

Daily Journal

OCTOBER 26, 2016

TOP BOUTIQUES IN CALIFORNIA 2016



Juliane Backmann / Special to the Daily Journal

From left, Nina Marino, Allen Glen Weinberg, Richard D. Kaplan and Reed B. Grantham.

WHITE COLLAR / CRIMINAL DEFENSE

Kaplan Marino

It began as a classic lawyer love story. “We met in court,” criminal defense lawyer Nina Marino said of her first encounter with husband-to-be Richard D. Kaplan, who was also an experienced trial attorney. It was 1990. “I was taking a verdict in a 12-count white collar embezzlement case. Richard was in court observing, because he had a case coming up on the calendar. It was tense. You could cut it with a knife, and it was as painful as it was tense. Conviction on a single count could have meant jail time, but I got 12 not guilty verdicts. Richard came up to congratulate me. He got a good impression. We became best friends and got married several years later.”

BEVERLY HILLS

In 1998, the couple founded their firm, which now has an of counsel appellate specialist, Allen Glen Weinberg, and an associate, Reed B. Grantham.

“Our aim was to reinvent white-collar criminal defense,” Marino said. “We specialize in devoting high-level personal service to individual clients.” She said that clients who come to the firm for their criminal matters often return or refer others when additional problems arise. “Maybe an existing client gets a DUI or his kid in college has a bad date and gets accused of sexual assault. Prosecutors, judges, proba-

tion officers send people to us. We’ve been doing this for so long, and we’re so entrenched in the system, that our resources and skills have evolved to where we can help whole families. We are ever aware of the collateral consequences inherent in any criminal investigation or prosecution. Our lawyers approach representation holistically in order to best protect not just our clients’ freedom, but their livelihood and reputations as well.”

In September, Marino and Kaplan tried their first case together, defending a former Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputy charged in the high-profile 2011 beating of a jail visitor. Client Byron Dredd was the only one of 20 deputies indicted following a federal investigation into the incident to have been acquitted.

Dredd was charged with conspiracy to violate the victim’s civil rights and

obstruction of justice based on having filed an allegedly false police report. The jury voted not guilty on both counts. It hung 10-2 for acquittal on a third charge of making false statements to an FBI agent. *U.S. v. Dredd*, 15-cr-0569 (C.D. Cal., filed Oct. 16, 2015).

“The spotlight was on and there was a lot at stake,” Marino said of the trial. “Every other case had come up a victory for the Department of Justice. We persuaded the jury that Byron Dredd is not a liar. He made a mistake and did not lie about it. Witness by witness, detail by detail, we brought that out.”

Federal prosecutors plan to retry Dredd on Count 3. “We have filed a motion to dismiss based on double jeopardy and collateral estoppel,” Marino said. “We believe we are on solid ground.” The retrial is set for Oct. 25. “We have a very happy but very nervous client,” she said.

Marino added that the experience of working together in court was an unqualified success. “We are stronger and more invincible as a team,” she said. “Going forward, for clients with the financial wherewithal, this is how we intend to operate.”

She spoke from London, where she and Kaplan were attending an American Bar Association international white-collar criminal defense conference. Marino was slated to deliver the closing remarks. Kaplan in September assumed the role of president-elect of the Beverly Hills Bar Association. And Marino founded and has led the criminal law section of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles for nearly two decades and has held multiple leadership positions with the criminal justice section of the ABA.

“Richard said to me soon after we met that it is as important to give back to our community as it is to serve our clients,” Marino said. “We have practiced that 100 percent. And we talk cases all the time. It’s all our kids have heard their entire lives. We love what we do. There is no greater joy than giving somebody their life back.”

—John Roemer