

Daily Journal

SEPTEMBER 20, 2017

TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA 2017

LITIGATION

Debra Wong Yang

GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER LLP | LOS ANGELES

SPECIALTY: WHITE COLLAR CRIMINAL DEFENSE, CRISIS MANAGEMENT, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & DATA PRIVACY

Yang has carved out a niche handling especially difficult crises anywhere in the world.

She was called in to defend New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie against corruption allegations that stemmed from the closing of a vital transportation artery between New Jersey and Manhattan. Now she's representing the University of Southern California in an unfolding scandal surrounding the former head of its medical school.

Yang led the U.S. attorney's office for the Central District during the early part of the Bush administration, an especially perilous time when authorities grappled with a surging number of terrorist incidents. That experience has served her well in private practice.

Specializing in crisis management "came about naturally because of my past experiences as a U.S. attorney dealing in a world post 9/11," Yang said.

Her post-government work has involved dealing with crises from Los Angeles to Macau. As chair of the crisis

management practice group at Gibson Dunn, she is often called in to deal with issues that never become public.

Her work is not limited to investigations, though.

She is representing DraftKings, an online daily fantasy sports company, in a lawsuit against the attorney general of Illinois regarding that state's gambling laws.

She is also representing Fitbit in a trade secrets lawsuit brought by a competitor.

Another case involves an employment dispute between Elton John's tour management company and two Los Angeles Police Department officers. The officers claim they were terminated by the company for their role in allegedly reporting misconduct of their supervisor to his superiors at the LAPD.

The variety of her work is what makes it most interesting, Yang said.

"There are always interesting legal issues and challenges but housed in a real world scenario," said Yang.

— Skylar Dubelko

