

# Daily Journal

APRIL 20, 2016

## TOP WOMEN LAWYERS

The Daily Journal's Annual List of  
Leading Women Lawyers in California

### Amy R. Forbes

**F**orbes is co-partner in charge of the firm's Los Angeles office. Her profile rose when she worked to bring the Rams back to the Los Angeles area from St. Louis with a new NFL stadium in Inglewood. Her team developed a successful strategy that secured permits and approvals in under eight weeks through an innovative use of the California voter-sponsored initiative process.

That 298-acre project is dwarfed, however, by the 688 acres she's working to develop in Irvine in a public-private partnership between El Toro/Heritage Fields LLC, the venture converting for civilian use the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, decommissioned in 1999. "How many football stadiums could we do?" she said. "If you're going for scale, El Toro is pretty big."

Forbes as land use counsel has been advising on the master plan to place 9,700 housing units and several million square feet of commercial development within a 1,000-acre Orange County Great Park.

"The challenge is the scale," she said. "I've been working on this since

2004. You plan, you map, you build the roads, you clear title to the land. There are a lot of issues in a public-private partnership, a lot of moving pieces." At the opposite end of scale and land use challenges was Forbes' work on redevelopment of the relatively tiny Beverly Hills Main Post Office. For client Tool-ey Investments, she helped draft a creative plan to reconfigure the building for office and retail uses that included replacing the former postal distribution center with a retail post office to serve the community. "My client wanted to convert into 'creative office' space with flexible floor plans for ad agencies and the like," she said.

The problem was a question of government hegemony, she said: "Who trumps whom on the food chain?" Because the federal government had built the place, it had not been subject to local zoning regulation until privately acquired. Forbes lobbied successfully for local approval. "If we hadn't gotten Beverly Hills to agree that, yes, this would be a legal, non-conforming use, we might have had to demolish the place. No one wanted to do that."



### Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Los Angeles

**Practice Type:** Land use and development

Forbes spread credit among the many lawyers on her teams doing the Inglewood and El Toro projects. "But I did the post office myself," she said.

— John Roemer