



Theresa M. LaVoie
Partner

Contact Information

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Education

B.A. & M.A. Degrees
California State
University at Northridge

J.D. Degree
Southwestern University
1989
Magnum Cum Laude

Practice Areas

Litigation & Alternative
Dispute Resolution
in Matters of:

- Real Estate
- Professional Liability
- Legal Malpractice
- Commercial Law
- Banking Law
- Equine Law
- Appellate Law

Theresa M. LaVoie

Practice Focus

Ms. LaVoie is a partner and co-founder of the Sacramento law firm of Ellis Law Group LLP. Ms. LaVoie has been a civil litigator since 1989 and she has extensive experience in the practice areas of real estate, professional liability, complex business litigation, premises liability, products liability, farm and ranch litigation, and equine law. She represents both defendants and plaintiffs, in both state and federal court throughout California, and regularly represents clients before the appellate courts.

Prior to moving to Sacramento in 1994, Ms. LaVole was a litigator in Los Angeles with the law firm of Howarth & Smith representing corporate clients in products liability, and complex business disputes involving both domestic and international law, and antitrust litigation against the NFL. She authored the article, "Wheel of Fortune: Relationship Between Damages and Liability Do High Damages Always Favor the Plaintiff?," published in 1992 by the Defense Liability Institute.

Education

Ms. LaVoie received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music and a Masters Degree in Education from California State University at Northridge. She taught in the Los Angeles Unified School District for eight years and served as a master teacher for university students in the Education Department.

In 1989, Ms. LaVoie graduated from Southwestern University School of Law *magna cum laude*, and while in law school served as a judicial extern for the Honorable Arthur Alarcon, Judge for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Ms. LaVoie also served as Note and Comment Editor of Southwestern's Law Review, and authored the article, "Challenging 'Covert' Paramilitary Operations in Nicaragua Under the Neutrality Act." She was also on the National Dean's List and was named in Who's Who Among American Women Students in American Universities and Colleges.

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Professional Affiliations & Activities

Ms. LaVoie maintains an active commitment to the legal community and profession. She was the 2007 President of Women Lawyers of Sacramento, and is currently serving on the Board of Directors for the Sacramento County Bar Association. She has also been involved as a Delegate at the Annual California Bar Conventions, and is a member of the Sacramento County Bar's Real Estate and Appellate sections.

As an equine lawyer, Ms. LaVoie has been active in the horse industry as a Board member with the Northern California Walking Horse Association and a member of the Northern California Driving Club. She owns SomerHill Farm located in El Dorado County where she breeds Tennessee Walking horses. She is an avid equestrian and shows her own Tennessee Walking horses. She also enjoys carriage driving and has competed in pleasure shows and three day combined driving events at Woodside Horse Park, Shady Oaks in Lodi, and Ram Tap in Fresno.

Ms. LaVoie lectures on equine legal matters and has authored a number of articles on ranch practices, boarding and training agreements, and liability issues in horse related accidents. In June 2011, Ms. LaVoie's article, "The Horse Protection Act: The Dark Side of the Tennessee Walking Horse Show World," was published in the Sacramento Lawyer (May/June 2011).

Representative Trials, Settlements, and Published Opinions

- ***Kent v. CRG RealEstate, et al.*** (January 2012). Plaintiff Nondisclosure/Breach of Fiduciary. Settlement reached at mediation in favor of client plaintiff.
- ***Norman v. The Salvation Army*** (March 2011). Plaintiff Premises Liability. Elderly client slipped and fell at entrance of Thrift Store owned and managed by The Salvation Army. A number of Building Codes and American With Disability Act violations were alleged to have caused, or contributed to the fall. A confidential settlement was reached at mediation in favor of client plaintiff.
- ***Neighbor's Financial v. Mullican Appraisal Services*** (March 2011). Plaintiff Professional Liability. Appraiser malpractice action triggering the buyback provision in client's purchase agreement with Countrywide Mortgage. A settlement was reached at mediation in favor of client plaintiff.
- ***4920 Corp. v. SVLG*** (June 2010). Plaintiff Legal Malpractice. Confidential settlement reached in matter prosecuted with partner, Mark E. Ellis, reached on 2 nd day of trial in favor of client plaintiff.
- ***Western Placer Unified School District v. Thornbrough*** (April 2009) Disciplinary trial against a classified employee of WPUSD lasting sixteen days before a Hearing Officer with managing partner, Mark E. Ellis. The Hearing Officer found

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in favor of our client (WPUSD), rejecting the employee's "whistle blower" defense, and recommended termination. The governing Board for the District voted unanimously to accept the Hearing Officer's recommendation.

- ***Scheel v. Henderson*** (July 2008) Bench trial concerning ownership and easement rights to use real property. Court quieted title in favor of client on ownership rights, and ordered that the Hendersons remove their mailbox from client's property.
- ***Bloom v. HBCW*** (October 2007) Partner Mark E. Ellis and Theresa LaVoie successfully defended a legal malpractice case for client law firm. After a five week jury trial, the verdict was in favor of law firm on its fee complaint for the full amount owing, and against the malpractice claims. The law firm's attorney-fee motion as the prevailing party was granted in the amount of \$328,976.00 for the fees and costs incurred.
- ***Buzgheia v. Leasco Sierra Grove*** (1994) 30 Cal. App. 4th 766.