



Deborah A. Yates
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Deborah A. Yates | Partner

Every single case I handle is the most important case in the world – to my clients. This thread connects my diverse practice, which includes family law cases and business disputes. Whether you need representation for a divorce or custody of your children, for litigation over labor laws, for a contract dispute, or for whatever other reason you find yourself in litigation: I understand this is the most important case to you.

I bring a rich legal background to bear for my clients: I spent over a decade in “Big Law” in Washington, D.C. litigating cases worth literally billions of dollars. I moved to San Diego in 2016, and turned my attention to serving the legal needs of the citizens of America’s Finest City. I now handle a mix of family law matters and business disputes. The combination allows me to bring experiences and ideas from one area to the other.

Ms. Yates handles litigation from case development through resolution. Ms. Yates has years of experience serving a wide range of clients, including businesses large and small and individuals in family law cases. Ms. Yates has extensive experience litigating in both state and federal courts, and in arbitration, and in front of administrative agencies with a particular focus on California casinos. Ms. Yates coordinates closely with clients to develop strategy, manage, and execute cases. In addition, Ms. Yates guides clients to non-litigation solutions including private or mediated settlements when appropriate.

For several years before joining Solomon Ward Seidenwurm & Smith, Ms. Yates served as Counsel at the law firm WilmerHale in Washington, D.C., where she was a member of the IP Department of the Year named by The American Lawyer in January 2014.

Practice Areas

- Business Litigation
- Family Law
- Gaming Law

Noteworthy Experience

- Represented California casino, owners, and key employees in licensing applications and related disputes with the California Bureau of Gambling Control
- Obtained \$250,000 settlement in client’s favor in breach of contract action in federal court
- Obtained over \$1 million settlement for employee in breach of contract/ERISA case, through administrative appeal process and suit in federal court
- Investigation of workplace harassment claims for local independent city
- Obtained dismissal with prejudice from federal suit for negligence/breach of warranty claiming damages from a four-hour, catastrophic fire on an oil rig
- Favorable settlement in marital dissolution involving 19 real estate holding across three states, two businesses, and scores of financial institution accounts
- Secured favorable settlement in marital dissolution involving large non-profit foundation and multiple pieces of real estate

Education

- George Mason University School of Law, 2007, J.D., first in class
- The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, 1995, M.B.A., with the highest distinction and Palmer Scholar designation (top 5%)
- University of Maryland, 1988, B.S. in Management Science and Economics, valedictorian

Professional Affiliations and Admissions

- Member at Large, Executive Committee, Civil Litigation Section, San Diego County Bar Association (2019)
- Master, Enright Inn of Court
- Member of the San Diego County Bar Association
- Member of the Federal Bar Association, San Diego Chapter
- Member of the Lawyers Club
- Admitted to practice at the Southern District of California, the Central District of California, and the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit