

Daily Journal

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Top Women Lawyers

This supplement is devoted to recognizing excellent lawyering and leadership skills among women attorneys in California. To pick a list of 75 litigators and 25 corporate transactions and regulatory specialists, editors at the Daily Journal reviewed hundreds of nominations from law firms, public agencies, nonprofits and universities.

Women are helping major litigation and deals and on the cutting edge of regulatory work. They are leaders and rainmakers in their law firms in numbers never seen before.

—The Editors

Debra Wong Yang

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, Los Angeles

PRACTICE TYPE: litigation, regulatory

SPECIALTY: crisis management, strategic counseling

It's no shock that Yang, whose accomplished career has included runs as Los Angeles Police Commissioner, Los Angeles County Superior Court judge and U.S. Attorney for the Central District, would add yet another heading to her resume.

In the past year, Yang has branched out from the white-collar defense and investigations that have been a mainstay of her practice. The civil cases she has taken on lately have a higher profile than the often secretive work she performs as co-chair of Gibson Dunn's crisis management group.

"I just let people know that I was available for civil matters," she said.

Yang recently represented University of Southern California in the much publicized wrongful death lawsuit brought by the parents of two graduate students from China. The judge dismissed the case against the university.

Currently she represents New Jersey and its attorney general, defending a lawsuit challenging a state law that legalizes gambling. The plaintiffs are the NCAA, along



with the NHL, NFL, NBA, Major League Baseball, and the Justice Department.

"It's on the cutting edge of what's going on with respect to sports wagering," she said.

It was only a matter of time before she found her way back into a courtroom. "I spent more than half of my career in a courtroom," she said. "Honestly I missed being in court."

But by no means has Yang dropped work in her other fields of expertise. Another ongoing area of her practice focuses on American companies that do business in China, and Chinese companies that do business in the United States. Recently, she was requested to be special council for a board of a U.S. company's Chinese operations. "That's relatively unusual. I haven't heard of others with my background being embedded in the company," she said.

— Chase Scheinbaum