

Daily Journal

COVER STORY

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Daily Journal TOP 100 Spheres Of Influence

Editor's Note

Some are power brokers and insiders. Others fight for the powerless and those caught inside excesses of the war on terrorism or crime.

Some are household names. Others work along the cutting edge of technology or explore provocative ways of using old

laws to tackle new problems. They wield their influence across the political spectrum.

In the answers to the questions we posed to this year's Top 100 Lawyers in the state, they shared their obstacles, their tenacity, their good fortune and the lessons they've learned.

They described the difficulties they

overcame to get their educations and get started in law.

These distinguished attorneys also remind us, that even in the 21st century, the secret to success remains no secret.

In the legal world, bound by precedent and slow to change, influence doesn't shift overnight. We welcome back many familiar faces to the Top 100. But the list does reflect those shifts when they happen, so we also welcome some new faces, though they are certainly no strangers in the legal community — among them Edley, criminal defense attorney Gigi Gordon, U.S. District Judges Florence Marie-Cooper and Thelton Henderson and Kramer.

The Top 100 list represents a year's worth of reporting by the Daily Journal staff, who gathered the names over the course of the year, scrutinizing the year's big cases, deals and controversies, talking to sources, then interviewing those on the list.

Cristina C. Arguedas
Emeryville

Place of birth:
Evanston, Ill.

Law school:
Rutgers Law School

Law firm:
Arguedas, Cassman & Headley

Practice area: White-collar criminal defense

Recent work: Arguedas recently



convinced the Internal Revenue Service that a client she declines to name had not intended to violate tax laws. The case against her client was dropped.

Most difficult case: Arguedas represented Mike Blatt, a wealthy developer and sports agent accused of hiring hit men in 1989 to kill a former business associate. After one hung jury, Arguedas signed on in 1992 for a 10-month contentious retrial. She didn't realize the case would bring new meaning to the term infighting.

"The prosecutor pushed me down in the hallway and wound up being sanctioned by the bar. It was a real brawl."

Biggest obstacle: "Being a woman in a man's world."

"I have coped with it by mostly ignoring it as an issue, and I try to make alliances with women doing this work as much as I can to have a sense of community.

I play golf from the white tees, too."

— Amy K. Spees