HansonBridgett



Kristina D. Lawson

Managing Partner

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Firm Leadership
Managing Partner
Management Committee, Chair

Areas of Focus

- Real Estate
- Health / Senior Care Real Estate
- Government
- Land Use
- Environmental Law
- Real Estate Litigation
- Cannabis Law

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Kristina Lawson serves as the Managing Partner and Chair of the firm's Management Committee at Hanson Bridgett. As the firm's chief executive, she oversees all aspects of the firm's strategic direction and management. She is the first female Managing Partner in Hanson Bridgett's 65+ year history. In addition to leading the firm, Kristina serves as the Chair of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Bay Area Council, an organization of 300+ influential employers committed to working with public and community leaders to keep the Bay Area the most innovative, globally competitive, inclusive, and sustainable region in the world.

Renowned in the legal industry and beyond as a progressive and collaborative leader, Kristina was recognized in the *San Francisco Business Times'* 2023 and 2024 Power 100 lists of the Bay Area's Most Influential Business Leaders. She is a former Mayor of the City of Walnut Creek, a city of approximately 65,000 residents in the greater Bay Area. In 2015, Kristina was appointed by California Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. to serve on the Medical Board of California, and was reappointed in 2022 by Governor Gavin Newsom, serving as the Medical Board's President from 2020-2023.

Kristina is a specialist in complex California entitlement, land use, environmental/natural resources, and municipal matters. She is a respected statewide authority on California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance and strategy, actively contributing to statewide CEQA modernization efforts. She is a

frequent author of complex California land use ballot initiatives/referenda. As a trusted strategic advisor, Kristina often advises clients on public policy, land use ballot measure strategy, and government relations strategy.

At Hanson Bridgett, Kristina is committed to leading by example and building on the firm's strong California foundation. She continues to advance the firm's values-driven programs, fostering an inclusive culture of engagement and collaboration, and doubling down on DEI initiatives.

Publications

"Your Heart Is Part of Your Leadership Infrastructure. Get It Checked," author, *ALM | Law.com* (October 2026)

"Law Firms Must Unite to Reject Complacency to Political Pressure," author, *Bloomberg* (February 2026)

"Doubling Down on DEI," co-author, *The American Lawyer* (January 2024)

"For Women, Leaving Big Law for a Midsize Firm Doesn't Mean Settling," *The American Lawyer* (August 2020)

"Project Approved Pursuant to SB 35 Streamlining Procedures Survives Court Challenge," co-author, *Land Use Law Alert* (May 2020)

"California Superior Court's Application of SB 35 to Los Altos Development Project Provides Encouragement to Housing Proponents," co-author, *Land Use Law Alert* (April 2020)

"Construction of Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly to Continue in Santa Clara County," co-author, *Real Estate Law Alert* (April 2020)

"Court Strikes Down Alameda Impact Fees in Boatworks, LLC v. City of Alameda" co-author, *Land Use Alert* (May 2019)

"Will CEQA Test Boring Co.'s Transit Projects?" author, *GlobeSt.com* (December 2018)

"SB 50: As Housing Crisis Continues, Senator Weiner Announces Revised Upzoning Legislation," co-author, *Land Use Law Alert* (December 2018)

"The End of the Road for LOS Analysis of Traffic Impacts," *Environmental Leader* (March 2016)

"California Cities Have Widely Variable Response to Housing Crisis," *Multi-Housing News* (February 2016)

"The Housing Debate Heats up in California," *Western Real Estate Business* (February 2016)

"California Legislature Debating 2015 Climate Leadership Legislation," *Environmental Leader* (March 2015)

"Reform CEQA to help live with drought," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 2015)

"California's New Energy Efficiency Challenge," co-author, *GlobeSt.com* (January 2015)

"California Proposes Overhaul of Standards for Transportation-related Environmental Impact Analysis," *Environmental Leader* (August 2014)

"Making Wine out of Water," co-author, *GlobeSt.com* (April 2014)

"Regional Regulators Turn up the Heat," *Western Real Estate Business magazine* (April 2012)

"Contemporary Zoning Conflicts – An Evolving Landscape Presents New Challenges," *Commercial Investment Real Estate magazine* (January-February 2012)

"The Rise of the Responsible Agencies – CEQA Compliance in a Regional Focused Environment," *Environmental Liability and Enforcement Reporter* (April 2011)

"Another Agency to Rain on Your Parade," *San Francisco Daily Journal* (May 6, 2010)

"Women in Commercial Real Estate," CREW Network Publication with the CREW Network Industry Research Committee (2010)

"Glass Ceiling or Sticky Floor, The State of Women's Advancement in Commercial Real Estate," CREW Network Publication with the CREW Network Industry Research Committee (2009)

"Buyer Beware," *Commercial Investment Real Estate magazine* (May-June 2009)

"Back to Basics Due Diligence: Ensuring Use and Minimizing Risk," *California Real Estate Journal* (May 2009)

"Repositioning Your Real Estate Career to Succeed in an Era of Change," CREW Network Publication with the CREW Network Industry Research Committee (2008)

"CEQA's Neverending Story – Post-Entitlement Enforcement of Mitigation Measures," *California Land Use Law and Policy Reporter* (June 2008)

"Prohibiting Big Macs and Rollbacks: California's Ever-Expanding Regulation of Retail End-Users," *California Land Use Law and Policy Reporter* (December 2007)

"Climate Change: New Impact Laws Affecting Development Projects," *BUILDERnews magazine* (July 2007)

"Thinking Globally When Acting Locally: How Will CEQA Adapt to a Changing Environment?" *California Real Property Journal, Vol. 25, No. 2* (2007)

"'Rapanos' Wetlands Decision Doesn't Void State Regulations," *San Francisco Daily Journal* (July 2006)

"Settling With Certainty – California Courts of Appeal Grapple With Challenges to the Settlement of Land Use Litigation," *California Land Use Law and Policy Reporter* (April 2006)

"Legislating a Density Bonus to Boost Affordable Housing," *San Francisco Daily Journal* (September 2005)

Presentations

"Leadership Unlocked: Effective Decision-Making and Direction Setting in High-Stakes Environments," speaker, Women, Influence & Power in Law Conference (September 2026)

"Leading from Every Seat: Building Leadership Skills for Impact and Influence," co-speaker, CMCP 2025 Annual Business Conference (September 2025)

"A Veritable Cornucopia: The State of the Legal Market," panelist, Thomas Reuters' 32nd Annual Marketing Partner Forum (January 2025)

"The Economic Imperative of DEI," Bay Area Council Economic Institute (June 2024)

"How are Mid-Market Firm Leaders Adapting Their Leadership Styles?" ALM Webinar (July 2023)

"Restoring Public Confidence About Crime and Safety," moderator, Bay Area Council's 2023 Pacific Summit (June 2023)

"Newsmakers: Ruben Navarrette Jr.," moderator, Newsmakers: Lesher Speaker Series (June 2022)

"The Spring In Her Step," Panelist, Women United (April 2022)

"The Future of California: Innovation and Equity," Moderator, Bay Area Council's 2021 Pacific Summit (June 2021)

“The Next Generation of Business Incentives,” co-presenter, MMANC Summer Symposium/CALED Regional Training (August 2019)

“Women Who Lead: Rising to the Top in Commercial Real Estate and Construction,” co-speaker, San Francisco Business Times (July 2019)

“The Tale of Inspiring Women,” co-speaker, The Registry: Women in Focus (January 2019)

“CEQA Guidelines,” co-speaker, The Industrial Association of Contra Costa County (February 2018)

“CEQA and the People’s Voice: Developer Ballot Measures,” Environmental Law Conference at Yosemite (October 2016)

“Affordable Housing and Economic Vitality: What Are the Linkages? And What Are the Paths Forward in the Bay Area?,” Bay Area Council Economic Institute Breakfast Event, San Francisco (November 2014)

“The Impacts of the Dissolution of Redevelopment Agencies in California - What Does This Mean for Real Estate in California?,” East Bay CREW Luncheon Meeting (March 2012)

“Bicycle Plans, Road Diets, and CEQA,” Association of Environmental Professionals/Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (November 2011)

“Local, County and Federal Update on the Status of Public Policy on Business and Commercial Real Estate,” East Bay Commercial Real Estate Women Luncheon Meeting (February 2011)

“CEQA & Climate Change,” California Water Law & Policy Conference (April 2010)

“From Formula Businesses to Drive-Thrus to Docs-in-a-Box: Permitting Special Uses and Services in Today’s Complex Regulatory Environment,” ICSC Law Conference Roundtable (October 2008)

“Permitting Your Project: Basics of Bay Area Entitlement Processing,” East Bay Commercial Real Estate Women Brown Bag Series (July 2008)

“Real Estate Development From Beginning to End,” Lorman Education Services (February 2008)

“Air Quality, Water and Smart Growth,” San Joaquin Valley Housing Symposium (January 2008)

“Update on Laws Addressing Climate Change and Their Impact on the Industrial and Development Sectors,” Contra Costa Council Industrial and Environmental Task Force (August 2007)

Press

"Big Law Firms Face Subpoena Threat Over Trump Pro Bono Deals," Law.com (November 2026)

"Why Women Law Firm Partners Still Earn Less Than Men," *Reuters* (October 2026)

"Hanson Bridgett Re-Elects Kristina Lawson to Third Term as Managing Partner," *Law360* (September 2026)

"Hanson Bridgett Opens Office in Downtown Fresno," *Law360* (April 2026)

"Hanson Bridgett Enters Fresno Market," Law.com (April 2026)

"After DOJ's 'Whiplash' Moves, Trump Keeps Pressure on Big Law Deals, Firms," Law.com (March 2026)

"As Paul Weiss Navigates an Abrupt Leadership Change, Messaging—Internal and External—Will Determine Its Success," Law.com (February 2026)

"Hanson Bridgett's Managing Partner Shares Her Thoughts On Leading A Law Firm Through Challenging Times," Above the Law (July 2025)

"4 Things Weighing on Law Firm Leaders' Minds at Midyear," *Law360* (July 2025)

"Hanson Bridgett Launches San Diego Expansion with Addition of Health Care Partner Natalie Mueller," Hanson Bridgett Press Release (July 2025)

"Many Lawyers Are Reeling From Election Results, but Leaders Are Staying Mum," Law.com (November 2024)

"Path to Greatness: How Good Lawyers Become Great Leaders—the Power of Personal Responsibility," *The Legal Intelligencer* (May 2024)

"Hanson Bridgett's Managing Partner On Her Second Term," *Law360* (February 2024)

"Increasingly, Law Firms Invest Time & Money in Culture," *Of Counsel* (November 2023)

" 'We Won't Mandate': West Coast Law Firms Aren't Following Wall Street Back to the Office," *The Recorder* (July 2023)

"Bay Area Council elects Hanson Bridgett's Kristina Lawson as board chair," *San Francisco Business Times* (July 2023)

“California Firm Leaders Say Growth Should Continue In 2023,” *Law360* (January 2023)

“Where Mid-Law Is Expecting Work In 2023,” *Law360* (January 2023)

“California Regional Firms Expect to Sell Talent on Stability and Flexibility in 2023,” *The Recorder* (December 2022)

“California Firm Leaders Eye Growth in Environmental, Health Care, and Real Estate Practices in 2023,” *The Recorder* (December 2022)

“Will Musical Laterals Derail Mid-Law Succession Planning?,” *Law360* (August 2022)

“Hanson Bridgett gets 6th B Corp certification,” *Daily Journal* (April 2022)

“Mid-Law’s Female Firm Leaders Reflect on Making History,“ *Law360* (March 2022)

“Midsize U.S. Law Firms Roll Out Raises, Perks to Recruit Attorneys in Talent War,“ *Reuters* (December 2021)

“BigLaw Pay Hikes Reach Mid-Law With $30k 1st-Year Bump,” *Law360* (October 2021)

“Hanson Bridgett Revamps Associate Compensation, Adding Productivity, Sabbatical Bonuses,” *The Recorder* (October 2021)

“How 3 Mid-Size Firms Handled Succession Planning,” *Law360* (August 2021)

“At These Remote-Flexible Firms, Associate Development Takes a Front Seat,” *The Recorder* (July 2021)

“California Firms Reassess Return to Work, Many With Vaccine, Mask Requirements,” *The Recorder* (July 2021)

“The NLJ 500: With Exceptions, Big Firms Weathered the Pandemic Best,” *The National Law Journal* (June 2021)

“Podcast: Kristina Lawson & Jennifer Martinez of Hanson Bridgett LLP,” *The Registry’s Real Perspectives Podcast* (May 2021)

“Leading Questions: Hanson Bridgett’s Kristina Lawson,” *Bloomberg Law* (April 2021)

“In a Pandemic Year, Law Firms Gave Back Even More,” *Law Practice Today* (March 2021)

“2020 Was A Big Year For ‘First Female’ BigLaw Leaders,” *Law360* (January 2021)

“In A First, Woman Takes Helm At Hanson Bridgett,” *Law360* (January 2021)

“Wave Of New Female Firm Leaders Continues Into 2021,” *Law360* (January 2021)

“Hanson Bridgett’s New Leader On Her Plans At The Helm,” *Law360* (January 2021)

“Hanson Bridgett Names First Woman to Lead the Bay Area Law Firm,” *San Francisco Business Times* (January 2021)

“What Pandemic? San Francisco Legal Market Stays Strong, Despite COVID,” *Of Counsel* (October 2020)

“ ‘Don’t Get Mad, Get Elected’ – Lessons from Local Lawyers’ Campaigns for Office,” *Contra Costa County Bar Association’s October Magazine* (October 2020)

“Leadership, Careers, and Women in Law Roundtable,” *Law Practice Today* (June 2020)

“The NLJ 500: Where Are Women Winning?,” *The National Law Journal* (June 2020)

“Short-Term Work Around or the New Normal? Firms Cope with Covid-19 Reality,” *The Recorder* (March 2020)

“Hanson Bridgett Names First-Ever Female Managing Partner,” *Daily Journal* (January 2020)

“Hanson Bridgett, a Likely Am Law 200 Addition, Appoints First Female MP,” *The American Lawyer* (January 2020)”

“Prominent SF Law Firm Names New Leader,” *San Francisco Business Journal* (January 2020)

“California Firm Noted for Diversity Record Hires First Female Managing Partner,” *The Global Legal Post* (January 2020)

“Battleground: LA Development,” *Commercial Observer* (December 2019)

“California Desperately Needs More Affordable Housing. Is More Coming in 2020?,” *HousingWire* (December 2019)

“Women Who Lead in Real Estate: Attorney Kristina Lawson Downs Bay Area NIMBYism,” *San Francisco Business Times* (July 2019)

“Calif. Housing Industry Watching Gov.’s $750M Incentive Plan,” *Law360* (March 2019)

“The State’s Suit Against Huntington Beach Is Just the Start ,” *GlobeSt.* (February 2019)

"Officials overturn landmark designation for UC Berkeley's Campanile Way," *Berkeleyside* (October 2018)

"Ex-Mayor Leaves Manatt For New Home at Hanson Bridgett," *The Recorder* (April 2017)

"Former Walnut Creek mayor joins Hanson Bridgett," *Daily Journal* (April 2017)

"Legal Challenge to Downtown Berkeley Mixed-Use High-Rise Struck Down," *The Registry* (2016)

"Judge Rules in CEQA Infill Case," *GlobeSt* (2016)

"CA Supreme Court Reverses Decision To Broaden CEQA," *Bisnow* (2016)

"Calif. Real Estate Legislation & Regulation To Watch In 2016," *Law360* (2016)

"Court puts kibosh on CEQA expansion," *San Diego Union Tribune* (2015)

"State high court rules on scope of principle enviro law," *Greenwire* (2015)

"State Supreme Court sets limits on the reach of CEQA in unanimous ruling," *Daily Journal* (2015)

"State high court backs developers in environmental case," *Sacramento Business Journal* (2015)

"Airbnb Initiative Could Spur More Suits In San Francisco," *Law360* (2015)

Honors & Awards

Best Lawyers (2019-2027)

Legal 500's Inaugural City Elite Rankings, Real Estate (2026)

100 Managing Partners You Need to Know, Lawdragon (2026)

Most Admired CEO, *San Francisco Business Times* (2024)

San Francisco Business Times' Power 100 (2023)

Federation of State Medical Boards, Award of Merit (2022)

Managing Partner of the Year—Law Firm, *Corporate Counsel* (2021)

Inspirator Award, The Bay Area CREW Chapters and *The Registry*'s ELEVATE Awards (2020)

Most Influential Women in the Bay Area, *San Francisco Business Journal* (2019-2020)

Super Lawyers, Land Use/Zoning; Environmental; State, Local & Municipal (2010-2012; 2016-2019)

Bay Area Power Women, *Bisnow* (2016)

Top 50 Development, Land Use and Municipal Infrastructure Lawyers, *Daily Journal* (2014)

Top 20 Under 40, *Daily Journal* (2014)

50 Lawyers on the Fast Track, *The Recorder* (2012)

40 Under 40, *San Francisco Business Times* (2012)

Rising Star, Northern California Real Estate Women of Influence (2011)

20 Under 40, Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Network (2010)

Professional Affiliations

Health Workforce Education and Training Council

Medical Board of California (Former President)

Federation of State Medical Boards, Member and Voting Delegate

Bay Area Council, Chair of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee; Co-Chair of the Government Relations Committee

State Bar of California

Contra Costa County Bar Association

American Bar Association

Academic Distinctions

Order of the Coif

Education

J.D., *cum laude* Santa Clara University School of Law (2002)

B.A., University of Arizona (1998)

Admissions and Courts

California