

# Daily Journal



COVER STORY

SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

## TOP 100 LAWYERS OF 2009

The Daily Journal compiled its first list of the leading lawyers in California in 1997. It quickly became a key indicator of who is doing the most cutting edge legal work in California. Our criteria then and now are simple: You must be based in California, and your work must have a broad impact on the legal profession or the larger society over the past 18 months. Our selection process is similarly simple: We solicit nominations from lawyers, judges and corporate counsel. This year, we received 850 nominations. We also poll our editors and reporters who write about California lawyers and their work year-round. From there, a list that represents

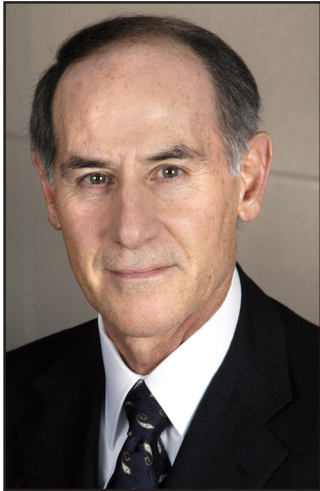
a broad cross section of California lawyers and their work begins to take shape.

This year's list features lawyers making impacts in their neighborhoods and throughout the world. One honoree helped launch precedent-setting clean tech deals from his Silicon Valley office, while another aids the less fortunate from her Compton storefront. Yet another assists countries worldwide navigate the complexities of global water issues. There are civil rights advocates, counselors to corporations and California Chief Justice Ronald M. George, who we can all

agree — no matter what your stance on gay marriage — issued a monumental decision in May 2008. In *Re: Marriage Cases*, (2008) 43 Cal.4th 757. This list is by no means comprehensive. California is fortunate to have hundreds of sharp lawyers who are putting their stamp on all manner of the law and society. But it is a good snapshot of the best and brightest California and the legal profession have to offer.

*David Houston*  
Editor

*Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journals*



**Larry W. Sonsini, 68**

Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, Palo Alto  
Corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions

Sonsini remains active both in representing companies in big-money deals and on the corporate governance front. He represented Genentech Inc. in its \$48 billion sale to Roche Holding. He also represented Sun Microsystems Inc. in its \$7.4 billion sale this year to Oracle Corp. In addition to those big deals, Sonsini was busy this summer representing Wind River Systems Inc. in its \$884 million acquisition by Intel Corp. He also represents Varian Inc. in its \$1.5 billion acquisition by Agilent Technologies Inc., which is awaiting government approval. The firm's longtime chairman, Sonsini recently was named chairman of a New York Stock Exchange independent advisory commission set up to examine corporate governance practices and the overall proxy process.

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