

Daily Journal

SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

Top 100 Lawyers 2025



Mark R. Yohalem

Wilson Sonsini Goodrich
& Rosati
Los Angeles

Mark Yohalem graduated from law school in 2005, clerked on the 9th Circuit and U.S. Supreme Court, and began practicing law in 2007. His career path emerged from a simple choice between two professions that appealed to him. “My whole life, I only seriously considered two careers: teaching or the law,” Yohalem said. “Both are ways that a person can help bring stability and fairness to situations where chaos, force and inequality would otherwise win out.”

The law won out over teaching for practical reasons — it proved easier to navigate

law school admissions than to secure a position teaching English. Since then, Yohalem has built a practice handling complex legal questions that span multiple fields.

His cases have addressed technical issues including how hearing records may be prepared, when internet platforms face liability for third-party actions, governmental immunity for state university hospitals and shareholder voting rights in director exculpation contexts. Despite their technical nature, Yohalem sees a common thread running through his work.

“At bottom, however, they all concern how to reconcile competing interests in the context of complex systems,” he said.

Currently, Yohalem represents four California superior courts in a case pending before the Supreme Court of California that exemplifies this principle. The case stems from California’s court reporter shortage, which has left hundreds of thousands of hearings without verbatim records. *Family Violence Appellate Project v. Superior Courts of California*, S288176 (Cal. S. Ct., filed Dec. 4, 2024).

Many of these proceedings involve fundamental rights and issues of significance to the parties, particularly in family law matters.

The situation creates a legal paradox. “As the familiar aphorism ‘no record, no appeal’ indicates, however, the losing parties in such hearings are often left without further recourse despite their nominal right to appeal,” Yohalem said.

To address this crisis, the Los Angeles Superior Court issued an order permitting electronic recording when court reporters are unavailable for hearings involving significant rights or liberty interests. Other courts followed suit. Now, the state Supreme Court must determine when such recording is permissible, having received briefs from access-to-justice organizations, courts, the legislature, the state attorney general and the court reporters’ union.

“The outcome of the case will impact hundreds of thousands of people participating in the justice system, particularly the most vulnerable, with the fewest resources,” Yohalem said.

His approach to advocacy centers on narrative construction. “In every case, the challenge is how to use the law and the facts to tell a story that captures the judge or jury’s attention and sense of justice,” Yohalem said. While some cases naturally contain drama and clear protagonists, others require more careful crafting.

Looking at the profession’s evolution, Yohalem sees both concerning trends and positive developments. He worries about “an increasing remove from the human connections: fewer face-to-face conversations; a greater reliance on technology; and a more transactional mindset.” However, he also recognizes innovations that make legal practice “more flexible and responsive to the needs of the community, the courts and attorneys themselves.”