oral advocacy. That is the kind of lawyer I am meant to be. I didn't let those early experiences of being the only woman in my practice area define me—I used the opportunity to learn and grow and face tough situations. To others, I would say: be the kind of lawyer you imagine yourself being, and rely on mentors you can trust to help you navigate your own path – just like Judge Lasater did blazing the trail as the first female County Bar President. And, we should all reach out and bring up the next generation of women lawyers behind us.

2020 WOMEN IN LAW



Rhonda Crandall

Shareholder



Rhonda Crandall, a shareholder at Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek, has over two decades of experience in tax and estate planning. Her legal practice is split between estate planning and administration and transactional tax planning, with a focus on Section 1031 tax-deferred exchanges.

Rhonda has extensive experience in structuring and implementing tax-deferred exchanges, including complex transactions involving partnership restructuring, reverse and build-to-suit exchanges, and multi-asset exchanges involving properties valued in excess of \$100 million.

Her trust and estates practice includes multi-generational estate planning, business succession planning, charitable gift planning, and trust administration. Rhonda uses a host of strategies, including gifts and sales to irrevocable trusts, grantor retained annuity trusts, life insurance trusts, and family limited partnerships, to maximize the use of clients' available gift and estate tax exclusions to preserve wealth for their families.

Rhonda was drawn to estate and tax law because she enjoys the almost puzzle-like challenge of working through complex laws to structure great outcomes for clients. Translating complicated tax laws into plain English is one of Rhonda's strengths.

Rhonda received her bachelor's degree, with honors, from Washington University in St. Louis, earned her law degree, cum laude, from Harvard Law School and her Master of Laws in Taxation, cum laude, from the University of San Diego.

An Arizona native, Rhonda enjoyed vacationing in San Diego with her family when she was a child. Rhonda and her husband, Scott, live in Pacific Beach with their two daughters, ages 11 and 9.

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Sarah Evans

Partner



Sarah Brite Evans was promoted to being a named partner at Schwartz Semerdjian Cauley & Evans earlier this year. She joined the firm in 2006 and heads its employment law practice, regularly working with clients to ensure compliance with applicable statutes and regulations. Sarah also provides insightful guidance on critical employment law issues, including preventing harassment and hostile work environment claims and disciplinary actions.

Sarah is also a litigation attorney, defending employers against individual claims and class action lawsuits involving employment and wage issues. She has shared her extensive experience handling such matters with others in her profession as co-author of the employment law chapter in the first two editions and in the upcoming third edition of "A Practitioner's Guide to Class Actions," published by the American Bar Association.

In addition to her work at the firm, Sarah has served and continues to serve in leadership roles in the Lawyers Club of San Diego, Border View Family YMCA, and Friends of Balboa Park, among others. She has received numerous accolades over the years, including being named California's 40th Senate District's Woman of the Year in 2019, San Diego Business Journal's "Best of the Bar" multiple times, San Diego Daily Transcript list of "Top Young Attorneys," and a San Diego Metropolitan Magazine "Top 40 Under 40" honoree.

Sarah balances these professional and community roles with her most important and favorite job—parenting her two school age sons. She graduated from the University of Southern California and Notre Dame Law School.

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Julia M. Dunlap

Director of Business



Julia M. Dunlap, Esq., is the Director of Business, Legal, and Safety Programs for UC San Diego Extension's Business certificates, ABA Approved Paralegal Certificate Program, the Intellectual Property Certificate Program, and OSHA Training Institute Education Center. Ms. Dunlap received her Bachelor of Art's degree in English from the University of California at Berkeley. She earned her Juris Doctor (J.D.) from the University of San Diego, School of Law, and became an active member of the California State Bar in 1993. She is licensed to practice before California and Federal courts. In addition to her duties at UC San Diego, she is a sole practitioner specializing in estate planning. A lawyer by training but an educator at heart, Ms. Dunlap has played an active role in legal education for over 20 years and is the past president of the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE)."

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We congratulate partner **Sarah Evans** for being named to the inaugural "Women in Law." We are proud of Sarah's dedication to the legal profession and her exemplary leadership in the community at large.

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**Shannon R.
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Shannon Finley is a shareholder in the firm's San Diego office. Shannon's practice areas include employment & labor and retail matters. She focuses her practice on employment law and represents California employers in disputes ranging from single plaintiff wrongful termination cases to complex class actions, and everything in between. In addition to defending employers in litigation, Ms. Finley advises employers about best practices to avoid lawsuits before they arise. Ms. Finley is also a speaker and author on issues including best hiring practices, wage and hour law, discrimination, leaves of absence, and social media.

Ms. Finley obtained her *Juris Doctor* from the University of San Diego School of Law, where she received a merit scholarship upon entrance. Prior to joining Pettit Kohn, Ms. Finley served as a law clerk for the Honorable Dee D. Drell, U.S. District Court Judge for the Western District of Louisiana. Most recently, Shannon was recognized in the 2021 *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch* for her work in Labor and Employment Litigation. She was also recognized as a San Diego *Super Lawyers Rising Star* and received the C. Hugh Friedman New Lawyer Award from Lawyers Club of San Diego for her leadership and professionalism in the Legal Community.

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**Whitney
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Partner

SheppardMullin

Whitney Hodges is a partner in the Real Estate, Land Use and Natural Resources Practice Group in the firm's San Diego office. She is the leader of the firm's Cannabis Industry Team and serves on the firm's Pro Bono, Recruiting and Diversity & Inclusion committees, as well as numerous industry specific teams. Whitney's practice focuses on the representation of clients involved in real estate development. She advises and represents major residential, industrial, commercial and mixed-use development projects, as well as Native American Indian tribes and renewable energy developers through all phases of the land use regulatory process and environmental compliance. Her land use experience includes real estate due diligence investigations, negotiating and drafting development agreements, processing land use entitlements, advising tribal governments on environmental and natural resources law, and appearing before governmental agencies and commissions. Whitney also advises cannabis companies and ancillary businesses on state and local regulatory compliance and real estate transactions.

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**Candice
Fink**
Counsel - Privacy

SONY

Candice has over 20 years of legal experience. She's been at Sony Electronics Inc. for eleven years where she is currently Counsel in the Legal Department counseling executives and advising on legal strategy and approach for data management and privacy related matters, as well as advising on commercial transactions and operations, including licensing and distribution. She previously served as a Director supporting various business groups and advising on e-commerce, sales, anti-trust, advertising, trademark and licensing.

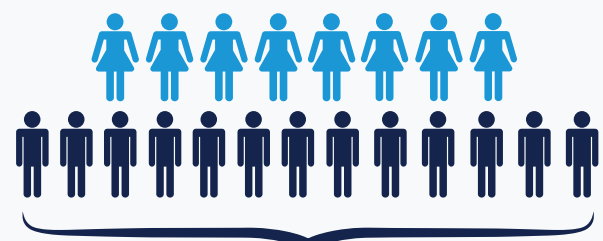
Formerly at Allstate Insurance Company as Corporate Counsel, Candice was responsible for regulatory compliance, marketing, advertising and claims management. Candice started her practice in Chicago, where she litigated civil matters.

Candice graduated from the Loyola University of Chicago School of Law and received her MBA from University of Illinois at Chicago. She is licensed to practice law in California.

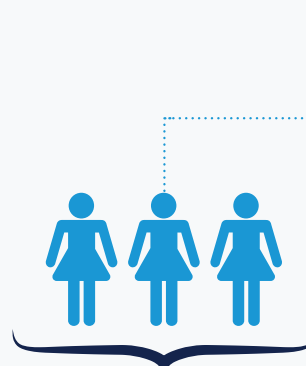
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In 2020, of the 21 attorneys promoted to partner, **8 are women.**



Of the 8 women attorneys promoted to partner, **3 are women of color.**

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• **2019 MCCA Thomas L. Sager Award Recipient** – Recognizes one Am Law 200 law firm that has championed diversity, encouraged equity and inclusion across the organization and is committed to hiring, retaining and promoting diverse attorneys.

2020 WOMEN IN LAW



Karen Hawkes

Founder and Managing Attorney



Karen M. Hawkes, Esq. is the Founder and Managing Attorney of Hawkes Trademark Law, Hawkes Law, A.P.L.C. Karen has over fifteen years of experience as an Intellectual Property and Corporate Attorney. Karen focuses her practice on Trademark, Copyright and Corporate Business Matters providing both transactional and litigation services to clients.

At Hawkes Trademark Law, Karen has significant experience in assisting clients with identifying their Trademarks, providing Trademark clearance searches, and obtaining Federal Trademark Registrations in the U.S. and abroad. Additionally, Karen represents clients in securing Copyright registrations with the U.S. Copyright Office. She represents clients in a broad scope of industries which include internet and e-commerce, retail brick and mortar stores, medical, authors, publishers, musicians and artists, computer software and code developers, clothing, craft breweries, wine and spirits and a wide range of additional industries.

Karen also represents clients in Trademark Opposition and Trademark Cancellation proceedings before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board, and in litigation cases involving Federal and State Trademark Infringement, Federal Copyright Infringement, Federal Unfair Competition, and Lanham Act claims. Additionally, she advises clients on advertising claims on products and services to ensure compliance with the Federal Trade Commission.

Karen highly values the innovation, risk-taking, trust and strength of entrepreneurs, and also provides Corporate Business Law services for all businesses ranging from start-ups to medium to well-established high level corporations. Such services include entity formation, shareholder agreements, corporate compliance, contracts, negotiations, privacy policies, terms and conditions, employment and independent contractor agreements, talent agreements, and other business matters.

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Priya Huggett

General Counsel



Priya Huggett is general counsel for Brixton Capital, private real estate investment firm that owns and operates a portfolio valued in excess of \$1 billion, including investments in retail, multi-family, office and land. She oversees various legal aspects of Brixton and its affiliates and provides oversight and a legal perspective for the acquisition, leasing and disposition of properties.

Earlier this year, Priya helped structure and facilitate Brixton's acquisition of property management firm United Apartment Group (UAG), based in San Antonio, Texas. UAG's property management portfolio includes approximately 30,000 apartment homes, primarily in the southwest and southeast U.S.

Priya has more than 20 years of broad-based experience corporate finance and in real estate, including acquisitions, dispositions, development, leasing, finance and operations covering multifamily, retail, residential, hospitality and office assets.

Prior to moving into in-house counsel roles, Priya worked for Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch and Solmon, Ward, Seidenwurm & Smith in the firms' real estate, corporate and finance practice groups.

She is a member of the American Bar Association and the San Diego County Bar Association Real Property Section. Priya is a graduate of the University of British Columbia, Faculty of Law in Vancouver, Canada and obtained a bachelor's degree in Criminology and Political Science from Simon Fraser University, also in British Columbia.

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India Jewell

Legal Head of Consumer Products



India has 18 years of legal experience. She's been at Sony Electronics Inc. for ten years where she is Legal Head of Consumer Products for North America leading a team, counseling executives and providing an overall legal strategy and with responsibility for all consumer products and commercial transactions, including sales, trademark, advertising and antitrust matters.

Formerly at The General Electric Company – Appliances & Lighting Division as Commercial Law Counsel, India was responsible for global advertising for the Appliances division, privacy and sales for the contract-builder sales channels. India started her practice at Seiller Waterman where she practiced business law and litigated civil matters.

When not practicing law, India focuses her free time on travelling the world, loved ones and mentoring law students. India graduated from the University of Cincinnati College of Law where she clerked as an extern at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit for the Honorable Nathaniel Jones. She is licensed to practice law in California, Indiana and Kentucky.

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Jennifer N. Lutz

Shareholder



Jennifer Lutz is a founding shareholder and co-chair of Pettit Kohn Ingrassia Lutz & Dolin PC's employment and labor group, where she focuses her practice in employment litigation and counseling. Jennifer represents California's employers in all aspects of employment disputes in state and federal court, and before administrative and government agencies. She has successfully litigated disputes involving issues of discrimination, wrongful termination, harassment, defamation, and both individual and class action wage and hour claims.

Jennifer is also a speaker and author on issues such as wage and hour law, employee privacy, and leaves of absence. She provides advice and training to employers on a full range of employment law issues, including drafting employment policies and procedures, terminations, and discipline. She also serves as an employment law instructor for the UC San Diego Extension. Ms. Lutz earned her B.A. degree, *magna cum laude*, from the University of Arizona and J.D. degree from the University of Arizona College of Law. She was recently recognized as one of the Top 25 Women Lawyers in San Diego by *Super Lawyers* and has been recognized by *Best Lawyers* in the 2021 listing of *The Best Lawyers in America* for her work in both Employment Law - Management and for her work in Labor and Employment Litigation.

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2020 WOMEN IN LAW



**Megan
McCarthy**

Counsel

SONY

Megan joined Sony Electronics Inc. in March 2019 and handles North American litigation matters while also supporting the consumer service, repair operations, product support, environmental and product safety groups by providing legal strategy and helping drive commercial transactions.

With over 19 years legal experience, Megan started her legal practice at DLA Piper, working on global patent litigation matters, and later joined Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch in San Diego where she focused on intellectual property and litigation. Prior to joining Sony, Megan started her in-house career at Petco.

Megan is a UCLA graduate and obtained her JD from the University of San Diego in 2000. She is licensed to practice law in California and is a licensed solicitor in England and Wales.

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**Raelynn
Stattner**

Attorney



Raelynn Stattner joined the top-notch legal team at Fleischer & Ravreby in July of 2020 to expand the firm's ability to cater to its high-asset clients. Raelynn graduated cum laude in the top 12% of her class from California Western School of Law in 2010, and she brings ten years of experience at several other leading San Diego law firms to F&R in Carlsbad. She is also a Certified Specialist in Family Law.

During the early years of her career, Raelynn took a special interest in child custody relocation cases as well as interstate and international custody matters. This means she can negotiate the most difficult of custody cases, even if the case is high conflict. Along with relocation and jurisdictional child custody cases, Raelynn is experienced in pre-marital agreements and complex property division cases (including high asset and high-income earner cases). Raelynn also handles post-judgment modification matters, so business owners can rely on her to renegotiate if their financial situation changes. Rest assured the future of your business is safe in her hands while you go through a divorce.

Raelynn is a member of the California State Bar Association and San Diego County Bar Association, Family Law Section, and she was named a 2020 Rising Star in San Diego by Super Lawyers. Call Fleischer & Ravreby today for a free consultation with Raelynn Stattner – before your spouse calls first.

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**Ruth
Ryan-Cruz**

Attorney



Ruth Ryan-Cruz is an estate planning attorney and business law attorney. She assists business owners and their families in both fluent Spanish and English.

In the area of estate planning she has helped hundreds of families establish their wills, trusts, and estate planning documents by helping each family protect their assets for their posterity and build wealth along the way. She has also helped families work through Probate and trust administration challenges involving disputes concerning specific assets, bank accounts, real property issues, business interests, and disputes involving complicated family dynamics.

In the area of business law Ruth helps businesses navigate several different phases of business including the planning stages, growth stages, disputes stages, winding up stage, mergers and acquisitions, and miscellaneous transactions in between. Working with clients ranging between start-ups and large-scale manufacturers, Ruth routinely takes her role as legal counselor seriously in order to aid these clients along the way. Transactions include those with business professionals (e.g. physicians, certified public accountants, attorneys, engineers, programmers, and similar), biotech operations, software development, international sales and distributions, and local operations with storefront operations.

In 2013 Ruth was nominated in San Diego Magazine's inaugural "Latinos Making a Difference Awards" in partnership with Univision KBNT San Diego honoring San Diego's most distinguished Latino leaders. In 2014 Ruth was featured as a Rising Star in the San Diego Attorney Journal. In 2015 Ruth opened her practice in Mission Valley where it remains today giving her easy access to the South Bay, central San Diego, and North County areas to assist clients throughout the County.

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Cheryl Dunn Soto

Partner

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SOTO LLP**

Cheryl Dunn Soto is a seasoned attorney who for the last 12 years has focused her practice on insurance coverage and bad faith litigation on behalf of commercial policyholders. Her clients have included contractors, developers, real estate professionals, medical groups, broker-dealers, accountants, law firms, HOAs, distributors and manufacturers, and other companies throughout California.

Cheryl handles a wide variety of coverage matters and has significant experience with liability policies, including D&O, E&O, commercial general liability, employment practices liability, and excess/umbrella policies. In addition to litigating coverage disputes, Cheryl frequently assists in analyzing and resolving insurance coverage issues pre-suit and has provided advise on highly complex, multi-layered coverage matters. Cheryl thoroughly enjoys analyzing and solving insurance coverage issues for her clients and, in the process, vindicating their rights.

After graduating from law school summa cum laude, Cheryl worked for four federal district court judges and a Ninth Circuit judge. During this time, she acquired invaluable knowledge and insight regarding judicial practice and procedure, allowing her to more effectively represent her clients. Prior to forming Franklin | Soto LLP, Cheryl practiced with a premier insurance recovery firm and was the sole shareholder of a firm that exclusively represented policyholders in coverage disputes. She has served as both Chair and Co-Chair of the Insurance/Bad Faith Law Section of the San Diego County Bar Association.

Awards/Recognitions: AV Preeminent Rating from Martindale-Hubbell; San Diego Super Lawyer (2019, 2020).

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Jonah Toleno

Partner

SR SHUSTAK REYNOLDS & PARTNERS, P.C.

Jonah Toleno is a partner with Shustak Reynolds & Partners, P.C. She practices securities litigation, financial services law, and business litigation. She is trial counsel in court and in arbitrations before FINRA (the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority). She represents firms and financial advisors in complex securities litigations, broker transitions, securities fraud, Ponzi scheme cases, employment matters, and commercial disputes. She also appears before the Securities and Exchange Commission and is outside corporate counsel to numerous businesses. In addition, she helps manage the Firm's operations.

Ms. Toleno is "AV" (Preeminent) rated under the Martindale-Hubbell ratings system, with a 5.0 out of 5.0 rating in Securities Law, General Practice, and Business Law.

Ms. Toleno Co-Chairs the Judicial Appointments Endorsements Committee and Membership Development Committee of Lawyers Club of San Diego, a 1,300-member organization dedicated to the advancement of women in the legal profession. She is past Co-Chair of Lawyers Club's Diverse Women's Committee and Bench Bar Committee and Past President of the Filipino American Lawyers of San Diego. She is active in other community organizations, including the San Diego County Bar Association and National Filipino American Lawyers Association. She is a regular speaker for bar organizations, law schools, and financial services conferences. SuperLawyers named her a 2020 Top 25 Woman Attorney in San Diego.

Ms. Toleno graduated from UC Berkeley and UC Hastings College of the Law. She was admitted to the California bar in 2000. She lives in San Diego with her husband and their two children, and their beloved chiweenie dog.

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Kimberly Simms

Founding Attorney

**KS LAW OFFICE OF
KIMBERLY R. SIMMS**

Kimberly R. Simms earned her law degree from Thomas Jefferson School of Law and became a member of the California State Bar in 2009. Kimberly has dedicated her entire legal career to the cannabis industry. She started her law practice immediately after law school with a focus on the legal and regulatory needs of the medical marijuana industry. In her law practice, she has negotiated with government officials to craft reasonable and effective regulations that allow for safe access, handled complex land use and zoning matters, advised on local and state regulations impacting the cannabis industry and advised hundreds of cannabis entrepreneurs to develop their cannabis business strategy and structure.

Kimberly is recognized as a leading expert in this emerging area of law. She has taught courses and lead seminars which focus on how to comply with the ever-changing legal and regulatory requirements of the cannabis industry. She is considered a trusted source by the media and has been interviewed by NPR, CNN and many local media outlets. Kimberly was a founding Board Member of the San Diego Cannabis Industry Association, San Diego's leading cannabis chamber of commerce and political advocacy organization. Kimberly served as the founding and acting Chapter Chair for San Diego Women Grow from 2015-2018. It is with great pride that Kimberly is also serving her second term as a Board Member of the California Cannabis Industry Association and co-chair of the Retail & Delivery Committee. Kimberly is committed to working hand in hand with other cannabis industry leaders to navigate the ever-changing regulatory landscape of California's robust cannabis industry.

Kimberly maintains the following memberships: California NORML, American's For Safe Access, National Cannabis Industry Association, California Cannabis Industry Association, Women Grow, the National Cannabis Bar Association and San Diego Leadership Alliance.

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Janice Walshok is a shareholder in the firm's San Diego office. She is an accomplished trial and litigation attorney with over a decade of experience primarily in the fields of personal injury, including wrongful death, product liability, and insurance bad faith. Janice has successfully tried several jury trials and argued before the Second District Court of Appeal. She continues to succeed in obtaining early resolutions for her clients by way of summary judgment, motions to strike, and other dispositive motions.

Ms. Walshok is a graduate of University of California, San Diego and California Western School of Law, where she was a recipient of the Dean's Scholarship. She had the distinct honor of serving as a judicial extern for the Honorable John A. Houston for the United States District Court for the Southern District of California. Janice has been selected to the San Diego *Super Lawyers' Rising Stars* list each year since 2015, a recognition bestowed on less than 2.5% of all attorneys in the region. She also served as a Board Member of San Diego Defense Lawyers from 2015-2017. In 2017, Janice presented before the San Diego Defense Lawyers regarding how to attack and prove the reasonable value of plaintiff's medical expenses in personal injury cases.

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