

Partner Arturo J. Gonzalez Joins Morrison & Foerster LLP in San Francisco, CA

By Kenneth Davis

Summary Partner Arturo J Gonzalez, of Morrison Foerster LLP in San Francisco, CA, is an expert litigator, who focuses on corporate and commercial disputes. He has experience representing clients in a wide range of industries, including technology, media, telecommunications, automotive and aerospace. With over 25 years of experience in the courtroom, Mr. Gonzalez has achieved success in all aspects of litigation, from pre-trial motions to appeals. Additionally, he has represented both domestic and international clients in mediations and arbitrations.

Mr. Gonzalez's background includes representation of companies in state and federal courts in areas such as antitrust, breach of contract, unfair competition, real estate, and fraud. He has also successfully handled disputes relating to corporate acquisitions, debt collection, and corporate governance. His experience extends to multi-district litigation and the coordination of parties located in various jurisdictions.

In addition to his litigation work, Mr. Gonzalez also advises clients regarding strategic negotiation and dispute resolution. He has considerable experience in the negotiation of employment and severance agreements, and counsels clients on corporate compliance matters and dispute resolution. In addition, he has been involved in the development of anti-corruption programs and corporate compliance protocols.

Mr. Gonzalez is a member of the State Bar of California, and has been listed as a Northern California Super Lawyer for 15 consecutive years. He has a BA from the University of California, Santa Barbara and a JD from the University of California, Los Angeles Law School.

Partner Arturo J Gonzalez of Morrison Foerster LLP in San Francisco, CA, is an experienced lawyer in the areas of litigation, arbitration, and corporate compliance. His extensive knowledge of the courtroom has enabled him to successfully represent a variety of clients in state and federal courts throughout the US. His background includes dealing with antitrust, breach of contract, unfair competition, fraud, real estate, and corporate acquisitions. In addition to litigation, he advises companies on strategic negotiation and dispute resolution, employment and severance agreements, and anti-corruption programs. Mr. Gonzalez is admired for his courtroom successes and has been a Northern California Super Lawyer for the past 15 years. He holds a BA in University of California, Santa Barbara and a JD in University of California, Los Angeles Law School.

Arturo J. Gonzalez: An Experienced Partner with Morrison Foerster LLP, San Francisco, CA

Founded in 1982, Morrison Foerster LLP's San Francisco office is one of the top-ranked law firms in the United States. They provide a full range of legal services in the areas of corporate, tax, litigation and intellectual property. Arturo J. Gonzalez is a partner in the firm, with over 25 years of experience in civil litigation and trial practice. He has represented clients in a wide range of disputes and appeals in state, federal and appellate courts.

Arturo J. Gonzalez: A Proven Litigation Advocate and Advocate for Diversity

Arturo J. Gonzalez is a proven advocate for his clients in complex litigation, arbitration and appellate matters. He specializes in representing companies and individuals in securities, contract, employment, intellectual property and white-collar criminal matters. His experience includes defending clients in government investigations, internal investigations and in high-stakes business disputes. Mr. Gonzalez is also a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion in the legal profession and has served on several committees promoting

diversity in the legal community.

Arturo J. Gonzalez: A Leader in Corporate Governance, Compliance and Risk Management

In addition to his litigation practice, Arturo J. Gonzalez has counseled corporate boards of directors, officers and shareholders in matters related to corporate governance, compliance and risk management. He has advised clients on various aspects of corporate governance, including CEO succession planning, shareholder rights and executive compensation. Mr. Gonzalez has also provided strategic advice on risk management and internal control systems as well as regulatory and enforcement matters.

Arturo J. Gonzalez: A Leader in Litigation and Dispute Resolution

Arturo J. Gonzalez is a recognized leader in litigation and dispute resolution. He has successfully represented clients in a variety of complex business disputes involving securities fraud, corporate governance, intellectual property, unfair competition and antitrust law. He has also handled numerous class action lawsuits and is experienced in mediation, arbitration and other forms of alternative dispute resolution.

Arturo J. Gonzalez: An Award-Winning Lawyer and a Member of the International Bar Association

Arturo J. Gonzalez has been recognized for his legal achievements by a number of organizations. He has received the ALI-ABA Award for Professional Excellence, the American Bar Association's Litigation Section Leadership Award and the Corporate Counsel Magazine's Top 10 Litigators Award. He is a member of the International Bar Association, the American Bar Association and the Hispanic National Bar Association.

"I grew up in a low-income neighborhood and saw things that I thought were not right," Gonzalez said.

"Initially I wanted to become a police officer because when people got into trouble, they would always call the police--whether someone stole your bike, or stole your car, or broke into your house. Whatever happened, you would always call the police. And I liked the idea of helping people."

Gonzalez eventually found that he could be of greater assistance to people by becoming an attorney.

"I wanted to be a police officer for a long time, and it wasn't until there were some people I knew who had experienced problems with the law that I came to realize that one thing a policeman could not do was to speak on someone's behalf in a court of law," he explained. "And you had to be a lawyer to do that, and that's when I decided that I wanted to be a lawyer."

From all indications, it would appear Gonzalez made the right decision. He is now a nationally recognized trial attorney and a partner with [renowned international law firm Morrison & Foerster](#). In addition, a number of legal publications have acknowledged Gonzalez for his stellar legal work. In 2003, *The American Lawyer* named him one of the nation's top 45 lawyers under the age of 45. He was also selected by the *National Law Journal* in 1995 as one of the nation's top 40 lawyers under 40, and in 1998 by *California Business Magazine* as one of California's top 20 young lawyers. In 2006, the *Los Angeles Daily Journal* named Gonzalez one of California's top 100 leading lawyers. He was also selected as a "[Leading Lawyer for Litigation](#) in California" by the 2006 *Chambers USA: Guide to America's Leading Business Lawyers*.

Gonzalez said that he doesn't have a particular specialty area.

"I'm a trial lawyer," he said. "Maybe I'm old-school in that sense in that I choose not to specialize. I realize that the vast majority of lawyers in today's market are specialists and are leaning towards specializing in one area or another. I think there's still a need for people who can walk into a courtroom and try any case, and that's something I can do."

Over the years, Gonzalez has handled a number of high-profile cases. In 2003, he was involved in a case in which the Oakland Raiders sued the City of Oakland and County of Alameda for fraud (*Oakland Raiders v. City of Oakland, et al.*). In the suit, the team claimed it was intentionally misled when it was lured into returning to Oakland from Los Angeles by the promise of sell-outs for the 1995 season. The Oakland-

Alameda County Coliseum, former Director of the Coliseum Ed DeSilva, and now-defunct accounting firm Arthur Andersen were also named in the suit. The Raiders sought \$1 billion in damages. Gonzalez successfully defended DeSilva in the case. The jury concluded that DeSilva did not mislead the Raiders and returned a defense verdict on his behalf. Gonzalez said the team did receive a judgment against the Coliseum, which is currently on appeal.

Gonzalez was also the lead defense counsel in a race discrimination case against Bank of the West in 1998. After a three-week trial, the jury returned a defense verdict.

And in 1999, Gonzalez represented the widow and children of a farm worker who was killed by the police. The suit claimed that the police violated the Fourth Amendment by the manner in which they entered the family's home and shot the man. After a three-week trial in federal court in Fresno, the jury found various constitutional violations and awarded the widow and her children \$12.5 million in damages. It was the largest verdict ever awarded in California for a police shooting.

Additionally, last year, Gonzalez represented the mother of a 19-year-old who had been sitting in a park with his girlfriend when a large branch fell out of a tree and landed on his hip. He was taken to a hospital emergency room, where he sat in the waiting room for many hours and did not receive proper care. He was conscious when he arrived at the waiting room but was bleeding internally. After awhile, he passed out; the hospital staff started scrambling and panicking and eventually transferred him to another hospital, where he died. A Fresno Superior Court jury found that the young man had not been properly cared for prior to being transferred to another hospital and that, had he been given proper care, he would not have died. The jury awarded the mother \$400,000 in damages.

Before going to law school, Gonzalez received his B.A. with honors in Political Science/Public Service from the University of California, Davis, in 1982. He went on to [attend Harvard Law School](#) and earned his law degree in 1985. While he was a student at Harvard, he had the privilege of meeting esteemed labor leader and civil rights activist Cesar Chavez, who came to speak on behalf of the Harvard Law Forum.

"I asked [Chavez] what he thought I should do with my career," Gonzalez said. "And to my surprise, he said to me in Spanish, 'You should go to one of those big firms where there are no Latino lawyers, and you should be the best lawyer at the firm.' I thought he was going to say, 'Hey, come work with us; we could use a Harvard lawyer at the UFW [United Farm Workers of America, which Chavez founded].' But he didn't. So I took it as a challenge."

After that, Gonzalez started looking at big law firms. He said he was quite surprised that there were virtually no big firms with Latino lawyers.

"And so there were lots of them to choose from," he said. "And the way I made my decision at the time is I knew that I wanted to do some public interest work. I mean, obviously, you're going to a big firm to do billable work, and everybody understands that. But I also wanted to go to a firm where I could give something back to my community, and I had heard that this firm called MoFo [Morrison & Foerster] was a firm that was progressive, and it did top-quality work but at the same time believed in the notion of giving back to your community. And so I decided that that's where I would go."

[Gonzalez joined Morrison & Foerster](#) in its San Francisco office in 1985 and became the firm's first Latino partner in 1992. When he first started at the firm, he was the only Latino out of more than 200 lawyers. However, things have changed significantly since then.

"Now I think we have nine Latino partners and about 40 Latino associates," he said.

He added that Vault, which ranks law firms and is used by law students to get information about law firms, has ranked Morrison & Foerster as the number one firm in terms of diversity for the last five years.

"We've definitely come a long way," he said. "There aren't many firms that can say that. But I realize that we've still got a ways to go."

Gonzalez discussed what he likes most about working at Morrison & Foerster:

"What I enjoy most about my job is the fact that we've got tremendous resources here that enable me to address just about any legal issue," he said. "Even if it's an area of the law that I don't know a whole lot about, there's somebody else in this firm who's a master at it, and I can immediately get up to speed on almost every area of law just by using the resources of our firm, and I just find that to be extremely helpful."

He added that he also likes the diversity of the work and the "array of legal challenges that are presented" at the firm.

"I suppose [...] probably one reason why maybe I don't specialize is I would not want to just be manufacturing widgets all day," Gonzalez explained. "I like different things, and so I learn different things all the time. And I love to learn."

Gonzalez said that he has had several mentors at MoFo, including Senior Partner James Brosnahan, Partners Melvin Goldman and Jack Londen, and Senior Counsel James Garrett.

"You know, they all share one thing in common," Gonzalez said. "They're all white men, and yet all four of them took the time to help me. There are many who believe that if you're a black man, you can only be mentored by a black man, or if you're a Latino or Latina, you can only be mentored by a Latino or Latina. I don't believe that. The reason I don't believe that is throughout my career, college, law school, and professionally, my mentors have been white men. There just have been white men throughout my career that have taken the time and the interest to give me some words of wisdom that have benefited me."

Gonzalez said he speaks to students whenever he gets the opportunity--and not just law students. He talks to high school students and even middle school students. This month, he said he'll be speaking to students at UC Davis and at the UC Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law.

Gonzalez explained what he enjoys most about speaking to students:

"What I really enjoy is the fact that people listen to me," he said. "I mean, you can just tell when you have an audience and when you don't. I'm not the smartest person in the world by any means, and I have plenty of weaknesses, but the one gift that I was given is the ability to talk to people, the ability to communicate with people. I can stand up, and I can talk to people--to almost any crowd--and keep them engaged. And that's probably why I'm a trial lawyer."

Gonzalez said one of the highlights of his professional career was his role as lead counsel in the highly publicized case *Butt v. Richmond Unified School District Board of Education*, which was filed when the Richmond school board voted to close its schools six weeks early because the district had run out of funds. He obtained an injunction that prevented the schools from closing. On appeal, Gonzalez successfully argued the case before the California Supreme Court. In affirming the injunction, a unanimous California Supreme Court decision held that a premature closure of a district's public schools would violate children's fundamental rights to public education.

"The Richmond schools case was really a good moment," Gonzalez said. "Because there were 30,000 kids

who were going to just get kicked out of school, and I just thought that was outrageous. We had to work very hard in a very short period of time, and we got it done. It was just a good example of what you could do as a lawyer that you couldn't do in any other profession. No matter how articulate you may be, in any other profession, you could not have done what we did in that case. You had to be a lawyer."

Gonzalez said he believes diversity is one of the most important issues facing the legal community today.

"I'm very concerned that the students entering our law schools today do not reflect the communities that they ultimately are supposed to serve," he fretted. "And that makes it all the more difficult for law firms, including mine, to try to diversify--the fact that the pools are not getting any bigger. It's a problem because I think our profession should reflect somewhat the people in the community, and we don't, especially with respect to Latinos and African Americans. And especially as you get [into] areas such as large law firms...that's an area that we continue to struggle with. We're doing much, much better with Asian lawyers, but Latinos and African Americans tend to lag."

Gonzalez said two of the most important things that young lawyers should maintain are responsiveness and integrity. Regarding the former, he explained that if a client has a question, the attorney should get back to him or her as quickly as possible.

"Even if you don't have the answer, you can say, 'I got your call; I'm gonna look into it, and I'll get right back to you,'" Gonzalez said. "Or even if you're working for a law firm and a partner has an assignment for you, again, responsiveness. Let the partner know that you got his or her voicemail or you got the email and you're on it."

And with regard to integrity, he had the following advice:

"I mean absolutely, not under any circumstances, should a lawyer ever compromise his or her integrity. You just don't do it. If somebody's asking you to do something that you've got concerns about, and you're not sure it's right, you ought to ask somebody else at your firm. And if for some reason there's not anybody you can turn to, then there are ethics hotlines that the bar associations have that you can call anonymously. There are just too many examples recently where people compromised their integrity, and it came back to bite them."

Gonzalez is married and has four children. He is also a big sports fan and cheers on his favorite teams: the Oakland Raiders, the Golden State Warriors, and the Oakland A's.