

Daily Journal

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Top 75 Labor and Employment Attorneys



The *Daily Journal's* first special issue devoted to Labor & Employment was published three years ago with a cover that read: "Waiting for Brinker." That headline was an acknowledgement that the development of employment law had grown stagnant despite being a practice that consumes vast court time and resources. Even in California, the nation's hotbed for cutting edge (businesses might say edge cutting) employment litigation, the development of the law wasn't progressing.

2012 changed all of that.

In February, California's 1st District Court of Appeal issued a strongly worded opinion in *Duran v. U.S. Bank National Association* that gave crucial guidance on certification of class actions in wage and hour misclassification litigation. Two months later, on April 12, the California Supreme Court issued its long-awaited and seminal ruling in *Brinker v. Superior Court* that provided guidance on the issue of meal and rest breaks. On April 30, the California Supreme Court was at it again. This time, in *Kirby v. Immoos Fire Protection Inc.*, the justices said violations of meal and rest breaks do not provide a basis for statutory attorney fees to the prevailing party.

For the lawyers on the *Daily Journal's* list of top practitioners in California everything has changed and nothing has changed. Employment has been and will remain one of the busiest areas of the law – despite the recent rulings, most experts believe. What's different is the lawyers now have some new tools with which to work their craft.

— The Editors



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Karen L. Corman

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significant achievement because, as is often the case, if you can avoid the filing of the litigation, that's the best outcome," said Corman, who defends employers against wage-and-hour, discrimination, harassment and overtime litigation.

"They don't look to be in front of juries. Emotionally it's not the best avenue," Corman said. "What I've enjoyed over the last year is being able to accomplish very sensitive employee separations in a manner that made sense to most sides."

Her recent successes contrast with past years where the goal has been to negotiate positive, class-wide settlements quickly.

Keeping clients out of litigation through proactive strategies is not all that Corman has worked on this past year. She's also done M&A work, a large part of what

Skadden takes on. She represented semiconductor company Broadcom Corp. in the employment aspects of its acquisition of network chip processor maker Broadlight Inc. in April.

But for Corman, a part of what makes her work so rewarding is its diversity.

"The variety of the employment practice here at Skadden has been consistently varied and consistently satisfying. It's been true since day one," Corman said. "Because of our diverse client base, it makes for a great deal of diversity in my practice."

When not working for Skadden, Corman, alongside other attorneys, volunteers through the Civil Referee Assisted Settlement Hearing (CRASH) program at the Los Angeles Superior Court, which takes on volunteers to act as settlement officers.

"We donate a day or multiple days to being over at the courthouse and working together to help the party settle the case," she said of the lawyers who participate in CRASH. "That has been good for the parties, but also good for the employment bar as it's fostered a sense of community and a sense of respect."

— Andrew McIntyre

Corman can claim a perfect track record of helping clients avoid litigation over the past year.

"The fact that there have been no filed cases the last year is a