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BUSINESS PRACTICE GROUPS

- Business & Civil Litigation
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- Environmental
- Franchise & Distribution
- Health Care
- Intellectual Property
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DECEMBER 2025

Recent Professional & Community Accomplishments

Thomas M. Morrow and **Paul C. Bauducco** brought a motion for summary judgment after the purchaser of our clients' restaurant sued our clients. Tom successfully argued the motion, effectively ending the suit against our client and enabling them to recover attorney's fees and costs.

Heidy A. Nurinda resolved a breach of contract action, recovering all monies owed to our client for services rendered, plus additional fees and costs. Heidy saved the client from substantial litigation expenses by reaching a prompt resolution.

Steven L. Feldman successfully defended a Prop. 65 matter by obtaining a withdrawal of a 60-Day Notice of Violation.

Tal Burnovski Yeyni and **Joshua S. Stein** secured favorable resolutions on multiple matters for our clients, bringing the original demands down to a fraction of their initial amounts.

Matthew J. Soroky (Certified Specialist in Franchise & Distribution Law) negotiated resolutions of two separate franchise dispute matters which allowed our franchisee clients to operate independent businesses. One client operates a franchise in the glazing industry, and the other in property management. In a separate matter, Matt and **Cindy J. Cardoza** reviewed a franchise disclosure document for a client considering opening a franchised pharmacy and infusion center.

Barry Kurtz and **Katherine L. Wallman** (Certified Specialists in Franchise & Distribution Law) collaborated with outside M&A counsel on the franchise matters integral to the closing of a franchisee client's asset sale of 20+ businesses to a buyer who rebranded the franchised businesses following the closing.

Kira S. Masteller represented an adult child in a property tax reassessment appeal involving her inherited family home. Her father passed away before Prop 19 and her mother passed after it became law. Kira successfully argued that two different exclusion laws be applied, not just one. The appeals board agreed, allowing half of the home to receive the unlimited exclusion under Proposition 58 and the other half to receive the \$1,000,000 exclusion under Proposition 19. This favorable outcome secured significant ongoing property tax savings for the client even if she moves to another home in California in the future.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick resolved litigation on a pro bono basis for an elderly client who could not afford legal representation in an unlawful detainer action. The landlord had improperly attempted to increase the client's rent and evict them. Jeff secured a favorable settlement that allowed the client to remain in their apartment without the improper rent increase, and with several months of free rent.

Kira S. Masteller prepared a Limited Liability Company (LLC) for out-of-state brothers who inherited an income real property in California. The LLC allows the brothers to continue co-owning the property as partners while limiting their financial liability exposure to the equity in the LLC's property, which protects their personal assets from potential creditors.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick and **Heidy A. Nurinda** resolved litigation for a client in the precious metals industry involving both trademark and copyright claims, thereby saving the client more extensive litigation costs. In a separate matter, Jeff and Heidy successfully opposed a motion to strike affirmative defenses, allowing our client to preserve its laches defense in a federal trademark infringement action.

Sue M. Bendavid and **Joshua S. Stein** resolved several cases for clients at a fraction of the original demand.

Wanjia "Olivia" Li and **Kira S. Masteller** represented a client in a probate proceeding involving a 7.5-foot strip of land unknowingly titled in only one parent's name. Olivia and Kira successfully completed the probate to transfer the strip of land into the parents' trust, allowing the finalization of the complete trust property sale.

Barry Kurtz and **Matthew J. Soroky** are preparing Franchise Disclosure Documents for separate clients seeking to franchise their existing restaurant chains. In a separate matter, Matt and **Cindy J. Cardoza** reviewed a Franchise Disclosure Document for our franchisee client evaluating the purchase of franchise rights for an indoor action park.

Sue M. Bendavid and **Tal Burnovski Yeyni** hosted a webinar, *California Employment Defense: New Laws 2026*, discussing legislative changes affecting California employers. Additionally, Sue conducted multiple harassment, discrimination, and retaliation prevention trainings for several clients' management teams.

Barry Kurtz and **Thomas M. Morrow** successfully closed several acquisitions of franchised businesses on behalf of a restaurant franchisor intending to rebrand the businesses. In a separate matter, Barry and **Caitlyn Dillon** are preparing franchise disclosure documents for a fitness franchisor serving individuals with developmental and physical disabilities.

Matthew J. Soroky represented a franchisor client in persuading opposing counsel to abandon claims raised in a demand letter, enabling the parties to communicate with each other directly to resolve their dispute and avoid further legal expense.

Steven L. Feldman secured an insurance defense from a major insurance carrier for a residential landlord in a lawsuit alleging lack of habitability in a rental apartment unit.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick and **Wanjia "Olivia" Li**, representing a restaurant client, successfully persuaded a third party to cease using an infringing trademark in connection with its restaurant business, allowing our client to avoid significant litigation expenses.

Sue M. Bendavid acted as a judge for a Loyola Law School National Moot Court Competition, where law students from across the United States participated in mock trials. Sue evaluated competitors based on their trial skills in the courtroom.

Vanessa Soto Nellis (Certified Family Law Specialist) and Paralegal **Joni Davis** organized and implemented this year's Settle-O-Rama program through the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, at the Van Nuys court. The program matches family law attorney and expert volunteers with trial ready family law cases, giving them an opportunity to settle their matters, and saving the Los Angeles courts valuable trial time. **Nancy Martinez** also volunteered with Spanish translation and settlement services for the program.

Congratulations to law clerk **Molly K. Thorpe**, who recently passed the California Bar Exam and will be joining our Employment Practice Group as an Associate.

Publications & Media Mentions

Professionals in Human Resources Association (PIHRA)

California Employment Law: Legislative Update - October 2025
Tal Burnovski Yeyni and **Molly Thorpe**, authors

LA Times Studios

Navigating Today's Employment Landscape
Sue M. Bendavid, interviewed

San Antonio Lawyer

The Media and America's Fascination with Crime
Mark J. Phillips, co-author

Bloomberg Law

Remote Workday Ruling Reignites Pay Debate, Boosts Employers
Tal Burnovski Yeyni, quoted

Los Angeles Business Journal, Inside the Valley

2025 Mentor of the Year
Sue M. Bendavid, selected

Best Lawyers Magazine

2026 Best Lawyers in America and Ones to Watch
Sue M. Bendavid
Tal Grinblat
Michael Hackman
Jeffrey A. Kobulnick
Barry Kurtz
Kira S. Masteller
Vanessa Soto Nellis
Andrew L. Shapiro
Lynn Soodik
Nancy Martinez

Valley Lawyer, San Fernando Valley Bar Association

Unintentional Franchises
Barry Kurtz and **Kate Wallman**, authors

San Antonio Lawyer

Trial of O.J. Simpson, Part 2
Mark J. Phillips, co-author

Los Angeles Business Journal, Inside the Valley

The Valley 200
Barry Kurtz, selected