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## TOP 50 WOMEN In Business

Editor's Choice | Professional Services | Leila Noël, Partner at Cappello & Noël, LLP

### *Meaningful impacts at the heart of her law practice*

By Mike Harris  
Staff Writer

Leila Noël, name partner at business litigation law firm Cappello & Noël, LLP has certainly had her share of accolades during her 40-year career at the Santa Barbara-based organization.

She was named one of the “Top 75 Women Litigators” in California for 2011 and one of the “Top 100 Women Lawyers” in California for 2013 by the Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journals. She was also named “Southern California Super Lawyer” in 2012, 2013 and 2018-2026.

Noël is consistently listed in the “Who’s Who of Professional Services” and “Top 50 Women in Business” by the Business Times. She has been included in Best Lawyers’ The Best Lawyers in America since 2020.

And this year, she can add yet another feather to her cap: once again being named by the Business Times one of the “Top 50 Women in Business.”

“There are so many talented, smart, and highly skilled women in the region,” Noël told the Business Times March 18.

“It is an honor to be included again,” she said.

Born and raised in Palo Alto, Noël had an interest in the law from a tender age.

She also had an interest in politics with aspirations to be the country’s first female president (“I was young and a bit naïve”) and, while a teen, interned for Bay Area Rep. Pete McCloskey in Washington, D.C.

“But then I quickly decided no, law is better, much more manageable,” Noël said.

She got a BA in political science from UC Santa Barbara and later her JD from William & Mary Law School in Virginia.

Noël began her career by briefly working for two sole practitioners, then in 1986 joined attorney Barry Cappello’s Santa Barbara firm.

She became a partner in 1993 and in 1998, the firm became Cappello & Noël, which pioneered the field of lender liability.

This year marks Noël’s 40th at the eight-lawyer firm.

She’s tried or co-tried most of the firm’s largest cases and has obtained verdicts and settlements in excess of \$500 million on behalf of her clients.

“I like that we try to work on cases that have a

meaningful outcome, or could have a meaningful impact, whether it’s for the individual or company we represent, or the greater community,” Noël said.

Among other high-profile cases, Cappello & Noël was one of the firms that represented landowners impacted by the 2015 Refugio State Beach oil spill.

A \$70 million class action settlement was paid by Houston-based Sable Offshore Corp.

In 2022, Noël and her co-lead counsel negotiated a \$230 million settlement for fishing industry members and shoreline residents who were damaged by the spill.

More recently, Cappello & Noël is representing the Santa Barbara Rental Property Association, which is seeking to invalidate the city’s temporary rent freeze ordinance.

Cappello said Noël is an outstanding trial lawyer who is “incisive, tenacious, intelligent, and incredibly organized.”

“The proof is that she handles the most complicated multimillion-dollar cases against Fortune 500 companies and banks for our clients,” he said.

Noël, he said, “can outwit, outwork and win against some of the finest defense lawyers in the country.”

Noël’s jury verdicts include a \$70.8 million verdict for a small aircraft manufacturer against General Electric Capital Corporation, and a \$23.1 million wrongful termination verdict against Johnson Controls, Inc.

She represented the parents of a 4 ½ year old boy who drowned in an exclusive athletic club due to the negligence and willful misconduct of the club and its employees.

The jury returned a verdict of \$16.2 million, one of the largest in the country’s history for a child wrongful death case.

Though at the start of her fifth decade with the firm, Noël, 67, says she has no intention of retiring anytime soon.

“Oh, heavens no,” she said. “Not when you’re still having fun.”

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Leila Noël, name partner at Santa Barbara-based Cappello & Noël, LLP, says she isn’t slowing down after 40 years at the business litigation firm.

### Leila Noël

Partner  
Cappello & Noël, LLP

#### In her own words:

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