

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

Jennifer L. Keller



Jennifer L. Keller

Keller Rackauckas LLP

Irvine

Litigation

Specialty: Business Litigation

Jennifer L. Keller is ready to move on from her star turn in helping MGA Entertainment Inc. defeat Mattel Inc. in the Bratz case. But it is not over yet, as an insurance dispute is keep-

ing the lawsuits coming.

Keller, business litigation specialist at Irvine-based Keller Rackauckas LLP, was lead counsel for California toymaker MGA in the "*Barbie vs. Bratz*" retrial.

Mattel alleged that MGA had stolen the company's intellectual property by way of hiring away one of its employees. A federal judge in Santa Ana found last year that MGA was the rightful owner of the trademarked Bratz dolls and the company was awarded \$310 million in damages and attorney fees.

"Having that part resolved was a big relief," Keller said. "It's been a horrible hardship for the company. It's hard for a company to not know what is going to happen to a brand."

But the initial claim spurred months more of other litigation — MGA's insurers filed a complaint against the company claiming they were owed a cut of the \$140 million attorney fees awarded in the case.

Most recently, MGA filed a claim last month against three of its insurers, alleging the insurance companies are not owed a cut of the award and acted in bad faith when they refused to defend MGA in the litigation with Mattel. In the initial battle with Mattel, MGA sued its own insurers to force them to provide a legal defense for the company.

"It was fun for me because I had never been exposed to insurance bad-faith litigation," Keller said. "I really like learning new things and getting involved with something I never have before."

Though the litigation with MGA put Keller on the map last year, she is eager to get into other big cases, and has been keeping busy in the meantime. Next month, Keller will be the lead counsel for MGA in a trial against National Products Ltd., a Hong Kong-based licensee of MGA that allegedly violated the terms of the license agreement with MGA by improperly selling merchandise it was not entitled to sell. Keller said damages could be in the \$10 million range.

"It's not the most glamorous case, but it's an important one," she said. "It's important because of what it stands for: A company needs to be able to rely on the contract it signs with its licensees."

And for an attorney who is no stranger to big verdicts, Keller is picky about what cases she takes on. She said she wants to always feel good about what she does.

"I want a case that's large, complex, interesting, and that has a potentially large-dollar closure," Keller said, describing her ideal case. "But I also want something intangible; I want a case where I can make a difference."

— Alexandra Schwappach