

Storytellers

Women lawyers are wowing judges, juries and opposing counsel in courtrooms across the state. As we learned from our Top 50 Women Litigators, there's plenty of action on their side of the gender divide.

Just a few decades ago, the cast of characters was largely the same in courthouse hallways across the state — men, in suits and ties.

And litigants could be certain that the face staring back at them from the bench would be male. Today, that landscape has changed, and courtroom hallways are clearly coed.

Women litigators have taken the courts by storm, carving out space in a field dominated by men. Like all lawyers, these women have war stories. Some have tales from the early days, when opposing counsel had to be convinced that the woman across the table was, indeed, an attorney. The newer arrivals

have stories of their own, about cases that stand out for them as the one that made the biggest difference and about clients whose gratitude made the fight worthwhile.

To compile our Top 50 Women Litigators list, we looked at the biggest cases and checked in with our best sources to see who stood apart from the new crowd. Then came the fun part. We asked our women litigators for their stories.

We asked for their most memorable courtroom moments and satisfying victories. We inquired about their approach to litigation itself and about the mentors who helped them climb as high as they are today.

And we asked the judges who heard their cases and the opposing counsel who battled against them for insight into what makes these women special.

Their answers, on the following pages, are a fascinating look at life in the litigation trenches. Over the years, women litigators have fought dual battles — one for themselves, and the other, the all-important fight for their clients.

As we put together our annual issue, we couldn't help but acknowledge a fair argument that at least one of those battles has been won.

— Katherine Galdos,
Editor

Stacy Phillips

Phillips, Lerner & Lauzon

Century City

Family law



Opposing counsel

Franklin R. Garfield of Los Angeles' Garfield Tepper & Raskin says "Litigation is inherently adversarial, but Stacy manages to be an aggressive advocate without being hostile or mean-spirited."

Highlights: Phillips is a veteran divorce lawyer representing some of the rich and famous — in other

words, people she can't name. Media frequently tap Phillips, 45, for thoughts on everything from Internet adultery to the Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman divorce. In 1998, she represented actor Jean-Claude Van Damme's former wife Darcy LaPier, winning \$27,500 a month in child support for their 2-year-old child, a record at the time. Other past clients include former Los Angeles Dodger Daryl Strawberry, who she represented in a paternity suit. Phillips helped write 1995 legislation that extends the statute of limitations for domestic violence victims to sue their abusers from one year to three years.

— Eron Ben-Yehuda