



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**

Speaker Bios

Alphabetical by last name

Amy Ackerman

Town Attorney, Corte Madera,

Partner, Renne Public Law Group

Amy Ackerman serves as the head of the firm's government practice group. Her experience includes general public agency law, open government law, public health, juvenile dependency and appellate law. She currently serves as town counsel for the Town of Corte Madera and District Counsel for Marin Sanitary District No. 2.

Amy was a Senior Deputy City Attorney for 16 years with the City and County of San Francisco. She served as the first Director of Training for the City Attorney's Office and developed a comprehensive training program for Deputy City Attorneys and paralegals. Training topics included: open government laws, including public records and public meeting laws; drafting and negotiation of contracts; the legislative process and drafting legislation; municipal finance; state preemption; and litigation skills, including appellate advocacy. She drafted legislative, contract and open government handbooks for use by attorneys and officials. She also served as the coordinator for legal advice on open government issues for the City Attorney's Office and delivered the annual open government training for all city officials. Representative cases include *Gillespie v. San Francisco Public Library Commission* (1998) 67 Cal.App.4th 1165, holding that the Library could properly hold a closed session to nominate candidates for City Librarian and serving as amicus on behalf of fifty cities in *City of San Jose v. Superior Court* (1999) 74 Cal.App.4th 1008, holding that the City of San Jose could protect the identity of citizens making complaints regarding municipal airport noise.

Amy served as legal counsel to the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, whose governing body is the Board of Supervisors. Amy also served as general counsel, litigating at both the trial and appellate level and drafting legislation, to a wide variety of City departments and agencies, including the Arts Commission, Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, Department of Human Services, First Five Commission, Film Commission, Juvenile Probation Department, Office of Citizens' Complaints of the San Francisco Police Department, Office of Labor Standards Enforcement, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, Rent Board, San Francisco Unified School District and Youth Commission. In addition, she drafted amicus briefs on behalf of the League of Cities and the California State Association of Counties.

After leaving the City Attorney's Office, Amy was a consultant to the National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity founded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She worked with communities around the country to enact policy solutions to address chronic health issues. Her work included drafting model legislation and agreements addressing land use, complete streets, healthy housing, code enforcement, shared use of government resources and promoting healthy food. In addition, she represented the counties of Del Norte, Napa, San Francisco and Sonoma in the California Court of Appeal on human services matters.

For more information, view her full bio [here](#).

Jena Acos

Shareholder, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP

Natural resources attorney with unique expertise combining public agency work with water law. Helps entities navigate emerging laws and fee authority, especially as they relate to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Prioritizes a preemptive approach to representation.

Jena Acos' practice thrives at the intersection of water and public agency law. She intimately understands how natural resource issues interrelate with the economic, social and regulatory aspects inherent in work on behalf of, and for those interfacing with, public agencies. She strategically breaks down problems and generates candid dialogue that is often key to resolving complex issues. Jena's clients include some of California's largest water districts and private agricultural interests operating in the state's most critically overdrafted basins. Along with institutional government entities, Jena works with various water rights holders on both small-scale and larger projects. She advises clients on the development and implementation of groundwater management plans and brings unique insight on public finance issues involving taxes, assessments, fees and charges.

Jena also serves as a contract city attorney for the City of Carpinteria, where she works with city staff to navigate critical jurisdictional issues and draft, review and enforce contracts and ordinances. Her decade of experience representing the city underscores her expertise in all aspects of local governmental law, including the Brown Act, Public Records Act, Political Reform Act and LAFCO issues, as well as planning, zoning, housing and environmental laws. This has included addressing short-term rentals and housing scarcity, social justice issues,

and sea-level rise and coastal access, as well as negotiating land use matters with housing and hotel developers and energy companies.

Mark J. Austin

Partner, Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP

Mark Austin is a partner at the law firm of Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP, where his practice focuses on [public](#)-entity [litigation](#), [real estate](#) litigation, corporate/partnership disputes, land-use and environmental litigation, and municipal tort defense (including dangerous condition cases, employment-related torts, and wrongful death matters). Mark has extensive trial experience, having handled multiple successful jury trials, bench trials, and arbitrations, and has successfully argued before the California Court of Appeal over a dozen times.

Mark began his career representing public entities on both litigation and transactional matters, including real-estate transactions and disputes, constitutional claims, complex land-use matters, employment disputes, and tort claims. Since that time, Mark has expanded his practice to include commercial disputes on behalf of businesses and developers of all sizes, private real-estate litigation, and environmental litigation. In his several years of practice, Mark's clients have included residential and commercial developers, nationally recognized private companies, cities, counties, small businesses, and private homeowners. His focus on real estate litigation has given him substantial insights into drafting pitfalls, disclosure requirements, and judicial interpretations of written agreements.

Mr. Austin has acted as deputy city attorney for several cities, and in 2015 he acted as the Interim City Attorney for the City of Calexico. He has represented the City of Anaheim, the City of Irvine, the City of Dana Point, the City of Torrance, and the City of Vernon, among several others, on multiple high-profile matters and cases.

Published Cases

- *Lathus v. City of Huntington Beach* (9th Cir. 2023) 56 F.4th 1238 (First Amendment challenge to decision of city councilmember to remove appointed member of public advisory board based on speech).
- *Oxford Preparatory Academy v. Edlighten Learning Solutions* (2019) 34 Cal.App.5th 605 (enforceability of contractual arbitration agreement)
- *City of Cerritos v. Cerritos Taxpayers Assoc., et al.* (2010) 183 Cal.App.4th 1417 (complex validation action concerning purchase and development of senior-housing project)
- *In re County of Monterey Initiative Matter* (N.D. Cal. 2006) 427 Fed.Supp.2d 958 (voting rights case)
- *City of Long Beach v. Department of Industrial Relations* (2004) 34 Cal.4th 942 (amicus; prevailing wage issue)

Eli Beckman**Mayor, Corte Madera**

Mayor Eli Beckman grew up in Corte Madera, and was elected to the Town Council in June 2018. He served as Mayor from 2020-2021, and was reelected to the Town Council in November, 2022, returning as Mayor in December 2023. Beckman is involved regionally on a number of issues including transportation, renewable energy and resource recovery, and served as President of the North Bay Division of CalCities from 2021-2022.

In his day job, Beckman is the founder and CEO of HAUS+, a full-service provider of prefabricated ADUs. He received his Bachelor of Architecture from Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, and is a LEED AP accredited professional in sustainable design.

Prior to his election to the Town Council, Beckman served on the Town of Corte Madera's Flood Control Board. He is active in the Corte Madera Lions Club and in the Mariner Cove Neighborhood Response Group.

Eli Beckman also serves as Board President for the Sanitary District No. 2 Board.

Wendy Chang**Los Angeles Superior Court, and Member
California Civility Task Force**

Judge Chang presides over a civil unlimited jurisdiction independent calendar courtroom in Department 36 at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse. She is a member of the Court's Budget Committee, the Technology Committee, and the Judicial Education Committee (Civil). Judge Chang also serves as a member of the California Judges Association Civil Committee and has served as an instructor for California Judicial Council's Center for Judicial Education and Research, and the Los Angeles Superior Court.

Prior to her appointment, Chang was a leading national voice in the law governing lawyers, and continues to engage in that space. She currently serves on the California Joint Working Group on Civility in the Profession and on the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Professional Regulation. She is a frequent speaker and was previously a frequent author and editor on the subject of the law governing lawyers. Chang served as a member of the State Bar of California's Task Force on Access Through Innovation of Legal Services, as a member of the State Bar of California's Working Group on Closing the Justice Gap, as an advisor to the State Bar of California's Commission for the Revision of the Rules of Professional Conduct (II) and also as Chair and later Advisor to the State Bar of California's Standing Committee on Professional Responsibility and Conduct. She also served on the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility. She has served as co-chair of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association's Judicial & Executive Appointments committee since 2007. She is a former member of the national board of the National Association of Women Lawyers, and a former president of the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association.

Chang is a graduate of Loyola Law School (J.D.) and the University of California at Los Angeles (B.A.). Prior to her appointment, Judge Chang was a litigation and risk management partner at Hinshaw and Culbertson LLP, with a practice that focused on the law governing lawyers. Before that, she was a senior associate at Manatt, Phelps and Phillips LLP, and an associate at Baker, Keener and Nahra.

Susan Cola**Assistant City Attorney, Santa Monica**

Susan Y. Cola has 28 years of experience in public agency and land use law. Over the years, her practice has focused on the areas of code enforcement, public construction, real estate, finance, land use, and redevelopment. She is currently the Assistant City Attorney for the City of Santa Monica and has been employed by the City Attorney's Office for approximately 13 years. Prior to her employment with the City of Santa Monica, she was employed by Kane Ballmer & Berkman, where she acted as special legal counsel to the redevelopment agencies of the City of Santa Monica, City of Culver City, City of Palmdale, City of Ontario, City of Ojai, City of Oxnard, City of Imperial Beach, City of Maywood, and the Centre City Development Corporation. Ms. Cola has extensive experience negotiating and drafting complex disposition and development agreements for affordable housing, commercial development, public parking structures, and mixed residential and commercial uses. Ms. Cola has also participated in seminars related to affordable housing development and, most recently, participated on a panel discussion of the Builder's Remedy.

Prior to joining Kane Ballmer & Berkman, Ms. Cola served as a Deputy City Attorney for the City of San Diego for approximately 11 years, during which time she served as a prosecutor in the City's Criminal Division and subsequently provided transactional advisory services to the City's Engineering & Capital Project, Transportation, Metropolitan Wastewater Departments, as well as the City's Redevelopment Agency and then-corporate agent, the Center City Development Corporation.

Christine Crowl

Assistant City Attorney, Hercules

Senior Partner, Jarvis Fay

Christie's practice focuses on land use, planning and zoning law, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, and general municipal law. She assists cities and other public agency clients in navigating the entitlement process, and has extensive experience with permitting, environmental review, development agreements, zoning ordinance compliance, General and Specific Plan compliance, conditional use permits, the Subdivision Map Act, the Brown Act, and the Political Reform Act. She specializes in drafting and reviewing CEQA documents, and regularly advises clients on CEQA issues.

Christie is currently the City Attorney for the City of Hercules and provides Assistant City Attorney services to a variety of other cities. Her general municipal work involves advising a variety of administrative and legislative bodies including city councils, planning commissions, and design review boards. She specializes in drafting and reviewing staff reports, resolutions, ordinances, CEQA documents and findings, and General and Specific Plans and plan policies. Christie has advised municipal clients on a variety of topical and environmentally sensitive zoning amendments, including amendments to ordinances governing accessory dwelling units, signs, special events, and cannabis. She has also given presentations on CEQA issues to local city attorney organizations, most recently at the CalCities Spring Conference. Christie has been designated as a Super Lawyers Rising Star in the land use/zoning category every year since 2017. "

Jonathan Holtzman
Founding Partner
Renne Public Law Group

Jonathan V. Holtzman is a founding partner of Renne Public Law Group. Jon has experience in virtually all aspects of employment law and labor relations. His labor expertise encompasses negotiations, fact finding, mediation, grievance and interest arbitration, and litigation related to bargaining obligations. Mr. Holtzman's practice focuses on assisting government agencies maintain and expand public services through strategic consulting, negotiations, fact finding, arbitration and litigation. He specializes in addressing long-term structural issues relating to pensions, health benefits, retirement health benefits, civil service reform, and other means of attaining greater managerial discretion and effectiveness through collective bargaining and reorganization. Mr. Holtzman also practices government law, including general advice work, drafting ballot and other legislative measures and initiatives, litigating issues of constitutional and statutory interpretation, and electoral matters. He is the author of Rutter Group's California Practice Guide: Public Sector Employment Litigation Guide, the leading treatise on public sector employment issues. Jon is a graduate of Stanford Law School and clerked for Justice Otto Kaus of the California Supreme Court.

Gabrielle Janssens**Partner, Goldfarb & Lipman LLP**

Ms. Janssens' practice focuses on assisting clients with land use matters, development of public property, and general municipal and governmental law. She advises both nonprofit housing developers and public agencies on subjects such as affordable housing requirements, accessory dwelling units, land use entitlements, and the California Environmental Quality Act. Ms. Janssens additionally has experience in all aspects of municipal law, such as the Brown Act, Public Records Act, and conflicts of interest. She has worked on many public-private transactions, including redevelopment projects and affordable housing development, and has drafted disposition and development agreements, purchase and sale agreements, development agreements, loan agreements, and regulatory agreements. In her capacity as an agency attorney, Ms. Janssens has provided legal advice to Planning Commissions, City Councils and Boards of Supervisors.

Barbara Kautz**Partner, Goldfarb & Lipman LLP**

Barbara E. Kautz practices with Goldfarb & Lipman LLP in the areas of land use, with an emphasis on housing-related legislation, including the Housing Accountability Act, SB 35, inclusionary zoning and implementation, density bonuses, and other recent changes to housing law; CEQA/NEPA compliance; and affordable housing. Ms. Kautz has over 40 years of land use experience. Prior to joining Goldfarb & Lipman LLP, she was the Community Development Director and Assistant City Manager for the City of San Mateo, California. She speaks frequently at conferences and before public agencies regarding housing issues and is a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners, member of the Board of Counselors at USF School of Law, and past editor of the Land Use chapter in the Municipal Law Handbook. She formerly served on the Boards of Directors for the League of California Cities and the California Chapter of the American Planning Association. Ms. Kautz received her law degree summa cum laude from the University of San Francisco, holds a Master of City Planning from the University of California, Berkeley, and is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Stanford University.

John Luebberke

Attorney, Herum\Crabtree\Suntag, LLP

John M. Luebberke has devoted the majority of his practice to representing cities and other public agencies concerning challenging litigation and transactional matters. Most recently Mr. Luebberke served as City Attorney for the City of Stockton for twelve years, before retiring in 2022 to return to private practice at Herum Crabtree Suntag.

Over nearly thirty years representing public agencies, public employees and elected leaders Mr. Luebberke has cultivated many strong and enduring relationships with clients and has developed a wide range of expertise that includes land use and development law, environmental law, water law and all aspects of the law governing the operation of public agencies and public utilities.

In the course of representing the City of Stockton as its City Attorney, John became a recognized expert in the Brown Act, Public Records Act, the Fair Political Practices Act, local election law, Proposition 218 and public utility rate setting. Mr. Luebberke also has more than twenty years of experience representing cities and (former) Redevelopment Agencies in real estate transactions, as well as Brownfield and environmental restoration and remediation efforts under the Polanco Act and AB 440.

The Great Recession presented John with a unique set of challenges few lawyers have the opportunity to encounter. These challenges included the legal processes of staff reduction (lay-offs), "effects" employee bargaining, employee benefits retraction, municipal bankruptcy and coordinating the City's strategy and efforts of a multiplicity of law firms and fiscal consultants. This experience

also involved drafting numerous important city charter amendments and guiding the City of Stockton as it established new tax revenue sources post-bankruptcy through local tax initiatives and a return to capital markets to finance essential new public facilities. Today Stockton is one of the most fiscally sound cities in America.

John has been instrumental in assisting clients through numerous diverse and important policy and legal issues over his nearly thirty years in public practice. Examples include negotiating and implementing the return of City of Stockton's water, sewer and storm drain utilities after a failed privatization agreement with OMI/Thames; representing the City of Stockton in city council redistricting during both the 2010 and 2020 cycles; drafting various amendments the City of Stockton Charter that restored compliance with voting rights laws and the drafting and implementing the first medical cannabis ordinance in San Joaquin County.

On behalf of his public agency and public employee clients Mr. Luebberke has been instrumental in resolving numerous and very serious litigation cases involving a wide range of legal issues. These have included matters in complex eminent domain disputes, civil rights law (ADA, free speech and section 1983), wrongful death, employment, public utility and public finance related matters in both state and federal court.

This perspective and experience can be valuable to private or public entities dealing with these types of sophisticated legal matters involving the delicate intersection of public and private interests.

In addition to many hours spent providing in-person educational content to client city councils, public employees, boards and commissions Mr. Luebberke

has also designed training curriculum on land use and development law, Brownfield redevelopment, the Brown Act, Public Records Act and mandatory conflict of interest and ethics training.

Dave Rand

Partner, Rand Paster & Nelson LLP

Dave Rand specializes in land use law and governmental regulatory matters. His expertise includes various aspects of the planning and entitlement process and navigating residential, industrial and commercial clients through the often difficult and cumbersome local land use approval and California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") compliance process.

Dave's practice has grown in recent years with a strong focus on mixed use and multi-family housing development. Dave has used his knowledge of constantly changing state and local housing regulations, including density bonus law, SB 35, SB 330, the Housing Accountability Act to lead his clients' housing projects through the dense regulatory thicket. Dave has obtained governmental approvals for thousands of market rate and affordable housing units throughout Southern California.

As a recognized expert in State and local housing regulations, Dave has testified in front of the State Assembly Housing Committee and spoken at various conferences on the topic of California's housing crisis. Dave has advised candidates and elected officials on matters related to State housing policy reform. In recognition of his experience and expertise in housing policy, Governor Newsom in 2019 nominated, and the State Senate confirmed, Dave to serve on the state California Housing Partnership Corporation ("CHPC") Board of Directors. CHPC is a leading advocacy organization and think tank at the forefront of advancing affordable housing opportunities in California. Dave also recently served as a member of both the City of Los Angeles and City of Santa Monica Housing Element Task Forces.

Dave's broader experience includes an extensive background in government, politics, and the local business community.

Sydne Rennie**Associate, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP**

A responsive and efficient attorney with deep public agency experience, Sydne Rennie helps clients navigate complex real estate and business legal matters with a holistic approach that balances big-picture results without losing sight of critical details. Her real estate practice centers on all aspects of real estate transactions and development projects, including leasing, acquisitions, dispositions and due diligence review. She also works with clients on a variety of core business needs like entity formation and drafting and negotiating contracts.

Sydne has experience representing diverse clients, from institutional developers to small businesses and individuals, in connection with various commercial real estate projects. Her work has included mixed-use projects, office projects, retail projects, industrial projects, and multifamily properties. She also has significant experience representing public agency clients in their real estate and business matters. Her public agency work includes assisting clients with real property dispositions subject to the Surplus Land Act, public works projects, procurement matters and general contracting.

Prior to Brownstein, Sydne was an associate at a prominent public agency law firm in California, where she represented public agency clients in real estate, construction, and business matters. She was also an extern with the California Coastal Commission and a legal intern at a boutique real estate firm in San Diego."

Sean Richmond**Senior Deputy City Attorney, Sacramento**

Since 2013, Mr. Richmond has defended the Sacramento Police Department and its personnel in cases arising under 42 U.S.C. section 1983. Practicing primarily in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California, he has tried multiple cases to verdict and has argued appeals before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. He has given numerous presentations to national audiences on topics such as Qualified Immunity, Monell Liability, and the preparation of discovery plans for 1983 cases.

Jennifer Rosner**Partner, Liebert Cassidy Whitmore**

Jennifer is a prolific litigator with an extensive background in lawsuits involving discrimination, harassment and retaliation, as well as disciplinary and due process issues. As a litigator, Jennifer has considerable experience with law enforcement issues, including the Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights Act, and in defending law enforcement agencies in officer discipline, Section 1983 claims and Pitchess Motion hearings. She has tried law enforcement lawsuits to verdict and/or judgment in state and federal court in cases involving claims for retaliation for exercising freedom of speech rights and union activities under 42 U.S.C. Section 1983 and false imprisonment. In one of her recent trials, Jennifer obtained a non-suit after nine-day jury trial involving a police officer who alleged numerous tort causes of action. Jennifer has been successful in obtaining summary judgment on behalf of clients in many of her litigation matters in both state and federal court and also has extensive appellate experience.

In addition to her work as a litigator, Jennifer represents clients in numerous administrative appeal hearings and has a strong record of success on behalf of the firm's clients in upholding their disciplinary decisions. Jennifer also frequently responds to requests from clients for advice and guidance in the areas of leave rights, disability interactive process, disability retirement, discipline, termination, Family Medical Leave Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, investigations, retaliation and discrimination. She also works extensively with local agencies on every facet of the disability accommodation process, including identifying disabilities, requesting medical documentation and evaluation, evaluating leave rights of disabled employees, engaging in the interactive process, identifying possible reasonable accommodations,

complying with applicable disability laws, and, when necessary, disability retirements. Jennifer is a prolific trainer on numerous employment law issues, including disability and the interactive process, industrial disability retirement, investigations, discipline, managing the marginal employment, the Fair Labor Standards Act, Ethics, harassment, discrimination and retaliation.

Nazanin Salehi**Associate Attorney, Goldfarb & Lipman LLP**

Nazanin Salehi practices in the areas of land use, municipal law, affordable housing and real estate. Ms. Salehi provides advice to public agencies on landlord-tenant policies, including rent stabilization and just cause for eviction, tenant relocation, anti-discrimination/retaliation/harassment, and rental registration. She currently serves as assistant general counsel to both the Mountain View Rental Housing Committee and the Pasadena Rental Housing Board.

She also advises public agency clients on related municipal law matters, including open meeting requirements under the Brown Act and disclosure requirements under the Public Records Act, and land use laws, such as Housing Element Law, the Housing Accountability Act, the Permit Streamlining Act, state density bonus law, SB 330, SB 9, SB 6 and AB 2011. She assists in complex land use litigation regarding new state housing laws.

Lastly, Ms. Salehi represents clients in all phases of the development process including property acquisition, entitlement and administrative approvals, CEQA compliance, fair housing compliance, and negotiating real estate disputes.

She received her B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, and her J.D. from The George Washington University Law School.

Matthew Slentz**Senior Counsel, Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, PC**

Matthew is Senior Counsel with Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley's litigation practice group. Matthew litigates a range of disputes for public agency clients in both trial and appellate courts, including suits involving land use, inverse condemnation, public utilities, and municipal finance. Prior to joining Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, Matthew served as Chief Deputy Public Defender for Stanislaus County.

Mary Strobel (Retired)

Signature Resolution

Judge Strobel served as a Superior Court Judge in Los Angeles from 2002 to 2023. For the last eight years, she presided over a specialized department focused on challenges to governmental action, handling over 200 writ trials. Her caseload included complex matters such as CEQA and Coastal Act challenges, land use disputes, public employment issues, and public office candidacy claims. Previously Judge Strobel had an all-purpose civil assignment, managing civil cases from complaint to resolution. She conducted dozens of court and jury trials including in the areas of contract dispute, employment, civil rights, insurance bad faith, and legal malpractice.

After graduating from the University of Southern California Law Center in 1983, where she was Order of the Coif and a member of the Law Review editorial board, Judge Strobel began her legal career as an associate with Mitchell, Silberberg & Knupp, with an emphasis on state and federal business litigation. From there, she joined the Santa Monica City Attorney's Office, where she worked for 12 years as deputy city attorney and senior land use attorney, advising the planning commission, council, and city departments on land use regulation, conflicts of interest, open meeting law compliance, environmental laws, and related regulations. Judge Strobel later became staff counsel and deputy director for the City of Los Angeles Charter Reform Commission. In this capacity, she drafted comprehensive revisions to the Charter of the City of Los Angeles and supervised legal staff in research, drafting, and preparing Commission presentations. Before being appointed to the bench in 2002, Judge Strobel was an assistant city attorney for the City of Los Angeles, where she worked on unique legal matters related to the proposed secession of the Valley, Hollywood and Harbor areas from the City.

Judge Strobel served as an adjunct professor at USC School of Law from 2013 to 2019 teaching trial advocacy and was also an instructor for civil matters for the Administrative Office of the Courts, which provides education for California judges statewide.

Judge Strobel served as chair of the Superior Court civil education committee and the Court Rules Committee and is a past member of the Executive Committee. Beyond the court, Judge Strobel was a board member of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers (ABTL) and executive board of the Los Angeles County Bar Litigation section, and a presenter for the Rutter Group on Administrative Agency law.

Judge Strobel joined Signature Resolution as a mediator and arbitrator in 2023.

Karen Tiedemann**Partner, Goldfarb & Lipman LLP**

Ms. Tiedemann is a partner at Goldfarb & Lipman with an emphasis of practice in affordable housing, real estate transactions, community economic development and nonprofit organizations. Ms. Tiedemann represents numerous public agencies in the negotiation and drafting of disposition and development agreement and statutory development agreements for complex developments involving multiple uses. She also advises clients on compliance with environmental laws, including shepherding developments through CEQA. Additionally, as general or special counsel to several public agencies, Ms. Tiedemann provides advice on compliance with the Brown Act, the Fair Political Practices Act and the Public Records Act.

Elizabeth Tom Arce**Partner, Liebert Cassidy Whitmore**

Liz is an accomplished advocate with experience litigating a wide array of labor and employment cases in state and federal trial and appellate courts. Liz has successfully represented employers in matters ranging from single plaintiff lawsuits to wage and hour class and collective actions. Her litigation experience includes numerous successful summary judgment motions, defeating class certification, and decertifying collective actions. Liz's litigation practice also includes handling matters in arbitration and before administrative agencies where she has been effective at obtaining favorable results for the firm's clients.

When she is not defending litigation matters, Liz advises employers on a wide range of diverse employment matters such as wage and hour, disability accommodations, public safety, employee discipline, disability retirements, and anti-discrimination, harassment and retaliation laws. At the center of her employment counseling practice is auditing employer policies and practices for compliance with wage and hour laws such as the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Liz is also a dynamic trainer who is motivated by her commitment to the firm's clients and her passion for employment law. She draws from her litigation experience during her presentations to educate and encourage employers to take preventative measures to reduce exposure to liability and costly litigation. In addition to presenting to the firm's consortiums, Liz also frequently speaks at regional, statewide and national conferences on a variety of employment-related topics.

Liz co-authored Chapter 4 (Leaves of Absence) of the California Public Sector Employment Law practice guide (Matthew Bender 2011). Articles authored by

Liz have also appeared in leading publications in the legal industry and for public employers.

Prior to joining Liebert Cassidy Whitmore, Liz was a litigator in the Los Angeles office of an international law firm where she represented businesses of all sizes in employment and commercial litigation matters.

Professional Involvement

Liz currently serves as the 2024 -2025 Los Angeles County Bar Association Labor & Employment Law Section Vice Chair.

Thomas Webber**Partner, Goldfarb & Lipman LLP**

Mr. Webber represents numerous public agencies and nonprofit developers on mixed-use and commercial projects. He has negotiated and drafted disposition and development agreements, loan documents, and ground leases for complex mixed-use developments, including finance documents for new markets tax credit transactions. Mr. Webber's work in this area involves structuring complex development transactions involving public and private partnerships, advising clients on public and private financing structures and all aspects of development issues, including CEQA-related and real property security issues. He also advises and represents public agencies on rent control, tenant evictions, and has drafted and advised on rent stabilization ordinances and related landlord-tenant policies, such as anti-harassment and tenant screening.

Curtis Wright

Managing Partner, Serviam by Wright LLP

Curtis Wright is a municipal litigator, a city prosecutor, a city attorney, special counsel to cities and counties throughout California, a court receiver, a certified code enforcement officer, and the founding and managing partner of Serviam by Wright LLP. Mr. Wright specializes in assisting cities and counties with municipal litigation, nuisance abatement, code enforcement, receiverships, cost recovery, and numerous other tangential areas of law. He has successfully represented municipal agencies throughout the State in Civil, criminal, and administrative, litigation, rehabilitated numerous extremely dangerous properties that threaten and have taken the lives of the public, and has secured hundreds of receivership appointments and convictions for substandard and blighted nuisance properties. In addition, he has also pioneered new and efficient methods of improving nuisance abatement effectiveness and maximizing municipal cost recovery.

Mr. Wright has been published multiple times on various legal topics and has taught hundreds of classes and led numerous presentations on various aspects of municipal law, receiverships, cannabis regulation, nuisance abatement, code enforcement, and cost recovery. Mr. Wright earned his Juris Doctorate magna cum laude from the University of La Verne College of Law, and his undergraduate degree from the University of Southern California. Prior to his legal career, Curtis was a Captain, Ranger, and combat veteran in the United States Army where he was deployed to Iraq as a platoon leader in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Mr. Wright is second generation law enforcement and hails from a long line of public servants. Curtis is proud to continue the tradition of serving local government to protect the public and improve our communities.

Curtis also has two young boys, and is a proud Head Coach of their champion football team!