



HansonBridgett

# 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW



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# Message from the Managing Partner

As we look back on 2024 and step confidently into 2025, it's clear that we've been on an extraordinary journey together.

The pace of 2024 was nothing short of exceptional, driven by our collective efforts to stay ahead of the curve. We thought creatively about our recruiting efforts and developing talent, our office space and geographical footprint, our internal attorney organization with an eye towards better servicing our clients, as well as keeping up with all of the advancements in technology.

Our dedication to giving back shone brightly through initiatives like highlighting our 35-year partnership with The Arc of San Francisco, which underscores our deep commitment to inclusivity and uplifting the communities where we live and work.

We continue to receive local, state, and national recognition of our DEI efforts—proof of our unwavering commitment to leveling the playing field and inspiring others to do the same. While we know this work is far from over, we're proud of the difference we're making and our leadership and innovation in this space.

Looking ahead, I am particularly eager to collaborate with and learn from the next generation of talented lawyers at Hanson Bridgett. Together, we'll continue to challenge expectations and shape a future that reflects our values and vision.

On behalf of the Management Committee and our exceptional team of attorneys and professional staff, I want to thank each of you for your trust and support. Our accomplishments in 2024—far too many to list here—are a testament to our shared dedication and the enduring trust of our clients.

Let's carry this momentum into 2025 as we embrace new challenges, seize opportunities, and elevate what's possible for our clients and communities. Together, we're redefining what it means to lead with purpose and innovation.

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*Kristina Lawson*

**Kristina Lawson**  
Managing Partner



# Leading the Way

At Hanson Bridgett, innovation is more than a concept; it's a commitment to doing what's best for our clients, communities, and the world we share. As a firm rooted in forward-thinking practices, we are proud to align our expertise with transformative efforts that drive meaningful change across industries.

In 2024, our work reflected this ethos in powerful ways. Partner Ellis Raskin's election to the Santa Monica City Council reflects our dedication to serving the public good. Ellis's expertise in real estate, housing, and environmental law equips him to address critical issues such as sustainability, homelessness, and economic recovery, benefiting both his community and the clients he represents with exceptional legal counsel.

Our dedication to leadership in DEI was further exemplified by Partner Alfonso Estrada's election to the 2025 Mexican American Bar Association's Board of Trustees and Senior Counsel David Casarrubias-Gonzalez's appointment as Regional President for the

Hispanic National Bar Association's Region 17, covering Northern California and Hawaii. These roles highlight our attorneys' commitment to advancing DEI within the legal profession and beyond. Partner Sandy Rappaport's appointment to the USLAW NETWORK Board of Directors enhances our ability to serve clients across the U.S. and internationally. Sandy's leadership will play a vital role in strengthening our involvement in this prominent legal network, ensuring we continue to deliver exceptional client service.

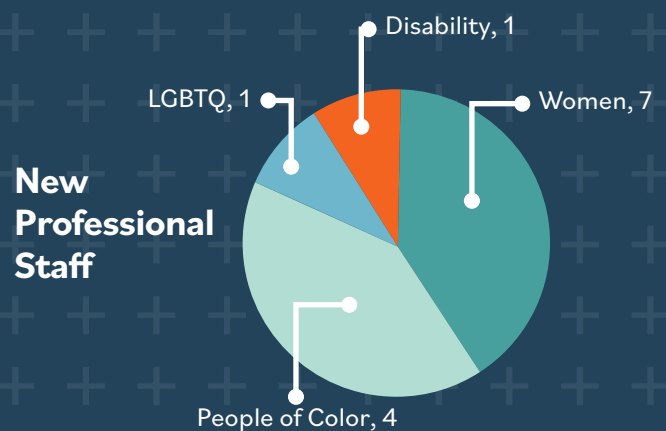
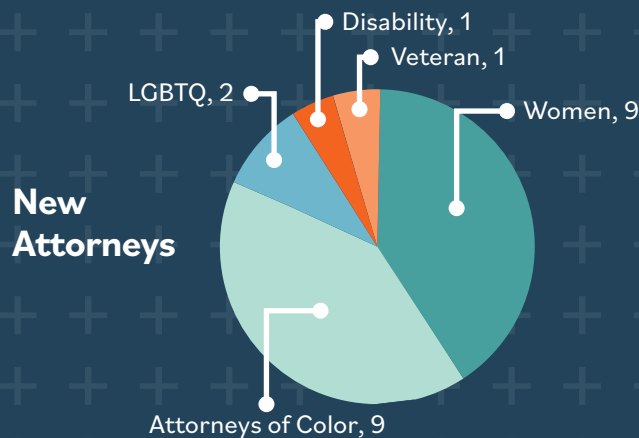
We also led efforts that brought about significant advancements in California's water policies. Our team played a pivotal role in shaping and passing legislation to ensure equity in water rates, reduce legal uncertainties, and protect low-income customers. These achievements underscore our longstanding commitment to supporting public agencies with innovative legal solutions that safeguard resources and benefit communities statewide.

Our work in zero-emissions transportation further highlights our ability to push boundaries for the greater good. From the launch of Sea Change, the world's first commercial hydrogen-powered ferry, to advising transit agencies on scaling zero-emission fleets, we are helping clients pioneer sustainable solutions that align with California's bold climate goals.

This year, we also deepened our focus on DEI. Hosting our first-ever Diverse Attorney Summit and publishing the inaugural DEI & Social Impact Report reflect our leadership's commitment to breaking down barriers and inspiring change. These initiatives not only enhance our firm but also position us as thought leaders helping others adopt equitable practices for lasting impact.

At Hanson Bridgett, we believe that embracing innovation and addressing complex challenges are essential to bettering the lives of our clients and communities. Whether driving legislative advancements, pioneering sustainable technologies, or fostering equity and inclusion, our forward-thinking culture enables us to lead with purpose, vision, and impact.

# Diversity Highlights, Numbers, & Recognition



At Hanson Bridgett, we've long been at the forefront of implementing innovative and forward-thinking DEI practices. Our commitment to breaking down barriers has not only strengthened our teams but also elevated the services we provide to our clients.

This past year, we reached new milestones by hosting our first-ever Diverse Attorney Summit, a powerful gathering that fostered connection, collaboration, and growth. We also published our inaugural DEI & Social Impact Report, highlighting the tangible progress we've made and our vision for the future.

Our approach to DEI is gaining wider recognition, and while external accolades are appreciated, what excites us most is the opportunity to share the impactful lessons we've learned. That's why our CDEIO, Jennifer Martinez, has been on the road this last year evangelizing about our approach, and we've launched a comprehensive and customizable consulting solution designed to help other companies and organizations achieve the transformative results we've experienced.

But we're not stopping there. Driving meaningful change requires continuous effort, and we're dedicated to building on the precedent we've set. By advancing equity and inclusion within and beyond our industry, we're shaping a more inclusive and impactful future for all.

“

**We will continue to bridge the gap by ensuring opportunities are available at Hanson Bridgett for women lawyers, lawyers of color, LGBTQ+ lawyers, and those with disabilities. We intend to stand firm in our commitment to diversity and inclusion.**

CDEIO Jennifer Martinez

## These are a few of our **2024 DEI highlights:**

### **Annual 1L Interview Workshop**

The most long-standing DEI initiative at Hanson Bridgett is designed to give diverse and/or first-generation first-year law students (many of whom are unfamiliar with the professional interview process) the tips and experience they need to shine in law firm interviews and reach their full potential. This year marked the 22nd consecutive year we've executed the workshop, and it was a smashing success: we held almost 200 mock interview sessions in total and had nearly 50 volunteer attorneys participate.



LEADERSHIP  
COUNCIL  
ON LEGAL  
DIVERSITY

### **Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD) Recognition**

- Top Performer Award
- Compass Award
- Partner Alfonso Estrada Selected as Fellow
- Associates Breana Burgos and Bianca Ko Selected as Pathfinders



### **Mansfield Certification Plus** (4th consecutive year)



### **Seramount's Best Law Firms for Women & Diversity** (15th consecutive year)

THE  
AMERICAN LAWYER

### **#4 on The American Lawyer's 2024 Diversity Scorecard**

### **#1 in Diversity for Women - Vault's 2025 Rankings**

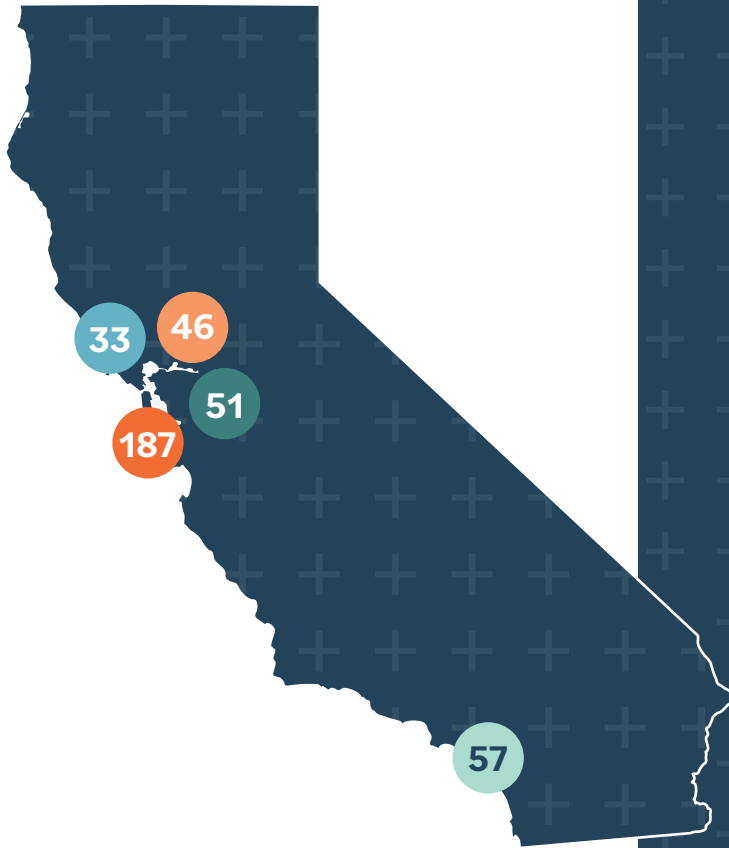


JPMorganChase

### **JPMorgan Chase Unity in Action Award**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**CLICK HERE** to review the complete list of Hanson Bridgett's recognition for diversity efforts.



## Headcount by Market

- 57 Los Angeles
- 46 Sacramento
- 187 San Francisco
- 33 San Rafael
- 51 Walnut Creek

## Client Reach

- 45 California Counties
- 35 States
- 1 US Territory
- 14 Countries

# Client Successes

We work hard to secure the best possible outcomes on behalf of our clients by providing world-class legal services to meet their goals, enhance relationships, and bolster our overall reputation. See below for a sampling of our 2024 victories on behalf of our clients.

## Construction



After a seven-day trial before the Hon. Kirk Nakamura, retired presiding judge of the Orange County Superior Court, a team of construction attorneys secured a significant win for their client, Beador Construction Company Inc., in *Beador Construction Company, Inc. v. City of Irvine*. Judge Nakamura denied all cross-claims by the City and awarded Beador Construction \$2.7 million for breach of contract, plus pre-judgment interest and attorneys' fees and costs.

## Health & Senior Care



We secured a significant victory for Continuing Life Communities Thousand Oaks LLC in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Court upheld a U.S. Tax Court ruling, affirming that Continuing Life's method of recognizing deferred entrance fees for its retirement community, University Village Thousand Oaks (UVTO), clearly reflects income under federal tax laws.

## Risk Management

### Green Tree Headlands LLC v. Crawford

We represented a trustee in an appeal from the trial court's denial of the trustee's anti-SLAPP motion filed in response to a malicious prosecution action arising from a quiet title action. The plaintiff brought the malicious prosecution action alleging the trustee and her attorney lacked probable cause to pursue the quiet title action and acted with malice in doing so. We defended the trustee, arguing that the trial court erred in denying the anti-SLAPP motion because the trustee clearly had probable cause to pursue the prior action. In a published opinion, the First District reversed the trial court's order denying the anti-SLAPP motion, ordering the anti-SLAPP motion to be granted, thus enabling the trustee to recover attorney fees as the prevailing party on the motion.

## Environmental



The Berkeley Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) approved the 17-story redevelopment of the Regal Theater, which will include a Viennese café and 227 units of housing. We successfully used AB 1633 to secure a CEQA exemption, a key aspect of our entitlement strategy.



## Government



A team of attorneys helped our client, San Francisco Bay Ferry, celebrate the public launch of Sea Change, the world's first commercial passenger ferry powered by 100 percent zero-emission hydrogen fuel cells. The success of the project provides a glimpse into the future of California transportation. Assisting San Francisco Bay Ferry's launch of Sea Change is just one key milestone in our evolving support of hydrogen-powered, zero-emissions public transit, which began over a decade ago. The work builds upon our extensive experience with battery-electric and other low- or zero-emission vehicles. Several public transit clients are integrating a mix of battery-electric and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles – an important step in reaching California's emission reduction targets.

## Private Client Services



Our family wealth resolution and disputes team represented a surviving spouse who was embroiled in intensely personal, painful litigation brought by her step son against her following the death of her husband. Our attorneys effectively and successfully led the client through the litigation and secured for her the full benefit of her legal entitlement through the use of a combination of rights arising from the Trust and the law.

## Real Estate



Our land use team worked on a 1,235-unit development that was to be built on surplus school property, with revenues going to the Jefferson Union High School District to raise teacher salaries and address other educational needs of the district's children. There was a good deal of political opposition, initially from the Sierra Club and others, and later, a labor union. This was perhaps a first-of-its-kind situation resulting in the teacher-housing portion of the project being featured on **Good Morning America!** Against significant odds, the project was approved by the City Council in February 2024.

## Employer Services



After seven years of litigation, we secured a complete victory for our clients, the City of San Jose, the City Manager, and the Board of the Federated City Employees Retirement System. The Court of Appeal for the Sixth Appellate District issued two unanimous unpublished decisions affirming trial court decisions our team of lawyers obtained. The plaintiff/appellants were 19 retired city employees (including five retired city attorneys) and a retirement association. In July 2017, they filed a lawsuit seeking to force the City to create and fund a supplemental pension system for benefits exceeding IRS limits, claiming entitlement under the Plan formula and California's vested rights doctrine. They also sought over \$6 million in unpaid benefits, additional future payments, and attorneys' fees. Almost all of the plaintiffs had been mistakenly paid excess pension benefits for a time, and when this was corrected sought damages under alternative theories of promissory and equitable estoppel and fiduciary duty breach claims. The case was hotly litigated—with no mediation or settlement discussions. It was substantively and procedurally complex involving a number of successful pleading motions and ultimately two successful summary judgment motions following extensive written and deposition discovery.

# Community Contributions

## Impact Hours

Hanson Bridgett attorneys and professionals found many ways to make positive impacts in their communities and the firm through Impact Hours. Whether through volunteering in their community, serving on organization boards or other community leadership positions, working on the firm's DEI initiatives, or promoting section knowledge and business development, our people contributed more than 3,900 Impact Hours in 2023-24.

## Pro Bono Week & Silent Auction

This year's Pro Bono Week was a celebration of our banner year in pro bono. We spent the week spotlighting some of the most impactful organizations our pro bono work has supported this year, including: the Gender Equity and Policy Institute, the Bay Area Council, Ujamaa Farmer Collective, and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the SF Bay Area. We also celebrated our program with our annual in-office receptions and silent auction to raise money for our amazing partner organizations!

## Social Impact Leader - *Law360.com*

Hanson Bridgett ranked #2 Law360's 2024 Social Impact Leaders rankings for the 101-250 lawyer category, and #26 overall! The national list includes those firms that have made the greatest strides on social responsibility.

## Pro Bono *Matters Matter*

Our pro bono work this year was as impactful as it's ever been. We've helped families recover compensation to assist in their healing from traumatic separations at the border. We've shown the way for California to make its business support policies more inclusive. We've helped black farmers acquire land to practice regenerative agriculture and empower the movement for food justice. We also staffed immigration clinics and assisted refugees seeking asylum. Our expanded volunteer opportunities included community service projects and assisting nonprofits with vital services for those experiencing homelessness, among others.

## #GivingTuesday Match Program

Wrapping our year with a heartfelt giving boom: From Hanson Bridgett's gift-matching program and Pro Bono Silent Auction to our turkey and donation drive, a successful #GivingTuesday campaign, and more - the firm and its employees contributed more than \$50,000 to charitable causes in the final three months of 2024 alone!

# Community Engagement: Celebrating Over a Decade of Empowering Women Entrepreneurs

Our commitment to inclusion by identifying, elevating, and retaining female talent prompted the creation of the Women's Impact Network (WIN) in 2010. The WIN, co-chaired by Partner Samantha Wolff and Legal Secretary Ambra Jackson, provides a collaborative environment where women thrive and unique professional opportunities are identified and pursued. This year's WIN Holiday Marketplace was a resounding success, continuing a cherished tradition we've proudly hosted for more than a decade. The event brought together an incredible community to support 14 Bay Area women-owned businesses and Women's HOPE, a vital residential treatment program for mothers and their children. We were thrilled by the amazing turnout and heartfelt engagement from all who joined us. This year's Marketplace was a celebration of community, empowerment, and the holiday spirit.



# Thought Leadership & Media Highlights

**Bloomberg  
Law**

“It’s not as simple as just turning off your nonprofit status,” said Daren. “Whatever the value is of those assets has to be properly accounted for.”

**Partner Daren Shaver**, *Bloomberg Law*, November 2024

**Daily Journal**

“This situation illustrates the complex tensions between environmental advocacy and human impact. What began as a conservation debate has evolved into a crisis affecting real families and communities.”

**Partner Andrew Giacomini**, *The Daily Journal*, December 2024

**HR DIVE**

“What exactly do people think is racist? That we treat people equitably? That we want our employees to feel included? That we recognize the value in having a diverse workforce? I’m not sure which part is the racist part among those. The idea that DEI initiatives are racist, they’re quotas or they’re lowering standards is a fundamental misunderstanding of what DEI programs actually are. I might go so far as to say an intentional misrepresentation.”

**CDEIO Jennifer Martinez**, *HR Dive*, October 2024

**SF  
Chronicle**

“It’s kind of a no brainer. AB 1287 has a lot of potential, obviously, for getting a lot of density and getting more affordable housing on site, as opposed to developers paying fees, which means you’re never really sure where that fee goes and whether projects get delivered.”

**Partner Robin Baral**, *SF Chronicle*, February 2024

**Legaltech  
news**

“If an AI invents something, it can’t be patented. If it can’t be patented, and it’s disclosed to the public, it’s in the public domain. And so that’s a little bit of a dicey situation. If a company is developing new designs using AI, can it be patented? How do you protect that?”

**Partner Robert McFarlane**, *Legaltech News*, March 2024

**LAW360**

“It’s not common for people to be leaving Hanson Bridgett for BigLaw; often it’s the other way around.”

**Managing Partner Kristina Lawson**, *Law360*, May 2024

**Daily Journal**

“We are better qualified, and better situated in the marketplace than probably any other firm to ensure a one-stop shop for the legal services [clients] need to implement their ITC plan.”

**Partner Shayna Mittler van Hoften**, *The Daily Journal*, September 2024

# Leadership & Professional Development

For as long as our firm has been around, we've been proud to have a warm, friendly, team-oriented environment for our attorneys and professional staff alike. We're a team that cares about each other, helps each other, collaborates together, and shares successes together—and we're committed to supporting all of our employees' development through personal and career growth. We have long been recognized for our workplace culture and proudly frequent the Best Places to Work lists. In 2024, we ranked as a top workplace in the Los Angeles Business Journal, Sacramento Business Journal, San Francisco Business Times, and Silicon Valley Business Journal again! In our first year of participation in Vault Law's Annual Associate Survey Rankings, we ranked in the top 10 in four categories. Additionally, we were named to the inaugural U.S. News & World Report's 2024 list of Best Companies to Work For among U.S. Law Firms, ranking among the top law firms recognized for employee well-being.

## Congratulations to our newest partners! Welcome to the partnership!

We promoted the following attorneys to **partner**, effective **January 1, 2025**:



**Rebecca Takacs**  
SF | Construction



**Robin Baral**  
SF | RE + E



**Catherine Groves**  
SF | Government



**Chris Powell**  
SAC | RE + E

In 2024, we welcomed a new counsel on our Health and Senior Care team, 15 new associates across multiple industries, as well as one senior counsel. In addition, we promoted five of our associates to senior counsel.

Our professional staff are the backbone to our continued success, providing the operational excellence and strategic support that enable our attorneys to focus on delivering exceptional legal services to our clients. We were pleased to promote 10 among our ranks recognizing their hard work, growth, and continued firm contributions.



## Executive Leadership Team & Administrative Chiefs



**Kristina Lawson**  
Managing Partner



**Brad Hise**  
General Counsel



**Laura Long**  
COO/CFO



**Jennifer Martinez**  
CDEIO



**Chris Fryer**  
CIO



**Michelle Friends**  
CMBDO



**Jeremy Strauss**  
CHRO



**Howard Salden**  
CAO

## Section Leaders



**Batya Forsyth**  
Corporate &  
Risk Management



**Michelle Akerman**  
Construction



**Allison Schutte**  
Government



**Jillian Somers Donovan**  
Health & Senior Care



**Alfonso Estrada**  
Employer Services



**Pat Glenn**  
Employer Services



**Dan Spector**  
Private Client Services



**Jordan Lavinsky**  
Real Estate + Environment

## Management Committee



**Kristina Lawson**



**Alex Grigorian**



**Jahmal Davis**



**Michael Lateef**



**Sandy Rappaport**



**Deidre A. Schönfeldt**



**Julie Sherman**



**Mohammad Walizadeh**

## Market Leaders



**Gilbert Tsai**  
San Francisco



**Shannon Nessier**  
Sacramento



**Brian Schnarr**  
San Rafael



**Eric Clarke**  
Walnut Creek



**Raffi Zerounian**  
Los Angeles