



Nahal Kazemi
Senior Counsel

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Education

Harvard Law School, J.D., *cum laude*, 2004
Harvard International Law Journal, Executive Editor
Harvard College, A.B., Government, *magna cum laude*, 2001

Practice Areas

Trials
Commercial Litigation
Insurance Recovery/Bad Faith
White Collar Criminal Defense
Legal Malpractice

Admissions

State Bar of California
State Bar of New York
Court of Appeals for the Second and Ninth Circuits
U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
U.S. District Court for the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York

Experience

Nahal Kazemi combines a strong background in broad, high-stakes litigation with extensive experience as a diplomat.

Since joining Keller/Anderle, Nahal has achieved outstanding results for her clients in major litigation matters, including successfully defending the City of Costa Mesa in federal litigation brought against it by sober living businesses. Nahal and the Keller/Anderle team representing the City were honored with a “2019 *California Lawyer* Attorneys of the Year” award for their victory in that case, which was also named one of the top defense verdicts of 2018 by the *Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journal*. Nahal worked closely with appellate counsel to defend this victory on appeal. In September 2021, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the jury’s verdict. Nahal was selected by Super Lawyers® as a Rising Star for Business Litigation in 2020 and as a Super Lawyer for Business Litigation in 2022.

On behalf of a plaintiff insurance agency, Nahal and the Keller/Anderle team obtained a highly-favorable settlement in a breach of good faith action. The case was resolved after mediation following aggressive litigation in Orange County Superior Court.

In a breach of contract and bad faith case brought by a major fitness equipment company in Superior Court in Los Angeles County, Nahal and the Keller/Anderle team achieved a full victory on summary judgment.

Nahal drafted and successfully litigated the emergency temporary restraining order application on behalf of the City of Costa Mesa that led the state and federal governments to abandon their plan to use a dilapidated and unsuitable former assisted living facility as a coronavirus isolation site. The case drew national media attention to the inadequate planning and lack of state and federal coordination with county and local authorities in addressing the coronavirus threat.

For five years, Nahal was an attorney at Davis Polk & Wardwell in New York, where she litigated against the Department of Justice and Securities and Exchange Commission on behalf of her client, a major engineering firm, on allegations it violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act; successfully defended a “Big Four” accounting firm in an investigation into derivatives and hedge accounting issues, among others; and successfully represented a major European bank in litigation involving its acquisition of a U.S. Bank in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

In her *pro bono* work, Nahal has obtained political asylum for numerous applicants fleeing persecution and political oppression, assisted holocaust survivors in claiming reparations, represented victims of domestic violence in obtaining orders of protection, successfully defended indigent tenants in unlawful detainer actions, and taught the Columbia University Immigration Law Clinic. She sits on the Board of Directors of WisePlace, Orange County’s only homeless shelter for unaccompanied women.

Nahal also served as a foreign service officer for the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C., Budapest, Hungary; Baghdad, Iraq; and Casablanca, Morocco. During her years with the State Department she developed a deep expertise in consular, political, and political-military affairs, including crisis management, democratization, human rights, countering violent extremism, multilateral diplomacy, U.S. security cooperation programs, emerging security challenges, and civil-military relations.

Nahal received her J.D. in 2004 from Harvard Law School, cum laude, where she was Executive Editor of the *Harvard International Law Journal*. She earned her A.B. in Government from Harvard College *magna cum laude* in 2001. As an undergraduate she won a John Harvard Scholarship for Academic Excellence and the Harvard College Scholarship for Academic Excellence. Nahal also was a member of the Women’s Varsity Water Polo team.

She teaches civil practice foundations as an adjunct professor at Chapman University’s Fowler School of Law, speaks at conferences locally and nationally, and has authored several articles in business and legal publications.

Nahal speaks fluent Farsi, Arabic and Hungarian, and conversational Spanish and French.

Testimonials

“Nahal immediately grasped the key issues, mastered the details, and treated my case like it was as important to her as it was to me. She helped me achieve an outstanding resolution to my case.”

– *Hugh Pham, CEO, Western Insurance Marketing Corporation*

Honors & Awards

- *Los Angeles Magazine*, Southern California Super Lawyers® for Business Litigation (2022)
- *Los Angeles Magazine*, Southern California Super Lawyers® Rising Star for Business Litigation (2020)
- *California Lawyer Magazine* CLAY Award (*California Lawyer* Attorneys of the Year), Municipal Law (2019)
- *The Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journals*, “Top Defense Verdicts” (2018)
- Fellow, National Defense University’s Program for Emerging Leaders
- Naval War College 2016 Foreign Service Officers Association Prize for Outstanding Writing (2016), First Prize
- Naval War College 2016 Admiral Richard G. Colbert Prize for Outstanding Writing
- State Department Meritorious Honor Award, 2017, 2014
- State Department Group Meritorious Honor Award, 2014
- State Department Superior Honor Award, 2013, 2012

Professional Activities

- Harvard Law School Association – Orange County Chapter President
- Harvard Law School Association Women’s Alliance – Orange County Chapter President
- Orange County Bar Association, Business Litigation Section
- Iranian American Bar Association, Orange County Chapter
- Pacific Council on International Policy

Community Involvement

- Vice President for Governance, Board of Directors, WisePlace

Representative Matters

- Representing three insurers from the AIG family of insurance companies, in retrial of claims for breach of contract, bad faith, and punitive damages brought by Victaulic Company.
- Defending a major semiconductor manufacturer in \$500 million lawsuit by housing developer alleging it violated lease terms for its factory due to excessive noise.
- Represented I-Hsin Chen, a shipping container warehouse magnate, who was indicted by the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the “Varsity Blues” college admissions scandal.
- Obtained favorable settlement for plaintiff client suing Fortune 1000 insurance company for breach of the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing.
- Successfully represented former head of USA Swimming and Coach of US Olympic Swim Team on civil lawsuit alleging negligent supervision of an assistant. Lawsuit was dismissed by plaintiff after intense litigation.
- Achieved full defense verdict on all claims for the City of Costa Mesa in federal fair housing and disabilities law case brought by sober living businesses challenging the City’s right to set minimum health and safety standards for rehabilitation residences.
- Achieved full defense victory on summary judgment for major insurance company in bad faith litigation brought in California state court.
- Obtained emergency restraining order in federal court, preventing the state and federal governments from using a rundown building the state had declared unfit for human habitation as a coronavirus treatment facility.
- Defended a major international engineering firm in connection with Department of Justice and Securities and Exchange Commission investigations into allegations of corruption and violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.
- Defended a “Big Four” accounting firm in a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation regarding derivatives and hedge accounting, revenue recognition, and project accounting issues.
- Successfully represented a major European bank in litigation arising from the acquisition of a regional U.S. bank immediately following the 2008 financial crisis.

Speaking Engagements

- Harvard Law School Association of Orange County, “The Future of Affirmative Action in Higher Education,” moderator (May 25, 2022 webinar)
- Northern District Practice Panel, “Civil Justice and the ADA,” panel discussion with R. Grewal, R. Williford, and T. Lange (November 9, 2021).
- Pacific Council on International Policy, “The Future of US-Israeli Relations,” moderator (June 12, 2020 webinar)
- Orange County City Attorneys’ Association, “Reasonable Regulations of Sober Living Homes: The Costa Mesa Case Study,” panel with Michael Schachter (April 18, 2019, Costa Mesa, CA)
- National Association of Women Lawyers, 15th General Counsel Institute, “Eliminating Bias and Leveraging Diversity: Lessons for Lawyers from War and Diplomacy,” panel with Jennifer Keller (November 7, 2019, New York, NY)

Publications

- “Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine: It’s Not About NATO” (*Pacific Council Magazine*, March 2022)
- “The Non-Controversy Over Birthright Citizenship: Defending the Original Understanding of Jus Soli Citizenship” (*Chapman Law Review*, November 2020) (with M. Stock)
- “Leveraging Diversity: Lessons from War and Diplomacy,” (*Orange County Business Journal*, October 14, 2019)
- “Illiberal Democracy’s Challenge to European Security Policy” (*The Foreign Area Officer Association Journal of International Affairs*, Volume XIX, Number 2, p. 54, Fall 2016)
- “Justifications for Universal Jurisdiction: Shocking the Conscience Is not Enough” (*49 Tulsa L. Rev. 1*, 2013)
- “Lowering the Bar: The Unanticipated Consequences of the Trademark Dilution Revision Act for Search Engine Advertising” (*J. of Internet L.*, Nov. 2005) (with R. Skibell)
- “Ill at Ease: The Precarious State of the Biological Weapons Convention’s Proposed Enforcement Regime” (*17 Florida J. of Int’l L. 137*, 2005)
- “Prospects for Justice and Reconciliation in Sierra Leone” (*44 Harvard Int’l L. J. 287*, 2003) (with L. Hall)
- *Foreign and International Source Citations*, The Bluebook: Uniform System of Citation (18th Ed) (with E. Sherwin)

Media

- February 22, 2020 – Costa Mesa Officials Address Growing Concerns Over Possible Transfer Of Up To 50 Coronavirus Patients To City
- March 27, 2019 – “Daily Journal” CLAY Award profile – “Writing the legal blueprint for cities as it relates to sober-living homes”

Languages

- Farsi, Arabic and Hungarian (fluent); Spanish and French (conversational)