

# Daily Journal

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## TOP BOUTIQUES 2023



FROM LEFT: Paul Chan, Benjamin Gluck, Julia Cherlow, Ekwan Rhow, Ariel Neuman and Nicole Rodriguez Van Dyk.

### Bird, Marella, Boxer, Wolpert, Nessim, Dooks, Lincenberg & Rhow, P.C.

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**T**he firm name is a mouthful, even though most know it simply as Bird Marella. Its current leaders respect the long list of early principals named in the full moniker: Bird, Marella, Boxer, Wolpert, Nessim, Dooks, Lincenberg & Rhow, P.C.

Decades after its founding in 1981, some remain active even as young attorneys come aboard. "There's no other L.A. firm that's been able to achieve the generational development we have," said co-founder Terry W. Bird. "Looking ahead to the next generation has always been part of our dynamic."

Today, the 46-lawyer litigation boutique's civil and white collar experience spans virtually every contentious commercial issue to arise in the past 40 years, from antitrust, insider trading, RICO, health care and environmental matters to consumer class actions, entertainment disputes, intellectual property and internet commerce litigation.

The firm was established by former assistant U.S. attorneys Bird and Vincent J. Marella; civil litigator Joel E. Boxer; former U.S. District Court Judge A. Howard Matz of Los Angeles; and Dorothy Wolpert, one of the first women name partners of the era. As the firm grew, it added additional

name principals: Ronald J. Nessim, Mark T. Dooks, Gary S. Lincenberg and Ekwan E. Rhow.

"We do the opposite of whatever branding advice a lot of firms are getting these days," said litigator Paul S. Chan, the managing principal. "All the early names are still at the firm, though not all are practicing. We are proud to have managed the succession smoothly. It's a source of our strength."

Chan joined Bird Marella 24 years ago, arriving as a fourth-year associate from Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP. "I wanted to maintain a high level of sophisticated practice while working side by side with these excellent colleagues," he said. "I wanted a long-term career here. I was looking, and when you see it, you know it."

Currently, the firm represents Brad Pitt in his multi-jurisdictional \$250 million lawsuits pending in Los Angeles, Luxembourg and France against his ex-wife, Angelina Jolie, and others over the parties' interests in a French winery, Chateau Miraval. *William B. Pitt and Mondo Bongo LLC v. Angelina Jolie et al.*, 22STCV06081 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed Feb. 17, 2022).

"This one is very heavily litigated and currently in discovery," Chan said.

In another battle of headline names, in May 2023, Bird Marella won a motion to quash for television personality Lauren Sanchez and her partner, Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos, over subpoenas issued by Sanchez's brother Michael Sanchez. That skirmish was part of Michael's defamation suit over allegedly leaked deposition information; earlier, the firm won an anti-SLAPP motion alleging extortion and emotional distress against the firm's clients. At one point, Sanchez and Bezos were awarded \$218,000 in legal fees against the brother. *Michael Sanchez v. Lauren Sanchez et al.*, 23SMCP00011 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed Jan. 3, 2023).

"When someone gets famous and comes into money, there are often claimants," Chan said. "So far, we have fended him off."

In November 2022, the firm won a complete defense verdict after less than a day of jury deliberations following a three-week trial for a health care apparel and lifestyle brand FIGS in a nine-figure false advertising case. *Strategic Partners Inc. v. FIGS, Inc. et al.*, 2:19-cv-02286 (C.D. Cal., filed March 27, 2019).

"I tell folks there's nowhere else I'd rather be practicing," Chan said. "It's been great being here."

— John Roemer