

Virginia Nelson

Virginia Nelson, a San Diego sole practitioner, experienced something peculiar six months ago. She walked into a deposition with her female client and all the other people in the deposition, including five defense attorneys and the court reporter, were women.



Her client had received a terminal diagnosis of breast cancer because of a delayed determination of the disease by her doctors. She was suing for medical malpractice. Nelson's client seized the chance to educate the women in the room about the errors she saw in her case, and Nelson, who specializes in personal-injury and medical-malpractice cases, secured a seven-figure settlement for the woman.

The 49-year-old attorney is gearing up for trial next month on behalf of the wife and daughter of a man killed in a dune-buggy accident in September 2001. The man died at the University Hospital in San Diego from an alleged anesthetic incident.

Nelson has sued the Regents of the University of California, which owns the hospital, as well as the driver of the vehicle, the owner of the dune buggy and his employer, who allowed the vehicle to be used recreationally.

Nelson is the only female attorney from San Diego who belongs to the American College of Trial Lawyers, an invite-only organization that comprises 5,000 attorneys in the United States and Canada.

— Stefanie Knapp