

# Daily Journal

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## TOP WOMEN LAWYERS 2025



### DEBRA WONG YANG

GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER LLP

LITIGATION

LOS ANGELES

**D**ebra Wong Yang has seen and dealt with high-pressure incidents for much of her career. So, it's fitting that the former Superior Court judge, Central District U.S. attorney and Los Angeles police commissioner has now chaired or co-chaired the crisis management practice group at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP for the last 18 years.

"With everything going on in the country right now, crises are in their full glory," Yang said in early May. "The last four months feels like 12 months. The ripple effect from the disruptions of the Trump administration has led us to do things like never before. It's now a practice like no other."

The federal regulatory agencies with whom Yang and her clients routinely have dealings are in the throes of change. "The agencies are in flux, much more so than any time in the last two decades," she said. "They're losing the people you're used to dealing with. The SEC office in Los Angeles doesn't even have a lease now."

Often sought for her strategic-and business-focused advice, and for the breadth of a legal practice that encompasses white collar litigation, civil litigation and investigations, she counsels tech and fintech entities, early-stage companies and traditional corporate businesses on their most complex and high stakes matters.

One major change has been a shift from compliance enforcement from federal to state agencies. "We've seen a great increase in the body of work coming from state AGs and the pace is picking up," she said. "In one fintech case involving alleged fraud, ordinarily you'd have the

DoJ bring an action, but now you have 26 AGs actively threatening to sue."

In mid-May, she and her Gibson Dunn colleagues launched a state attorneys general task force to assist clients in navigating the "increasingly active source of enterprise-threatening investigations and litigation" posed by multi-sourced probes from different states. Yang is co-lead of the task force.

"When AGs come at you, we find they're getting smarter about investigations in the consumer protection arena as the [Trump] administration cuts down on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau," Yang said. "In sum, there's been a growth in AG investigations in the wellness space, the tech space, finance and environmental sustainability."

In April, Yang and colleagues on a joint defense team petitioned a state court in Minnesota for dismissal of a complaint regarding allegedly deceptive disclosures by consumer finance companies in the solar panel installation industry, pointing out differences between state and federal laws on the topic. *State of Minnesota et al. v. GoodLeap LLC et al.*, 27-CV-24-3558 (Minn. 4th Jud. Dist., filed Apr. 5, 2024).

"I'm at command central for a lot of these cases," she said.