

George Stephan

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George Stephan is a Shareholder and Chair of the Firm's Litigation Practice Group. He specializes in business litigation, product liability, real estate disputes and general civil litigation matters.

Representative Matters

- *Pentair In-Line Filter Litigation (2014-2015)*: Obtained defense judgment/award in three of three product liability cases tried.
- *Haas v. Denny* (2014): Obtained \$1.3 million judgment and injunction protecting client's IP.
- *Michaels v. Pentair Water Pool & Spa* (2011): Won defense jury verdict in Las Vegas, NV against \$25 million dollar claim that exploding swimming pool filter was defectively designed and lacked proper warnings and blinded and brain damaged plaintiff-homeowner.
- *Kausch v. Wimsatt* (2009): Won affirmance in State Court of Appeal of trial court judgment at trial for clients. *Kausch v. Wimsatt* (B208274; slip opinion filed 10/28/2009.)
- *City of Anaheim v. Angels Baseball* (2009): Won affirmance in State Court of Appeal of trial court judgment for Angels Baseball in name change case. *City of Anaheim v. Angels Baseball* (G037202; slip opinion final on 2/20/2009.)
- *Cohn v. Angels Baseball* (2008): Obtained summary judgment in Orange County Superior Court in favor of Angels Baseball against claim that the Angels' celebration of Mother's Day, including a give-away of tote bags, was gender discrimination. Then obtained published opinion from State Court of Appeal to that effect, affirming the judgment in favor of client. *Cohn v. Corinthian Colleges, Inc. and Angels Baseball, et al.* (2008) 169 Cal App 4th 523. Case generated national press.
- *Kausch v. Wimsatt* (2007): Obtained published opinion vindicating mediation confidentiality rights of client, and then obtained a trial court order throwing out the unmeritorious mediation related claim that the mediated settlement was inadequate, on the grounds that the published opinion legally barred such claims. *Wimsatt v. Superior Court (Kausch)* 152 Cal.App.4th 137, 61 CalRptr.3d 200 (2007)
- *City of Anaheim v. Angels Baseball* (2006): Defeated City's requests for temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction in January 2005. Had those rulings affirmed during pre-trial appellate proceedings in Summer 2005. In February 2006 obtained jury verdict in favor of Angels Baseball in breach of contract and covenant of fair dealing lawsuit brought by City seeking over \$370 million for loss of naming rights. Case generated national press.
- *Daniel Reeger v. Pentair Water Pool & Spa* (2006): On second day of trial of product liability suit alleging exploding filter pump, obtained dismissal for virtual cost waiver.
- *Epright v. Anthony Pools* (2005): Won judgment for Anthony Pools in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania against quadriplegic's multi-million dollar claim that defectively designed in ground gunite swimming pool caused catastrophic injuries.
- *Webb v. S.R. Smith* (2004): Won judgment for S.R. Smith in jury trial in State Court in Akron, OH, which was affirmed in part and reversed in part on appeal, then won judgment on remaining claims by quadriplegic plaintiff against diving board manufacturer in federal court in Akron, OH, which defense judgment was affirmed in full by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeal in Cincinnati, OH.

- *Van Wagner Communications, Inc. v. City of Los Angeles* (2001): Obtained and collected nearly two million dollar judgment against City for wrongly revoking permit to construct first amendment protected billboard at Santa Monica and Sepulveda Boulevards, in Los Angeles, including lost profits between permit revocation and eventual billboard completion, plus all attorneys' fees incurred by client (then Outdoor Systems, now CBS-Viacom Outdoor).
- *Van Wagner Communications, Inc. v. City of Los Angeles*, 84 Cal.App.4th 499 (2000): Published opinion by California Court of Appeal for Second District that City may not arbitrarily interpret zoning regulations to deny billboard permits under the First Amendment. Court of Appeal remanded claim by client for trial.
- *Cruz v. Green* (1995): Won trial in Ventura County Superior Court in favor of Intex Recreation and United Merchandising (dba Big Five) against claim by rider of water towable that defective design of product caused upper extremity injuries while being towed by a ski boat.
- *Lillard v. State of Oregon* (1995): Defended State of Oregon against claim arising out of the death of Earnest Killum, an OSU basketball player who died while in LA to play USC and UCLA. Opinion finding jurisdiction published at 24 Cal.App.4th 1550 (1994). Case generated press.
- *Ham v. Crown Equipment* (1994): Won trial in San Bernardino County Superior Court (Rancho Cucamonga division) in favor of Crown Equipment against claim by operator of stand-up forklift that defective design caused lower extremity injuries.
- *Troop v. Anthony Pools* (1994): Won jury verdict in Montgomery County, Maryland against claim that exploding swimming pool filter which shattered plaintiff's skull was defectively designed.
- *Reynolds v. Place One Homeowners Assn.* (1993): Won jury verdict in Dallas, TX in favor of client, S.R. Smith, against quadriplegic's multi-million dollar claim that defectively designed diving board lacked proper warnings and caused catastrophic injuries.
- *Gionis v. Gionis* (1990): Won sole custody of John Wayne's granddaughter from Aissa Wayne Gionis after multi-week trial in Orange County. Obtained extraordinary writ of mandate on pre-trial bifurcation issue, published at 202 Cal.App.3d 786 (1988). Case in press.
- *Kiersky v. Pool Center* (1987): Won jury verdict in Pittsburgh, PA in favor of client, Johnny Weismuller Pools, against quadriplegic's multi-million dollar claim that defectively designed above ground pool lacked adequate warnings and caused catastrophic injuries.
- *Bartling v. Glendale Adventist Medical Center* (1984-1986): Successfully defended hospital and the treating physicians against a suit seeking to remove patient from life support at a time when there was very little law on the subject. The landmark opinion published at 163 Cal. App. 3d 186 found a constitutionally guaranteed right to refuse treatment, but the \$10 million lawsuit against the hospital and physicians was thrown out and that dismissal was affirmed on appeal. See: 184 Cal.App.3d 97 and 184 Cal.App.3d 961 (both 1986). Case on 60 Minutes.
- *Ashjian v. Anthony Pools* (1984): Obtained defense jury verdict on proverbial million dollar counter claim against client for fraud, etc., and recovered prayer on client's breach of contract claim, plus attorneys' fees and foreclosure of mechanic's lien in swimming pool construction dispute.
- *Litoff v. Litoff* (1984): Week long dissolution trial concerning multiple partnership investments. Client recovered share plus attorney's fees.
- *Matter of Marymount Hospital and Baptist Hospital* (1982): Represented Catholic owned Marymount Hospital in multi-week administrative trial in Kentucky against Baptist Hospital, eventually winning right to expand client's hospital in politically and publicity charged case.
- *Adams v. Nussbaum* (1981): Winning trial counsel in nearly month long trial in trust dispute involving millions of dollars of stock and farm land in Inland Empire, involving complex accounting and tax issues. Court removed and surcharged trustees, and client awarded millions.

Publications

- Co-Author, "*O'Neil v. Crane*: The Supreme Court's Most Recent Pronouncement Concerning if and When a Manufacturer is Liable for Components Used in or in Connection with its Product," *Business Law News*, Issue 2, 2012
- "California Appeals Court Affirms Decision Backing Mediation Confidentiality," *Alternatives*, Commentary: January 2010
- "Post-Sale Successor Independent Duty To Warn," *Law360*, Byline: November 2008

Recognition

- Selected as a 2013 Top Rated Lawyer in Commercial Litigation by American Lawyer Media in conjunction with Martindale Hubbell
- Selected as one of Southern California's *Super Lawyers* twelve times from 2004 to 2015
- Selected as a Southern California *Super Lawyer, Corporate Counsel Edition* from 2008 to 2010
- Keynote Speaker, University of San Diego School of Law, Sports and Entertainment Law Symposium at the International Center for Peace and Justice
- "Mediation's Confidentiality Laws Come Under Scrutiny," *Daily Journal*, August 10, 2007
- "2006 Top Defense Verdicts," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, February 9, 2007
- "City Loses 2 Players, But Big News is Courtside," *Orange County Register*, January 26, 2006
- AV Preeminent rated by Martindale Hubbell

Mr. Stephan earned his J.D., *cum laude*, at Southwestern University School of Law and received his B.S. in Business Administration, with an emphasis in Accounting, from University of Southern California.

Areas of Practice

Litigation

Bar Admissions

California

Industry Specialty

Consumer Products, Apparel and Textiles

Court Admissions

Supreme Court of the United States
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
Multiple Federal District Courts