



## Koren L. Bell

### **PARTNER**

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Los Angeles

Koren (“Kori”) Bell is an experienced trial and appellate lawyer who has litigated high-stakes cases in courtrooms around the country, and has led sensitive investigations abroad. She 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. In her diverse practice, Kori represents prominent clients across industries ranging from healthcare to technology, real estate to media and sports. She is fluent in Spanish, and regularly represents clients from all over the world.

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 multiple 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,

### **EDUCATION**

Yale Law School, J.D.

Swarthmore College, B.A., high honors

### **CLERKSHIPS**

Hon. Stephen Reinhardt

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

### **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

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the Court praised the “topnotch” and “superb lawyering by Ms. Bell and Mr. Larson,” deeming the result “a testament to their abilities.”

Just prior to *Shaw*, before joining the firm, Kori was a core member of the trial team that obtained a complete defense verdict in *McNair v. NCAA*, a defamation case arising from the Reggie Bush scandal, 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 nearly a decade at the Federal Public Defender’s Office 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, 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. In so holding, the court wrote that Ninth Circuit precedent and that of five other circuits upholding the fraud jury charge “are no longer tenable in light of the Supreme Court’s intervening ruling in *Shaw v. United States*.”

Earlier in her career, as a Skadden Fellow at the Education Law Center, Kori represented a plaintiff class of schoolchildren from 31 low-wealth districts before all levels of the New Jersey courts. In this position, Kori challenged the non-disclosure of data used to determine school-funding formulas for the state’s most disadvantaged students in a case she helped advance to, and litigate before, the New Jersey Supreme Court.

## **REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS**

- Defending decorated USC water polo coach charged in the highly publicized “Varsity Blues” college admissions case with conspiring to operate a nationwide racketeering scheme.
- Defending former Outcome Health president against highly publicized criminal charges, and parallel SEC proceedings, alleging a \$1 billion fraud scheme targeting this prominent healthcare information tech startup’s clients and investors.
- Representing plaintiffs—real estate developer Colonies Partners and its co-managing partner—in the largest federal civil rights suit pending in the Central District of California, seeking over \$100 million in damages for the District Attorney’s Office’s pursuit of a retaliatory investigation which ended in full acquittals at trial.
- Representing counterclaimants in a putative class action matter involving alleged trade secret violations, and violations of the Federal Wiretap Act and California’s Invasion of Privacy Act.
- Representing a major television network in an internal investigation overseas.

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## *Significant Prior Representations:*

- Defended 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.
- Defended Pfizer Inc. in multi-plaintiff products liability actions brought in Missouri state court over its blockbuster statin.
- Defended founder and former CEO of Insys Therapeutics charged in an unprecedented federal prosecution with illegally distributing an FDA-approved medication in violation of RICO, the fraud statutes, and the Anti-Kickback Statute.
- Defended client in landmark criminal prosecution under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, obtaining midtrial dismissal following first-impression litigation over the construction of the statute.
- Defended client in high profile criminal prosecution alleging \$30 million international market-manipulation conspiracies, obtaining a disposition that reduced the client's life-term exposure to time-served.
- Defended client in a counterfeit currency case, obtaining pretrial dismissal after challenging the constitutionality of the government's search.
- Defended client in a cross-border illegal gratuities case, obtaining jury acquittal on a witness-tampering count and post-trial dismissal of a gratuities count.
- Represented client in a firearms case predicated on the client's two confessions, obtaining jury acquittal.

## **ACTIVITIES**

- Los Angeles Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, *Board Member*
- Los Angeles County Bar Association, *Membership Committee Co-Chair*
- Mexican American Bar Association, *Federal Judicial Externship and Scholarship Committee Member*
- American Bar Association's Judicial Intern Opportunity Program, *Advisory Committee Member*
- The Chancery Club of Los Angeles, *Member*
- Los Angeles Chapter of the Women's White Collar Defense Association, *Member*

## **AWARDS & RECOGNITION**

- *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Criminal Defense: White-Collar (2021)
- Nominated for Fellowship in the Litigation Counsel of America (2020) (invitation-only trial lawyer honorary society whose membership is limited to the top one half of 1 percent of nation's lawyers)
- *Los Angeles Business Journal*, "Top Women Attorneys in Los Angeles" (2020)
- *Los Angeles Business Journal*, "Most Influential Women Lawyers" (2019)