

Daily Journal

SEPTEMBER 27, 2011

TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA

EDITORS' NOTE

From the mortgage crisis to the Gulf oil spill to virtually every major intellectual property dispute, California lawyers are playing leading roles. But they don't just clean up big messes. They secure funding and regulatory approval for cutting-edge developments in water, energy, technology and biotechnology that are the promise of the future.

We aim for this list to be a kaleidoscope of the California legal scene. There are divorce attorneys and public finance lawyers, prosecutors and criminal defenders and much, much more.

We reviewed hundreds of nominations from members of the legal community and from our own editors and reporters to compile this list. It is never an easy task — the list isn't long enough — but it is fun. Read on. We know you'll enjoy learning about these people as much as we did.

— The Editors

BRIAN J. MCCARTHY



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Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP
Los Angeles
Practice type: Corporate Transactions
Specialty: Mergers and Acquisitions

Humility is a rare quality for a lawyer who produces multibillion-dollar deals for a living. McCarthy, however, doesn't have a problem talking about his first merger deal that he confessed slipped through his fingers.

"I had no idea what I was doing," McCarthy recalled of the potential merger he was assigned as an associate in 1978 between two chemical companies — Celanese Corporation and Olin Corporation. "Everyone was talking in Greek. People asked me to go do things, and I had to leave the room and ask people what it was that I was supposed to do."

The deal, valued at approximately \$1.5 billion, never played out. But remaining eager to take on big projects, McCarthy's career did.

This year, he was lead counsel for National Health Properties (NHP), a Newport Beach-based real estate investment trust (REIT), in its \$7.4 billion acquisition by Ventas, Inc., an S&P 500 company and health care REIT. The resultant company invests primarily in health care real estate, with properties in 47 states, the District of Columbia and two Canadian provinces.

"That's why they call it the practice of law," McCarthy said. "You just keep practicing. You work with people who are older and have more experience, and you pick it up."

— Casey Sullivan