

Trial *Style*

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Bringing the Past into the Present

De Castro, West
Senior Trial Lawyer
Judianne Jaffe
Wins Lengthy
Probate Fight

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PRACTICE AREAS

Complex Business Litigation
Tax Litigation

EDUCATION

- J.D., University of Southern California Law School, 1976: Order of the Coif
- B.A., University of California at Los Angeles, *summa cum laude*, 1972: Phi Beta Kappa

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

State Bar of California, 1976
U.S. Tax Court
U.S. District Court for all California districts

AFFILIATIONS

- State Bar of California
- Chair, Committee on Administration of Justice, 1990-91
 - Member, Litigation Section
- Beverly Hills Bar Association
- Chair, Litigation Section, 1980-81 and 1994-96
 - Associate Editor, Beverly Hills Bar Journal, 1977-80
- Los Angeles County Bar Association
American Bar Association
- Member, Litigation and Antitrust Sections

ACTIVITIES

Trustee, John Wayne Cancer Institute at St. John's Hospital and Health Center, Santa Monica

Judianne Jaffe focuses her practice on complex business litigation and trials in the California courts, U.S. District Courts and U.S. Tax Court. She represents clients in regulatory disputes, arbitrations and judicial references. Ms. Jaffe represents North American and Pacific Rim companies from a wide variety of industries. She earned her Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Southern California Law School, Order of the Coif. In addition to the State Bar of California, Ms. Jaffe is admitted to practice before the U.S. Tax Court and the U.S. District Court for all California districts.

Ms. Jaffe's expertise includes disputes involving:

- Competitive practices
- Intellectual property
- Real property and construction
- Partnership and corporate restructuring
- Internet media
- Motion picture and video financing, production and distribution
- Probate
- Insolvency
- Tax

Ms. Jaffe represents North American and Pacific Rim companies from a wide variety of industries, including:

- Publicly and privately held developers
- A musical instrument manufacturer
- An automobile manufacturer
- Aftermarket auto parts and equipment manufacturers, distributors and retailers
- A motion picture completion guarantor subsidiary of an international insurance conglomerate
- An international heavy construction equipment leasing company
- A web-hosting and software development firm

De Castro, West, Chodorow, Glickfeld & Nass provides planning and advocacy to clients in complex business transactions and litigation. The firm helps individuals, private entities and public corporations navigate the legal intricacies of both the boardroom and the courtroom through strategic counseling, innovative planning and aggressive representation. De Castro, West is a full-service law firm, handling almost every type of legal matter for nearly every kind of enterprise. For more information about De Castro, West, Chodorow, Glickfeld & Nass, call (310) 478-2541 or e-mail tray@dwclaw.com.

F E A T U R E D

Bringing the Past

De Castro, West Senior Trial Lawyer Judianne Jaffe
By Staff Reports

AFTER MONTHS OF PROTRACTED LEGAL WRANGLING COMING FROM HER OPPONENTS, DE CASTRO, WEST PARTNER JUDIANNNE JAFFE WON A COMPLETE VICTORY IN PROBATE COURT. THE CASE INVOLVED AN INTESTATE (NO WILL) ESTATE OF SOME CONSIDERABLE VALUE.

The deceased, Cindy Cameron, was 85 years old when she passed away in 2006. She had been an actress and real estate investor.

“We prevailed on summary judgment in the estate matter, where Cameron’s cousin sought to be the executor and an intestate heir based on being Cameron’s ‘equitably adopted’ sister,” Ms. Jaffe says. “We established that equitable adoption was not recognized in the state of Kansas where the so-called adoption in 1935 would have taken place.”

Cameron’s widowed father married the cousin’s mother (his brother’s widow) in 1935. She claimed Miss Cameron’s father was too poor during the Depression to legally adopt her.

“Even under California law, which recognizes equitable adoption, there must be a legal barrier that prevents formal adoption, for an equitable adoption claim to prevail,” Ms. Jaffe, who focuses her practice on complex business litigation, says. “The court ruled as a matter of law that lack of money to pay for a legal adoption is not a ‘legal barrier’ under the California statute.”

“Even under California law, which recognizes equitable adoption, there must be a legal barrier that prevents formal adoption, for an equitable adoption claim to prevail.”

The cousin also claimed she was the trustee and beneficiary of a “land trust” into which Miss Cameron had placed her commercial property in 1998. However, Ms. Jaffe established that the cousin had signed a Quitclaim Deed, intending to return the property to Miss Cameron, at Miss Cameron’s request, in 2003.

De Castro, West represented Miss Cameron’s niece and two grand-nieces against Miss Cameron’s first cousin. The cousin claimed she was Miss Cameron’s rightful heir. She demanded priority of appointment as executor, asserting she was Miss Cameron’s “equitably adopted” sister. The cousin based this claim on the fact that Miss

Superior Court Judge John L. Segal ruled on the summary judgment motion regarding the alleged equitable adoption, and presided over the bench trial on the land trust issue.

• M A T T E R into the Present

Wins Lengthy Probate Fight

"We prevailed at trial on the 'trust' issue," Ms. Jaffe, who tried the matter with the assistance of associates Yona Conzevoy and Sharon Nolfi, says. "The cousin claimed that she owned the real property in trust for herself as successor beneficiary, despite having signed and delivered a quitclaim deed to Miss Cameron three years before Miss Cameron's death."

The court ruled after a four-day bench trial that the quitclaim deed was intended to return all right, title and interest in the real property to Miss Cameron in her own name. The Court decided that, as a result, the real property was part of the intestate estate. In this circumstance, the land was appropriately inherited by Ms. Jaffe's clients, Miss Cameron's niece and grand-nieces.



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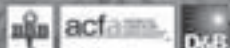
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