

Daily Journal

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TOP BOUTIQUES IN 2020 CALIFORNIA

COMPLEX LITIGATION

Doll Amir & Eley LLP

LOS ANGELES, MANHATTAN BEACH

The founding partners at Doll Amir & Eley—Gregory L. Doll, Michael M. Amir and Hunter R. Eley—have been such close friends for so long that in 2005 when they decided to launch a joint enterprise they found it unnecessary to sign a partnership agreement.

Today they've grown to a 19-lawyer shop specializing in litigation involving health care, financial services, class action defense and intellectual property work. Clients include Amazon.com Inc., Verizon, Capital One Financial Corp., Citibank N.A., Heritage Provider Network Inc., Hewlett Packard Co., IBM Corp., Golden 1 Credit Union, American Medical Response Inc., ICM Partners, Sunrun Inc. and Wintrust Financial Corp.

"The whole firm was built on our friendship," Doll said. "It was a handshake deal. We planned from the start to divide everything that came in and to split all expenses."

When they expanded from their original downtown Los Angeles offices to open a second shop near the surf in Manhattan Beach, they signed a one-sentence document stating that they'd be governed by the Uniform Partnership Act, unless otherwise agreed. That concluded the formalities. At the new offices, corporate style is out and dogs and flip-flops are welcome, the partners said.

"I can walk out at lunch and do stand-up paddle-boarding," Amir said. Eley rides his bike to work, explaining, "That was a game-changer for me, to get my mind right on the way to the office." And Doll rises early to ride the waves before his legal duties begin. "Surfing is my passion," he said.

The beach place became a refuge when the coronavirus arrived. "Six or seven of our attorneys lived near the South Bay, and they were exhausted by the commute to downtown," Doll



Justin L. Stewart / Daily Journal

Hunter R. Eley, Michael M. Amir, Gregory L. Doll, founders of Doll Amir & Eley LLP, from left to right.

said. "So relocating to Manhattan Beach was accidentally perfectly timed for the pandemic. We're not using L.A. at all now."

The three, and several of the other lawyers at the firm, are Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP alumni. "We recruit from big firms to obtain lawyers trained to focus on sophisticated cases," Doll said. The additional partners are Jason B. Baim, Amy I. Borlund, Mary Tesh Glarum, Jamie O Kendall, Brett H. Oberst, Connie Y. Tcheng and Paul M. Torres.

"Our success starts and ends with the talented lawyers who chose DAE as their home," Amir said.

Added Eley: "Our firm's culture is the bedrock of our success. From day one, DAE prioritized flexibility and work-life balance. That message resonated with a diverse group of uniquely talented people, and they are what truly sets us apart."

Eley said the firm's strategy is to collaborate with those who retain its services. "Our firm is built to partner with our institutional clients to solve the day-to-day issues they encounter. We become part of the fabric of these sophisticated in-house departments by being on the front lines of everyday litigation. This affords DAE attorneys the opportunity to develop true subject mat-

ter expertise, so when matters of even greater consequence arise, such as class action lawsuits, DAE is uniquely positioned to defend its clients' interests."

The firm has a winning streak in cases involving health care clients. Serving as lead counsel, Amir successfully defended his HMO client against a \$120 million suit by five hospital facilities over charges he called inflated and unwarranted. The case settled for a sum far lower than the plaintiffs ask. *St. John's Regional Medical Center v. Heritage Provider Network Inc.*, BC666023 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed June 22, 2017).

And Amir prevailed for his medical staff client in a case over physician autonomy that has national implications for how hospitals operate.

After a three-weeks-plus bench trial, a Tulare County judge ordered reinstatement with all rights, privileges and status of the staff that was fired and replaced; the hospital agreed to pay \$300,000 in legal fees. *Tulare Regional Medical Center Medical Staff v. Tulare Local Healthcare District*, VCU264227 (Tulare Super. Ct., filed Feb. 10, 2016).

Doll, who said he has never lost a jury trial, summed up, "Everything we have accomplished as a firm has been a team effort."

— John Roemer