

TOP LAWYERS

NEED LEGAL ADVICE? WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED WITH THIS YEAR'S LIST.

We sometimes wonder how lawyers maintain decent self-esteem. After all, no one ever *wants* to retain the services of a lawyer. But boy, if you need a lawyer, you want the best you can find! (And afford.) We can help. Every year, Sacramento Magazine contracts with Professional Research Services, which asks Sacramento area attorneys to nominate three colleagues they would recommend in their area of law. All nominees are reviewed to ensure they have up-to-date licenses and are in good standing with The State Bar of California. Those who receive the highest number of votes make the list.

Along with publishing the list of Top Lawyers, every year Sacramento Magazine profiles a few of the top lawyers from the list. Specialties include personal injury, immigration, criminal defense and litigation. This year, we asked our picks to answer questions about why they chose their area of law, a funny thing that happened to them professionally, what's on their bucket list and advice they would give to their younger selves. The questions are lighthearted in nature but intended to give you a sense of who the person is inside and outside of the courtroom. (Provided they go to a courtroom.) We hope you don't need a lawyer if you don't want one, but if you do, we hope this list will be of service to you.

Sidebars by **ELENA M. MACALUSO**

The professionals listed herein were selected by their peers in a survey conducted by Professional Research Services Company of Troy, Michigan. Professionals may be screened and selected through the verification of licensing and review of any infractions through various applicable boards, agencies and rating services. For further information visit prscom.com or email PPS at sshevin@hour-media.com.



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PRACTICE AREA: Business and
Real Estate Law

I KNEW I WANTED TO BE A LAWYER WHEN:
I worked in my father's law firm as a teenager.

I CHOSE THIS AREA OF LAW BECAUSE:
I wanted to help small businesses. It is really fulfilling to be there for a small business in the best of times and the worst of times.

THE FUNNIEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME PROFESSIONALLY: My kids and dogs have frequent appearances on Zoom meetings. At this point, I think everyone just expects it and they are disappointed when they don't show up.

MY FIRST JOB WAS: Children's tutor.

IF I WASN'T A LAWYER, I WOULD BE A:
Therapist. A big portion of my job involves working through people's feelings, so I get a lot of practice.

BESIDES MY FAMILY, THE THREE THINGS I LOVE THE MOST ARE: Dogs, books and coffee.

I UNWIND FROM A LONG DAY BY: Snuggling with my kids.

ONE PIECE OF ADVICE I WOULD GIVE TO MY YOUNGER SELF IS: Don't rush to adulthood. It's a trap.



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MOUZIS CRIMINAL DEFENSE
PRACTICE AREA: Criminal Defense

I KNEW I WANTED TO BE A LAWYER: When I was 8 years old. My dad thought I would be a good lawyer. Twenty years later, I was sworn in as a member of the bar.

I CHOSE THIS AREA OF LAW BECAUSE: The criminal justice system impacts everyone in our community and I wanted to be a positive force in an often difficult and impactful system.

MY FIRST JOB WAS: Working at a neighborhood restaurant stemming strawberries for their pies.

IF I WASN'T A LAWYER, I WOULD BE: A sociologist. I would love to study isolated populations.

I UNWIND FROM A LONG DAY BY: Cooking. Cooking has always been a comfort to me in times of stress. Focusing on making others happy, even with a good meal, makes me forget the stresses of the day.

ONE OF THE ITEMS ON MY BUCKET LIST IS: To explore China, including sailing down the Yangtze River and walking on the Great Wall of China.

ONE PIECE OF ADVICE I WOULD GIVE TO MY YOUNGER SELF IS: Not to allow others to define my goals, abilities or moral compass.

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Carissa Beecham

KRONICK MOSKOVITZ
TIEDEMANN & GIRARD

PRACTICE AREA: Environmental and
Natural Resources, Land Use and Water Law

I KNEW I WANTED TO BE A LAWYER WHEN:

A partner from my first firm job told me very confidently that I, too, was a litigator; he was right. I then gravitated toward the attorneys and clients in the environmental and land use space—all working to build a better future. I landed in water, where I work with the brightest and most ambitious people tackling some of the toughest issues in California.

THE FUNNIEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME PROFESSIONALLY:

Was when opposing counsel read my name into the record with a short "i" instead of a long "e."

MY FIRST JOB WAS:

An intern for local government lobbyist Don Peterson. I would write advocacy letters in the morning and sneak him Jim-Denny's at lunch.

BESIDES MY FAMILY, THE THREE THINGS I LOVE THE MOST ARE:

Live music, good food and dressing up.

I UNWIND FROM A LONG DAY BY:

Going for a run through our midtown neighborhood listening to French pop.

ONE OF THE ITEMS ON MY BUCKET LIST:

Was checked off for my 40th birthday when I took my two children and mother to Paris for a week and then my husband and I danced through Greece.



Patrick Gihana

LAW OFFICES OF PATRICK GIHANA

PRACTICE AREA: Immigration

I CHOSE THIS AREA OF LAW BECAUSE: I

wanted to fight for the fair and humane treatment of immigrants. This cause is dear to my heart given my own background. I am a child of refugee parents, and I have lived as an immigrant in many countries prior to coming to America.

MY FIRST JOB WAS: Clerk, driver, tech support and everything my dad wanted me to do at his law firm. I learned a lot from that experience.

BESIDES MY FAMILY, THE THREE THINGS I LOVE THE MOST ARE: Traveling, connecting with people on a deeper level and trying and learning new things.

I UNWIND FROM A LONG DAY BY: Exercising like running, biking and playing tennis. That's the official answer. In reality though, watching TikTok videos and the latest Twitter feud work as well.

ONE OF THE ITEMS ON MY BUCKET LIST IS: Walking Spain's famous pilgrimage trail, El Camino de Santiago.

ONE PIECE OF ADVICE I WOULD GIVE TO MY YOUNGER SELF: Relax, because no one has it figured out.

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Alice Kessler

GREENBERG TRAURIG, LLP

PRACTICE AREA: Government Law and Policy

I KNEW I WANTED TO BE A LAWYER WHEN: My mother said, "You can choose between being a lawyer or a doctor. Which one do you pick?"

I CHOSE THIS AREA OF LAW BECAUSE: The legislative and public policy arenas lend themselves to dynamic and creative strategies for clients, and the stakes are typically high. Call it a lot of things, but it is never boring!

BESIDES MY FAMILY, THE THREE THINGS I LOVE THE MOST ARE: Being an out and proud

member of the LGBTQ+ community, giving back to that community through avenues such as my service on the board of directors for the CARES Foundation, and spreading compassion and kindness in as many small ways as I can each day.

I UNWIND FROM A LONG DAY BY: Listening to music on my commute home, usually the stuff my family refuses to let me play when they are in the car with me!

PEOPLE MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO KNOW THAT LAWYERS: Often struggle with depression and substance abuse.

ONE OF THE ITEMS ON MY BUCKET LIST IS: Visiting the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.



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LEVANGIE LAW GROUP

PRACTICE AREA: General Litigation

I KNEW I WANTED TO BE A LAWYER WHEN: I did Mock Trial in high school and wanted more!

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION ABOUT LITIGATORS: Is that we pick fights and create problems. We find solutions for problems. Disagreements and conflict often happen along the way, but the end goal is always to solve the problem.

IF I WASN'T A LAWYER, I WOULD BE: An intelligence analyst or detective.

I UNWIND FROM A LONG DAY BY: Going for a trail run. I'm most relaxed with a high heart rate and dirt under my feet.

PEOPLE MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO KNOW THAT LAWYERS: Need to have creative minds! Strategy is not always predictable or obvious, and good lawyers are constantly innovating solutions that fit the situation in front of them.

ONE OF THE ITEMS ON MY BUCKET LIST IS: To run a 100-mile race and/or the Zion Traverse.

ONE PIECE OF ADVICE I WOULD GIVE TO MY YOUNGER SELF IS: Lose the long sideburns— they do not look as cool as you think they do.





Jeffrey M. Schaff

SCHAFF LAW GROUP, INC.

PRACTICE AREA: Personal Injury

I CHOSE MY AREA OF PRACTICE BECAUSE:

It was the best intersection of my interests: trying cases and helping people.

THE FUNNIEST THING THAT EVER

HAPPENED TO ME PROFESSIONALLY: One of the first civil cases that I tried involved an escaped cow.

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION ABOUT

PERSONAL INJURY LAW: Personal injury law is more than billboards and big jury verdicts. There is a great deal of empathy and guidance needed in our practice.

MY FIRST JOB WAS: At Folsom Outlets selling kitchen products.

IF I WASN'T A LAWYER, I WOULD BE: A teacher, an architect or a park ranger.

BESIDES MY FAMILY, THE THREE THINGS I LOVE THE MOST ARE: Cooking, eating and afternoon naps.

I UNWIND FROM A LONG DAY BY: Sipping bourbon on the couch with my dogs.

PEOPLE MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO KNOW THAT LAWYERS: Have the best lawyer jokes.

ONE OF THE ITEMS ON MY BUCKET LIST IS: Diving with sharks.

ONE PIECE OF ADVICE I WOULD GIVE TO MY YOUNGER SELF IS: The measure of success is how you define it.

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WEINTRAUB TOBIN

PRACTICE AREA: Litigation and
Real Estate Litigation

I KNEW I WANTED TO BE A LAWYER WHEN:

My high school English teacher told me to stop arguing with her—and that I should be a lawyer.

I CHOSE THIS AREA OF LAW BECAUSE: It's interesting, complicated and creative. I am always amazed by how much benefit clients bring to the community when they create new buildings, homes, shops and services.

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION ABOUT REAL ESTATE LAW: Is that it is limited to residential real estate. I practice commercial real estate law and litigation, and that involves land, development and commercial buildings.

MY FIRST JOB WAS: Paper boy. I "inherited" a couple of routes from my cousins, so it was go-go-go from the very beginning.

BESIDES MY FAMILY, THE THREE THINGS I LOVE THE MOST ARE: My friends, the outdoors and my dog, although not always in that order!

ONE PIECE OF ADVICE I WOULD GIVE TO MY YOUNGER SELF IS: It's all going to work out.

