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TOP WOMEN LAWYERS 2026



LINDA M. DARDARIAN

DARDARIAN HO KAN & LEE

OAKLAND

CIVIL & WORKERS' RIGHTS
CLASS ACTIONS

Linda Dardarian has practiced since September 1987 — more than 38 years — representing plaintiffs in class and complex actions across employment, housing and disability civil rights.

Her path to law began in childhood. Inspired by a character in the "Doodsonbury" comic strip, she decided a law degree was the vehicle for social justice work she had long envisioned. That conviction has held.

An early case set the trajectory. As an associate, Dardarian was assigned to argue a Ninth Circuit appeal in a Clean Water Act citizen's suit after both lead attorneys resigned from the firm. Her opponent was a veteran appellate partner at a large firm. She had no prior appellate experience.

"I was terrified and tried to get out of it," Dardarian said. When that failed, she negotiated time to prepare fully — and won. The court issued a landmark ruling: a polluter's payment to a regulator does not bar a citizen's enforcement action unless the payment was assessed under the Clean Water Act's penalty provisions. "That experience taught me to not be intimidated by going up against more

established lawyers, to embrace challenges as opportunities to grow, to take them seriously, and to not skimp on preparation," Dardarian said.

Much of Dardarian's recent work centers on disability access litigation against municipalities. She has brought cases against the cities of Baltimore, Oakland and Los Angeles, securing court orders requiring each city to remediate inaccessible infrastructure — broken sidewalks, missing or deteriorated curb ramps and park facilities that exclude people with mobility disabilities.

"Many governmental entities just aren't thinking about people with disabilities," she said. Others, she notes, acknowledge the problem but deprioritize it. "That's not acceptable."