



Jenny Riggs
Principal

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Practice Groups

Trial and Litigation
Commercial Litigation
California Public Records Act
Labor and Employment
Workplace Investigations

California Bar Number
204417

Education

Northwestern University School of Law, JD,
cum laude, 1999

University of Dallas, BA, History, *cum*
laude, 1992

Practicing Since: 1999

Jenny Riggs is a Principal in the Trial and Litigation, Commercial Litigation, First Amendment, and Labor and Employment Practice Groups. She has extensive state and federal court litigation experience on behalf of municipalities, counties, special districts, businesses and non-profit organizations. Her complex litigation experience also includes multi-district cases and civil litigations that are intertwined with criminal actions.

Jenny's expertise includes single- and multi-plaintiff cases involving constitutional law, government corruption, land use, zoning, catastrophic disasters, eminent domain and inverse condemnation, coastal issues, environmental claims, Public Records Act and Brown Act compliance, Americans with Disabilities Act, employment law, and civil rights claims for violations of substantive and procedural due process.

Jenny handles pre-trial litigation (including dispositive motions), pre-trial discovery, various stages of motion practice, and trial. In addition to her skills in the courtroom examining witnesses and arguing motions, and her expert aptitude for taking and defending depositions, Jenny leads the development and management of Meyers Nave's systems and protocols for discovery plans in complex matters and document intensive litigation.

Jenny is admitted to practice in the courts of the State of California, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and all U.S. District Courts in California.

Honors and Awards

- 2010 Volunteer of the Year, Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice

Professional Affiliations

- Member, The State Bar of California

- Member, California Women Lawyers
- Member, Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles

Presentations

- Presenter, “Fires, Floods, Landslides, and Debris Flows: Crisis Management Best Practices,” County Counsels’ Association Fall Land Use Conference, December 3, 2020
- Presenter, “Public Works Liabilities for Catastrophic Disasters,” County Counsels’ Association Fall Public Works & Contracts Conference, 2020
- Presenter, “Preparing for Fires, Floods, Landslides and Debris Flows,” County Counsels’ Association Spring Land Use Conference, 2020 (cancelled due to coronavirus pandemic)
- Presenter, “What is the California Consumer Privacy Act?,” LSI webinar, 2020
- Presenter, “It Just Isn’t Fair: Unfair Competition Claims,” LSI Conference, 2019
- Presenter, “e-Discovery,” 17th Annual Eminent Domain Conference, CLE International, 2015

Representative Experience

Land Use, Zoning, Civil Rights, First Amendment

- Achieved a closely watched victory for the County of Los Angeles in a final ruling that awarded \$6.6 million in attorneys’ fees, sanctions and civil penalties plus permanent injunctive relief in a case that involved the illegal transport and dumping of concrete and other construction debris in an ecologically sensitive region in the Santa Susana Mountains. Relying on drone surveillance and more than 500 exhibits, Meyers Nave initially obtained a preliminary injunction banning all Class 6 trucks and higher from the illegal waste disposal operation, along with additional restrictions including requiring defendant to post No Dumping signs and submit a conditional use permit and engineered grading application to address hillside stability issues. After granting our motion for summary judgment, the Court ordered briefing on the appropriate remedies. The Court’s subsequent ruling granted a permanent injunction banning Class 6 and higher trucks, the most effective deterrent for the County to halt the dumping and parades of trucks through the canyon. Civil penalties and attorneys’ fees were awarded in the amount of \$6,638,192.33. For violating the County’s Zoning, Grading, and Building Codes, the Court assessed civil penalties of \$4,893,000. For violating the state Unfair Competition Law, the Court assessed an additional penalty of \$800,000. The Court also awarded the County \$945,192.33 in attorneys’ fees.
- Defended the County of Los Angeles in a series of lawsuits in federal and state courts brought by a married couple asserting land use, civil rights/takings, and First Amendment retaliatory claims. The original case settled after a Rule 68 offer. Remaining cases are on appeal following successful motions to dismiss or for summary judgment.

- Represented the City of Chula Vista in obtaining a permanent injunction to close a strip club that violated zoning codes. The court also granted the City's cost bill. The case validated the constitutionality of the City's adult zoning and licensing ordinance that Meyers Nave drafted.
- Represented the City of Oceanside in obtaining dismissals of claims pursuant to the anti-SLAPP statute in a dispute regarding the City's rejection of an application from BGT to operate a digital billboard on a City right-of-way. At the end of public hearings, the City Council voted to deny approval of the applicant's digital billboard project. A year after BGT's application was denied, the City completed a global zoning code amendment that repealed the provision under which BGT had made its application for a permit. As a result of the amendment, the City no longer permitted digital billboards on City property or City rights-of-way. An initial demurrer and an anti-SLAPP motion succeeded in obtaining a full victory for the City and resulted in a judgment for Oceanside with an award of attorneys' fees.
- Provided cities, including Modesto and Ventura, with legal advice on revisions to adult use ordinances, including urgency and moratorium ordinances.
- Defended the City of Modesto against federal claims brought by the owner/operator of a proposed strip club, obtaining dismissal before discovery began.

Catastrophic Event Litigation

- Represent the County of Santa Barbara in a dispute with Southern California Edison (SCE) regarding potential liability for the 2017 Thomas Fire and subsequent Montecito debris flow. SCE sued various public entities alleging that "negligent acts and omissions of the public entities" contributed to or exacerbated the injuries, deaths and multi-million dollar losses incurred by plaintiffs that are suing SCE for causing the fire. The matter includes 200 lawsuits, 3000 plaintiffs, and 70 plaintiff law firms asserting billions of dollars of liability.

Government Corruption

- Assisted a municipality in a major government corruption investigation of the Mayor and every member of the City Council. The investigation was conducted by a joint federal and state task force involving the FBI, the IRS criminal investigative division, and the District Attorney's office. Extensive e-discovery was required to cull through 500,000+ pages of documents from City departments, councilmembers' email accounts, and various City defendants. The massive amount of electronically stored information had to be reviewed from the Public Records Act perspective and, in select instances, uploaded to a City website that provided the public with updates about the investigations.

Employment, ADA

- Represented a personnel commission against a claim brought by an employee who was returned to class from a probationary position after he engaged in sexual harassment of a colleague. After the trial court ruled in our client's favor, the matter settled on favorable terms prior to an appeal.

- Represented an international English language instruction college in an employment matter in which a former employee filed a claim with the California Labor Commissioner alleging violations of the California Labor Code and applicable wage orders, as well as a claim alleging violations of the California Labor Code related to retaliation. The matter settled very favorably for the client with the former employee subsequently releasing his claims against the employer and dismissing the claims with prejudice.
- Represented a transit agency in an employment matter in which the former Director of Human Resources alleged retaliation and wrongful termination in violation of FEHA. The matter settled on favorable terms for the agency.
- Represented the County of San Bernardino in federal court litigation involving the ADA, and specifically the issue of whether County Hospital medical personnel provided effective communication to hearing impaired individuals who were treated at the Hospital. Settled the case, both with the plaintiff and with the Department of Justice, on terms beneficial to the County. Also settled a second case to the benefit of the County in which the plaintiff, a paraplegic, alleged in a federal action that he was denied on-street parking accessibility to a store because the County failed to install an angled parking space and curb ramp that would enable him to access the store.
- Represented the City of Los Angeles in a federal class action lawsuit alleging that the City violated state and federal disability laws by failing to install and maintain accessible pedestrian rights of way, including sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb cuts. The matter involved discovery, both electronic and paper, across nearly all offices and departments of the city, including a number of legacy products. The matter resolved on favorable settlement terms.
- Conducted an investigation into allegations made against a senior level executive at a transit agency, relating to claims that the executive had not properly executed responsibilities, had not accurately reported information, and had improperly influenced recruitment and hiring.
- Conducted an investigation into allegations relating to the use of a concealed recording device and listening device in a municipal building, potentially involving both elected officials and senior staff at the municipality.

Construction

- Defended a transit agency in litigation involving competing claims brought by a tunneling contractor, and the agency's own cross-claims. The action involved disputes over differing site conditions, defective specifications, delay, liquidated damages, and chemical grouting costs.

Product Liability

- Defended a multinational company in a five month toxic tort trial in Los Angeles brought by multiple foreign plaintiffs, obtaining a split verdict that was later overturned on appeal due to plaintiffs' fraud.
- Defended a respirator manufacturer in numerous personal injury/product liability actions throughout California, including defending against claims of successor liability.

Business, Contracts, Commercial Litigation

- Defended a microelectronics company in a four month trial in San Jose, California, obtaining a unanimous defense verdict, subsequently recognized as a “Top Defense Verdict of the Year.”
- Represented a third party defendant against indemnity claims arising out of the client’s IPO.
- Brought suit on behalf of a water district seeking rescission of an interest rate derivative swap transaction, disgorgement of fees earned by defendants in those transactions, and fraud damages.
- In a matter relating to leases for operating a tourist train, successfully opposed the tenant’s request for a preliminary injunction to prevent a county transportation commission from terminating the tenant’s leases, and then successfully settled the case.

Pro Bono

- Provided pro bono representation to women seeking domestic violence restraining orders.
- Provided pro bono representation to a California state prisoner in a religious discrimination case, seeking to enforce his First Amendment rights.

Other

- Represented the Assessor in defending against various challenges to the assessment of property taxes.
- Represented a municipality in its response to federal and local investigative subpoenas relating to a confidential matter.