

## Virginia C. Nelson '79—A Top California Woman Litigator

**V**irginia C. Nelson '79 was recently named one of the Top 50 Women Litigators in California in the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*. Honorees were selected based on input from leading lawyers, readers' nominations, and the *Daily Journal's* research on women involved in important court cases.

Of the list, the *Daily Journal* stated, "We knew that women had become a force in our courtrooms, but still we were amazed at the depth of talent that's out there across every practice area and style. . . . They have all earned a large measure of our profession's respect. They also are all owed a debt of gratitude from men and women alike for their insistence on excellence, their demand that they be judged on the merits, for defying expectations and further opening the door for the next generation."

Nelson's insistence on excellence has not only gained her recognition as a top female attorney, but as a top attorney in general. She has been widely recognized for her work, most notably when she was invited to be a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers. According to the college, "Fellowship . . . is by invitation, extended only after careful investigation, to those experienced trial lawyers who have demonstrated exceptional skill as advocates and whose professional careers have been marked by the highest standards of ethical conduct, professionalism and civility."

The college has the distinction of being the most selective trial lawyer

organization in North America, stipulating that membership can never be more than 1% of the total lawyer population of any state or province. Nelson is the only female member in San Diego.

**"We knew that women had become a force in our courtrooms, but still we were amazed at the depth of talent that's out there across every practice area and style. . . . They have all earned a large measure of our profession's respect."**

She has also received three Outstanding Trial Lawyer Awards, has been listed in Best Lawyers of America since 1993, has received the 1990 University of San Diego School of Law Distinguished Alumni Award, and was selected as America's Finest City's Legal Professional of the Year in 1991. In addition, she has received the Bernard Witkin Award for excellence in the teaching, practice, enactment, and adjudication of the law; and the Daniel T. Broderick Award, representing the highest level of civility, integrity and professionalism.

For more than 20 years, Nelson, a sole practitioner, has practiced in the areas of personal injury and medical malpractice litigation. She has represented many seriously injured clients in state and federal courts and has



**VIRGINIA C. NELSON**

extensive experience litigating Kaiser matters in the arbitration arena.

The *Daily Journal* Top 50 list celebrates the growing influence women have in the courtroom. Over her career, Nelson has also noticed the change, saying that she sees far more female judges, female experts, and women actually handling and trying the cases. She notes that, "It looks more like a cross section of daily life. The conversation and camaraderie is much more enjoyable than it used to be because there is more balance and perspective."

Nelson remains actively involved with the School of Law. She is currently on the Board of Visitors and teaches portions of the Civil Practicum Class. Formerly, she served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Law Alumni Association. "It is a terrific school and I will always want to continue my ties to the school, hopefully with more teaching in the future. I find the students impressive and energetic."