



Celeena B. Pompeo

Partner

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Celeena Pompeo represents insurance carriers, corporations and small business owners in the defense of personal injury suits, including cases arising out of catastrophic injury. Her clients include national corporations, several among the giants in their industries. She has particular experience representing insurance carriers and businesses in disputes that involve multi-party trucking and transportation cases and product liability.

With experience in general liability, Celeena completes early evaluations and works closely with her clients to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of claims and defenses, developing the most effective defense. Celeena leverages her penchant for establishing good relationships with opposing counsel to extricate clients early with no cost to them.

Celeena handles cases from inception through trial, and has second-chaired several jury trials. She is skilled at conducting direct examinations, cross-examinations, client and witness testimony preparation, and all aspects of expert witness testimony. She has handled the preparation of many jury trials that she was able to resolve on the eve of trial.

Understanding the value of early resolution on many levels, Celeena steers her clients in that direction while remaining trial-ready should the need arise.

Of Indian-American descent, Celeena leverages her background and language skills in working with various clients.

Education

- Whittier Law School (J.D., *magna cum laude*, 2013)
 - Trial and Appellate Practice Fellowship

Services

- Transportation
- Complex Tort & General Casualty
- Toxic Tort

- California State University, Fullerton (B.A., 2005)

Bar Admissions

- California
- Arizona

Professional Affiliations

- Orange County Coalition of Diversity in the Law

Awards & Honors

- Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America® Ones to Watch™*, 2025-2026
- Up-and-Coming 50: 2023 Women Southern California Rising Stars Top List
- Selected for inclusion in Super Lawyers® Southern California Rising Stars™, 2018–2023; Southern California Women's Edition Rising Star, 2022

Languages

- Punjabi

Representative Matters

Successfully arbitrated a UIM matter for an insurance company where claimant refused to accept any amount under the policy during pre-arbitration settlement negotiations. The final arbitration award was significantly under the claimant's 998 amount. During the arbitration, claimant alleged that he could never work in the future due to this injury and required several additional spinal surgeries. We showed the arbitrator that claimant failed to mitigate his damages, was able to work with the appropriate ergonomics system in place, and any future medical treatment was related to claimant's degenerative spinal condition.

Defended a corporate entity and its owner from a dog-bite case involving a minor plaintiff that claimed she would have a lifetime of pain and suffering due to the nature of the incident and facial scarring. The minor plaintiff's mother and brother claimed PTSD from allegedly witnessing the incident. Obtained defense verdicts for the claims filed by the minor plaintiff's mother and brother. The jury awarded the minor plaintiff a \$75,000 verdict to the minor plaintiff that was the amount the defense requested that the jury award.

Successfully arbitrated a UIM matter for an insurance company where claimant sought several million dollars during arbitration. Through establishing numerous gaps in medical treatment, we were able to obtain an award that was significantly less than the claimant's 998.

Successfully defeated a motion for summary adjudication for a corporate client on the issues of agency and vicarious liability.

Defended a corporate entity on a products liability claim and prevailed on the demurrer with a dismissal, without leave to amend.

Obtained a dismissal in exchange for a waiver of costs for a world-wide restaurant chain in a premises action after putting the pressure on the plaintiff with discovery, request for an independent medical examination of plaintiff, noticing several depositions.

Second-chaired a jury trial that resulted in the jury awarding plaintiff nominal damages under \$20,000 in an admitted liability motor vehicle accident in which plaintiff sought millions during trial. The defense strategy to establish the numerous gaps in medical treatment and pre-accident condition led to this result.

Client Wins

Cieniawski, Pompeo, Merritt & Martinez Prevail on Inapplicability of Fictitious Defendant Practice to an Out of Time Party Addition

Brian Cieniawski (Of Counsel-Phoenix, AZ), Celeena Pompeo (Partner-Orange County | Los Angeles, CA), and Phoenix, Arizona, associates Nicholas Merritt and Marcus Martinez defended an major transportation client regarding a tractor-trailer incident in Mohave County, Arizona, in which plaintiff alleged that multiple driver side wheels separated from a trailer hauling freight. The plaintiff attempted to add our client as a defendant more than five months after the two year limitations period expired. Our defense focused on a straightforward statute of limitations bar under A.R.S. § 12 542 and the inapplicability of fictitious defendant practice to an out of time party addition; we also emphasized the absence of timely notice or any “mistake” in identity to satisfy Rule 15(c)’s relation back requirements, and the availability of public information that would have identified the trailer’s owner earlier. The court granted our motion and dismissed all claims with prejudice.

Pompeo and Werner Prevail for Premises Owner under Privette Doctrine

Celeena Pompeo (Partner-Orange County, CA) and James Werner (Associate-Orange County, CA) obtained summary judgment in favor of a premises owner client against a plaintiff who tripped and fell on a floor mat while working for a cleaning company at our client’s warehouse. The plaintiff sustained a spinal fracture and claimed she could not return to work due to her injuries. Her past lost earnings, loss of future earnings and earning capacity was substantial due to the many years she had missed work. The plaintiff claimed the floor mat was a dangerous condition on the property and that the owner should have provided a warning. Celeena and James argued that the *Privette* doctrine bars the plaintiff, an employee for an independent contractor on the premises, from recovering against the hirer of the independent contractor. Through the effective and critical deposition questions posed to the plaintiff, Celeena and James were able to confirm that the client did not affirmatively contribute to the plaintiff’s injury, and thus there was no valid exception to the Privette doctrine in this case. They also argued that the plaintiff walked on the floor mat five days a week, at least three times per day over the course of two years without any issue. The court confirmed there was no evidence of a

dangerous condition on the property and the floor mat was open and obvious.