

Daily Journal

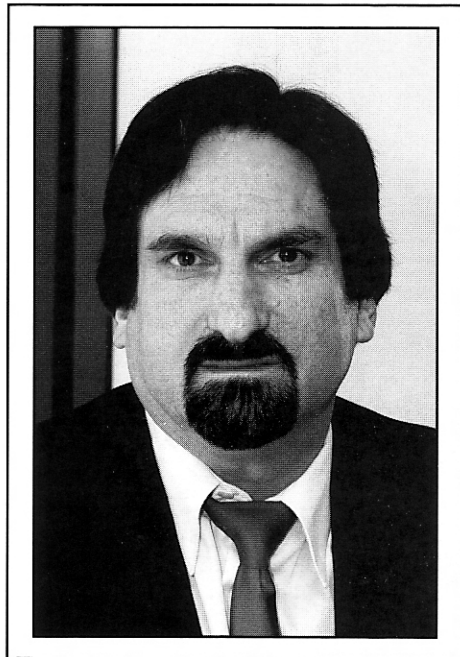
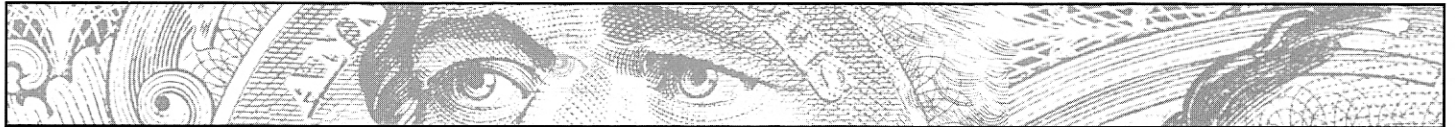
OCTOBER 21, 2009

Rainmaking

CALIFORNIA'S LEADING RAINMAKERS TALK ABOUT HOW THEY MANAGED TO THRIVE IN 2009

EDITOR'S NOTE

Uncertainty isn't comfortable but it's almost always the catalyst for growth and development. In this issue of the Daily Journal's annual rainmaking supplement, we look beyond the fitful past 18 months to spotlight lawyers and ideas that represent the future of the legal industry. Many on our list of 10 leading rainmakers practice in industries that were decimated by economic woes. They did not allow these dire times to derail them. They adjusted. Tried new approaches. Learned that thriving often means change. As a result, they — their firms and teams of junior partners, associates and staff — are poised for more success in the coming year.



Richard J. Simmons

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
SHEPPARD MULLIN RICHTER & HAMPTON |
LOS ANGELES

People recognize him at the airport, on shuttle buses, in stores. They recognize Simmons, one of the state's top labor and employment litigators, from court — the basketball court, that is. He holds season tickets to the Lakers, right behind the announcers.

"I'm more recognizable because of where I sit at Lakers games than because of the thousands of presentations I've given in California," says Simmons, who, in spite of a packed speaking schedule, never misses a game.

Of course, Simmons says, he'd rather be recognized for his work. He's the author of widely used wage and hour law publications, gives speeches on employment law up to three times a week, and each year, he brings Sheppard Mullin more money than he did the last. He said his 2009 revenue exceeds \$10 million.

Simmons, 57, says he has "three careers that go on simultaneously" — public speaker, writer and attorney — that make him a successful rainmaker. Wanting to succeed in each role pushes him to "outwork anyone" and never provide himself "an excuse for failure," he says.

As a speaker, Simmons said he masters his subject and finds ways to engage his audience through humor. "I was the class clown in grade school — that's where I learned it."

He reminds himself he has only one shot to reach an audience. "You feel a debt, a responsibility to your audience, and you let that motivate you," he says. "You give your best every time, and that should be your goal as a litigator as well."

For his books, Simmons says, "I distill the law in an understandable way, work it over and over again and hone it down so an average person can understand."

His clients, which include Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, the California Retailers Association and the California Restaurant Association, all recognize his authority in labor law. But even then, Simmons says, it can be tough to keep them focused on his work.

"Some guys, I just can't get them to talk to me about the case," he says. "They always want to talk to me about the Lakers."

— JOANNA LIN