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TOP BOUTIQUES IN CALIFORNIA 2022

GOLDSTEIN, BORGEN, DARDARIAN & HO

OAKLAND
CIVIL RIGHTS & WORKERS' RIGHTS CLASS ACTIONS

LEFT TO RIGHT, JAMES KAN, LAURA HO, ANDREW LEE AND LINDA DARDARIAN.

Goldstein, Borgen, Dardarian & Ho has evolved since its founding in 1972 into a plaintiff-side class action law firm focused on the protection of the interests of workers and others who are subjected to discrimination and abuse. The firm has been known by different names since its founding as former partners departed. It has had its present moniker since 2013 and is staffed by 15 attorneys.

The senior partners are Linda M. Dardarian, Laura L. Ho, James P. Kan, and Andrew P. Lee. Barry Goldstein and David Borgen are Of Counsel to the firm. Additional partners include Byron R. Goldstein, Raymond A. Wendell, and Anne P. Bellows.

Ho, who joined in 1998 to help start the firm's wage and hours practice and made partner in 2005, said, "Civil rights law is why I went to law school. Even in high school in Tacoma. Washington, I was on the civil rights committee."

After getting her JD from Yale Law School. she clerked for U.S. District Judge John C. Coughenour of Seattle. "For anyone interested in civil rights litigation, a district court clerkship is extremely valuable," she said.

Her former named partners include of counsel Barry Goldstein, a former director of the Washington D.C. office of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund; and David Borgen, a former house counsel for the Com-munications Workers of America, AFL-CIO. Her current named partner, Linda M. Dardarian, specializes in disability civil rights impact litigation.

Among the firm's focus is voting rights at the municipal level and claims that at large election rules tend to disadvantage minority populations by diluting minority individuals' vote. The partners are currently awaiting an oral argument date at the state Supreme Court in a major case out of Santa Monica that seeks to clarify what a plaintiff must prove to establish vote dilution under the California Voting Rights Act of 2002. *City of Santa Monica v. Pico Neighborhood Association et al.*. S263972 (Ca. S. Ct.. pet. for rev.. filed Aug. 18. 2020).

Ho and co-counsel represent Pico Neighborhood Association. which persuaded a trial judge that a remedial electoral system is needed to level the playing field for Latino voters in Santa Monica. An appellate panel reversed. The high court granted Ho's petition for review and depublished the Court of Appeal decision.

"Municipal elections are a big deal because that's where politicians get their feet wet before moving up the political ladder," Ho said.

The Santa Monica case follows an earlier matter in which Goldstein Borgen prevailed for Asian American voters in the city of Santa Clara when a judge ruled that the at-large election system there diluted votes. Following appellate affirmance. the city settled by establishing a district system which has already led to the election - for the first time - of three Asian American city council members. *Yumori-Kaku v. City of Santa Clara*, 17-CV- 319862 (S. Clara Co. Super. Ct.. filed Nov. 30, 2017).

"These new council members are people who had been frozen out by the old system," Ho said. "This represents good government on a number of levels."

Lee. who joined as an associate in 2013 and made partner two years later. is the son of labor union members and the grandson of a union organizer. He and his colleagues represent employees in another state Supreme Court case over PAGA'S role post-*Viking River. Adolph v. Uber Technologies Inc*., S274671 (Ca. S. Ct., rev. granted July 20, 2022).

"This work is exceptionally rewarding with dedicated co-workers," Lee said.

— JOHN ROEMER

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