

# Daily Journal

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Top

# 100

Lawyers  
2022



Top  
**100** | **LUIS LI**

WILSON SONSINI  
LOS ANGELES  
LITIGATION

**L**uis Li's background includes 10 years of public service, both as an assistant U.S. attorney focusing on complex, large-scale racketeering and organized crime matters and as chief of the criminal branch of the Los Angeles city attorney's Office, one of the largest prosecutorial agencies in California. Those experiences allowed him to hone skills that have been invaluable in private practice, he said.

"Probably the most important thing is, you get trial skills — you get the opportunity to try cases, be responsible for all aspects of the case, and make the tough judgment calls." Also, Li said, "It was helpful in constructing larger-scale cases. These were not just reactive cases where something bad happens, you gather the evidence and you prosecute it. This was proactively investigating an organization, proactively discovering the evidence that will make the case."

These days, Li handles complex business litigation, corporate crisis management, internal investigations, white-collar criminal defense and international enforcement matters. He has worked on prominent cases across a range of subject matters, including representing the owner in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and representing UCLA in the "Varsity Blues" admission scandal.

In a recent high-profile matter, Li represented Vanessa Bryant in an

invasion of privacy and federal civil rights suit. *Vanessa Bryant v. County of Los Angeles*, 2:20-cv-09582 (C.D. Cal., filed Oct. 19, 2020). Bryant alleged emotional distress caused by Los Angeles County employees who took and shared graphic photographs of the helicopter crash site that left Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gianna and seven others dead. In August, a jury awarded Vanessa Bryant \$15 million.

"It's important to make the jury understand what the fundamental narrative of your client is. In that particular case, you have a courageous mom and wife who is trying to protect her family from what is basically an abhorrent practice," Li said. "Everything we did — from the first letters we wrote to the county in early March 2020, to discovery, to the depositions of the sheriff and other important people — everything was geared toward how we were going to use it at trial."

In response to issues brought up by the lawsuit, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill in 2020 that made it illegal for first responders to share graphic crime scene photos outside of official law enforcement purposes. Furthermore, the case sets a legal precedent for future privacy cases for public figures and may cause first responders to think twice about distributing such photos, Li said.

— Jennifer Chung Klam