

2022

THE AMERICAN LAWYER

# TRAILBLAZERS

WEST



Custom Publishing Supplement to *The American Lawyer*



## California

Dear Readers,

*The American Lawyer* is proud to present its second annual West Trailblazers. The Trailblazer series is a special supplement developed by the business arm of *The American Lawyer*. We are proud to spotlight a handful of individuals from each practice area that are truly agents of change.

Our goal was to recognize professionals in the West who have moved the needle in the legal industry. For our purposes, we defined the West as the following states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.

As with all Trailblazer supplements, the list is never complete. If you have someone you feel is deserving of the title, please reach out and let us know.

Congratulations to this year's honorees!

All the best,

### **Carlos Curbelo**

*Vice President, Legal Market Leader*

© 2022 ALM Media Properties, LLC. All rights reserved. Duplication without permission is prohibited. For information, contact 877.257.3382 or reprints@alm.com.

## ANGELA C. AGRUSA

DLA PIPER



### **What was the genesis of the idea/path that has made you a trailblazer?**

G6's willingness to be introspective about the societal issue of human trafficking cannot be overstated. In addition to defending the iconic Motel 6 brand in litigation, our team has worked with G6 to equally focus on obtaining emerging information and understanding of this insidious crime, including through partnerships with survivor organizations and collaborations with local, state and federal law enforcement. Without that close collaboration, we could not have developed the survivor-centered approach that we bring to this issue that has helped G6 resolve suits and work toward helping to eradicate this societal problem.

### **What sort of change has resulted from the concept?**

Among other things, G6 has developed enhanced anti-trafficking practices and training for employees, novel means to publish and feature the National Human Trafficking Hotline on its properties, a hotline for hotel staff to report suspected trafficking, and directed resources to nonprofit organizations that provide survivor support services. We have been fortunate to collaborate with G6 on these efforts, which have supported the rescue and rehabilitation of many survivors and have earned recognition from law enforcement agencies and anti-trafficking organizations across the country.

### **What bearing will this have on the future?**

We believe that taking a survivor-centric approach to this broad societal issue will drive attention and conscientiousness to reduce the risk of trafficking occurring on G6 properties, and beyond. In the courtroom, we treat plaintiffs respectfully, without discrediting experience or recollection, but also without compromising our client's defenses and strategy. That approach has been appreciated by the plaintiffs' bar and the courts.

## California

## CAROLINA BRAVO-KARIMI

WILSON TURNER KOSMO

**What was the genesis of the idea/path that has made you a trailblazer?**

It started with my childhood. My mother is Chilean, and my father is Persian. Having grown up in a multicultural feminist home, issues surrounding race and gender have always been at the forefront of my experiences and thoughts. I was also able to label and learn about so many of my personal experiences with implicit bias during my graduate work in Gender Studies at the London School of Economics. Both my personal and educational experiences propelled me to teach others about implicit bias, with the hope of creating more inclusive and respectful environments.

**What sort of change has resulted from the concept?**

Thanks to my personal, educational and legal experiences, I launched the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion practice group at Wilson Turner Kosmo in 2021. In my capacity as chair of this group, I have formulated robust programs to assist employers of all sizes, and across industries, in the creation, implementation and management of their DE&I efforts. Additionally, as Managing Partner at WTK, I have also ensured that our employees are given the necessary tools to identify and interrupt implicit biases to normalize conversations about this topic and promote an inclusive work environment.

**What bearing will this have on the future?**

Internally at WTK, my hope is that our work in the implicit bias space allows our employees to show up as their full selves and work in an environment that is genuinely inclusive and inviting. Externally, it's my hope that I assist my clients in achieving the same.

## DORIS CHENG

WALKUP, MELODIA, KELLY &amp; SCHOENBERGER

**What was the genesis of the path that has made you a trailblazer?**

Widely recognized for her legal work and passion for the American legal system, Doris Cheng is one of the Bay Area's top attorneys, achieving multimillion-dollar verdicts and settlements. With almost 25 years of experience, Doris utilizes her voice to build a case, support a cause, and achieve justice. She served as the president of the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association (2015), the Bar Association of San Francisco and Justice & Diversity Center (2019), and the San Francisco ABOTA Chapter (2020). She is the sixth Walkup partner to lead the San Francisco Chapter of ABOTA and is the Program Director of the National Institute for Trial Advocacy's Western Region Advocacy Teacher Training Program.

**What sort of change has resulted from the concept?**

Doris specializes in cases involving complex injuries caused by third-party negligence. For example, she recently secured a confidential settlement on behalf of the parents of a Marin County child who was crushed to death by a defective gate on a private school campus and a \$13,500,000 settlement on behalf of a 60-year-old man who suffered severe brain damage due to carbon monoxide poisoning. Doris has been recognized for her achievements in advancing the rule of law and trial by jury through serving as a chair and faculty member for many legal education programs. She has directed legal training programs associated with the U.S. Department of Justice Overseas Prosecutorial Development and Training and the National Center for State Courts. Ms. Cheng has served as the lead Trial Skills Training Director supporting the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative created under the Obama administration. Doris created the first trial skills program in San Francisco to promote women trial lawyers as first chair in civil jury trials. As part of the Rule of Law Initiative, she's had the privilege of training trial lawyers and judges in Mexico, Kosovo and Macedonia.

**What bearing will this have on the future?**

Doris has spent her career representing underserved victims with severe injuries and obtained their deserved compensation. The verdicts and settlements she has recovered have helped expose dangerous conditions and improved public safety for everyone.