

# Daily Journal

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## TOP 20 UNDER FORTY

### EDITOR'S NOTE

To compile this list, *Daily Journal* editors and reporters considered hundreds of lawyers from throughout California. We looked at every major practice type, including corporate transactions, criminal prosecution and intellectual property litigation.

The most important consideration was the work.

How have this lawyer's cases impacted the law, a particular sector of industry or society? That's the first question we ask ourselves in considering each person. We also look at the candidate's impact on the legal community. Is he or she taking a leadership role within the firm, agency or organization? Are they active in bar groups and public

service organizations?

This is the 20th year we've published the list, and the remarkable thing is that the pool of worthy candidates gets deeper every year. As you read through this supplement, we think you'll agree that California's legal talent is some of the best you'll find anywhere in the world.

### WILL CHUCHAWAT

In early 2007, when Sheppard Mullin was ready to open its first international office in Shanghai, Chuchawat, an associate, volunteered to relocate to China and help build the corporate practice.

"It was a time when a lot of firms got interested in China," Chuchawat said.

He had been there a few years earlier.

"In 2004, it's when my eyes got opened to what China was really about," he said. "There was construction everywhere. It had a vibrancy and optimism of a boom town."

When he returned in 2007, Chuchawat recalled, "A lot of local businesses and corporations didn't know how to use us. They didn't come from a culture of using attorneys for litigation or deals. It was a new concept."

These days, Chuchawat, now a partner, spends a significant amount of his time working with Chinese companies that are looking for acquisitions and commercial transactions in the United States.

"China now has a mandate to go abroad," he said, "and that often means to the United States to look for opportunities."

Among his significant matters, Chuchawat represented GenCorp in connection with the execution of a deal to acquire United Technologies' Rocketdyne business for \$550 million.

The deal was somewhat of a game changer, he said.



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"There aren't many rocket companies in the world," he said. "We were essentially consolidating two of them, and Rocketdyne is an iconic American business."

The transaction was highly complex, Chuchawat added, considering all of the regulations that the defense industry is subject to.

"There are not a lot of folks who have the expertise to do these aerospace deals," said Chuchawat, who served as lead counsel. "I billed 140-plus hours in

#### FIRM

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP

#### LOCATION

Los Angeles

#### PRACTICE TYPE

Corporate

#### SPECIALTIES

Mergers and acquisitions

#### AGE

32

a week and killed some brain cells there."

He also represented Bison Capital Partners IV LP in connection with the acquisition of WestStar T.V. Ltd., the sole cable company in the Cayman Islands.

It was another particularly complex deal, Chuchawat said, involving multiple co-equity investors and co-lenders, along with regulatory issues.

Looking forward, Chuchawat predicts that 2013 will be "a very good year for mergers and acquisitions."

"People are more willing to do deals, and we're seeing more optimism in the M&A space," he said. "I think people realize that, where the economy is not growing by leaps and bounds, people are looking more and more at M&A for growth."

— Pat Broderick