

NEW LAWYERS EDITION

# VALLEY LAWYER

NOVEMBER 2013 \$ 4

A Publication of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association



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# Rising Stars of the Valley Legal Community

By Irma Mejia



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Rising local attorney leaders Hrach Karakachian, Yi Sun Kim, Corilee Racela and Alfonso Martinez share their passions, experiences and hopes for the future of the legal profession.

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**Irma Mejia** is Editor of *Valley Lawyer* and serves as Publications and Social Media Manager at the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. She also administers the Bar's Mandatory Fee Arbitration Program. She can be reached at [editor@sfvba.org](mailto:editor@sfvba.org).

**Yi Sun Kim, State Bar Admission 2007**  
Greenberg & Bass, Encino



Born and raised in the San Fernando Valley, Kim took a cautious approach to selecting her career. As a pre-med undergraduate, she learned that medicine was not her passion. To gain insight into the day-to-day operations of a legal career, she chose to work as a file clerk with local firm Greenberg & Bass. The hands-on experience in a law office and guidance from strong female attorneys led her to discover that the legal field

was right for her. After graduating from Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, she returned to Greenberg & Bass, where she primarily focuses her practice on bankruptcy and business litigation. In September, she was sworn in as a Trustee of the SFVBA.

**Q: Do you plan to branch out to other areas of law?**

**A:** I was lucky to join the firm just as its bankruptcy practice became more active. I was able to branch into that field which ended up being a good fit for me. Since Greenberg & Bass is a “full service” firm, I’m able to practice various areas of law already. Aside from bankruptcy and litigation, I handle transactional matters, including formation, maintenance and dissolution of companies, sale of business assets, and intellectual property. I plan to add more to that list as I further develop my own skills and expertise.

**Q: Where do you see yourself in ten years?**

**A:** I’m very happy where I am. I hope to still be at Greenberg & Bass, working with the same people I’ve known for more than ten years. In ten years, my contribution to the firm would be greater, in terms of new business and adding to the firm’s supportive environment. I also hope to be even more active in the legal and general community at large.

**Q: What were you not taught in law school that you wish you knew when you started practicing?**

**A:** How to bill and keep track of your time! Although I don’t think there really is anything more you can be taught in law school; it’s practice and experience that teaches you the most.

**Q: What do you like most about being a lawyer?**

**A:** The most satisfaction I get as a lawyer is when I walk out with clients after they have been examined by a bankruptcy trustee and they finally breathe a sigh of relief knowing the bankruptcy process is nearly over and they can move on. The best part is when they say it wasn’t as bad as they thought it would be because I made it so much easier for them to handle. Anytime you see that you actually helped someone, it makes you want to work harder for the next one.

**Q: What is your least favorite thing about practicing law?**

**A:** Driving to Riverside for morning court appearances.

**Q: How do you think bar associations can remain relevant to a new generation of attorneys?**

**A:** Newer attorneys may be intimidated to get involved in organizations, thinking the emphasis is in networking and referring business. Highlighting the other aspects of a bar association, including meeting other new attorneys and attending informative programs on more basic matters that attorneys learn in their first few years, may make it more beneficial for them to participate.

**Q: What is it like being one of the SFVBA’s youngest trustees?**

**A:** I’m actually a very introverted person. Starting out, it made me so nervous to go to court, let alone try to network with other professionals. During these past few years, however, I’ve been challenged to overcome these anxieties. I’m a much different person today. It would have been harder for me to serve on the Board before, especially as one of the younger members. But now I’m very excited.

**Q: What are your goals for your time on the Board?**

**A:** I want to focus on new members and new attorneys. I feel like it takes people like me, who are on the cusp between being new and not-so-new, to engage incoming attorneys based on our own shared experiences. Being on the Board now, I see it as my responsibility to attract other members who may need a little extra encouragement to get out there like I did.

**Q:** What advice would you give to a law student or recent graduate?

**A:** Expect to make mistakes and know you will get better with practice. Also, be nice to your staff because you're not going to get anything done without them.

