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A LAW CORPORATION

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MARCH 2026

### 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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Congratulations to our **2026 Southern California Super Lawyers** and **Rising Stars**, including: **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** (IP 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). Our **Rising Stars** include: **Cindy J. Cardoza** (Franchise/Dealership), **Caitlyn Dillon** (Franchise/Dealership), and **Nicholas J. Vitale** (Business/Corporate).

We are pleased to announce that **Thomas M. Morrow** has been promoted to Shareholder. Tom continues his work in our Intellectual Property, Franchise & Distribution, Employment, and Business Litigation Practice Groups.

Congratulations to **Barry Kurtz**, named to the *Los Angeles Business Journal's Inside the Valley: Leaders to Know - Trusted Advisors* list for 2026.

**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."

**Barry Kurtz** and **Katherine L. Wallman** (Certified Specialists in Franchise & Distribution Law) are representing a client that is purchasing development rights for more than 50 chicken franchises in South America.

**Sue M. Bendavid** and **Tal Burnovski Yeyni** defended a client at trial against an inflated wage and hour claim brought by a former employee seeking nearly \$700,000 in alleged unpaid minimum wage, overtime, and missed breaks. At trial, Sue and Tal argued that the employee's claims for "stand-by pay," round the clock work, and missed breaks lacked merit, using the employee's own testimony and records to highlight his lack of credibility. The Court agreed, denying the majority of the employee's claims and issuing a final award of approximately 5% of the initial demand.

**Steven L. Feldman** led a lengthy negotiation for a manufacturing client with a small, out-of-state private railroad district, culminating in a loan from the client to the district to finance railroad track upgrades and repairs, with transfer provisions for a new railroad operator.

**Matthew J. Soroky** (Certified Specialist in Franchise & Distribution Law) and **Thomas M. Morrow** represented a multi-unit operator in negotiating the reopening of our client's franchised locations after all franchised and company-owned locations had closed.

**Tal Grinblat** and **Katherine L. Wallman** won a Uniform Domain Resolution Policy proceeding against a domain infringer who used our client's trademark as part of a domain name for a website that gave the false impression that our client owned it. An investigation revealed the Registrant of the infringing domain name lived in a developing country and had no connection to our client. The National Arbitration Forum ordered the domain name transferred to our client.

**Paul C. Bauducco** settled a lawsuit between our client and a well drilling company, saving the client the cost of preparing for and trying the case.

**Sue M. Bendavid** worked with several employers that received PAGA notices to audit their wage and hour practices, positing them to advocate for dramatically reduced penalties. Sue strongly recommends that employers take proactive compliance measures to reduce the risk of PAGA claims from arising.

**Barry Kurtz** and **Matthew J. Soroky** are advising a franchisor regarding the possibility of switching to a license model for their business. Barry and Matt are also representing several clients in their franchise disputes with the California Department of Financial Protection & Innovation.

**Jeffrey A. Kobulnick** sent a cease-and-desist letter on behalf of a toy industry client to a company using a confusingly similar trademark for similar products. In response, the company abandoned its trademark application and stopped using the mark.

**Matthew J. Soroky** and **Cindy J. Cardoza** counseled a veterinarian client in negotiating a franchise agreement to operate a clinic within a pet store. Separately, Matt represented a restaurant franchisor in negotiating a payment plan and post-term obligations for early termination of a franchise agreement.

**Tal Grinblat** and **Heidy A. Nurinda** successfully overcame a refusal to a trademark owned by a marketing, data collection, data integration and data modeling company. The Trademark Office contended our client's application was confusingly similar to another mark because all but one letter was identical. Tal and Heidy convinced the Examiner that, despite the overlap in letters, the marks differed in meaning and commercial impression. The Examiner agreed and approved our client's mark for publication.

We are pleased to welcome back Senior Counsel **Peter L. Ente**! Peter rejoins the firm's Corporate Practice Group.

**Barry Kurtz, Kevin E. Rex, Peter L. Ente,** and **Caitlyn Dillon** are representing a franchisor that is taking on investors for the expansion of their coffee business with franchisees.

**Nancy Martinez** represented a client residing in South America whose spouse filed for divorce in California in 2022. Nancy successfully obtained dismissal of the California case, allowing the matter to proceed in South America.

**Jeffrey A. Kobulnick** helped resolve numerous claims for copyright infringement brought against a client and other named defendants on favorable terms, which spared the client more significant litigation expenses.

**Tal Grinblat** (Certified Specialist in Franchise & Distribution Law) and **Caitlyn Dillon** created a new franchise program for a client in the fresh fruit and vegetable business. Tal and Caitlyn prepared the Franchise Disclosure Document, Franchise Agreement, and all related documents prior to year-end, permitting the client to launch operations for its concept in the New Year.

**Paul C. Bauducco** participated in a mediation in a construction defect case, securing a settlement for our client and saving them thousands of dollars in trial preparation costs.

**Sue M. Bendavid** presented *California Employment Defense: New Laws 2026* at an in-person seminar, where she shared key legal reminders and discussed new bills and court decisions impacting California employers.

**Jeffrey A. Kobulnick** served as Chair of the Los Angeles Region for the International Trademark Association's Saul Lefkowitz Moot Court Competition, a national law student competition and the only one in the country devoted exclusively to trademark law. Jeff has been actively involved in the competition since 2005, is a past National Chair, and founded the Los Angeles Region, which he chaired annually since 2016.

## Publications & Media Mentions

### **Valley Lawyer, San Fernando Valley Bar Association**

*A Legacy of Resilience: Remembering Leon and Maurice Lewitt*  
**John B. Marshall** and  
**Keith T. Zimmet**, authors

### **Valley Lawyer, San Fernando Valley Bar Association**

*Packard v. Packard (2025): By Expanding the Definition of Construction of Trusts, the Court of Appeal Reduces the Risk of Contest*  
**Mark J. Phillips**, author

### **American Bar Association Forum on Franchising**

*Franchise Relationship Laws: A Practical Guide*  
**Barry Kurtz**, co-author of the California chapter

### **Professionals in Human Resources Association (PIHRA)**

*California Employment Law: Legislative Update*  
**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

### **Valley Lawyer, San Fernando Valley Bar Association**

*Unintentional Franchises*  
**Barry Kurtz** and  
**Katherine L. Wallman**, authors

### **Los Angeles Business Journal, Inside the Valley**

*2025 Mentor of the Year*  
**Sue M. Bendavid**, selected