

# Daily Journal

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## Top 100 Lawyers 2025



**Theane D. Evangelis**

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP  
Los Angeles

Over a 20-year career, Theane D. Evangelis has expanded her highly successful litigation practice at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP to become co-chair of the firm's litigation group. Her deep expertise is reflected in her membership in the firm's appellate; class action; labor and employment; media, entertainment and technology; and crisis management practices as well.

Her exemplary credentials include a clerkship with Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, another with Judge Alex Kozinski at the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and a JD with university honors for highest GPA at New York University School of Law.

Evangelis thrives on last-minute emergency calls to jump into high stakes impact cases. She got one in May, when Los Angeles officials phoned just days before a critical evidentiary hearing over claims it wasn't keeping its promises on homelessness fixes. Critics wanted a federal judge to place the program in the hands of a receiver.

"I live for cases like this," Evangelis said of suddenly being asked to defend Los Angeles at the evidentiary hearing. "There's nothing like the adrenaline rush of getting that call and jumping right in."

This was squarely in Evangelis' wheelhouse, both because of her experience with managing legal crises and because in 2024 she'd won an important ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court in *City of Grants Pass, Oregon v. Johnson et al.*, 23-175.

The justices held that local governments should be allowed to manage their unhoused populations with minimal judicial interference.

The Grants Pass outcome, which Evangelis argued personally, won her a Daily Journal 2025 CLAY Award.

She and a Gibson Dunn team had just days to prepare for a 7-day courtroom showdown, confronting a highly vocal homelessness coalition that has waged a protracted legal battle over the city's compliance with a 2022 agreement to build 13,000 shelter beds by 2027. *L.A. Alliance for Human Rights et al. v. City of Los Angeles et al.*, 2:20-cv-02291 (C.D. Cal., filed March 10, 2020).

"You just jump in, you investigate, you prepare for cross-examinations without depositions. We did the work of months in a couple of weeks," Evangelis said.

"This was really a trial of the city as the Alliance tries to dictate Los Angeles' homeless policy," Evangelis said. "Los Angeles has made enormous strides in providing permanent supportive housing for the homeless, and homelessness is down in L.A., but at every turn the Alliance has been second guessing the city in court, impeding the city's efforts."

Evangelis made opening and closing arguments that stressed the Grants Pass holding. "And the court agreed with us and declined to impose a receiver," she said. Evangelis also argued the relevant motions, including her successful opposition to compelling the mayor and other officials to testify. "And we were ready with a mandamus petition if case the judge ruled the other way."

The case didn't really belong in court, Evangelis contended. "Who decides these challenging, complex decisions — courts or the voters through their elected representatives? The Alliance case is Exhibit A as to why courts should not dictate homeless policy."

Evangelis is appealing part of the court's ruling. "It was a whirlwind and a roller coaster. I'm very proud of our work."