

BIOGRAPHY

Michael E. Lopez, Ph.D.
Partner

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Practice Areas

- Litigation
- Insurance

Education

UCLA School of Law (J.D., 2001)
Graduated 10th in class
Order of the Coif
UCLA Law Review, Articles Editor

Wesleyan University (1996, B.A., Philosophy, Medieval History)

UCLA Dept. of Philosophy (2013, Ph.D., Philosophy)

Professional Profile

Michael E. Lopez is an experienced litigator who has focused his practice primarily on the areas of insurance coverage litigation, appellate practice, business litigation (including trade secrets and fiduciary duty disputes), and legal ethics and malpractice issues. He also has experience in commercial contract litigation and construction defect litigation. His practice has had a heavy emphasis on novel and/or complicated legal issues, and he has often been brought into cases already in progress in order to draft or consult on appellate briefs and dispositive motions. His approach to cases is informed by a firm conviction that the client's interests and goals are far more important than the attorney's ego or what may have worked in the past on other cases.

Michael began his career at Quinn Emanuel in Los Angeles, where, as developer's counsel, he was the primary case management coordinating attorney for multiple

large-scale construction defect cases involving dozens of parties and hundreds of plaintiffs. He also worked on entertainment contract cases and general commercial litigation.

In 2004, he joined the insurance department of Irell & Manella LLP, in their Newport Beach office. There, he worked on a number of large-scale coverage matters as well as a range of business litigation cases. He left Irell in 2007 and took a temporary sabbatical from the law in order to obtain a PhD in Philosophy at UCLA, where he worked primarily in ethics, philosophy of education, philosophy of law, value theory, and Medieval philosophy. After completing his coursework and while working on his dissertation, he opened up his own part-time practice.

Shortly after receiving his degree, he went to work at the newly founded firm of Greenberg Gross in Costa Mesa. There, he focused primarily on appellate issues, business litigation, and the execution of complicated settlements. He also worked to obtain insurance financing for his clients' litigation. He joined Mr. Bark in practice as a partner at Wilbert Bark LLP in November of 2016, and founded Lopez, Bark & Schulz with his partners in May of 2017.

Dr. Lopez was named as a Southern California "Rising Star" by *Super Lawyers* in 2007.

Dr. Lopez is an accomplished second tenor, a former competitive fencer (saber and foil) who was named the 2001 UCLA Team MVP, a designer of board and card games, and an avid collector and consumer of wine and cinema. He also is a reasonably skilled amateur at most forms of poker.

Bar and Court Admissions

2001, California

2001, U.S. District Court for the Central District of California

Publications and Seminars

A Normative Theory of Nontortfeasor Liability and Taxonomy for Exemplary Damages, 48 UCLA L.Rev. 1017 (2001). Article has been cited by the Hawaii appellate court and Witkin's.

Nimmer on Copyright, Chapter 19C (Insurance) (2006) - Co-Author and primary drafter.

Representative Matters

Michael's experience includes:

- Obtained discovery sanctions dismissing millions of dollars of claims against a major housing developer.

- Negotiated a substantial settlement with an insurer in an industrial pollution case despite a significant delay in tender.
- Represented a major casino operator in pursuing insurance recovery after Hurricane Katrina.
- Obtained a reversal of a trial court's denial of a motion to disqualify opposing counsel that was brought over a year and a half into litigation, leading to settlement of a heavily litigated re-packing/licensing dispute.
- Represented a California county in an insurance coverage action with respect to environmental claims worth millions of dollars.
- Represented a major asbestos manufacturer in insurance claims in coordination with bankruptcy proceedings.
- Primary researcher and drafter of a summary judgment strategy that was upheld on appeal, eliminating a legal malpractice claim worth over \$12 million based on lack of causation and damages.
- When a client was being sued by former insiders, successfully disqualified opposing counsel despite lack of a formal attorney-client relationship.