



Koren L. Bell

Partner

213.516.2468
kbell@larsonllp.com

EDUCATION

Yale Law School
Swarthmore College, B.A., High Honors

ADMISSIONS

California
New York
U.S. Supreme Court
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
U.S.D.C. Central District of California

LANGUAGES

Spanish

Koren ("Kori") Bell is a partner at Larson O'Brien in Los Angeles. She is an experienced, bilingual trial and appellate lawyer who has litigated high-stakes cases in courtrooms around the country. Kori has handled complex white collar criminal matters—including as Counsel of Record in a case she advanced to, and argued before, the U.S. Supreme Court—and civil matters—including as trial counsel in widely publicized complex commercial and civil rights cases for prominent clients. She has represented both plaintiffs and defendants—including Fortune 500 companies, diplomats, and high-net-worth individuals—across a range of industries, and regularly represents Spanish-speaking clients in all types of matters.

Across her diverse practice, and at every stage of litigation, Kori delivers results for her clients through aggressive, creative, and focused advocacy.

Most recently, in *People v. Salari*, a public corruption case involving the former Los Angeles County Assessor, Kori and partner Stephen G. Larson obtained the dismissal before the California Court of Appeal of two separate cases charging our client with 67 counts of bribery, embezzlement, and tax fraud. The case, which dates back to 2012, garnered national attention after then-Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley stated that it was one of the County's most important in decades.

Shortly before that, in *People v. Shaw*, another highly-publicized case, Kori and Stephen defended a decorated economic development expert charged alongside the former Palmdale mayor with the embezzlement of millions of dollars in NASA funds. Following a multi-week preliminary hearing—which the Court described as "among the most complicated, if not the most complicated case I've ever heard in 37 years"—Kori and Stephen obtained a favorable sole-tax-count, no-custody, no-restitution disposition for their client, and the dismissal of all remaining charges. At the conclusion of the proceedings, the Court praised the "topnotch" and "superb lawyering by Ms. Bell and Mr. Larson," deeming the result "a testament to their abilities."

And in *Todd McNair v. NCAA*, a defamation case arising from the Reggie Bush scandal, Kori was a core member of the trial team that obtained a complete defense verdict for the NCAA, following a month-long trial that was covered extensively in the media. After the jury rejected the plaintiff's claims, the Court called the advocacy in the case—which included Kori's spearheading of legal strategy and examination of key trial witnesses—"the best I've seen since I've been a judge."

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Before entering private practice, Kori spent over eight years at the Office of the Federal Public Defender in Los Angeles. As a Supervising Trial Deputy in the largest office in the federal defender system, she helped oversee trial litigation, devise management improvements, and develop district-wide challenges to prosecutions. During her tenure, Kori defended clients in some of the Office's most difficult federal criminal trial matters and appeals—including cases involving alleged cross-border criminal activity, each of the federal fraud statutes, bribery, public corruption, and capital murder.

Among these matters was *Shaw v. United States*, a case involving the proper construction of the federal fraud statutes, which Kori advanced to—and argued before—the U.S. Supreme Court after securing acquittals on certain counts at trial. The Supreme Court agreed that the Ninth Circuit's fraud jury instruction was erroneous, vacated the court's judgment affirming her client's convictions, and remanded. Following *Shaw*, the Ninth Circuit then held in *United States v. Miller*—a case in which Kori and her team reiterated the *Shaw* jury-charge challenge—that its model fraud instruction misstates the law. Ninth Circuit precedent and that of five other circuits upholding the fraud charge, the court wrote, "are no longer tenable in light of the Supreme Court's intervening ruling in *Shaw v. United States*."

Kori began her career as a law clerk to the Honorable Stephen Reinhardt on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. She was then a Skadden Fellow at the Education Law Center, where she represented a plaintiff class of schoolchildren from 31 low-wealth districts before the New Jersey Supreme Court and the lower courts, and an associate at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP.

Kori received her law degree from Yale Law School, where she was the Executive Editor of the *Yale Journal of International Law*. She received her undergraduate degree with high honors from Swarthmore College, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and was selected as a Eugene Lang Scholar in recognition of her demonstrated commitment to social justice. Following college, she was a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar in Argentina, where her family is from, and a Fulbright Scholar in Chile.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Kori is active in the Los Angeles legal community as a member of the Board of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, and the Mexican American Bar Association. She serves on the Advisory Committee of the American Bar Association's (ABA) Judicial Intern Opportunity Program, and the Federal Judicial Externship and Scholarship Committee for the Mexican American Bar Association.

Kori has taught at the National Institute for Trial Advocacy, presented at the ABA Institute on White Collar Crime and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers White Collar Conference, and judged national moot court competitions.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Trial counsel in *Todd McNair v. NCAA*. Obtained a complete defense verdict in a month-long defamation trial in Los Angeles Superior Court.
- Counsel of Record in the U.S. Supreme Court, and lead trial and appellate counsel, in *Shaw v. United States*. After winning jury acquittals on certain counts, advanced the case to the Supreme Court. Following argument before the Supreme Court, secured a judgment vacating and remanding the Ninth Circuit's decision affirming the client's convictions in a ruling that undermines the applicable jury instructions for the federal fraud statutes.
- Defense of FedEx Ground Package System in \$600 million federal civil lawsuits brought by the State and City of New York alleging the knowing shipment of contraband cigarettes.
- Defense of Pfizer Inc. in multi-plaintiff products liability actions brought in Missouri state court over its blockbuster statin.
- Defense of founder, majority owner, and former CEO of a leading pharmaceutical company federally charged with illegally distributing an FDA-approved medication in violation of RICO, the fraud statutes, and the Anti-Kickback Statute.
- Trial counsel in a landmark criminal prosecution under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Obtained mid-trial dismissal following aggressive litigation over the applicable jury instructions.
- Lead trial counsel for the lead defendant in three cases, out of two jurisdictions, alleging \$30-million international market-manipulation conspiracies. Leveraged government misconduct to negotiate a disposition that reduced the client's life-term exposure to a sentence of time-served.
- Trial counsel in a counterfeit currency case. Obtained pre-trial dismissal after challenging the constitutionality of the government's search.
- Lead trial counsel in a cross-border illegal gratuities case. Obtained jury acquittal on a witness-tampering count, and post-trial dismissal of a gratuities count. Raised first-impression questions of statutory interpretation later addressed by the Supreme Court in *McDonnell v. United States*.
- Trial counsel in a firearms case in which the government presented two confessions obtained from the client. Won jury acquittal.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- *Los Angeles Business Journal*, "Top Women Attorneys in Los Angeles" (2020)
- *Los Angeles Business Journal*, "Most Influential Women Lawyers" (2019)

Higher education honors include:

- Skadden Fellow (2004-2006)
- Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar (1999-2000)
- Fulbright Scholar (1998-1999)