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Business Practice Groups

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Recent Professional & Community Accomplishments

Congratulations to **John B. Marshall** who received a *Lifetime Achievement Award* from the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. The Bar recognized John for over 40 years of legal service.

We are proud to announce that 12 Lewitt Hackman attorneys were named ***2027 Best Lawyers in America***, by *Best Lawyers Magazine*: **Sue M. Bendavid** (Litigation - Labor and Employment); **Tal Grinblat** (Franchise Law); **Michael Hackman** (Tax Law); **Jeffrey A. Kobulnick** (Litigation - Intellectual Property); **Barry Kurtz** (Franchise Law); **John B. Marshall** (Real Estate Law), **Kira S. Masteller** (Trusts and Estates); **Vanessa Soto Nellis** (Family Law, Family Law Mediation, and Collaborative Family Law); **Andrew L. Shapiro** (Personal Injury Litigation - Plaintiffs); **Lynn Soodik** (Family Law); and **Matthew J. Soroky** (Franchise Law). The magazine selected Family Law's **Nancy Martinez** to the ***Ones to Watch*** list.

Barry Kurtz and **Matthew J. Soroky** (Certified Specialists in Franchise & Distribution Law) helped a home maintenance franchisee reach an agreement with its franchisor on a mutual termination of its franchise agreement. The two also prepared franchise documents and registrations for a client seeking to franchise its separate Italian food and hamburger restaurant concepts.

Sue M. Bendavid, Nicholas Kanter, Joshua S. Stein, and **Molly K. Thorpe** represented our client in a long-fought dispute. On the eve of a hearing on a motion to dismiss, our attorneys prevailed against claims for which the opposing party repeatedly sought seven-figure settlements, but which ultimately had only nuisance value.

Keith T. Zimmet represented our client in the sale of its national business to an American subsidiary of a European company. Keith spearheaded our firm's team of professionals, including **Peter L. Ente** and paralegal **Marianne Ludanyi**, in guiding our client throughout the complex stock sale, including satisfying numerous regulatory hurdles, international export controls, and a multifaceted tax reorganization. The Lewitt Hackman team negotiated the transaction with opposing counsel located throughout the United States and Europe.

Tal Grinblat overcame two separate Trademark Office refusals of our client's trademark applications. The Examiner refused registration of our client's marks claiming they were too descriptive of the client's business and operations. Tal presented substantive arguments in response, and the Examiner withdrew her refusal and approved both marks for publication.

Vanessa Soto Nellis (Certified Specialist in Family Law) successfully finalized a prenuptial agreement under a short deadline after the other party's initial counsel failed to move the process forward. Vanessa worked expeditiously with successor counsel to complete the agreement in advance of the couple's destination wedding, allowing the required seven-day waiting period before execution.

Thomas M. Morrow, **Jeffrey A. Kobulnick**, and **Paul C. Bauducco** mediated and settled their homeowner client's construction defect claims, avoiding the costs of trial and providing the client with a significant settlement.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick obtained a favorable judgment for our client in the retail appliance industry regarding a cybersquatting and trademark infringement case filed in federal district court. The Court ordered the defendant to stop infringing our client's mark, awarded the client significant compensatory damages in addition to six-figure damages for violations of the Anti-Cybersquatting Consumer Protection Act, plus all attorney fees and incurred costs.

Barry Kurtz represented a restaurant client in terminating its consulting agreement with the former owner of the restaurant business.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick resolved a third party's threat against the federally registered trademark of a client in the consulting services industry. The resolution included a significant monetary payment from the third party to our client.

Joshua S. Stein and **Paul C. Bauducco** successfully demurred to a complaint against our client based on the statute of limitations, with the Court sustaining the demurrer to all causes of action.

Matthew J. Soroky counseled a fast casual restaurant franchisor on negotiating an orderly resolution over disputed terms for termination of a multi-unit development agreement. In a separate matter, Matt reviewed and counseled a franchisee on signing an agreement for a fitness concept.

Tal Grinblat and paralegal **AJ Torres** succeeded in invalidating a domain name registered by an infringer. The infringing domain incorporated our client's nearly identical trademark and replicated their website to make it look like the infringing domain was actually our client's website. Through the Uniform Domain Resolution (UDRP) process, the National Arbitration Forum found in our client's favor and ordered the domain name transferred to them.

Steven L. Feldman successfully resolved two separate ADA accessibility claims filed in federal court this month, achieving very reasonable settlements with minimal settlement conditions imposed on our client.

Tal Grinblat and **Thomas M. Morrow** won two related Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB) proceedings involving our restaurant business client. In one proceeding, Tom and Tal succeeded in invalidating a trademark registration which was similar to the client's existing registrations. In the other, Tal and Tom blocked the confusingly similar application from becoming registered. The proceedings started separately but were later consolidated. The TTAB found in our client's favor on both proceedings.

Barry Kurtz and Matthew J. Soroky are working with a hotel franchisee to terminate its franchise agreement for an unopened hotel. Barry and Matt also worked with a real estate brokerage franchisee that refused to renew its franchise agreement with a national real estate brokerage.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick helped a collectibles industry client respond to several copyright infringement claims arising from the alleged unauthorized use of certain photos on our client's website. The parties resolved the claims on highly reasonable terms, shielding the client from more significant litigation expenses.

Sue M. Bendavid conducted multiple trainings, including a large-scale session for more than 300 school employees on professional boundaries, mandated reporter responsibilities under the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, and anti-harassment policies.

We are growing! Shareholder **Eric A. Schreiber** and Senior Counsel **Ean M. Schreiber** joined our firm in October. Eric and Ean represent clients in our Corporate, Real Estate, and Trust and Estate Planning Practice Groups.

Publications & Media Mentions

LA Times Studios
Common California Employment Law Mistakes and How Employers Can Avoid Them
Sue M. Bendavid interviewed

Professionals in Human Resources Association (PIHRA)
California Employment Law: Key Changes Employers Need to Know for 2027 and Beyond
Tal Burnovski Yeyni author

Westlaw Today
California's New AI Rules for Lawyers and Arbitrators: What SB 574 Means for Your Practice
Nicholas Kanter author

LA Times Studios
Insights on Today's Employment Landscape
Sue M. Bendavid interviewed

Westlaw Today
California Court Rules: FEHA May Reach Employees Working Outside the State
Molly K. Thorpe co-author

Los Angeles Magazine
Best of L.A. Legal 2026
Sue M. Bendavid
David B. Bobrosky
Kira S. Masteller
Vanessa Soto Nellis
Mark J. Phillips
Andrew L. Shapiro
Lynn Soodik

Westlaw Today
State Antitrust Lawsuit Threatens Paramount's Warner Bros. Deal
Nicholas J. Vitale author

Los Angeles Business Journal, Inside the Valley
The Valley 200
Barry Kurtz selected

Doyle's Guide
Leading Employment Lawyers: Los Angeles 2026
Sue M. Bendavid recommended

LA Times Studios
2026 Legal Visionary
Barry Kurtz, selected