



YEARⁱⁿ REVIEW

One year ago, in January 2016, Stephen G. Larson and Robert C. O'Brien, together with nine accomplished colleagues, established a new boutique law firm focused exclusively on trials, arbitrations, appeals, and investigations.

Over the past twelve months, Larson O'Brien has quickly established a record of success in both trial and appellate courts, has been engaged in high-profile national and international matters, and has grown to twenty attorneys.

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UNDEFEATED AT TRIAL

In 2016, Larson O'Brien tried three cases and began a fourth, securing a victory for the Larson O'Brien client in the three that have been completed.

- ◆ In a breach of contract case that spanned 75 days of hearings in Los Angeles before a three-arbitrator panel, Larson O'Brien's client, a Los Angeles-based company, obtained an eight figure monetary award and declaratory relief against a national brand name contracting partner. The firm's trial team was comprised of Robert O'Brien, Steve Bledsoe, Jerry Behnke, and RC Harlan.
- ◆ In April and May, Stephen Larson, Steve Bledsoe, and RC Harlan tried a case in the federal court in the District of Columbia in a fee dispute between Larson O'Brien's client, one of the lead attorneys in the Indian Trust Litigation, and a major national law firm. The trial ended with the court rejecting all legal defenses raised by Larson O'Brien's opponents and granting Larson O'Brien's client a seven figure judgment.
- ◆ In August, Stephen Larson and his colleagues Jerry Behnke and Melissa Meister returned to his former federal courtroom in Riverside. This time as defense counsel for a retired senior Drug Enforcement Administration agent accused of conspiring to commit fraud and making false statement to federal officers. On the fifth day of trial, following Larson's dramatic cross-examination of government law enforcement witnesses that led to a federal district judge's tentative decision to tell a jury that the prosecution had elicited false testimony in the case, the U.S. Attorney's office dismissed the entirety of the nine-count indictment against Larson O'Brien's client. He walked out of court a free man.



WINNING ON APPEAL

In addition to the firm's trial wins, Larson O'Brien clients have won key appeals in the California Court of Appeal and the Ninth Circuit.

- ◆ In a wrongful death action by plaintiff, mother of the deceased, against celebrity drug interventionist Warren Boyd and film and television star, the late Carrie Fisher, Larson O'Brien was engaged after a trial court had awarded terminating sanctions and sustained demurrers against the plaintiff, effectively ending the client's case. Stephen Larson and colleagues RC Harlan, Emilie Zuccolotto, and Steve Haskins successfully obtained a reversal of the trial court through three separate appeals before the California Court of Appeal. These rulings rescued the core causes of action, and Larson O'Brien obtained a trial date for October 2017. The case has been extensively reported on in the *Hollywood Reporter* and *People* magazine.
- ◆ Larson O'Brien represents the lead defendant in a case Gov. Jerry Brown described as one of the largest public corruption prosecutions in California. In the federal district court, Larson O'Brien sought the return or destruction of the fruits of an illegal search of the client's home by the FBI. After the district court denied the motion, Larson O'Brien successfully obtained a unanimous reversal in the Ninth Circuit. After this reversal, the federal government, which had earlier closed its investigation, agreed to destroy all of the documents seized from the client's home and sent a letter to state prosecutors seeking to clawback all of the materials it had improperly shared. The Larson O'Brien defense team is led by Stephen Larson with assistance from Jonathan Phillips, Melissa Meister, Steve Haskins, Uri Niv, and Erica Graves.
- ◆ Other appellate victories were secured by Larson O'Brien attorneys for the West Valley Water District on an appeal arising from an Inland Empire water rights dispute, and for the City of Chino on two appeals of a lawsuit brought by a taxpayer group alleging various conflict of interest violations by city council members.

HIGH PROFILE ENGAGEMENTS

Since the firm's founding, it has been sought out to handle several of the largest cases in the country. Representative matters include:

- ◆ Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, now the recently-confirmed Administrator of the EPA, and Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich, retained Larson O'Brien to represent their respective states in seeking recovery for their citizens in the Volkswagen AG emissions litigation.
- ◆ Victims of the San Bernardino terror attacks and their families engaged Larson O'Brien to represent them in supporting the FBI's motion to compel Apple, Inc. to unlock the terrorists' iPhones. Stephen Larson advocated for the victims both in court and on numerous national television news programs.
- ◆ Stephen Larson was appointed by Orange County District Attorney Anthony J. Rackauckas and the Board of Supervisors to monitor the Orange County district attorney's office's compliance with a blue ribbon panel's recommendations regarding the jail informant controversy in the county.
- ◆ In ongoing litigation between the firm's client, an independent oil and gas company, and the EPA and State of California, Robert O'Brien, Stephen Larson, Steve Bledsoe, and Jerry Behnke successfully argued for monetary and issue sanctions against California for the spoliation of key case-related documents. The Santa Barbara News Press has labeled the Government's improper conduct "Targate."
- ◆ Stephen Larson was appointed to serve as general counsel to the Ontario International Airport Authority and was privileged to represent the Authority as OIAA was officially transferred from LAX to OIAA.
- ◆ Both Stephen Larson and Robert O'Brien were appointed to serve as arbitrators and special masters in several complex international arbitrations and federal court litigation matters during 2016.
- ◆ In December, U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh appointed Larson O'Brien liaison counsel in Davidson, et al. v. Apple, Inc., a nationwide class action.

Larson O'Brien is honored that current clients also include The Walt Disney Company, Seterus, Inc., an IBM company, F. Korbel & Bros. Champagne Cellars, The City of Irvine, The American Society of Cinematographers, Buzz Aldrin, Renovate America, and The R.J. Noble Company, among many others.



REPUTATION

The legal and business press has already taken notice of Larson O'Brien's arrival on the legal scene in Los Angeles. The *Los Angeles Business Journal* selected Stephen G. Larson and Robert C. O'Brien as two of the "500 most distinguished leaders in the Los Angeles business community" in the inaugural issue of the "Los Angeles 500" – "the most influential people in Los Angeles." In its first year, Larson O'Brien was ranked in Los Angeles by the U.S. News - Best Lawyers® "Best Law Firms" survey. Many of our lawyers have also been recognized by Super Lawyers®.



THE FIRM'S RAPID GROWTH

Since establishing the firm in January 2016, with 11 lawyers, Larson O'Brien has added six new associates – **Shane D. Baumgardner**, **Andrew J. Bedigian**, **Ariana E. Fuller**, **Erica R. Graves**, **Matthew S. Manacek** and **Uri Niv**. All of the attorneys are highly credentialed and come from major firm or clerkship backgrounds. Larson O'Brien expects to continue to expand its associate ranks in 2017. In January, the firm elevated its first associate to partner, **Paul Rigali**.



The firm is also pleased that **Scott A. Sommer** and **Patrick K. O'Brien** have become affiliated with Larson O'Brien as Of Counsel.



IN THE NEWS

In addition to extensive media coverage of the firm's cases, its partners appeared in the media to comment on public affairs during 2016. Most notably, Hugh Hewitt, co-moderated four of CNN's presidential debates during the Republican primary. He was a regular on NBC's "Meet the Press" and continues to host Salem Media's the Hugh Hewitt Radio Show. Hewitt's latest book, "The Fourth Way," was released by Simon & Schuster in January 2017. Robert O'Brien's book on American foreign policy, "While America Slept: Restoring American Leadership to a World in Crisis" was published in September by Encounter Books and was widely reviewed and cited in the national press. Stephen Larson has been called upon as a former federal judge to comment on various trending cases.



A member of the family but not the firm, Jaelan Phillips, son of partner Jonathan Phillips, was one of the top five high school football recruits in the country this year and ultimately committed to play at UCLA. He has been profiled in many national news stories. Larson O'Brien will be tailgating at the Rose Bowl this fall and rooting for Jaelan!





LARSON · O'BRIEN_{LLP}

555 SOUTH FLOWER STREET • SUITE 4400 • LOS ANGELES, CA 90071
TEL:213.436.4888 • FAX:213.623.2000
LARSONOBRIENLAW.COM