



LEWITT | HACKMAN
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A LAW CORPORATION

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DECEMBER 2024

Recent Professional & Community Accomplishments

BUSINESS PRACTICE GROUPS

- Business & Civil Litigation
- Commercial Finance
- Corporate
- Employment
- Environmental
- Franchise & Distribution
- Health Care
- Intellectual Property
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Real Estate
- Tax Planning

CONSUMER PRACTICE GROUPS

- Family Law
- Personal Injury
- Trust & Estate Planning

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We are pleased to announce that for the 10th consecutive year, *Best Lawyers* designated Lewitt Hackman a **Best Law Firm** in 2025. Currently we are recognized in nine practice areas.

Congratulations to **Barry Kurtz**, named a *2024 Legal Visionary* in Intellectual Property Law by B2B Publishing of the *Los Angeles Times*.

Nicholas Kanter prevailed on an anti-SLAPP motion. The plaintiff filed a lawsuit alleging claims arising from settlement discussions. In response, Nick filed a motion arguing the allegations on which the claims are based are protected activity under the anti-SLAPP statute, and plaintiff cannot prevail in the lawsuit because the claims are protected by the litigation privilege. The court agreed, and dismissed the lawsuit.

Vanessa Soto Nellis (Certified Family Law Specialist) obtained favorable child support payments for our client, whose spouse demanded a large monthly sum to support an 18-year old with a few months left in high school. Vanessa and our client offered less than half, and the court further reduced the amount.

Thomas M. Morrow, Heidi A. Nurinda, John B. Marshall and Paul C. Bauducco successfully brought a motion to consolidate a subsequently filed action against an architectural firm. The firm designed a custom home and our clients were named as defendants by the owner of the home in a prior action. With the consolidation, our attorneys saved our client the cost of a separate trial.

Keith T. Zimmet represented our client in a long standing property line dispute. The matter was resolved amicably with a lot line adjustment and limited easement. In an unrelated matter, Keith guided our client through the acquisition of a commercial building and the assignment of a lease with a large, nationally known tenant.

Sue M. Bendavid and Nicholas Kanter received court approval to resolve several wage and hour class actions and Private Attorney General Act cases. The settlements will allow the employers to resolve costly wage claims for a tiny fraction of the alleged liability and wipe the slate clean.

Tal Grinblat worked with a film production company to shut down an infringing domain name user in Denmark. The infringer registered our client's primary brand as a domain name without permission. The infringer agreed to transfer the domain to our client at no cost.

Kira S. Masteller and Olivia Li worked with the children of parents who owned 25 residential real properties at their deaths. The properties were all transferred to the children and thereafter into LLCs the beneficiaries formed to continue to own, and manage the properties together.

Barry Kurtz and Katherine L. Wallman (Certified Specialists in Franchise & Distribution Law) are developing a business structure for a trademark owner wanting to expand his business with a licensing program as an alternative to franchising his business.

Mark J. Phillips (Certified Specialist in Estate Planning, Probate & Trust Law) represented a large national trust company in a dispute between our client and the beneficiary of a trust – which prompted the trustee to withdraw. Mark negotiated with the beneficiary and their counsel, obtained the nomination of a successor trustee, and successfully petitioned the Court for an appointment of a new trustee. Mark's year-long negotiations enabled the parties to resolve their differences without resorting to expensive and lengthy litigation.

Kira S. Masteller created protective trusts for adult children to receive monetary and real property gifts from their parents. These trusts help shield the assets in the trusts in the event a child divorces, or from a child's creditors. Additionally, the assets transferred into these trusts are exempt from Federal Gift/Estate Tax which allows the future appreciation of the assets to pass to the next generation free of estate tax.

Barry Kurtz, Matthew J. Soroky (Certified Specialists in Franchise & Distribution Law) and **Thomas M. Morrow** are defending two unrelated franchisors against franchisees whose businesses were unsuccessful.

Kevin E. Rex and **Kira S. Masteller** represent a client in a business succession matter wherein the surviving parent is selling a long-term family business to the child who runs the business.

Nicholas Kanter and **Jessica W. Rosen** prevailed on an appeal regarding a motion for terminating sanctions. In the trial court, Nick obtained an order for terminating, and monetary sanctions in favor of our client. The adverse party appealed the trial court's ruling, claiming he was denied due process. Nick and Jessica demonstrated the adverse party received adequate notice and opportunity to oppose the motion for terminating sanctions. The Court of Appeal affirmed the trial court's ruling.

Tal Burnovski Yeyni negotiated a release of all claims for an employer involved in a highly contentious matter. Our client's employee claimed unpaid bonuses in the six figures. Tal worked with opposing counsel to separate the employee and fully release our client from all known and unknown claims. The settlement brought the employer peace of mind, and protected the client from costly wage and hour claims and litigation brought by this employee.

Tal Grinblat and **Thomas M. Morrow** prevailed in a Trademark Trial and Appeal Board dispute on behalf of a children's gym client. A third party filed a petition to contest our client's registration claiming they had senior rights to the mark. After nearly two years of defending the dispute, the Board dismissed the Opposition with prejudice in a complete victory for our client's rights in the mark.

Sue M. Bendavid served as presiding judge for a National Civil Trial competition hosted by Loyola Law School. Law students from across the United States participated. Sue provided feedback and critique to the students on their mock trial skills.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick helped moderate questions for a presentation by legal scholar Laurie Levenson on recent U.S. Supreme Court Decisions, hosted by The Executives supporting Los Angeles Jewish Health.

Vanessa Soto Nellis (Certified Family Law Specialist), **Nancy Martinez**, Paralegal **Joni Davis**, and the San Fernando Valley Bar implemented a *Settle-O-Rama* program at Van Nuys court. The program matches family law attorneys and expert volunteers with trial-ready family law cases – saving our Los Angeles courts valuable trial time. Joni dedicated a significant number of hours in this regard.

We are growing! We added four new Associates to our firm: **Yining Song** and **Janet Lim** join our Tax, and Trust & Estate Planning Practice Groups. **Nicholas J. Vitale** works in our Corporate Practice Group. Last, law clerk **Cindy J. Cardoza** of our Franchise & Distribution Practice Group, recently passed the California Bar exam and is now an Associate.

Publications & Media Mentions

Los Angeles Daily Journal

Appellate court expands and clarifies the rights of litigants to challenge trusts

Mark J. Phillips, co-author

Professionals in Human Resources

California Employment Law: Legislative Updates

Tal Burnovski Yeyni, author

Trust Me! The Trusts & Estates Podcast of the California Lawyers Association

All in the Family: What Estate Planners Should Know About Family Law Basics

Vanessa Soto Nellis, guest

Los Angeles Daily Journal

PAGA at 20: New legislation could reduce litigation

Tal Burnovski Yeyni, author

Letter from Los Angeles

Trial of Casey Anthony, Parts 1 & 2

Mark J. Phillips, co-author

Franchise Law Journal

LADR Case Notes and FLJ Currents

Matthew J. Soroky, co-author

Los Angeles Business Journal

2024 Top 100 Lawyers

David B. Bobrosky selected

Los Angeles Business Journal - Inside the Valley

2024 Trusted Advisors

Barry Kurtz selected

FranchiseTimes

2024 Legal Eagles

Tal Grinblat selected

Los Angeles Business Journal - Inside the Valley

Labor & Employment - A

Roundtable Discussion

Sue M. Bendavid, participant

World Trademark Review

WTR 1000 - World's Leading Trademark Professionals

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick selected

Los Angeles Business Journal

Franchisers Fret

Barry Kurtz, quoted