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TOP WOMEN LAWYERS 2025



THEANE D. EVANGELIS

GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER LLP

LITIGATION

LOS ANGELES

Theane D. Evangelis is co-chair of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP's global litigation practice. In that role, she not only takes on cases of immense social significance — such as her 2024 win before the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of municipal efforts to deal with homelessness — but also successfully litigates high-value business matters.

The high court's ruling in *City of Grants Pass* allows public camping ordinances to be among cities' policy tools as they encourage people to accept help. "Since the court ruled, we've seen a huge improvement in San Francisco, for example, as officials help people get shelter and services instead of remaining on the street," Evangelis said.

She won a Daily Journal CLAY Award for the Grants Pass outcome.

Also in 2024, Evangelis persuaded a federal judge to wipe out a \$198 million punitive damages award against UPS in a single-plaintiff retaliation and wrongful termination case. She then further attacked the outcome, obtaining the grant of a new trial in a district court ruling that eliminated the jury's \$39.6 million compensatory damages verdict. *Gratton v. United Parcel Service Inc.*, 1:22-cv-03149 (E.D. Wash., filed Oct. 18, 2022).

Next, she plans to defend against the plaintiff's appeal and join her Gibson Dunn colleagues for the retrial.

Following the enormous verdict, UPS sought new counsel at Gibson Dunn. "This is what I love best, getting a call like that after a jury verdict," Evangelis said. "We had a week to jump in before post-trial motions were due to play the rescue squad."

With a team of associates, Evangelis quickly digested the trial record and identified ways to attack the punitive damages award and the verdict more broadly. Just a week after they were hired, she and her team filed a renewed motion for judgment as a matter of law, arguing that no reasonable jury could have concluded UPS's employees acted with malice or reckless indifference as required for punitive damages.

The motion pointed to evidence the plaintiff was fired not out of retaliation, but because of substantiated allegations of sexual assault. The motion also emphasized that UPS employees complied with the company's robust anti-retaliation policies.

"UPS did everything it was supposed to do," Evangelis said. "The plaintiff's termination had everything to do with misconduct, and there was no evidence whatever to justify damages."

Although post-trial motions for judgment as a matter of law face long odds, U.S. District Judge Thomas O. Rice of Spokane, Wash., agreed with Evangelis and vacated the punitive damages award. In February 2025, Rice tossed the rest of the verdict in favor of a new trial.

"Very gratifying," Evangelis said. "It was plain to me that UPS did the right thing. I was proud to represent them."