

Daily Journal

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Top 20 Under 40

Sorting... Navigating... Leading...

- Sorting out a pharmaceutical company's duty to monitor off-label use of its drugs
- Putting together contracts for the largest construction project in the nation in five years
- Working to overturn California's gay marriage ban
- Leading the equity practice of one of the world's largest law firms

• Navigating the legal rights of cancer patients
These are a few of the issues being tackled by those on our 2010 list of top California lawyers under age 40.

Finding standouts among a group of exceptional people is never easy. We reviewed 150 eligible nominations this year.

There were many impressive candidates; these 20 were a cut above. They found a way to make an impact on the world outside their

sphere. One didn't just defend a lawsuit for a client but works to change the law so that other companies wouldn't face a similar suit. Another takes time from his practice putting together marquee transactions for corporate clients to help a non-profit start a grocery store in an underserved area of Oakland. This is exceptionalism at its best. We urge you to read on and get to know these people.

— The Editors

Brett J. Rodda 35

MUNGER, TOLLES & OLSON
LOS ANGELES

CORPORATE

Corporate governance, mergers and acquisitions

The reason Rodda, a Michigan native who graduated from Stanford Law School at the height of the tech bubble, jumped at the chance to join Munger, Tolles & Olson in Los Angeles rather than stay in the Bay Area was simple: He wanted to go with the firm that had Warren Buffett as a client.

Rodda would not only go on to meet Buffett a few years later at a law firm anniversary dinner — where he took note of the investor as a down-to-earth billionaire — but to work on some of the firm's biggest deals on behalf of Berkshire Hathaway Inc., Buffett's investing vehicle.

In 2009, Rodda handled some of the most difficult parts of Berkshire Hathaway's headline-making acquisition of railroad giant Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp. Rodda drafted a novel election provision that fixed the value of the stock, rather than the number of buyer shares, in order to cut down on market arbitrage. Valued at \$44 billion, the deal was Berkshire's largest acquisition ever.

Also last year, Rodda represented the William Morris Agency in its April merger with The Endeavor Agency, which positioned the new company as a strong competitor to industry-leading Creative Artists Agency. He steered the deal through complicated governance arrangements that included preserving the rights of the William Morris stockholders in the newly merged entity.

Joining Munger Tolles was the natural step for Rodda who was drawn to the law profession through a fascination with the legal side of business transactions, an interest that developed during a post-college stint as a radio reporter for NASDAQ in Washington, D.C.



Rodda handled some of the most difficult parts of Berkshire Hathaway's headline-making acquisition of railroad giant Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp.

At Munger Tolles, Rodda sits as the youngest partner on the policy committee. He acts as outside counsel on corporate matters for the Daily Journal Corp.

— Rebecca U. Cho

