

Daily Journal

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TOP 25 PLAINTIFF LAWYERS

Let's face it, plaintiff lawyers add the bling to the legal industry. But too often, we in the media focus on the large monetary judgments and settlements their cases garner and on their big personalities — in and out of the courtroom. We don't pay enough attention to the public and corporate policy changes their cases bring about.

In this inaugural issue, we tried to change that.

We selected just 25 California plaintiff lawyers to honor. We could have honored more but, in our opinion, these are the ones who consistently force broad change in the law, industry and society. Some are well-known, like Elizabeth Cabraser, Joseph Cotchett and Tom Girardi, and others are relative upstarts like Lawrance Bohm, whose eye-popping employment-related verdicts have grabbed us by

the proverbial lapels and forced us to pay attention.

As you read about these men and women, there is a common thread — and it doesn't have dollar signs; they truly care about having an impact. The work they are doing to hold governments and industry accountable will last long after the bling has dimmed.

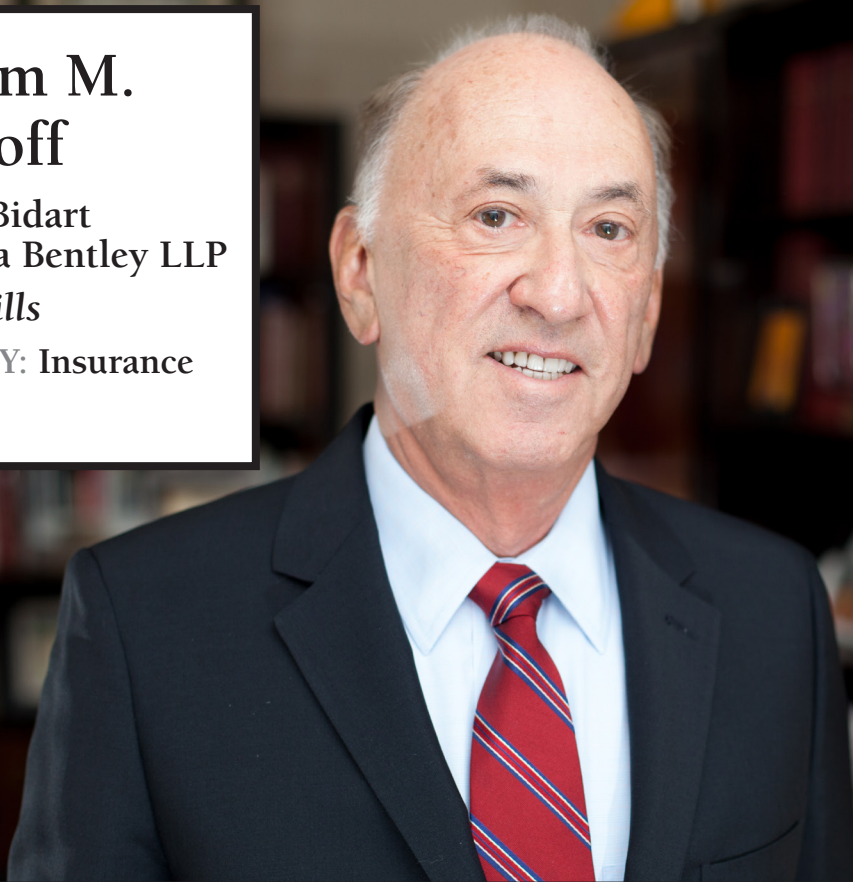
— The Editors

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William M. Shernoff

Shernoff Bidart
Echeverria Bentley LLP
Beverly Hills

SPECIALTY: Insurance
bad faith



“I just think the law of good faith and fair dealing is very important so that people get what they deserve,” said Shernoff who pioneered insurance bad faith law with his 1979 California Supreme Court victory in *Egan v. Mutual of Omaha*. “You pay premiums all the time, when it comes time to collect on a claim you should be treated fairly, and if you’re not that’s insurance bad faith.”

The body of law in this area has developed significantly since *Egan*. “We are very proud to have been in the forefront and been pioneers in this field of law,” he said of his firm, “that’s our specialty.” Currently, he is representing Lois Brown, a 90-year-old retiree who, according to Shernoff, was defrauded out of her savings and given an annuity that was almost worthless. The suit, filed in December, accuses Elco Mutual Life & Annuity and U.S. Senior Vets of committing financial elder abuse.

“I just like helping people, who are regular ordinary people, and seeking justice for them.”

— Hetert-Qebu Walters