

Office Snapshot: Hanson Bridgett Expands On LA Success

By James Mills

Law360 (May 8, 2025, 4:50 PM EDT) -- With its lease up and barely any elbow room for its attorneys and staff, Hanson Bridgett LLP was searching for a new office for its growing Los Angeles team.

Raffi V. Zerounian, the office's market leader, tells Law360 Pulse his goal was to find a spot "that would inspire togetherness, create an environment where people would want to come in."

Hanson Bridgett found what it was looking for at the landmark CalEdison Building and moved its LA operation to a 15,000-square-foot space there at the start of the year, nearly doubling its footprint in the city.

The six-block move from its previous space at 777 Figueroa St. is a milestone for an office that has seen tremendous growth since it opened in temporary space in 2014, expanding from just two lawyers to now 40 attorneys.

Andrew Giacomini, the firm's longtime former managing partner, credited Zerounian with the success of the Los Angeles office, calling him an "office builder."

"Raffi was then and still is really passionate about building out our office in LA," Giacomini said. "It was very important to him. He had a really good network of people down there. He proved to me over time that he could recruit. That's a pretty good recipe. He's very loyal to the firm. He leads with our values, which is important when you're doing lateral recruiting."

Hanson Bridgett, well known in Northern California since opening in San Francisco in 1958, had long wanted to branch into Southern California, according to Giacomini, but they couldn't find the right person to open that office.

Hanson Bridgett did consider merging with an LA-based firm to get started there but couldn't find the right match. So they abandoned the idea, until they met the husband of one of their associates.

Zerounian's wife, Anita, started in 2005 in the firm's San Francisco office as a real estate transactions



The reception area of Hanson Bridgett's new office in the historic CalEdison building in downtown Los Angeles. (Courtesy of Hanson Bridgett)

attorney. In 2010, the couple decided to move to Los Angeles to be closer to family, and Anita Zerounian began working remotely. The firm ultimately got to know Raffi Zerounian, a trademark and copyright attorney, and decided to bring him on board as well.

Zerounian was happy to join but insistent they should have a physical office in Los Angeles. He secured temporary offices until he found a permanent space at 777 Figueroa. And now the office has grown so much, it had to move to bigger offices.

"As the [managing partner] who got this thing started, I'm pretty proud of the progress we've made [with the Los Angeles office], because we built that whole thing organically," Giacomini said. "We did a small acquisition of a few lawyers at one time, but mostly it's been ones and twos over time. That's hard to do given the size we're at. The vibe down there is strong. It's a great accomplishment."

The Leader

The son of an Armenian family that immigrated to America from Syria, Zerounian was in the first generation of his family to go to college. When he got to law school at the University of California, Berkeley, the school had a strong intellectual property program. That's where he found his specialty in trademarks and copyrights.

"I see my work everywhere I go. I see the brands I protect in grocery stores, in movie theaters, I see it on my kids' phones and their various social media apps," Zerounian said. "It's very satisfying. The work falls to my strengths in terms of being responsive, having good judgement."



Raffi Zerounian

Practicing trademark law has always "felt natural" to Zerounian, he said.

"I'm at the point in my practice where I have these wonderful clients who share my approach, view, philosophy and values," he added. "We just work together solving issues. I just really like that aspect of it. These are deep relationships."

Before joining Hanson Bridgett in 2014, he worked at Harvey Siskind LLP and Zuber Lawler LLP and helped found The Taillieu Law Firm LLP, according to his LinkedIn page.

With his arrival at Hanson Bridgett, Zerounian said he just took the responsibility of opening the new office and ran with it.

"It was slow, thoughtful, organic growth," Zerounian said. "In looking back, it was a safe approach. If you work in a slow way and really bring in folks who fit in with the culture of Hanson Bridgett, it helps keep this a unique place."

Whenever he gets a chance to promote the firm, he gives this elevator speech: "Wonderful attorneys that take a long-term view of their clients and achieve successful results."

The Location

Hanson Bridgett's new office is in the CalEdison building at 601 W. Fifth St. at Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles's financial district.

The 14-story, 242,000-square foot, historically designated Art Deco building was designed by Allison &

Allison and completed in 1931. Originally called the Edison Building because Southern California Edison was its primary tenant, the building was also one of the first all-electrically heated and cooled buildings in the Western United States. In the 1980s, the name changed to One Bunker Hill, but after a refurbishment in the mid-2010s the building was rebranded as the CalEdison building in 2017.

Hanson Bridgett occupies 15,000 square feet on the third floor. Using a sleek, modern design style with clear glass and high ceilings, the space has conferencing and research technology as well as multiple conference rooms.

"One of the things we needed was more space to do our work," Zerounian said. "Given the number of conference rooms, we can now hold many more simultaneous depositions or quiet meetings. So that was one of the other reasons that we needed to move. We needed more space to do our work."

The firm does not have an in-office mandate, but attorneys who are consistently in the office at least three days a week received their own office. For other attorneys who come in occasionally, attorneys take whatever offices or desks are available that day.

The new office also includes a large outdoor terrace that was part of the original building design. The firm plans to have many social events and gatherings on that outdoor terrace. Similarly, attorneys and staff take advantage of the deck for coffee breaks, lunch breaks and such.

"The space is a fun place for people to relax, get some sun," Zerounian said. "It's nice that people hang back and spend some time with each other on the deck. I wanted an environment for folks to get to know each other better and to collaborate and to just really enjoy being together in person to do the hard work that we do."

And if the office keeps growing at the pace it has been, the firm has an option to take over more space on the third floor.

"We moved here with a plan and a contingency to be able to grow in this space," Zerounian said. "The space we're in, gives us the ability to grow significantly if we need to."

The Team

Attorneys: 40

· Partners: 10

· Associates: 17

· Senior Counsel: 6

· Counsel: 5

· Of Counsel: 1

· Contract Attorney: 1

Professional Staff: 19

Total in office: 59



Hanson Bridgett's new office has multiple conference rooms, including this boardroom. (Courtesy of Hanson Bridget)

The Work

Zerounian said the office's top practice areas are labor and employment and public agencies. That's followed by real estate, trademarks and copyrights and construction.

Partners in San Francisco were initially hiring attorneys to work in Los Angeles in the public agency and labor and employment practice groups, two of the firm's strongest practices. However, in 2020 Claire Collins joined the LA office and brought a team with her.

"Claire's a public agency attorney, and that significantly increased the number of public agency lawyers we have," Zerounian said. "Since then, Claire has grown her practice and other public agency attorneys have been recruited."

Zerounian credited Alfonso Estrada and Sonia Salinas with having a similar effect upon the labor and employment practice in LA.

"Alfonso joined in 2021 and helped strengthen our labor and employment practice. He helped recruit associates to join the practice too," Zerounian said. "So did Sonia when she joined in 2023."

Comings and Goings

The office has had five associates join in the past year.

In April 2024, Brian Hoops joined the construction practice group and Robert Pierce joined the government practice. About five months later, Eric Gamboa joined the labor and employment practice.

In October, Sewar Sunnaa joined the construction litigation practice.

--Editing by Brian Baresch.