



# Susan C. Yu

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**Susan C. Yu** specializes in complex civil, criminal, and medical board litigation and trials in federal, state, and administrative courts. Susan grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area and attended several “segregated” schools throughout the city. During college, she helped manage her parents’ Jewish Deli and held a number of part-time jobs in the Bay Area. Her unique life experiences shaped her interests in class infrastructures and political ideologies, and later in law. Susan went on to receive her B.A. in *Political Science* with a concentration in *Soviet Politics* from the *University of California at Berkeley* and her J.D., *cum laude*, from *Syracuse University College of Law*, where she was a *Dana Hinman Scholar* and inducted to the *College of Law’s Dean’s Honor List* and *Justinian Honorary Law Society*. Susan also served as Editor of the *Syracuse Journal of International Law and Commerce*. Thereafter, Susan received intensive trial advocacy training at the *University of Virginia School of Law*. In addition to English, Susan speaks Korean, Russian and Japanese.

Deeply committed to excellence, Susan has a history of consistently obtaining winning results for many prominent clients, including: the late music legend **Michael Jackson**; the former **First Lady of Gabon, Africa**; a family member of the late film actor **Peter Falk** (known from a hit TV series “Columbo”); a top-ranking government official’s family member from **China**; actor **Robert Blake**; the founder and former CEO of women’s knitwear, **St. John Knits International, Inc.**; an international corporation from **South Korea**; a family member of **L.A. Gear**; a top-ranking officer of a multi-national real estate development company from **India**; a publicly-traded midstream company from **Texas**; a high-profile Beverly Hills **Plastic Surgeon**; a prominent **Orthopedic Surgeon** from Southern California; a well-respected **Radiologist**; a highly accomplished **Corporate Lawyer** in Los Angeles; a top **Entertainment Lawyer**; a high-profile **Real Estate Agent**; one of the country’s top real estate companies, **Coldwell Banker Realty**; and the world’s largest home improvement retailer, **Home Depot U.S.A., Inc.**

In addition to maintaining a diverse trial practice, Susan is actively involved in pro bono and community service, as well as a wide-range of work for the profession. Susan regularly donates her time to the poor in high-stakes criminal and civil rights cases pro bono in state and federal courts. For over 10 years, Susan served on the California State Bar’s Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation and the Los Angeles County Bar Association’s Judicial Appointments Committee, vetting judicial applicants at the trial and appellate court levels throughout the state of California. To promote the advancement of women in the legal profession, Susan serves on the Board of the Litigation Counsel of America, an invitation-only national trial lawyer honorary society limited to one half percent of American lawyers ([www.litcounsel.org](http://www.litcounsel.org)). Susan has been named “**Top 100 Trial Lawyers**” by the National Trial Lawyers and “**Top 75 Women Litigators in California**” by the Los Angeles Daily Journal.

In 2020-2023, Susan obtained multiple dismissals in employment, breach of contract, and property easement cases after intense litigation; successfully represented clients in pre-accusation investigations and in inter-state criminal extradition proceedings; won multiple appeals; and obtained a dismissal for an international corporation in a federal criminal case after years of investigations.

In January 2019, Susan, as lead trial counsel, won a complex “bet the company” trial for a prominent family conglomerate involving nearly \$17 million in investments, immeasurable goodwill and reputation, and over \$45 million in land value. This high-stakes case involved extensive investigations of professional fraudsters and enormous amount of time litigating and proving their lies.

In October 2018, Susan, as lead trial counsel, secured a complete reversal of a medical license suspension recommendation for a preeminent chief surgeon at a major medical institution in the country. This case involved extensive investigation and analysis of uncorroborated evidence, as well as witness inconsistencies and statements, all of which helped prove the recommendation was not founded.

In August 2018, an international company and executive officer sought Susan’s help in petitioning the INS for approval of an intracompany transferee executive’s L-1A, which was denied. Susan had less than 14 days to review and analyze nearly 5 years’ worth of records, interview all pertinent witnesses and prepare and file an evidentiary petition. In January 2019, the INS granted their petition.

In March 2017, Susan, as lead trial counsel, won a complete dismissal of a construction contract case on behalf of a multi-national corporation on the eve of trial. This case involved extensive forensic investigations involving fraud, obstruction, and frivolous claims.

In September-December 2016, Susan, as lead trial counsel, won numerous defense settlements for her corporate client involving alleged labor code/employment law violations, and wrongful termination based on age, race, and retaliation.

In January 2016, Susan, as lead trial counsel, won an environmental trial in one case, and a summary judgment motion involving land use/right-of-way issues in another case, back-to-back.

In March 2015, Susan, as co-lead trial counsel, won a not guilty verdict for her client, a real estate agent, on 16 counts of mortgage fraud in the **United States District Court, Central District**. The Indictment filed by the United States Attorneys’ Office charged her client, along with 7 other co-defendants, with wire fraud, bank fraud, and false statements to FDIC banks. 5 co-defendants pleaded guilty. Susan’s client pleaded not guilty and went to trial. Approximately 200 witnesses and over 120,000 pages of documentary evidence were involved. The FBI investigated this case for nearly 5 years. During trial, Susan’s cross-examination of the lead FBI agent, who was caught lying on the stand about witness recordings, became the focal point of the front page news on the



Los Angeles Daily Journal entitled *“Recordings Expected in Modern Prosecutions.”* The credibility of the FBI agent was destroyed, which many trial observers believed resulted in a not guilty verdict.

In January 2015, Susan, as lead trial counsel, won a \$35 million case for her client, an international businessman, who was accused of sexual battery, battery, assault, false imprisonment, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and negligent infliction of emotional distress. This was a very complex case involving extensive domestic sting operations, international undercover investigations, DNA, forensic, and toxicology evidence, mental examinations and related “psychological damages,” medical evaluations and various expert testimony on a wide-range of issues. After a 5-week trial and 3 days of deliberation, the jury returned a unanimous defense verdict in favor of Susan’s client. This case was featured in an article entitled **“California Fellow Susan Yu Successfully Defends International Businessman Against Sexual Assault Accusations”**

In April 2014, Susan, as lead trial counsel, obtained a dismissal of 9 felony counts in a complex white-collar criminal case for a prominent family member of a corporate giant who was a victim of criminal threats. The case involved extensive international undercover investigations.

In March 2014, Susan, as lead trial counsel, obtained a dismissal of 4 felony counts in a complex “three strike” drug offense case for a client with a military school background, falsely accused of the crimes he did not commit. The case involved questions of constitutional violations (substantive and due process) and extensive intra-state undercover investigations.

In December 2013, Susan, as lead trial counsel, won a Summary Judgment Motion in a complex civil case for a prominent corporate CEO and his family.

In January 2013, Susan, as lead trial counsel, obtained a settlement of a Federal Copyright case on the day of jury selection for a publicly traded oil company in Texas.

In November 2012, the Medical Board affirmed a trial Susan won as lead trial counsel in July 2012, completely exonerating Susan’s client, a prominent orthopedic surgeon who was facing a revocation of his medical license before the State of California Medical Board. In that trial, Susan obtained a complete dismissal of all counts in the *Accusation* for her client. This was an extensive trial involving a complex and strange set of facts and issues, challenging audio and video evidence, testimony by law enforcement, lay and expert witnesses, and various constitutional issues asserted by the State Attorney General Office’s key witness. The Presiding Administrative Law Judge, after hearing all the evidence and arguments in this high stakes medical board trial, found in favor of Susan’s client and exonerated him of all charges in the Accusation.

In April 2012, Susan, as co-lead trial counsel, obtained what many consider an “incredible resolution” for her client, the ex-wife of Oscar-winning actor, Joe Pesci. This was a multiple life sentence case involving allegations of several murder plots, including conspiracy to murder and attempted murder. The prosecution alleged that Susan’s client conspired with others to hire a hit man to murder her former husband, a Hollywood stuntman who appeared in many films, including Avatar. The client was charged with multiple counts of attempted murder and conspiracy to murder the stuntman, who survived four shots and lost an eye. This case was litigated for 6 years, including issues involving secret recordings, wiretaps, polygraph, the Trombetta-Youngblood evidentiary hearing, child custody, and forensics, including DNA, fingerprint, and handwriting analyses of the so-called “murder notes” and “murder photos.” After trial commenced, and during jury selection, the prosecution offered to settle the case. The client accepted the offer and will be released from prison in approximately 8 years.

In March 2012, Susan, as lead trial counsel, obtained a dismissal of a felony criminal case for her client, a prominent international Asian businessman, who was accused of sexually assaulting two women. After nearly three years of litigation and undercover investigations with the local police and the FBI, the case was dismissed. The case involved extensive ESI investigation in local, state, federal and international cyber venues.

In December 2011, a capital murder case, in which Susan's client was facing the death penalty, was dismissed prior to trial.

In December 2010, after approximately a year of litigation, Susan, as co-lead trial counsel, obtained a complete dismissal for her client, the son of high-profile corporate giant, who was accused of criminal threats and battery. The alleged victim was a former girlfriend who had been a Playboy Magazine centerfold and Playmate of the Year.

In April 2010, on the first day of a jury trial, Susan, as lead trial counsel, obtained a dismissal of a **multi-count felony sexual assault case** for her client, a well-known local celebrity race car driver.

In August 2009, Susan, as co-lead trial counsel, obtained a not guilty jury verdict on **13 federal felony counts of mortgage fraud** (i.e., allegations of \$40 million loan fraud, bank fraud, conspiracy, money laundering, aiding and abetting, and criminal forfeiture) in the **United States District Court, Central District of California (Los Angeles)** for **Joe Babajian**, a highly-respected, top real estate agent in the country. This was a highly publicized, complex, document and fact intensive federal real estate fraud case involving 11 co-defendants. The *United States Attorney's Office*, the *F.B.I.*, and the *I.R.S.* conducted a 6-year investigation. 8 co-defendants pleaded guilty before trial. The remaining 3 co-defendants, including Mr. Babajian, pleaded not guilty and went to trial. Over 200 potential witnesses, hundreds of thousands of pages of discovery and thousands of Federal Grand Jury and Trial Exhibits were involved. After 6 weeks of jury trial, Mr. Babajian was the only defendant that was acquitted. He was found not guilty on 13 felony counts of mortgage fraud, and the jury hung on the remaining 8 felony counts. The United States Attorney's Office has dismissed the remaining 8 felony counts, in exchange for Mr. Babajian's plea of guilty to a newly-created, 1 misdemeanor count of receiving improper referral fees from his brokerage company with no jail time. In addition, the United States Attorney's Office has waived any potential civil claims against him.

In May 2009, Susan, as lead trial counsel, obtained a hung jury in a felony sexual assault case for her client, a highly-respected corporate executive. The prosecution has agreed to *dismiss* the entire case in return for the client performing community service and completing certain prescribed courses.

In February 2009, Susan, as lead trial counsel, obtained a hung jury in a document-intensive felony financial embezzlement case, in which her client, an executive assistant, was accused of embezzling over \$800,000.00. The prosecution has agreed to end the case with a plea agreement and no jail time.

In November 2008, as lead trial counsel, Susan successfully defended on behalf of a highly-respected philanthropist and businessman in Los Angeles, a civil lawsuit involving unfair business practices under the *California Business and Professions Code §§ 17200, et seq.* After Susan successfully defeated plaintiff's *Anti-SLAPP Motion under C.C.P. § 425.16* and *Demurrer*, the plaintiff agreed to dismiss the complaint in its entirety.

In October 2008, Susan, as lead trial counsel, obtained a dismissal of a document-intensive oil pollution environmental state criminal case on behalf of a publicly-traded, Texas-based oil pipeline company. Susan also

obtained a favorable settlement in a parallel Federal civil oil spill case brought by the government under the Federal Clean Water Act.

In September 2008, on the first day of a jury trial, Susan, as co-lead trial counsel, obtained a dismissal on behalf of her client, a school board official, who was accused of engaging in lewd conduct.

In July 2008, Susan, as co-lead trial counsel, obtained a hung jury on behalf of her client, a prominent member of a Catholic Church, who was accused of child molestation. The case was subsequently dismissed because the prosecutor decided to not retry the case.

In December 2007, Susan, as lead trial counsel, obtained a dismissal of a criminal case in which four police officers accused Susan's client, a former military officer, of battery, assault and resisting arrest.

In November 2007, on the eve of trial, Susan, as lead trial counsel, obtained a dismissal of a criminal case involving domestic violence and abuse of governmental power for her client, an employee of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

In June 2007, on the first day of a murder trial before a jury, Susan's client, who was facing life in prison, was offered a settlement of voluntary manslaughter with significantly less jail time. The client accepted the offer and will be released from prison in approximately 4 years.

In April 2007, Susan, as lead trial counsel, successfully won and acquitted a prominent Plastic Surgeon in Beverly Hills, who was facing a permanent suspension of his medical license from charges of sexual harassment and lack of informed consent for surgery. After a 2-week trial before the **California Medical Board, Los Angeles Division**, Susan's client was exonerated.



In April 2006, Susan, as sole lead trial counsel, vigorously litigated and won a bench trial for the former **First Lady of Gabon, Africa**, who almost lost her real estate properties in Beverly Hills, worth in excess of \$15 million dollars, in a real estate fraud scam.

In October 2005, Susan, as co-lead trial counsel, successfully obtained a dismissal of a high-stakes civil lawsuit for a *nuisance amount* on behalf of the *founder and former CEO* of **St. John Knits**.

From April 2004 – June 2005, Susan defended the *late music legend* **Michael Jackson** in a high-profile criminal case that resulted in a successful acquittal of all 14 counts, after

a five-month jury trial (January – June 13, 2005) in Santa Maria, California. This case was the most televised and publicized criminal trial in American history, in which over 2,200 media outlets from all over the world covered the case. After countless hours of trial strategies, preparation of over 300 potential witnesses and scrutiny of hundreds of thousands of documentary, audio and video discovery, Susan and her team obtained a sweeping not guilty jury verdict on *all 10 felony and 4 lesser-included misdemeanor counts*. After trial, until 2006, Susan served as General Counsel for Michael.

From 2003 – 2004, Susan served as co-counsel for actor **Robert Blake** in a high-profile, murder with special circumstances case.

In prior years, Susan, as lead counsel, successfully defended **Home Depot U.S.A., Inc.** in numerous white-collar, regulatory compliance and enforcement proceedings in criminal courts throughout *Los Angeles County, Ventura County, Orange County, San Bernardino County and Riverside County*. In many of these cases, Susan was successful in obtaining a favorable settlement and a dismissal.

A relentless advocate, Susan has successfully defended and prosecuted a wide-variety of *criminal* and *civil* cases in both *Federal* and *State* courts on behalf of individuals, mid-size institutions, and major corporations, including Fortune 500 companies. She has extensive experience in highly complex, document and fact intensive *Federal* and *State* criminal and civil cases.

She has also obtained many favorable settlements for her *corporate clients* involving antitrust violations, unfair competition, business torts, trade secret violations, trade mark and trade name infringements, copyright infringements, fraud, breach of contract, unfair business practices, eminent domain, construction defects, toxic torts, environmental liability, products liability, and wrongful termination (based on race, gender, age and disability discrimination).

Susan represents her clients in all phases of civil and criminal proceedings, including pre-lawsuit counseling, pleadings, law and motion, discovery, settlement negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and trial.

Successfully defended, as co-lead trial counsel, a **boat manufacturer** involving multi-million dollar *products liability* and negligence claims. The case settled for a *nuisance amount*.

Successfully defended and prosecuted, as lead trial counsel, on behalf of a **prominent businessman**, who came to her after having lost 9 separate civil business lawsuits. He was the target victim of a massive fraud scam. He had lost a bench trial, had several default judgments entered against him, and had a case dismissed against him. In a short period of only 2 months, Susan expeditiously and successfully won a *Motion for New Trial* (setting aside the bench trial judgment); won multiple *Motions to Set Aside Default Judgments*; won a *Motion to Set Aside the Dismissal and Reinstate the Action*; and won a bench trial for her client.

Successfully defended, as lead counsel, a top **real estate brokerage company** involving a multi-million dollar real estate fraud claim. The case settled for a *nuisance amount* on the eve of a summary judgment motion hearing.

## – Pro Bono Work & Community Service

In addition to maintaining a diverse trial practice, Susan is actively involved in *pro bono* and community service. Susan funded and opened a Free Legal Clinic at St. James' Episcopal Church in Los Angeles for low-income persons from all walks of life. Susan continues to donate her time to the poor in high-stakes criminal and civil rights cases *pro bono* in state and federal courts.

Dedicated to advancing the highest standard of excellence in teaching and research in the field of Asian American Studies, Susan served as legal counsel to the National Association for Asian American Studies,

headquartered in Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, and comprised of professors, academic administrators, graduate and undergraduate students, and community leaders from North America.

Every year since 2007, Susan has served as a Judge for the final rounds of the annual National Civil Trial Competition at **Loyola Law School** in Los Angeles. She has also served as a Judge for the semi-final round of the annual National Criminal Trial Competition at **Southwestern Law School** in Los Angeles.

## – Contributions to the Legal Profession

For ten years, from 2007-2016, Susan served on the Los Angeles County Bar Association's **Judicial Appointments Committee** (JAC) (2007 – 2014) and the California State Bar's Commission on **Judicial Nominees Evaluation** (JNE) (2014-2016), evaluating judicial applicants. The JAC Committee reviews and investigates judicial applicants for the Los Angeles County Superior Court bench. The JNE Commission investigates and evaluates judicial applicants at the trial and appellate court levels throughout the state of California.

Susan is on the Advisory Board, as well as on the Nomination Committee, of the **Litigation Counsel of America**, an invitation-only trial lawyer honorary society established to reflect the new face of the American bar. LCA Membership is limited to 3,500 Fellows, representing less than one-half of one percent of American lawyers. Susan was elected to serve as President of LCA in 2011.

## – Professional Affiliations & Activities

Susan is a Master of the Bench member of the **American Inns of Court** and a Master Fellow of the **Litigation Counsel of America**. She is also a member of the **Federal Bar Association**, the **Los Angeles County Bar Association**, and the **Association of Business Trial Lawyers**.

To help women advance in the legal profession, Susan serves on the Board of the **Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA)** and mentors young women lawyers as **WLALA's** DTLA Career Mentoring Chair.

## – Speaking Engagements

Susan is frequently asked to speak to various groups and organizations on trial strategies, the legal profession, and civil rights issues, including the need for a community dialogue on race, integration, equality and justice.

A sample of Susan's speaking engagements include:

**Bridgeport Seminar on "What Makes Jurors Tick?"** (Susan was a panel speaker on "What Makes Jurors Tick?" at Hotel Indigo in Los Angeles. This program was presented by Bridgeport Continuing Education, a California State Bar MCLE provider, in August 2018.)

**Bridgeport Seminar on Gender Issues in the Courtroom** (Susan was a panel speaker on "Gender Issues in the Courtroom" at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. This program was presented by Bridgeport Continuing Education, a California State Bar MCLE provider, in August 2017.)

**Elimination of Bias Seminar on Civility and Professionalism in the Practice of Law- What Does This Mean for Women Lawyers Today?** (Susan was a co-moderator of a legal educational seminar that she created entitled “Civility and Professionalism in the Practice of Law – What Does This Mean for Women Lawyers Today?” This seminar featured U.S. District Court Judge Dolly Gee, LA County Superior Court Judge Laura Seigle, and ADR Mediator Cynthia Pasternak in March 2017.)

**APAWLA Annual Installation: A Conversation with California Supreme Court Associate Justice Goodwin Liu** (Susan presented and interviewed CA Supreme Court Associate Justice Goodwin Liu on access to justice, gender bias and related issues at the APAWLA’s annual installation in May 2016.)

**Federal ABA Criminal Justice Section’s 2012 Spring Conference/Continuing Legal Education on E-Discovery in Government Investigations and Criminal Litigation.** (Susan served as a *panel speaker* on post-indictment ESI discovery and the challenging issues of authentication, foundation and admissibility of electronic evidence at trial in federal criminal cases. This conference was held in Los Angeles, CA, in April 2012.)

**Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Ohio’s Continuing Legal Education Seminar on Jury Selection, Trial Strategies and Opening Statements.** (Susan *delivered a lecture* to approximately 500 federal bar members, including federal public defenders, private defense lawyers, federal prosecutors and judges in Cleveland, Ohio, in August 2011.)

**Litigation Counsel of America’s Continuing Legal Education Seminar on Winning Approach to Trial Strategies, Jury Selection, Opening Statement and Cross-Examination in a Complex, White-Collar Criminal Case in Federal Court.** (Susan *delivered a lecture* to approximately 150 highly accomplished trial lawyers in Laguna Beach, CA, in May 2011.)

**Pepperdine Law School’s Event on the Issue of Women and the Law.** (Susan addressed law students and law professors as the event’s *panel speaker* in 2009.)

**Los Angeles Leadership Academy’s Symposium on Community and Cultural Issues.** (Susan addressed middle school and high school students as the event’s *key note speaker* in 2007.)

**Harvard University Law School’s 12th Annual National Asian Pacific American Conference.** (Susan addressed law students and community leaders as the event’s *key note speaker* in 2006.)

**University of Denver’s Symposium on Community Issues.** (Susan addressed college students and community leaders as the event’s *key note speaker* in 2006.)

**Asian Pacific American Bar Association’s Annual Summer Associate Mixer in Los Angeles.** (Susan addressed lawyers, summer associates, law interns and law students as the event’s *key note speaker* in 2005.)

**National Korean American Coalition’s Annual Convention in Colorado.** (Susan addressed community leaders and students as the event’s *key note speaker* in 2005.)

**Rotary Club of Los Angeles’s Symposium on Community Issues.** (Susan addressed community leaders as the event’s *key note speaker* in 2005.)

**California Polytechnic State University at Pomona’s Annual Professor for a Day program.** (Since 2004, Susan has participated as a “professor for a day” in the Department of Sociology and has lectured to college students in the areas of community and urban sociology, criminal justice, and sociology of culture.)

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