

Daily Journal

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TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA

EDITORS' NOTE

This is the 15th year the *Daily Journal* has published a list of California's 100 leading lawyers. Our goal has always been to compile the purest list possible while understanding that it could never be scientifically accurate. Dozens of worthy lawyers' names are left in the cutting room every year in an often-wrenching process.

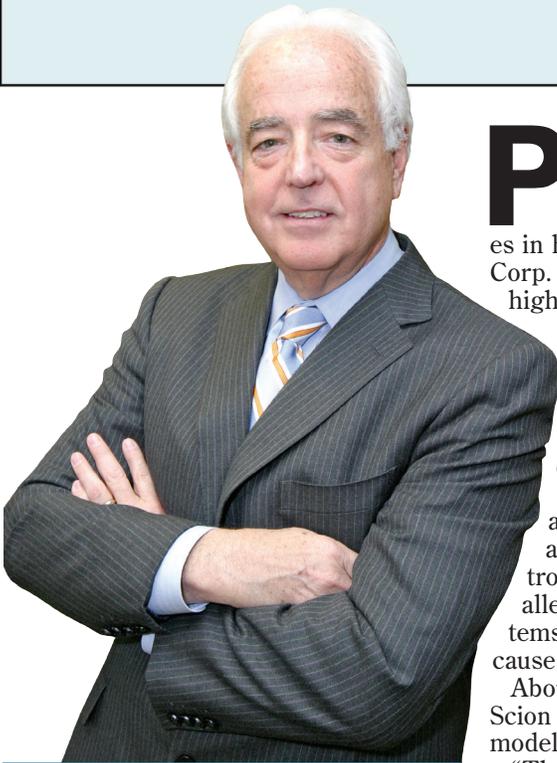
In compiling our list, we look for lawyers who moved the needle, had an impact on the legal industry, our state, the nation and the world. This isn't a popularity contest. In fact, some of the lawyers we honor represent very unpopular causes and institutions, but they are skilled practitioners.

We considered more than 1,000 attorneys this year. Our staff of reporters—the largest of any legal publication in the nation—researched candidates' recent work and made their arguments to editors.

As you read through this issue, we think you'll agree that the result is a pretty impressive group of lawyers who are working on some of the weightiest issues of the day in all corners of the globe.

— David Houston, Editor

Thomas J. Nolan



Thomas J. Nolan

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates

Los Angeles

Litigation

Specialty: Complex Commercial

Putting a face on a major corporation — especially one connected with human tragedy — is a challenge, and it's one that Nolan faces in his representation of Toyota Motor Corp. and Toyota Motor Sales USA Inc. in high-profile and ongoing litigation.

As lead trial counsel for Toyota in the economic loss phases of the case, Nolan, along with his team, are defending their clients in hundreds of individual and putative class-action lawsuits.

Plaintiffs claim economic damages arising from Toyota's sales and marketing of vehicles with electronic throttle control systems. They allege Toyota's vehicles with such systems have a concealed defect that can cause unintended acceleration.

About 8.6 million Toyota, Lexus and Scion vehicles across 33 models and 12 model years are targeted in the litigation.

"The challenge in this type of high-profile case is to get the jury to focus on the extensive scientific and technical evidence which disproves plaintiffs' claims," Nolan said.

But also key to communicating with jurors, he added, is to put a human face on the corporation.

"Toyota is a company made up of hun-

dreds of thousands of employees around the globe, who show up to work everyday," said Nolan, chairman of Skadden's West Coast litigation practice. "We focus on the individuals who make the company work — the designers, the engineers."

More than 400 individual and class-action lawsuits have been consolidated into multidistrict litigation pending before Judge James V. Selna in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. *In re Toyota Motor Corp. Unintended Acceleration Marketing, Sales Practices and Products Liability Litigation*, 8:10ML2151 (C.D. Cal., filed April 12, 2010).

In addition to the MDL litigation, there are more than 100 California state court actions that have been consolidated in a Judicial Council Coordinated Proceeding before Judge Anthony J. Mohr in Los Angeles County Superior Court. *In re Toyota Motor Cases*, JCCP 4621 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed March 22, 2010).

Among them is the first bellwether case scheduled for trial on Nov. 1.

In this matter, the plaintiff contends that his 2008 Toyota Tundra truck had a malfunctioning electronic control system that caused it to lurch. He is alleging breach of warranty, lemon law, unfair competition and claims under California's consumer legal act.

— Pat Broderick