

Daily Journal

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TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA 2018

COMMERCIAL LITIGATION
LUIS LI

MUNGER, TOLLES & OLSON LLP | LOS ANGELES

SPECIALTY: WHITE COLLAR CRIMINAL DEFENSE, ART LAW

Inspired by watching the Watergate hearings in his family's den as a kid, Li knew from an early age he wanted to be a part of the legal system.

"Growing up with parents who fled communist China, I remembered how my father was utterly fascinated with the Watergate scandal and the idea that the American legal system was robust enough to replace someone as powerful as the president."

After leaving Munger Tolles in 1995 for a successful stint as chief prosecutor at the U.S. Attorney's Office, Li returned to Munger Tolles to practice complex business litigation, corporate crisis management, internal corporate investigations, art law, international enforcement matters and white collar criminal defense.

Li recently defended the Norton Simon Museum by obtaining a summary judgment dismissing claims to recover two paintings subject to Nazi-coerced sales during World War II. The plaintiff claimed nearly \$450 million in restitution of the works but in the end received nothing. The court recognized that the museum had full title to the paintings under the postwar restitution statutes and laws enacted by the Dutch government.

"We dug really deep on what the postwar Dutch restitution process was, and we understood at a really granular level

how the system worked," Li said. "I forget who said it, but God is in the details."

Digging deep seems to be Li's modus operandi when it comes to high-stakes litigation. He obtained a trial win in a contentious face-off against famed trial lawyers Patricia Glaser of Glaser Weil Fink Howard Avchen & Shapiro LLP and Dale Kinsella of Kinsella Weitzman Iser Kump & Aldisert LLP in a bench trial over control of entertainment management company ROAR LLC. The judge delivered Li's client, ROAR co-founder Jay Froberg, a significant defense verdict in a 67-page ruling.

"We took this case two or three weeks before trial, didn't ask for a continuance and just jumped into it with two feet," Li said.

Li is currently co-lead, defending Plains All American Pipeline in the Refugio Beach Oil spill trial as well as MGM Resorts International in multiple lawsuits arising from a mass shooting that took place on Oct. 1, 2017 in Las Vegas.

"You absolutely have to accept that what happened in these various cases was awful but you also need to challenge people to engage in the evidence to determine how and what the legal process should be."

Whether it's in the courtroom or in life, Li is no stranger to taking on immense



challenges. He once spent three weeks climbing Mt. McKinley, the tallest peak in North America, as well as participated in an eight-day bike race across Europe that he said took him a year to train for.

"You have to totally commit to taking on those challenges, and trials are a lot like that."

— Blaise Scemama