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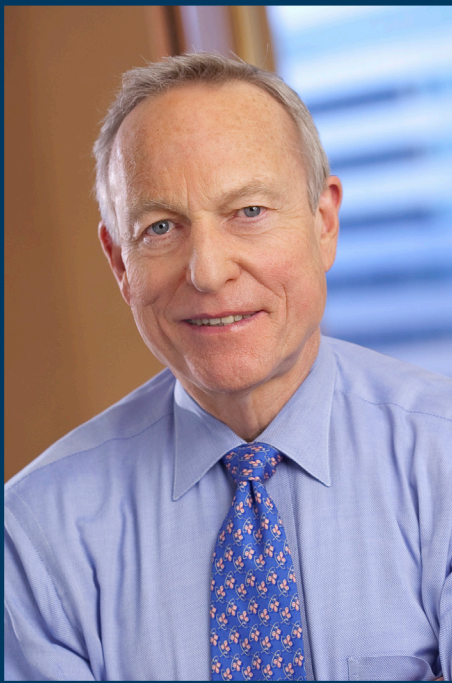
TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA

EDITORS' NOTE

Every year, the editors of the Daily Journal look at the work of hundreds of California lawyers. We receive nominations from law firms and nonprofits and universities – and from clients. We also examine our archive of stories and talk to each reporter about the matters they've been covering. The point is to honor the attorneys whose work is having the widest impact, and not just on their career or their firm's bottom line. We seek to honor work that is changing an industry or the law or the society as a whole. And every year, we reach the difficult but exciting truth: There are far more than 100 leading lawyers in California. Deciding who won't make the list is our most difficult task.

We don't pretend that this list is scientific or encompassing; it is a snapshot of a moment in time. It is a representative sample of the tremendous legal talent that California offers. As you read, we hope you'll agree.

— David Houston, Editor



RONALD L. OLSON

LITIGATION & CORPORATE
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SPECIALTIES: Corporate governance, mergers and acquisitions, antitrust, appellate, insurance, securities

Olson has helped Google Inc. stay on the cutting edge, though his work has nothing to do with Google Glass or search algorithms.

Nine years ago, when Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin were in the middle of Google's initial public offering, the duo called on Olson for help with what was at the time a novel stock structure for tech companies. Olson helped the co-founders restructure the company to create two classes of stock, one with 10 votes per share for the company insiders, and one with a single vote per share, to be sold to the public.

"That was very unique at the time. It was so far as we know the first tech company that had two classes of stock," Olson said. "It was very controversial with [venture capitalists] at the time. Since then, virtually every one of these technology companies has done the same thing — Facebook, Groupon, LinkedIn."

Earlier this year, Page and Brin again looked to Olson for help with another stock deal. Olson helped the co-founders create a third tier of stock, a tier with zero votes per share.

"The intention was to give the company an additional currency that might be used for making major acquisitions or making compensation payments to employees," Olson said. "It allowed them to do that without diluting or changing the voting structure of the company."

As is often the case in these matters, plaintiffs lawyers challenged the move. But the case was settled a week before trial.

In another search engine deal last year that made headlines, Olson represented the board of directors of Yahoo Inc. in its sale of half its stake in Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. to Alibaba for \$7.1 billion.

Olson has also remained busy with litigation. He's currently representing Fukushima power plant owner Tokyo Electric Power Co. Inc. in a class action brought on behalf of U.S. sailors who had been aboard the USS Ronald Reagan when it was deployed to assist in the aftermath of the disaster. The sailors claim they have a right to compensation after having been exposed to radiation.

— Andrew McIntyre