

THE TOP 100... -- Reasons Why It's Good That Lawyers Have Power

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A few months back, the Johnnie question came up at an Algonquin gathering of high-powered lawyers on Sunset Boulevard.

The heated discussion that ensued came to mind on a beautiful autumn afternoon that was perfect for watching football and contemplating lawyers. Specifically, the 100 included in this year's list of the most powerful lawyers in California, the 150 more who deserved serious consideration, the approximately 1,000 nominated and the 21 who have made the list in each of its five years.

People say a lot of bad things about lawyers, and many of them are deserved. But what we all too often fail to pause and appreciate is the civility our country enjoys because of our system to resolve disputes. We are a society that reflects every face, language, religion and philosophy under the sun. Yet those differences do not ultimately divide us.

There are many, many reasons for that, including our form of government, our standard of living and our social mobility. Some of the credit should also go to lawyers.

The lawyers on this year's Top 100 can be irascible jerks intent on turning the other side into mulch. They also are gentle and generous human beings who give more freely of their time and resources than almost any other group of individuals you could find.

Among them are lawyers who have brokered international peace accords, justices who have more widely opened the doors of our courts and advocates who have passionately persuaded on behalf of their clients.

That's been a hallmark of our Top 100 for the five years of its existence: The lawyers who make it each year are the face of the law in our society. And while it's easy to see the blemishes, overall it's a face of dignity, compassion and commitment.

Our survey is not a scientific one any more than beauty is an objective measure. Still, we call hundreds of lawyers and take thousands of votes to derive the list of those counsel considered most "powerful" by their California peers.

The face of power in California law changes little from year to year. There are 21 titans who have made the list each year, who are denoted in the following pages in the larger, shaded boxes. Of the remaining 79 lawyers on this year's list, 36 are first-timers.

This year's rookies reflect the cases most on the minds of lawyers these days: the Catholic Church, corporate fraud, post-9/11 and the death penalty.

The breadth of lawyers nominated this year, as in the past, remains simply staggering - as does the source of their power.

Some have the power of ideas, like Erwin Chemerinsky and Laurence Lessig; the power of global business, like John Schulman, Ann Baskins and Robert Dell; the power to persuade of Tom Girardi, Ron Olson and Joe Cotchett; the power of compassion that fuels David Lash, Dan Grunfeld, Mark Rosenbaum and Eva Paterson; and the power of vision that has been the hallmark of Ron George, Larry Sonsini and Warren Christopher.

There are two important footnotes to this year's list. One member passed away a few weeks back. But he was with us, Ira Yellin used his legal skills to change the landscape of downtown Los Angeles.

This was also the first year we had a member of the Top 100 ask to not be included in order to protect his privacy. We won't tell you who he is so as not to further highlight this remarkable but complex man. We felt we had a duty to include him for two reasons: he was selected by his peers and his contributions reflect the finest tradition of lawyering.

Which brings us back to Johnnie. Mr. Cochran is on hiatus from this year's list, falling off the radar of his California colleagues after a year spent on the national scene representing Enron workers and preparing a huge slave reparations lawsuit.

At the Algonquin dinner, public relations maven Michael Levine played the role of Dorothy Parker, inquiring with an upturned brow whether Cochran had done a great disservice to lawyers with his successful defense of O.J. - isn't that why lawyers have such a bad reputation?

Each of you probably has your own answer to that question. But what's inescapable as you read the tales of the Top 100 is the face of justice that emerges beyond any specific battle, and any particular side. These are the individuals who make sure the scoundrels who are caught are prosecuted fairly; that corporations, their employees and shareholders retain the most solid economic and ethical base; that the weak are not further marginalized by being deprived of justice in addition to means; and that our courts remain the repository of our belief in a better way to resolve our disputes.

If it's true that, as we age, we get the face we deserve, this year's fifth anniversary Top 100 should give lawyers a reason to smile.

_Katrina Dewey

Nancy L. Abell (Partner, Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker, Los Angeles) - For a boss in hot water, Abell's the attorney to call. One of the nation's most prominent employment defense attorneys, she has heavyweight clients such as Coca-Cola Co. and Microsoft Corp. and generated \$10 million last year for her firm. In November, she defeated class certification in a case charging race and gender discrimination against Microsoft.

- *"I'd really rather see somebody else on the other side of the case."*

Wylie A. Aitken (Name Partner, Aitken Aitken & Cohn, Santa Ana) - Few liberals carry clout behind the Orange Curtain like this prominent personal injury lawyer. The Democratic Foundation heavyweight and major Gray Davis contributor whispers into the governor's ear about local judicial appointments. He also sits on the powerful bipartisan panel that recommends federal judges in California.

- *"He has done it all. We all envy him."*

Mary Alexander (Name Partner, Alexander & Associates, San Francisco) - The first Californian in two decades to lead the 60,000-member American Trial Lawyers Association, Alexander put her group's muscle behind the defeat of federal legislation to cap damages in medical malpractice cases in July. In November's congressional elections, she's backing consumer rights candidates.

"She could be counted on to stick to the personal injury lawyer's script."

Ramon P. Arias (Executive Director, Bay Area Legal Aid, Oakland) - Arias guided the difficult marriage of legal services programs in the Bay Area. He merged their boards of directors while negotiating a pay raise for most of the staff. To lure young lawyers to pro bono work, Arias established a loan repayment program that he hopes to take nationwide.

- *"He had the vision to see that some of the best people were not able to do that work."*

Vincent J. Bartolotta Jr. (Name Partner, Thorsnes, Bartolotta & McGuire, San Diego) - He made a big mark in San Diego County last year by winning the second-largest jury award in its history - a \$94.5 million judgment against the city on behalf of a land developer. And the plaintiffs' lawyer with a knack for major injury cases hasn't stopped there. He has recent wins of \$2.7 million and \$1.95 million in two separate wrongful death lawsuits.

- *"He has a personality that can charm the toughest juror."*

Ann O. Baskins (General Counsel, Hewlett-Packard Co., Palo Alto) - Baskins was at the top of the pyramid of lawyers handling HP's \$19 billion acquisition of Compaq Computer Corp. in May. She led the team that developed the legal strategy for the merger, proxy fight and related litigation, and worked with U.S. and international regulatory bodies to get the deal approved.

- *"She has an extraordinary ability to pick the team she believes in and then not to micromanage."*

Ralph H. Baxter Jr. (Chair, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, San Francisco) - Baxter built Orrick and is steering it through the Bay Area's most troubled economic times in three decades. The firm's profits are up, and 25 new associates just came on board. Baxter opened offices in Paris and Orange County. He also moved many Orrick support functions from pricey San Francisco to the needy, cost-conscious burg of Wheeling, W.Va.

- *"He's been a tremendous change agent at Orrick and the profession at large."*

Robert K. Best (President and CEO, Pacific Legal Foundation, Sacramento) - Best picks the battles taken on by the granddaddy of conservative public interest firms, championing causes like property rights and Proposition 209. When snowy plover nests threaten to close public beaches to off-road vehicles or affirmative action lurks in schools or city hiring, Best is there - and often effective.

- *"They are the trendsetter for the whole public interest law firm movement on the more conservative side of the spectrum."*

Michael J. Bidart (Name partner, Shernoff, Bidart & Darras, Claremont) - Health maintenance organizations are afraid of Bidart, who continues to build his reputation as one of the nation's leading litigators in bad faith insurance cases. His eye-popping multimillion-dollar verdicts have shaped major legislation, including a state bill that allows HMOs to be sued by their patients for bad faith and punitive damages.

- *"He has the ability to make public policy as the result of his huge verdicts."*

Raymond P. Boucher (Name Partner, Kiesel, Boucher & Larson, Los Angeles) - Among the most novel legal actions filed against the Roman Catholic Church were those conceived by Boucher, who filed a pair of RICO suits and a class action for facilitating the actions of pedophile priests. An emerging heavyweight in the consumer bar, he's well-connected in Sacramento, lobbying for victims of the Northridge earthquake and against secret settlements and state bailouts of power companies.

- *"Intense, focused and active, both in the courtroom and in the bar."*

Brad D. Brian (Partner, Munger, Tolles & Olson, Los Angeles) - Executives at companies like Arthur Andersen, Boeing and General Electric probably have Brian on speed dial. Whether their company is in trouble or they just need advice from the complex civil and criminal litigator, Brian has been the attorney many execs call in a crisis.

His 1994 victory on behalf of Thomas Spiegel, the former chairman of failed Columbia Savings & Loan who faced three felony charges claiming he stole millions of dollars from the thrift, put Brian on the map, and high-profile clients have been a mainstay in his practice ever since.

His latest legal victory has state Republicans breathing a heavy sigh of relief and refocusing on the November election. California gubernatorial candidate Bill Simon won new life after Brian convinced a judge to set aside a \$78 million fraud verdict against Simon's family investment firm, William E. Simon & Sons.

He's not totally corporate, however, having served as president and a board member of the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles.

Still, when you add Northrop Grumman, Fluor Daniel and numerous unnamed law firms to his list of clients, it's pretty clear whom corporate America calls in a jam.

- *"Everybody wants his advice and judgment."*

Harry M. Brittenham (Name Partner, Ziffren, Brittenham, Branca, Fischer, Gilbert-Lurie & Stiffelman, Los Angeles) - If Skip left town, half the deals in Hollywood wouldn't get done. Harvey and Bob Weinstein, co-heads of Miramax films, director Ridley Scott and actors Bruce Willis and Harrison Ford are just a few of the heavyweights that rely on Brittenham's deal-closing prowess, making the longtime entertainment sage one of the best friends to have in Tinseltown.
- *"No doubt about it, Skip's the insider's insider."*

Bruce A. Broillet (Name Partner, Greene, Broillet, Panish & Wheeler, Santa Monica) - He may be short in stature but this past-president of the Consumer Attorneys of California is a giant in the courtroom. He's representing movie producer Gary Binko in a suit against the producers of MTV's "The Osbournes" for allegedly stealing his idea for the popular reality television series. In July, he won a confidential settlement on the eve of trial in a Ford Explorer rollover case.
- *"Broillet doesn't back down and thrills at taking cases others might shy away from."*

James J. Brosnahan Jr. (Partner, Morrison & Foerster, San Francisco) - His successful defense of the American Talib - who pleaded guilty to a 20-year sentence after initially facing three life sentences plus 90 years - revealed flawed prosecutorial efforts in the government's war on terrorism. It also proved that Brosnahan may be the best defense attorney in the nation for high-profile cases with a cause.
- *"He is electrified by the defense of civil rights, and he loves a good fight."*

Willie L. Brown Jr. (Mayor, San Francisco) - Nearing the home stretch of his second term as mayor and six years removed from his influential post as speaker of the state Assembly, Brown remains a formidable force in California politics. And with his term ending January 2004, he is considering a run for the state Senate.
- *"He doesn't have the national prominence he did a decade ago, but if you want something done, going to Willie Brown is a very good idea."*

John L. Burton, (President Pro Tem of the California Senate) - The Legislature's top official blocked a public bailout of Pacific Gas and Electric Co. and Edison last year. However, the liberal lost his fight against term limits. His legacy when he leaves office next year will be his tireless dedication to society's disenfranchised.
"He's tough: some say abrasive, some say crude. In the world we live in ... that may be necessary to fight the strong and powerful."

Elizabeth J. Cabraser (Name Partner, Lieff, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein, San Francisco) - This drummer-turned-plaintiffs'-attorney is known for her mass tort work, including the claims of 35 families suing the Tri-State Crematory in Noble, Ga., for stacking bodies in mass graves and saying they had been cremated. She's worked on more than 250 class actions and estimates that in the last three years she's won \$6 billion for her clients.
- *"She is a commanding attorney and a role model for other litigators, - especially fellow female lawyers."*

David S. Casey Jr. (Name Partner, Casey, Gerry, Reed & Schenk, San Diego) - No stranger to high-profile cases, Casey represents American POWs in a slave labor compensation case against Mitsui & Co. and the Mitsubishi Corp. The president-elect of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America also was honored for his work with the Sept. 11 victims' fund, including setting a moratorium on lawsuits and creating a group of lawyers to help victims collect from the fund.

- *"The man could probably solve the Middle East problem."*

Erwin Chemerinsky (Professor, University of Southern California Law School) - One of the country's pre-eminent legal scholars, Chemerinsky is often the first person the media calls for commentary on constitutional law, hate crimes, ethics and everything else law-related, it seems.

When he's not teaching at USC, Chemerinsky likely is racking up frequent-flier miles, lecturing nationwide or testifying in Washington, D.C., and Sacramento.

This spring, he was asked by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to advise it on *Warren v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue*, 00-71217, on the constitutionality of providing tax breaks for the clergy. And he's jumped into the debate over how far the federal government can go to fight terrorism. He joined civil rights attorney Stephen Yagman in the fight to obtain legal counsel for detainees being held at the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. *Coalition of Clergy v. George W. Bush*, 0255367.

His sweet disposition and peripatetic mien will keep Chemerinsky on top as the scholar of choice for years to come - unless, of course, he ever takes one of the numerous other posts he's offered.

- *"He is beyond brilliant. Judges all around the country look forward to his talks."*

Warren M. Christopher (Senior Partner, O'Melveny & Myers, Los Angeles) - The unparalleled model for combining influential government service with a successful law practice, Christopher has served under three presidents and handles the most sensitive domestic and international disputes for O'Melveny's clients.

As secretary of state under President Clinton, Christopher negotiated the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1991, he chaired the Christopher Commission, tasked with reforming Los Angeles' police department following the Rodney King beatings.

He also headed the search committees that selected Al Gore as Bill Clinton's running mate in 1992 and Joe Lieberman as Gore's running mate in 2000. After the ticket's controversial loss, Christopher was a top strategist for the campaign's Florida recount effort.

This year, Christopher assisted Los Angeles' campaign against secession and its selection of a police chief. He has criticized congressional indifference over federal election reform and the Bush administration's treatment of detainees in the war on terrorism.

A power broker since the Kennedy years, Christopher will remain a trusted adviser to clients, candidates and world leaders for years to come.

- *"The supreme counselor in every sense of the word."*

Morgan Chu (Managing Partner, Irell & Manella, Los Angeles) - Chu once held the world record for hitting all of New York's subway stations the fastest. That's no surprise to those who know him.

The last year has been more of a marathon than a sprint for the high-tech litigator, but his yearlong effort on behalf of City of Hope National Medical Center has paid off in a major way.

Chu scored a \$300 million verdict in compensatory damages and \$200 million in punitive damages for City of Hope in a breach of contract lawsuit against Genentech. The big win reportedly brings in a gold rush for Chu's firm, as well, but the high-energy managing partner is keeping mum about attorney fees.

His success is tough to top, with big wins spanning his career: a \$1 billion settlement for Texas Instruments and a \$120 million verdict for Stac Electronics against Microsoft Corp.

With his track record, Chu's worthy of a new title: best intellectual property litigator around.

- *"He is absolutely unflappable. There are never ups and never downs over the course of trial."*

Jack B. Clarke Jr. (Partner, Best Best & Krieger, Riverside) - When not representing educational institutions in high-profile civil rights litigation, Clarke is shaping policy in the Inland Empire. He oversaw a Riverside committee monitoring the use of force by the city's police department and was chairman of the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce.

- *"Jack Clarke is an integral part of most good things that happen in western Riverside County."*

Jerome L. Coben (Partner, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, Los Angeles) - Former client and go-to junk-bond bank Drexel Burnham is gone, but Coben's still standing. He's on most of L.A.'s noteworthy deals, like the sale of Dick Clark Productions Inc. to Mosaic Media and the Tribune's purchase of the Los Angeles Times. His practice helps anchor the thriving L.A. outpost of New York heavyweight Skadden Arps.

- *"He is always thinking about new ways of doing things."*

Nancy S. Cohen (Heller Ehrman White & McAuliffe, Los Angeles) - This zealous advocate has gone bicoastal as lead counsel for General Motors Acceptance, the lender for the World Trade Center, in the biggest lawsuit arising from Sept. 11: an insurance dispute over whether the planes that hit the towers should be considered one or two

events under a policy paying \$3.5 billion per "occurrence." She's also won \$50 million in settlements from insurance companies on behalf of Holocaust survivors.

- *"She must never sleep."*

Michèle B. Corash (Partner, Morrison & Foerster, San Francisco) - Corporate America calls on this leading trial attorney to defend it against Proposition 65 lawsuits. Environmental chair for her firm, the longtime critic of the state's Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1996 is known among the toxic tort bar for her fierce independent streak.

- *"She tends to do things her own way, and when you are the 800-pound gorilla, you can do that."*

Joseph W. Cotchett Jr. (Name Partner, Cotchett, Pitre, Simon & McCarthy, Burlingame) - In 2002, Cotchett led the charge to make corporations and their executives accountable - something he's preached for three decades.

He began the year by suing some of the nation's largest investment banks, and Arthur Andersen, for promoting Enron stocks while the company was tanking. Then he agreed to represent the California State Teachers' Retirement System in its complaint that Homestore.com defrauded investors of \$2 billion.

Cotchett then switched to the other side of the counsel's table when he recently agreed to defend the state Judicial Council and its new arbitrator guidelines against a lawsuit filed by the National Association of Securities Dealers and the New York Stock Exchange.

Ironically, it's his participation in a controversial parking garage that landed him in the most headlines this year. Hastings Law School tapped its prominent alum - who has the ear of Gov. Gray Davis and Sen. Barbara Boxer for judicial vetting - to decide the fate of a parcel of land pegged for student parking until local leaders raised a stink.

- *"He has managed to develop an extremely influential practice that has the ability to change public policy."*

Patrick J. Coughlin (Partner, Milberg Weiss Bershad Hynes & Lerach, San Francisco) - The former federal prosecutor is second only to Bill Lerach in the firm's high-profile securities class-action practice. He has secured billions of dollars from the technology, oil and tobacco industries and now has Nike in court for alleged false advertising. Defense lawyers applaud him for his cool demeanor and utmost professionalism.

- *"If some lawyers litigate in the gutter, Patrick litigates in the eyes."*

Mary B. Cranston (Chair, Pillsbury Winthrop, San Francisco) - Bravely leading Pillsbury Winthrop through the Bay Area's worst downturn in corporate work since the early 1990s, Cranston raised eyebrows recently when she publicly bashed an East Coast partner who departed for a rival. The move belies Cranston's steady hand leading Pillsbury through one of the largest, most expensive law firm mergers in history while keeping profits steady and revenues up.

- *"Mary is a determined, innovative and courageous law firm leader."*

J. Graham Davis Jr. (California Governor) - This prolific fund-raiser has collected \$50 million toward re-election, but he's battling criticism over the state's \$24 billion deficit and a \$95 million Oracle contract that raised eyebrows over campaign contributions before it was rescinded. Among his brightest achievements, Davis is credited with selecting 200 outstanding judges.

- *"When you play golf with Gray, set aside the day. He is the slowest golfer in California."*

Rockard J. Delgadillo (City Attorney, Los Angeles) - This rising Latino star may have his eye on the mayor's office. In his first year as city attorney, he's reorganized the office, adding top talent, and gone after billboards that advertise alcohol and tobacco to children as well as strip clubs that violate city codes. He also has worked to curb city liability costs: Payouts over the last fiscal year are down by 50 percent from the previous year.

- *"His skills as a negotiator are really unparalleled. It allows him to find win-win solutions for everyone involved."*

Robert M. Dell (Chair, Latham & Watkins, San Francisco) - In the eight years since he took the helm at Latham & Watkins, Dell has outdone himself to ensure that the firm is among the most prestigious in the state, nation, and now the world. Because of Dell, it is old hat to see Latham & Watkins atop charts listing profits, revenues and attorneys.

The firm's profits rose 7 percent last year despite a slowdown in its corporate department and the addition of expensive new offices in Hamburg, Germany; Frankfurt, Germany; and Paris. In Europe, Latham & Watkins went from 50 lawyers to 250 in one year. This year, it has opened outposts in Brussels and Italy - meeting goals that Dell says will help Latham & Watkins become one of the elite, global law firms.

Clients, including the firm's many investment bankers, told Latham & Watkins it would lose capital market deals if it wasn't fully ensconced in Europe. Dell - a former standout litigator - went one better, adding general corporate lawyers to the multicultural mix, proving once again why he's one of the premier law firm leaders around.

- *"He has been instrumental in keeping Latham a half step ahead of every other indigenous California firm ... Latham is setting the tone that everybody else is following."*

Kenneth M. Doran (Managing Partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher Los Angeles) - In April, the corporate rainmaker became the managing partner of California's most profitable law firm. An integral member of the firm's management since 1996, Doran helped make Gibson Dunn the powerhouse it is today. Bear Stearns, Morgan Stanley, Wellpoint Health Networks and Ticketmaster rely on Doran for their legal needs.

- *"There are law firm leaders who lead through show. Ken leads through know."*

Laurence E. Drivon (Name Partner, Drivon & Tabak, Stockton) - This plaintiffs' lawyer has won record verdicts against the Ford Motor Co. and the Roman Catholic Church. Now special counsel to the State Senate committee investigating the California

energy crisis, he has used a hard-driving approach to uncover evidence of price gouging by Enron and other energy companies.

- *"His attitude is damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead, regardless of the political implications."*

Joseph L. Dunn (State Senator) - The former top plaintiffs' lawyer from Orange County has waged battles against the makers of cigarettes, breast implants and heart valves. A Democrat, Dunn, who elevated his profile heading the energy crisis probe, plans to run for attorney general in 2006.

- *"Joe Dunn has taken on the energy giants who gouged California with the same keen intelligence, determination and unrelenting energy he brought to the fights against Big Tobacco."*

Martha M. Escutia (State Senator) - Escutia represents much of the San Gabriel Valley in the state Senate and chairs the judiciary committee. Her brusque manner and fierce drive have made her one of the most feared lawmakers in the Capitol. An ally of Senate leader John Burton, Escutia has carried significant legislation on behalf of the courts and trial lawyers and has forged access to health care for the poor.

- *"She is a tenacious, tireless, dedicated fighter for all that she believes in."*

Boris Feldman (Partner, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, Palo Alto) - A top defense-side securities litigator who counts Genentech Corp., 3Com Corp., Network Associates Inc., and Hewlett-Packard Co. among his clients, Feldman is drawing on his wide web of Silicon Valley contacts, including former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, to get appointed to the federal bench.

- *"He's a person you'd have dinner with by choice, which you wouldn't always say about lawyers."*

Dennis A. Fischer (Sole Practitioner, Santa Monica) - This 15-year veteran of the public defender's office has tried cases in just about every court possible. Now, the man who literally wrote the book on appeals, "Appeals and Writs in California Criminal Cases," is battling prosecutors' rights to appeal reduced charges in wobbler cases.

- *"Devastatingly effective as a civil litigator, the Fish is a winner. It's the truth."*

Katherine K. Freberg (Name Partner, Freberg & Associates, Irvine) - After years representing corporate clients in anonymity, Freberg jumped into the spotlight with last year's \$5.2 million sexual abuse settlement against the Diocese of Orange. A finalist for Trial Lawyers for Public Justice's Lawyer of the Year, the Texan has clients coming out of the woodwork.

- *"She's hardworking and detail-oriented, but she can get a bit peevish when things are not going her way."*

Ronald M. George (Chief Justice, California Supreme Court) - In the past year, the leader of the nation's largest justice system continued to campaign for more user-friendly courts. The chairman of the Judicial Council instituted a court Web site to provide the

public greater access to filings and pushed for "pro per action plans" to help nonlawyers represent themselves.

He also skillfully guided the courts through the state budget crisis. As the governor slashed spending at most state agencies, George expertly negotiated with Gray Davis to minimize the bloodshed to the judiciary. Critics contend that George's considerable energy would be better spent in chambers chipping away at the court's backlog of cases, particularly death penalty matters.

George's moderate voice - blending pro-law enforcement, responsibility and social awareness - has defined the high court. The chief wrote this year's blockbuster opinion upholding Proposition 21, the state ballot initiative allowing juveniles to be tried as adults. Observers say George, the 2002 recipient of the country's highest award for judicial excellence by a state court judge, is sure to go down as one of California's greatest high-court jurists.

- *"He has great political skills and pushes all the right buttons."*

Mark J. Geragos (Name Partner, Geragos & Geragos, Los Angeles) - He's on a first-name basis with Larry King and ferries Winona Ryder around in his Porsche, proving that the Susan McDougal thing wasn't just his 15 minutes. Geragos burst onto the national scene when he opened up a can of whup-ass on Kenneth Starr. Since then, his client roster looks like an episode of lifestyles of the kitsch and infamous: Roger Clinton, Gary Condit and Armenian terrorists.

- *"He's a legend in his own mind."*

Thomas V. Girardi (Name Partner, Girardi & Keese, Los Angeles) - Despite his fame as the king of toxic torts, Girardi rarely raises a stink with opposing counsel. Because of his sweet disposition, Girardi received the Lee B. Wenzel Civility Award this year from the American Board of Trial Advocates, an organization he headed in 2000.

But likeability alone does not a reputation make. This year, he's championed the cause of Northridge homeowners to the tune of a \$200 million settlement for earthquake damage to their homes. He also scored \$44 million from The Walt Disney Co. for his 4-year-old client who was injured when he fell off a ride at the Anaheim amusement park.

His lone miscue was also a victory of sorts; the Los Angeles Unified School District accepted a \$3 million settlement in its malpractice suit against O'Melveny & Myers stemming from the Belmont Learning Complex debacle.

Girardi heads back to court in November representing New Mexico in a \$1.8 billion suit against General Electric and Chevron for polluting Albuquerque's water supply.

It's hard to imagine a lawyer with more clout than Girardi. Still, his renown is only likely to grow in the years ahead. He's already a key player in statewide politics, and those in the know say he's got his eye on the national scene.

- *"It's good to be the king."*

Patricia L. Glaser (Name Partner, Christensen, Miller, Fink, Jacobs, Glaser, Well & Shapiro, Los Angeles) - In the past year, this fearless, no-nonsense goddess of the courtroom proved again why she's the Top 100's Athena. A cast of high-powered characters called on Glaser's litigation prowess in 2002, from major studios and Hollywood moguls to failed telecom companies and billionaire developers. She resolved Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's lawsuit against its insurer over the James Bond Franchise and is defending Walt Disney Co. in a wrongful termination suit brought by a reporter.

She also got an age-discrimination class action by 150 TV writers thrown out on behalf of talent agencies. That same month, she convinced a jury that a Disney division did not discriminate against a former executive. And Global Crossing hired Glaser to defend it in a shareholder class action claiming it inflated revenues a la Enron. Phew.

- *"If ever there was an attorney to hire when you want to go for the opponent's gonads, it's Patty."*

Daniel Grunfeld (President and CEO Public Counsel, Los Angeles) - The leader of the nation's largest pro bono law firm is the go-to guy in Los Angeles' legal services community. Leaders of other public interest firms seek Grunfeld's advice on everything from State Bar matters to management issues.

He stays on top because he hasn't lost his creative edge. He's bringing the legal services community together, holding a series of communitywide meetings of executive directors of the city's public interest firms. He also continues to enlist help from the biggest firms and most powerful corporations.

Public Counsel also worked this year to open a permanent homeless court with the Los Angeles County Superior Court.

Grunfeld's leadership has set the pace for the Los Angeles legal services community since he left a private law partnership and took the helm of the organization five years ago - reminding all lawyers of their duty to provide access to justice for all.

- *"When he moves forward, he moves a lot of people with him."*

Joseph A. Grundfest (Professor, Stanford Law School) - The former SEC commissioner is a leading expert on securities class action reforms, and his online Securities Class Action Clearinghouse is the bible for information on claims against public companies. Recent revelations of corporate fraud have brought new attention to his directors' college at Stanford, which provides training for directors of publicly traded companies.

- *"A rare combination of intellectual firepower and biting wit."*

James K. Hahn (Mayor, Los Angeles) - In his first full year as mayor, Hahn has faced his share of difficulties. The former city attorney angered the African-American community, which supported him during his election, by not backing Police Chief

Bernard Parks. He faces a well-organized secession effort in the San Fernando Valley on November's ballot.

- *"After a slow start, he's making a comeback. He needs to remember that mayors, like baseball managers, are remembered for what they were able to do and how they were able to inspire."*

J. Michael Hennigan (Name Partner, Hennigan, Bennett & Dorman, Los Angeles) -

When the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles needed a miracle, it turned to Hennigan, who takes on - and often wins - the most controversial cases. He recovered \$865 million, for instance, for Orange County in its bankruptcy. Recently, he brought what could be the largest class action in U.S. history, taking on State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance for 50 million policyholders.

- *"Have you ever seen him get pissed? He'll rip your head off."*

Beth J. Jay (Senior Staff Attorney to the Chief Justice, California Supreme Court) -

As the chief justice's right-hand person, Jay touches everything concerning the courts statewide. Her involvement in all things judicial includes serving on the court's multijurisdictional practices task force and implementation committee. The group's work, if passed, will expand the ability of out-of-state attorneys to practice in California.

- *"She is the eyes and ears of the chief justice. I don't know what we would do without her."*

Michael A. Kahn (Name Partner, Folger Levin & Kahn, San Francisco) - This high-powered trial attorney and lifelong Democrat is best known for his unwavering public service. He sits on the Commission for Judicial Performance and oversees the California Independent System Operator, which declares emergencies when the power supply runs low. He is the governor's confidante on all things energy.

- *"He's done as good a job as anyone keeping the power flowing and lights on under very difficult circumstances."*

Samuel A. Keesal Jr. (Name Partner, Keesal, Young & Logan, Long Beach) - The largest companies in the world turn to this monsoon maker's Long Beach firm for guidance when they find themselves in hot water. The nation's leading securities expert has a client list that reads like a who's who: Salomon Smith Barney, Citigroup, ExxonMobil, General Electric and JP Morgan Chase.

- *"Skip Keesal is forced to deal with all kinds of cobras. And he's a mongoose."*

John W. Keker (Name Partner, Keker & Van Nest, San Francisco) - Enron's former Chief Financial Officer Andrew Fastow looks like he's in a world of trouble. Expected to face criminal charges any day now, Fastow can take some comfort in the fact that Keker is fighting on his behalf.

Keker has made a name for himself by successfully defending tough criminal cases, like his 1995 acquittal of Bay Area attorney Patrick Hallinan, who was charged with conspiracy, racketeering, illegal possession of weapons and drug smuggling.

Earlier this month, a jury in a Sacramento patent infringement trial found in favor of Keker's client, Genentech, accused by rival Chiron of stealing the intellectual property that helped create an anti-cancer drug.

He also recognizes when to cut a deal. In December, he negotiated one on behalf of Russian software developer Dmitry Sklyarov, whom federal prosecutors accused of trafficking decryption software in violation of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. In exchange for the government dropping the charges, Sklyarov is expected to testify against his company, Elcomsoft Ltd.

Never afraid to take on controversial clients, Keker remains an incomparable force in any courtroom.

- *"It makes my blood run cold watching him tear a witness apart."*

C. Douglas Kranwinkle (General Counsel, Univision Inc., Los Angeles) - Long a leader at O'Melveny & Myers, Kranwinkle shocked the firm in 2000 by joining Univision. Since then, the corporate lawyer has led the nation's largest Spanish-language broadcasting company on a barrage of mammoth deals, including a \$3.5 billion acquisition of Hispanic Broadcasting and last year's \$1.1 billion purchase of stations from USA Networks.

- *"He's an outside counsel's dream counsel."*

Sheila J. Kuehl (State Senator) - There is no better champion for women, children or consumers. Kuehl, who represents Los Angeles' affluent West Side, marked her eighth year in office by introducing a raft of legislation designed to strengthen women's rights, including a bill to fund domestic violence programs through a \$10 increase in the marriage license fee.

She also sponsored legislation to make it easier to put stalkers behind bars and to prohibit mediators from recommending child visitation or custody arrangements if the parents cannot agree.

She's also been a staunch supporter of consumers. Her bill to curb businesses' use of the state anti-SLAPP law has mixed reviews, with plaintiffs' lawyers hailing it as an important consumer protection and corporate America criticizing the bill as discriminatory against commercial entities.

For all her efforts, she is considered a possible successor to powerful Senate President Pro Tem John Burton. However, even her most ardent supporters concede that her feminist agenda and openness about her homosexuality may be an impediment in the eyes of her fellow legislators should she seek the Legislature's top seat.

- *"She's clearly one of the most effective legislators in decades and really seems unparalleled in smarts and savvy."*

Walter J. Lack (Name Partner, Engstrom, Lipscomb & Lack, Los Angeles) - With 1,200 plaintiffs' cases pending against Pacific Gas and Electric, Lack and his personal

injury partner-in-crime, Girardi (yes, that one), could be the utility's worst nightmare. The toxic tort guru also represents 3,000 Nicaraguans against Dow Chemical and Shell for allegedly exposing them to a banned pesticide, as well as hundreds of alleged mercury-poisoned villagers in Peru against Denver-based Newmont Mining Corp.

- *"I certainly would not want Walter Lack after me if I did anything wrong."*

David A. Lash (Executive Director, Bet Tzedek, Los Angeles) - A leader in the public-interest community, Lash keeps the legal victories and the funds flowing at Bet Tzedek. This year, the firm expanded its work with Holocaust survivors, helping them receive reparations from governments and payments from Nazi-era insurance policies. He also forged a \$1 million settlement with a notorious Los Angeles slumlord.

- *"If I had a public-interest case that I absolutely had to win, I would take David Lash as counsel every time."*

William S. Lerach (Name Partner, Milberg, Weiss, Bershad, Hynes & Lerach, San Diego) - Throw a rock in any direction, and you're bound to hit one of Lerach's enemies. It might be an executive from one of hundreds of corporations targeted by his firm's securities fraud cases, a fellow plaintiffs' attorney whom Lerach beat out as lead counsel for a major class action, or any Republican annoyed by his lavish contributions to the likes of President Clinton and Gov. Gray Davis.

But even Lerach's detractors admit to his resilience. The 1995 Private Securities Litigation Reform Act has failed to curtail Milberg Weiss' astounding share of fraud class actions filed, which tops 60 percent nationally. The act shifted lead plaintiff control to powerful institutional investors - ones that Lerach since has won over as clients.

His enemies smiled earlier this year at reports that a federal grand jury in Los Angeles was investigating whether his firm solicited clients for its class actions. Just weeks later, however, a Houston judge awarded Lerach lead counsel status in the case against Enron.

As corporate corruption sweeps across the nation, Lerach is looking more and more like a legitimate, if overzealous, crusader against corporate greed.

- *"He's reprehensible."*

Lawrence Lessig (Professor, Stanford Law School) - In his books, most recently "The Future of Ideas," Lessig warns that corporations are choking free expression on the Internet. He represented Napster in its legal melee and is now challenging a law that would extend copyrights by 20 years. Lessig presents oral arguments in the copyright case, *Eldred v. Ashcroft*, to the U.S. Supreme Court on Oct. 9.

- *"He has showed incomparable energy and vision in preserving free access to information in the digital age."*

William W. Lockyer (State Attorney General) - Known as a take-charge guy who looks out for the consumer, Lockyer, up for re-election this year, was criticized for dragging his feet in investigating power companies. He responded by suing a whole slew, including Mirant, Duke Energy, Dynegy and PG&E Corp. Lockyer also is demanding

tougher remedies in the antitrust case against Microsoft, in which the federal government has settled with the software giant.

- *"He loves the law, he loves political issues, he loves being attorney general."*

James L. Lopes (Partner, Howard, Rice, Nemerovski, Canady, Falk & Rabkin, San Francisco) - When the California power crisis pushed the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. into Chapter 11 bankruptcy, Lopes was there to guide the utility. The case has dominated his professional life - and generated a whopping \$17 million in fees for the firm since the April 2001 filing.

- *"He is a tremendous consensus builder when dealing with warring creditor factions."*

Elwood Lui, (Partner, Jones, Day, Reavis & Pogue, Los Angeles) - A former appellate justice, Lui heads the federal judicial-selection panel for the Central District, and has seen two picks and a U.S. Attorney confirmed. As special master, he helped rebuild the State Bar after the dues crisis and is leading the group deciding whether the state Supreme Court should take over attorney discipline. He's also a coveted litigator with numerous victories to his name.

- *"He's had every great job there is to have in this town."*

Thomas R. Malcolm (Partner, Jones, Day, Reavis & Pogue, Irvine) - With a Republican in the White House, few perches are more powerful than that of Republican kingmaker in one of the most Republican areas of the state. Known as the county's go-to man, Malcolm has coattails that have lifted several Orange County lawyers into federal judicial nominations. And with clients like IBM, RJR Reynolds and Kodak, his business litigation practice remains first-rate.

- *"He doesn't overstate or understate. He tells it like it is."*

Don W. Martens (Name Partner, Knobbe, Martens, Olson & Bear, Newport Beach)

- For decades, he has been at the helm of one of the most reputable intellectual property boutiques in the state. With clients such as Callaway Golf Co. and Bausch & Lomb, the intellectual property litigator has been named one of the top 10 patent lawyers in the world by PLC Global Counsel magazine.

- *"He has an ability to take complex concepts and reduce them to a form that's understandable by the man on the street."*

John P. McNicholas III (Name Partner, McNicholas & McNicholas, Los Angeles) -

The longtime attorney for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles is a staunch defender of the church, responsible for building a strategy to deal with a wave of priest molestation lawsuits and advising Cardinal Roger Mahony on which cases to settle. A renowned trial lawyer as defense and plaintiffs' counsel, McNicholas may be the most trusted attorney in the state when it comes to church matters.

- *"He's a loyal son of the church."*

Michael E. Meyer (Partner, Pillsbury Winthrop, Los Angeles) - He's headed Pillsbury Winthrop's Los Angeles office since 1999 and is arguably the country's leading real estate

lawyer. Meyer has played a role in erecting practically every trophy building in Southern California, and his clients have included Nestle, MGM, the Gap and Merrill Lynch.

- *"He's childish. He completely trusts himself, but he's very likeable. He's not arrogant. He could be and deserves to be."*

George J. Mhlsten (Partner, Latham & Watkins, Los Angeles) - Mhlsten has made a name for himself in real estate and land use. Advising high-profile clients such as the Walt Disney Co., he's the man developers call when they need approval in Los Angeles. Just ask Playa Capital, which called on Mhlsten for help getting Playa Vista, its controversial 5-million-square-foot residential and commercial complex, off the ground.

- *"I don't know anyone who is brighter, more respected or influential than George."*

Mary G. Murphy (Partner, Farella, Braun + Martel, San Francisco) - The real estate and land use expert makes a practice of sprucing up historic buildings, with projects like the landmark Ferry Building getting a \$90 million facelift from her developer client. As a Presidio Trust board member, Murphy negotiated a 90-year ground lease with Lucasfilm, which plans to build a digital arts center at the Presidio National Park in San Francisco.

- *"She is one of the toughest, brightest negotiators I've ever met."*

Stephen C. Neal (Chair, Cooley Godward, Palo Alto) - This year, the litigator and law firm head represented dissident shareholder Walter Hewlett in Hewlett's failed bid to block Hewlett-Packard Co.'s \$19 billion merger with Compaq Computer Corp. Despite the setback, Neal was selected as lead trial lawyer for Pacific Gas & Electric Co. in the next critical stage of the utility's bankruptcy proceedings set for Nov. 12.

- *"Very capable trial lawyer, very smart, truly hardworking - a superb litigator."*

Tanya M. Neiman (Director, Volunteer Legal Services Program, Bar Association of San Francisco) - A tireless guardian of legal services for the poor, she has created a holistic approach to advocacy, changing lives by addressing the causes of legal problems. She helped organize the legal community to provide disaster-relief services for victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

- *"She's incredibly tenacious in advocating for the rights of people for whom the system has not been accessible."*

Thomas J. Nolan (Managing Partner, Howrey Simon Arnold & White, Los Angeles) - Recently, courtroom giant Nolan has been coordinating American Airlines' defense to a travel-agent class action. He also has netted a \$440-million payday for Litton in its antitrust case with Honeywell. Outside the courtroom, he's focused on global domination, sending armies of Howrey litigators into San Francisco, Brussels and Chicago.

- *"He's very cute ... and a hell of a lawyer."*

Ronald L. Olson (Name Partner, Munger, Tolles & Olson, Los Angeles) - Happy clients and outfoxed courtroom opponents consistently recognize Olson as one of California's best litigators who, year in and year out, handles some of the most high-profile and difficult cases.

For decades, Olson has represented oil companies in civil and criminal matters relating to spills, cleanup responsibility and other alleged wrongdoing. Last year, he helped longtime client Shell Oil Co. and seven other oil companies defeat a \$5 billion class action over an alleged price-fixing conspiracy.

In another big case last year, Olson helped struggling Southern California Edison avoid bankruptcy by reaching an agreement with the Public Utilities Commission. This year, Olson has been in the news representing Philip Morris in Big Tobacco's fight for statutory immunity in California.

Olson remains legendary in the nonprofit community, as well. He chairs the board of trustees for the RAND Corp., Southern California Public Radio and the USC Annenberg School for Communication and sits on the boards of directors at the Brennan Center for Justice, the Jules Stein Eye Institute and the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles.

- *"He can get more for his client with a smile than most lawyers can with 20 interrogatories."*

Richard M. Pachulski (Name Partner, Pachulski Stang Ziehl Young & Jones, Los Angeles) - The bankruptcy specialist and savior of troubled companies just finished restructuring telecommmer Covad Communications and is said to bring in \$10 million a year to his ever-expanding firm. With outposts in New York, San Francisco and Washington, D.C., Pachulski Stang is poised to catch millions in work from frantically restating corporate America.

- *"He deserves a lot of the credit for what his firm has done. He's been very single-minded."*

Brian J. Panish (Name Partner, Greene, Broillet, Panish & Wheeler, Santa Monica) -After winning \$4.9 billion against General Motors in 1999 (reduced to \$1.2 billion), the product-liability litigator has kept the cases coming. He represents the families of victims in the crashes of Alaska Air flight 261 and of the charter plane carrying singer Aaliyah and nine others.

- *"What held true when he played defensive back in college still holds today: Anybody who strays into Brian Panish's territory, pays."*

Gerald L. Parsky (Chairman, Aurora Capital Group, Los Angeles) - Far-right Republicans think he's a liberal cloaked in Brooks Brothers, and Democrats wonder whether he knows any liberals at all. Even White House staffers disparaged his bipartisan judicial selection committee this year. But don't count out the Westside venture capitalist. He golfs with Poppy and talks policy with Junior. Now he's gearing up to head Bush's 2004 campaign in California.

- *"The many hats he wears makes Gerry California's man for all seasons."*

Eva J. Paterson (Executive Director, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, San Francisco) - A tireless fighter for the civil rights of immigrants, minorities and the poor, Paterson has taken on fire departments, the University of California and Propositions 187

and 209, all of which she says were discriminatory. Over the years, those fights have brought her to the national spotlight and the heart of the civil rights debate.

Though some say she is out of step with modern political realities, Paterson remains a standard bearer for the civil rights movement. On Sept. 9, for instance, the committee filed suit on behalf of an Egyptian immigrant who was allegedly the victim of anti-Arab sentiment from guards at a federal prison in Louisiana.

Her committee also sued U-Haul for wrongly accusing an African-American couple of robbing the rental operation at gunpoint, according to that suit.

A third suit targeted San Francisco Supervisor Gavin Newsom's Care not Cash initiative, which Paterson claims takes benefits away from the homeless.

While Paterson says she has softened her "maniacal focus on social change," friends and critics say she's still a true believer.

- *"The fact that she may be out of step with a lot of people, including more moderate Democrats, doesn't bother her a bit. She'll carry on the fight of the far left until her dying days."*

Burt S. Pines (Judicial Appointments Secretary to Gov. Gray Davis) - Practitioners and judges statewide say the quality of new judges is outstanding. After Davis was criticized for his slow pace of appointments and the paucity of Hispanic judges, Pines swiftly helped fill vacancies, providing California with its highest-ever percentage of women and ethnically diverse jurists.

- *"What he's done is illustrative of what he did in the Los Angeles city attorney's office, which is to diversify the work force."*

Michael J. Piuze (Sole practitioner, Los Angeles) - In 2001, Piuze scored \$3 billion in the largest punitive damage award for one individual, and this year he dove back into the ring against Big Tobacco. Not one to rest on his laurels, he's in trial with client Betty Bullock in a Los Angeles Superior Court case against Philip Morris. It's the first suit since a California Supreme Court ruling that protects tobacco companies from liability from 1988 to 1998.

- *"He marches to his own drum and obviously knows which drum to beat."*

John J. Quinn Jr. (Partner, Arnold & Porter, Los Angeles) - Jack Quinn knows how to keep a lot of balls in the air. In the past few years, he's led an acquisitive trend for Washington, D.C.'s Arnold & Porter, as its Los Angeles managing partner. Under Quinn, the firm has gathered some choice intellectual property lawyers - including the sought-after Blanc Williams boutique - and now the 90-lawyer office is hungry for transactional lawyers.

And he's remained a courtroom regular. He found himself on the losing end of the Oakland Raiders \$1.2 billion claim that the National Football League scuttled the

Raiders' plan for a new stadium, forcing them to leave Los Angeles. He may prevail on instant replay: The team is claiming jury misconduct.

He's also a main man for all things judicial in Southern California. Last year, he ended a six-year stint chairing the disciplinary committee for L.A.'s federal court; he also helps U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer pick federal judges.

A collector and fixture in Southern California's art community since the 1960s, Quinn also is beloved by the legal world. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals gave him a distinguished service award, and Pepperdine University recognized him - as do many colleagues - as its "Legal Hero."

- *"A classic that still runs fast."*

Bruce M. Ramer (Name Partner, Gang, Tyre, Ramer & Brown, Beverly Hills) - Ben Stiller, Demi Moore, Elizabeth Shue, Cameron Crowe and Robert Zemeckis are just a few of the big shots who rely on this popular Hollywood deal maker and civic-minded citizen who also is the honorary president of the American Jewish Committee, chairman of the board of Public Television's KCET-TV and a board member of the Film Foundation and the Urban League.

- *"More than just a great lawyer - a compassionate person with exceptional ethics and morals."*

Mark P. Robinson Jr. (Name Partner, Robinson Calcagnie & Robinson, Newport Beach) - Known for his work uncovering documents in cases against automakers, Robinson turned his attention to pharmaceuticals this year with a class action against makers of Rezulin, a drug that caused liver damage. In January, he'll represent Orange County against Arco Gas in an MTBE contamination case.

- *"He grabs onto cases like grabbing a bull by the horns and tackling it to the ground."*

Mark D. Rosenbaum (Legal Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, Los Angeles) - A tireless advocate for civil rights, Rosenbaum has never been afraid to take on big government. This year, he led the ACLU's federal lawsuit on behalf of California airport security screeners trying to block a post-Sept. 11 requirement that they be U.S. citizens. The suit, pitting the ACLU against the Department of Transportation, was the first legal action taken against new regulations after the terrorist attacks.

Rosenbaum also is an outspoken champion for children. In July, he was one of several child advocates who filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against Los Angeles County and the state of California, claiming the county is unlawfully denying mental health services to children in foster care.

And Rosenbaum is leading a class action demanding better conditions for poor and minority students in substandard California public schools. The case, filed in 2000, is pending in San Francisco Superior Court.

Never one to sit still, Rosenbaum also won a lawsuit to get rid of California's antiquated punch-card system to tally election votes; he's also handled cases on welfare, redistricting and school de-segregation.

- *"He is the most talented, brightest, most politically astute and hardest-working attorney."*

Kelli L. Sager (Partner, Davis Wright Tremaine, Los Angeles) - From O.J. to Rampart to the Los Angeles Archdiocese, Sager ensures that the public isn't denied public information on cases that have riveted the nation. The First Amendment expert and go-to woman for the country's leading media outlets won a big victory in July for the California Public Records Act by preventing government agencies from running to court to stop requests for public documents.

- *"If you have a media law issue, everybody knows that you call Kelli Sager."*

Peter A. Schey (Founder, Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, Los Angeles) - For three decades, this nationally renowned immigration lawyer has pioneered major litigation on behalf of undocumented aliens, winning landmark cases for illegal immigrant children and Salvadoran and Haitian refugees. He was one of the first lawyers in the country to bring class actions against the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

- *"I think the government is genuinely afraid of him because of his consummate skills as a lawyer."*

John A. Schulman (General Counsel, Warner Bros., Burbank) - The man with the booming voice and imposing frame has spent 18 years at the studio, more than any other Hollywood general counsel. Last year, he helped along Harry Potter and trounced Francis Ford Coppola after the director absconded with his idea for a Pinocchio movie. These days, he's keeping an eye on the studio's bottom line because of its parent company's woes.

- *"He is as much a businessperson as he is a lawyer. He never loses his cool."*

Elisabeth A. Semel (Director, Boalt Hall Death Penalty Clinic, Berkeley) - The onetime director of the American Bar Association's death penalty representation project, Semel leads students through the intricacies of capital punishment at Boalt Hall's year-old clinic. Eliminating the professor-student relationship and treating her pupils as associates, the group collaborates to argue cases and file amicus briefs that oppose the death penalty.

- *"She's relentless and passionate. If I ever found myself in trouble, Liz Semel is the first person I would call."*

Tower C. Snow Jr. (Partner, Clifford, Chance, San Francisco) - Getting booted from Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison didn't keep the controversial former chairman down for long. By bringing 16 partners with him to Clifford Chance in the biggest law firm deal of the year, Snow traded in his status as Bay Area high-tech icon to become newly crowned king of the Magic Circle's West Coast colonies.

- *"Say what you want about him, the man has vision in the legal business - and that's unique."*

Lawrence W. Sonsini (Chair, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, Palo Alto) - Few names epitomize the practice of law in Silicon Valley quite the way Sonsini's does.

By now, the firm's legendary clients, including Silicon Valley icons Apple Computer Co., Sun Microsystems Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Co., are old news, and all anyone ever wants to talk about is whether or not Wilson Sonsini laid off associates under the guise of performance-based cuts. With a stalwart demeanor, Sonsini has braved heavy criticism from his staunch denial of any layoffs.

Either way, the decline in corporate work has affected Wilson Sonsini - the firm's profits declined 11 percent last year - the same as other Silicon Valley firms. That didn't stop Sonsini from pulling off the biggest deal of his career: the \$19-billion merger of Hewlett-Packard and Compaq Computer Corp. The deal was bitterly contested in the Delaware Court of Chancery. But Sonsini, his lawyers and Hewlett-Packard's legal team prevailed.

Though the dot-com bubble burst, Sonsini is expected to ride on to Silicon Valley's next wave, atop a firm that redefined the California economy.

- "He took a very small firm in 1980 and converted it into a firm which is dominant in its field."

Kathleen M. Sullivan (Dean, Stanford Law School) - Since she graduated from Harvard Law School 22 years ago, Sullivan has become a celebrated constitutional law author, teacher and scholar.

In 1999, her astuteness earned her the deanship of one of the nation's most prestigious legal institutions. Her role at Stanford hasn't stopped Sullivan from continuing to edit "Constitutional Law," the widely used text that she co-wrote.

She appears regularly on television, especially "The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer," and writes frequently for the Op-Ed and book review pages of the New York Times.

Sullivan's busy public life and teaching schedule haven't stopped her from litigating First Amendment cases.

She is co-counsel for Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who is challenging the constitutionality of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law, which prohibits unregulated, soft-money donations to federal elections.

The woman McConnell calls "America's pre-eminent First Amendment scholar," joins a distinguished cast of characters in the case, including renowned Pentagon Papers lawyer Floyd Abrams and former Whitewater Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr.

- "She is the Dream Dean - an intellect of national stature who teaches up a storm."

Brian A. Sun (Managing Partner, O'Neill Lysaght & Sun, Santa Monica) - Corporate criminal defendants rely on this former federal prosecutor's moxie. He defended Earthlink's co-founder, convicted of masterminding a \$600 million Ponzi scheme, and

scientist Wen Ho Lee, falsely accused of downloading nuclear secrets. He now represents Hollywood producer Elie Samaha in an FBI fraud investigation.

- *"He doesn't back away from a fight, no matter who is on the other side."*

James S. Thomson (Sole practitioner, Berkeley) - This fiercely private criminal defense lawyer, who some describe as rough around the edges, is one of the nation's most vocal critics of capital punishment. He has saved convicted killers around the country from execution and secured the reversal last fall of the death sentence for Steven Ainsworth, who sat on California's death row for 22 years.

- *"He is really a forceful, tenacious guy. Some might say iconoclastic in his advocacy."*

Michael T. Thorsnes (Name Partner, Thorsnes, Bartolotta & McGuire, San Diego) - This poet-turned-successful-plaintiffs'-attorney doesn't always go after big bucks for his client. This year he's defending PacBell against a \$2 billion audit by the California Public Utilities Commission. He also represents San Diego developers in a \$25 million breach of agreement action against the Metropolitan Water District - a figure that's practically small change compared to the \$250 million-plus he's won for his clients.

- *"Mike Thorsnes' style is to basically out-think the other side."*

Grover C. Trask II (District Attorney, Riverside County) - Trask, the county's top prosecutor for 20 years, is one of the longest-serving district attorneys in the state. He transformed his office into a home for career prosecutors boasting one of the state's highest conviction rates. He's the only district attorney to serve twice as president of the California District Attorney's Association.

- *"He's a national presence and a driving force that other district attorneys in the state look to for guidance."*

John K. Trotter (Arbitrator, JAMS, Orange) - When he helped found JAMS in 1987, Trotter turned the ADR cottage industry into an integral part of the legal process. The retired presiding judge of the 4th District Court of Appeal has handled more than 2,500 cases at JAMS. Handling large catastrophic injury cases and complex business disputes, he recently resolved a tread separation case after a jury returned a \$55 million verdict against Continental General Tire.

- *"He's a legend in the ADR community."*

John F. Walker Jr. (Partner, Latham & Watkins, Los Angeles) - Most law firm chairmen find themselves a tough act to follow. Walker is an exception.

After presiding over Latham & Watkins' ascendance to the top ranks of California firms, Walker stepped down as chairman in 1994 to return to his tax practice.

That didn't last long. Last year, he spent six months in Germany helping forge Latham & Watkins' identity as a key player in the European legal market. He helped integrate Latham & Watkins' new offices in Frankfurt and Hamburg, leaving Latham & Watkins with 250 attorneys in six European offices.

He's also a leader of the public interest community, serving on the board of Public Counsel for nearly a decade. Walker has made pro bono work a priority for the firm, devoting 20 percent of his billable hours to pro bono matters. As a leader of the L.A. Chamber of Commerce, he works to improve the city's financial picture, reworking the Los Angeles business license tax to make it less burdensome for small and minority owners and bolstering the downtown scene.

Whether he's contemplating Latham & Watkins' world domination, teaching Los Angeles to be more fiscally astute or inspiring lawyers to care about the public interest, Walker has proved himself a dedicated mastermind.

- *"Jack is the consummate leader. He's a leader in every sense of the word."*

James D. Ward (Associate Justice, 4th District Court of Appeal, Riverside) - Ward devotes nearly all of his free time to improving California's court system. As vice chair of a Judicial Council's task force, he oversaw drafting of new civil jury instructions. He recently instituted reforms to the Judicial Nominees Evaluation Commission, which reviews the governor's judicial selections.

- *"Jim loves the legal profession and the judicial system, and he has spent a career trying to improve both."*

William M. Wardlaw (Partner, Freeman Spogli & Co., Los Angeles) - This lawyer, investment banker and prodigious Democratic fund-raiser is a trusted advisor to presidents, governors and mayors. He helped usher James Hahn into office and now leads the Los Angeles mayor's campaign against San Fernando Valley secession. Few wield as much power in the City of Angels.

- *"He's tough, and he's feared. He is a believer that to the victor go the spoils."*

Dennis M. Wasser (Name Partner, Wasser, Cooperman & Carter, Los Angeles) - The more Hollywood marriages fail, the more his Rolodex grows. And at \$625 an hour, so does his wallet. The latest celebrity client to call on divorce king Wasser is actress Angelina Jolie, who split from Billy Bob Thornton in July. And a palimony suit against his client, Stevie Wonder, is expected to go to trial early next year.

- *"Lesser people may find him arrogant."*

Michael F. Yamamoto (Sole Practitioner, Los Angeles) - This outspoken criminal defender and 2001 president of California Attorneys for Criminal Justice donates his time fighting for clients like Mumia Abu-Jamal, a journalist on death row who many believe was framed for his political views. He's also a founder of International Bridges for Justice, a coalition of clergy, attorneys and professors working for civil rights in the Far East.

- *"He's got the courage to take a position no matter how politically unpopular it may be."*

Debra W. Yang (U.S. Attorney, Los Angeles) - Maybe it is her brilliant legal mind, or it could be her sharp political skills. Whatever the reason, Yang made quite an impression in Washington this year, besting a slate of impressive candidates to become Southern

California's top law enforcement officer. As U.S. Attorney, she has corralled 250 overachieving prosecutors.

- *"She is one of the most energetic attorneys I've ever met. Her judgment is rock solid, and she really has heart."*

Ira E. Yellin (President, Urban Partners and The Yellin Co., Los Angeles) - The lawyer and land developer is credited with restoring the decaying landmarks of historic Los Angeles, including Grand Central Market. The advisor to local and national political leaders died earlier this month at 62 and is remembered for his dedication to bettering the city's cultural and political landscape.

- *"His personal values and core values and his integrity were so apparent to everyone who knew him."*

Steven G. Zieff (Name Partner, Rudy, Exelrod & Zieff, San Francisco) - This plaintiffs' lawyer, who got his start as a public interest lawyer on a civil rights fellowship, has made a name for himself fighting for employees' rights. In 2001, he made headlines by winning \$90 million in a wage-and-hour class action against Farmers Insurance Exchange. Now, he's taking the case on the road as lead counsel in a nationwide federal class action against the insurance giant.

- *"He's smart, thorough and dogged."*

Kenneth Ziffren (Name Partner, Ziffren, Brittenham, Branca, Fischer, Gilbert-Lurie & Stiffelman, Los Angeles) - Century City stars may come and go, but Ziffren has been a Hollywood fixture since launching his own firm in 1979.

Along with co-founder Skip Brittenham, Ziffren presides over the most powerful entertainment firm in the world. It has played a role in almost every big-time movie, television show, music recording or entertainment transaction imaginable, with a roster of clients including Harrison Ford, Eddie Murphy, Michael Jackson and TV producer Dick Wolf.

While his colleagues have closed deals for Hollywood's top talent, Ziffren has focused on the cosmic transactions that keep the industry moving.

In 1998, he served as special counsel to the National Football League for its \$4.4 billion TV deal with the major networks. In 2000, Ziffren advised Vivendi on its acquisition of Seagram, creating Vivendi Universal. He also mediated negotiations between the Screen Actors Guild and the Association of Talent Agents earlier this year and is representing the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in negotiations with the networks over a new contract to televise the Emmys.

- *"In a land of agents, he is also a great lawyer - head and shoulders above the rest."*