

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

ROMAN M. SILBERFELD

The high-profile \$320 million verdict against ABC and Buena Vista Television last year has helped change the way the entertainment community is viewing profit-participation deals, said Silberfeld, who was lead trial counsel for Celador International Ltd. in the dispute.

At issue was the contention of Celador, a U.K. production company, that Walt Disney Co. and its subsidiaries cheated Celador out of its share of licensing fee profits from the hit TV show it created, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire." Originally aired in the U.K., the show was brought over to the U.S. in 1999.

The case focused on the manner and propriety of studio accounting practices when creative entities and individuals share in the success of television and film projects. *Celador International Inc. v. American Broadcasting Cos. Inc.*, CV-04-3541 VAP (C.D. Cal.).

Verdicts, such as Celador, have sent a message to artists to look more closely at profit statements to see if they're getting fair accountings, Silberfeld said.

"We've had quite a number of inquiries over the course of last year, saying, 'Would you look at ours?'" he added.

"There is a definite uptick in the number of these cases being filed," he said. "In part, people are feeling more bullish in their opportunity for success. But it's still extraordinarily difficult and takes time and money and resolve to succeed in these cases."

Celador had all of this, Silberfeld said.

"That is part of the reason we succeeded," he added. "We had an incredible set of clients who not only thought they were right but had the financial and emotional staying power to see it through to the end."

The defendants are appealing the judgment.

— Pat Broderick



ROMAN M. SILBERFELD

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Practice type: Litigation
Specialty: Complex Civil Cases