

# Daily Journal

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## TOP WOMEN LAWYERS

The Daily Journal's Annual List of  
Leading Women Lawyers in California

### Nina Marino

**M**arino has taken up leadership roles in a number of organizations that support women white collar practitioners, including serving as chair of the American Bar Association's Women in White Collar Committee. And she prides herself not only on being a leader, but being a trailblazer. She's always had her own practice, which Marino said has given her a certain skill set for figuring out how to get from point A to point B. "I never worked for someone to tell me how to do that — I always had to figure it out. That's made me very agile and flexible, and result-oriented," she said.

In what Marino describes as her favorite case, she defended a first-time charter school operator who was charged with 17 felony counts of embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds. In the end, her client was acquitted of all but one of the charges and sentenced to probation. The case was a memorable one for Marino because of the numerous issues of first impression that arose before the court, all of which required the kind of creative approaches that Marino loves.

In another recent case that Marino said "makes me love what I do," she represented a government contrac-

tor whose security clearance was in jeopardy. In such cases, the applicant is burdened with demonstrating that his security clearance is in the interest of national security, "which is a crazy burden," Marino said, but she won by digging down deep with her client, and learning things about him that wouldn't have surfaced, had she not spent a lot of time with him. Her client's failing a polygraph test, Marino successfully proved, wasn't due to dishonesty, but to a medical condition. After having her client undergo medical tests, she learned that he suffered sleep apnea, and it made him fail polygraph because he was involuntarily holding his breath. "He didn't even know he had it."

Being a woman, Marino said, "I think I am more comfortable in letting a client know that I really do care about them. It's not limited to just the cases — it's how the case is impacting them." When someone is involved with litigation, she said, it's not simply a legal matter, but one that can create family issues, relationship issues, financial concerns. "I don't keep my clients so much at arm's length. I know a lot of lawyers do. But if you're going to be representing someone in something as sensitive as a criminal matter, you have to look at both the



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**Practice Type:**  
Criminal Defense White Collar

case and the client holistically." What Marino most loves about her work is "being able to approach a case on a very human level. That always offers opportunities to be creative. I think that's what my success is derived from."

— L.J. Williamson