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TOP BOUTIQUES 2018

COMMERCIAL LITIGATION

Keller/ Anderle LLP

IRVINE • LOS ANGELES

Name partner Jennifer L. Keller said she and firm co-founder Kay Anderle keep their 15-lawyer shop driven toward courtroom outcomes. “We have decided to focus on significant matter high-value cases with a substantial likelihood of going to trial,” Keller said.

As if to prove it, she and colleagues in their Irvine offices recently had just been notified that a Los Angeles County Superior Court jury was back and about to announce its verdict in the case of a Keller/Anderle client. Firm partner Jesse A. Gessin, a former deputy public defender, was in court representing a wealthy orthopedic surgeon suing his trusts and estates attorneys and his daughter for legal malpractice, elder abuse, fraud and breach of fiduciary duty on claims the defendants defrauded him out of his \$15 million estate.

“Jesse has 26 jury trials to verdict,” Keller said, “and he teaches trial advocacy at UC Irvine School of Law.” The firm recently hired Reuben Camper Cahn, the former federal public defender for the Southern District. “He has more than 100 jury verdict cases and he’s argued twice before the U.S. Supreme Court,” Keller added. “We have found that former public defenders have no trouble transitioning to civil practice. They handle trials from nose to tail.”



Sam Diephuis / Special to the Daily Journal

From left, Kay Anderle, Michael Schachter, Shaun Hoting, Jeremy Stamelman, Nahal Kazemi, Anand Sambhwani, Jennifer Keller, Jay Barron, Ryan Fisher, Chase Scolnick, Stephanie Lind, Thomas Kao, Jesse Gessin and Reuben Camper Cahn of Keller/Anderle LLP.

Keller/Anderle began building the firm in 2002, Anderle said. Now, with more than 400 cases tried to jury verdict, the partners and their team have reaped more than \$925 million in verdicts and judgments for plaintiff clients and successfully defended others. “We thrive on the tough cases: the ones where a company, fortune or liberty are on the line,” she said

Clients include Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co., the City of Costa Mesa, American International Group Inc., Microsoft Inc., and MGA Entertainment. Last year Keller achieved a full acquittal for real estate developer Jeffrey Burum in an epic bribery prosecution in San Bernardino County over a \$102 million deal.

People v. Burum, FSB1102102 (San Bernardino Super. Ct., filed May 9, 2011).

Awaiting a verdict, though routine, can be tough, Keller said. “You’re wearing holes in the carpet. Having a jury out is the least fun. It’s like being a woman in labor — and I can say that, having been a woman in labor.”

The Los Angeles jury announced its decision: \$3.6 million for Dr. John L. Howard against the trusts and estates lawyers for malpractice and constructive fraud. “A nice verdict for our young lawyers,” Keller said. She had hoped for more, but the jury did not find the doctor’s daughter liable. “We have a lot of appealable issues,” she said. A few days later, the

case settled. *Howard v. Howard*, EC066357 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed April 10, 2017).

Anderle said the firm excels in part because “we formulate and execute super efficient trial plans from start to finish. Our eye is always on the trial, looking for results, not stacking the bills up. The verdict today is small by our standards, but if Jennifer and I like the case, we take it. We wanted to help Dr. Howard out, not because his case fit our model. We’re attorneys with heart.”

Keller attributes the firm’s successes in part to its young, enthusiastic team members. “Kay and I joke that we have managed to put together a firm that wouldn’t even interview us,” she said.

— John Roemer