



MARCH 2025

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

818.990.2120

lewitthackman.com

16633 Ventura Boulevard
Eleventh Floor
Encino, California 91436

We are pleased to announce 14 of our attorneys were selected **2025 Southern California Super Lawyers**. They include: **Zane S Averbach** (Business/Corporate), **Paul C. Bauducco** (Business Litigation), **Sue M. Bendavid** (Employment & Labor), **David B. Bobrosky** (PI General: Plaintiff), **Tal Grinblat** (Franchise & Dealership), **Stephen T. Holzer** (Environmental), **Jeffrey A. Kobulnick** (Intellectual Property Litigation), **Barry Kurtz** (Franchise & Dealership), **Kira S. Masteller** (Estate & Probate), **Vanessa Soto Nellis** (Family Law), **Mark J. Phillips** (Estate & Probate), **Andrew L. Shapiro** (PI General: Plaintiff), **Lynn Soodik** (Family Law), and **Keith T. Zimmet** (Business/Corporate).

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick was selected to the *WTR 1000* - the *World's Leading Trademark Professionals*, described as "the top trademark professionals in key jurisdictions around the globe."

Kira S. Masteller prepared a Form 706 estate tax return for a client electing portability of his deceased spouse's unused Federal Estate Tax Exemption, ensuring his estate maximizes the exemptions available upon his death, when their children will inherit.

Thomas M. Morrow, **Tal Grinblat**, **Jeffrey A. Kobulnick** and **Heidy A. Nurinda** represented a client in the pizza business in a dispute over a third party's trademark registration that was blocking our client's applications and infringed its rights. After nearly a three-year battle, the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board found in our client's favor and canceled the third party's registration, finding a likelihood of consumer confusion. Our client's applications may now proceed.

Barry Kurtz and **Keith T. Zimmet** are working with a franchisor client on issues involving compliance with its credit line with a major lender.

Vanessa Soto Nellis (Certified Family Law Specialist) obtained a Judgment of Dissolution before the end of the year for a client wishing to expedite the divorce process so that he could invest in real estate as a single person.

Mark J. Phillips (California 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.

Kevin E. Rex prepared a partnership agreement for our corporate client. In separate matters, Kevin prepared or revised shareholder agreements because of changes to our respective clients' businesses.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick sent a cease and desist letter to a third party using our client's apparel brand on their own line of clothing. The unauthorized user complied, freeing our client from the worry and expense of litigation.

Sue M. Bendavid worked with several clients to formulate layoff plans. Employers should remember: characterizing a termination as a layoff does not necessarily prevent an employee from pursuing discrimination or retaliation claims. Careful legal analysis should be considered in layoff and termination decisions.

Paul C. Bauducco successfully resolved a real estate non-disclosure issue for clients who purchased a home through pre-litigation mediation. The resolution saved our clients costs of proceeding with a lawsuit.

Barry Kurtz and **Matthew J. Soroky** (both Certified Specialists in Franchise & Distribution Law) are working with a real estate agency and a property management company on non-renewal of their franchise agreements after their terms expire. In separate matters, Barry, Matt and **Thomas M. Morrow** represent separate franchisor clients in arbitration and mediation proceedings with disgruntled franchisees.

Nancy Martinez represented a father prevented from seeing his child for over four months by the child's mother. Nancy filed a Request for Order, and at the subsequent hearing, a family law judge issued temporary custodial orders. Nancy later helped our client reach a final resolution on custody issues with the mother. The parties reached an agreement and an order was submitted to the Court, protecting our client's right to see his child.

Mark J. Phillips worked with clients to provide their children or grandchildren 2024's maximum allowable tax-free financial gifts of \$18,000 each, before year's end. The beneficiaries were either minors, or not financially responsible. Mark created irrevocable trusts to hold the gifts which will be managed by a trustee. For one of these clients, each grandparent gifted the maximum amount to six grandchildren – reducing their taxable estate by over \$200,000, and saved the clients' estate over \$80,000 in taxes.

Matthew J. Soroky and **Tal Burnovski Yeyni** convinced opposing counsel to dismiss a lawsuit against a franchisor. Our client was named as a defendant even though it had no relation to the plaintiff. After several follow ups and threats to file a demurrer, opposing counsel agreed to dismiss the franchisor from the lawsuit.

Alex J. Hemmelgarn (Certified Specialist in Tax Law) presented *2025 Tax Law and Policy Update* for the members of the Calabasas Chamber of Commerce..

Kira S. Masteller worked with clients who own fractional interests in limited liability companies to obtain discount appraisals for purposes of gifting partial interests to their adult children during the clients' lives. The discount appraisals result in lower valued gifts for gift tax purposes leaving a greater amount of estate tax exemption at the time of the clients' deaths.

Kevin E. Rex represents several clients in the purchase and sale of their privately held companies. For one client, Kevin negotiated the engagement letter for an investment banking firm to help find a buyer for the client's company. For another, Kevin helped negotiate and finalize the terms of a letter of intent to sell a company. And for several more, Kevin resolved issues in due diligence.

Barry Kurtz and **Katherine L. Wallman** (both Certified Specialists in Franchise & Distribution Law) are reviewing franchise documents for a client purchasing multiple franchises in the U.S., from a beverage franchisor based in China. In a similar matter, Barry and Kate are reviewing documents for another client purchasing food service franchises located in Brazil.

Wanjia "Olivia" Li and **Kira S. Masteller** created an estate plan with a special needs trust for an adult child with disabilities so that the public assistance the adult child receives will continue when he inherits from his parents.

Sue M. Bendavid provided a client with anti-harassment, discrimination, and bullying training. The state-required training helps remind employees that such conduct is prohibited, and helps employers mitigate exposure and shield the company from liability in the event of a claim.

Tal Burnovski Yeyni conducted a seminar titled, *From Onboarding to Offboarding: A Guide to HR*, for members of the Professionals in Human Resources Association.

David B. Bobrosky and **John B. Marshall** attended the Mediation Center of Los Angeles awards dinner. The MCLA provides low cost mediation and settlement services since the Superior Court discontinued its own service due to budget constraints.

Publications & Media Mentions

Los Angeles Daily Journal

DEI under the spotlight: The DOJ v. the EEOC

Tal Burnovski Yeyni, author

Money Talk, 1290 AM Radio

Matt Soroky on Franchise Law and Franchise Finance

Matthew J. Soroky, guest

Westlaw Today

Beyond the Contract:

Non-Signatories to an Arbitration Agreement Can Compel Arbitration

Nicholas Kanter, co-author

2025 Best Law Firms

Fifteenth Edition, Best Law Firms

Lewitt Hackman designated

Los Angeles Daily Journal

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

Mark J. Phillips, co-author

Los Angeles Times B2B Publishing

2024 Legal Visionaries in

Intellectual Property

Barry Kurtz selected

Professionals in Human Resources

California Employment Law:

Legislative Updates

Tal Burnovski Yeyni, author

Trust Me! 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