

Daily Journal

MAY 28, 2025



TOP WOMEN LAWYERS 2025



KAREN J. SLOAT

SLOAT LAW GROUP, APC

EMPLOYMENT LAW

PALM DESERT

Karen Sloat has practiced law for 37 years, founding a firm that operates on principles that set it apart in the legal profession. Admitted to the bar in December 1987, the employment litigator's path to law began after college when she worked as a clerical employee in law offices.

"I was drafting so many documents for them in various practice areas, with speed and accuracy, that I told myself I could make twice the salary if I went to law school," Sloat said.

Her background in theatre arts contributed to her courtroom presence. "My theatre training prepared me to be confident and poised in stressful situations, think on my feet, and to speak clearly and with confidence in court," she noted.

Sloat established her own practice, Sloat Law Group, to implement her vision of legal services. Her firm operates under the motto "Caring for clients while pursuing Justice," with core values of integrity, excellence, intentional community and unity.

"Many attorneys are driven by money and success, over actually empathizing with the client's plight and working in their best interests," Sloat said. "We seek to understand our clients and mete out 'capital J' Justice for them."

In a recent case, Sloat defended a landscaping company against a complex class action involving nearly 1,300 employees. The potential liability was more than 80 times the eventual confidential settlement, which was reached after two years of litigation. *Lizarraga Osuna v. Vintage Associates, Inc.*, CVRI2200103 (Riverside Super. Ct., filed Jan. 10, 2022). *Lizarraga Osuna v. Vintage Associates, Inc.*, CVPS-2200100 (Riverside Super. Ct., filed Jan. 3, 2022).

The case centered on the company's time-keeping practices. Through research and testing, Sloat's team demonstrated that the employer's rounding system consistently favored employees. Shortly before mediation, the plaintiff dropped claims related to rounding — which con-

stituted the majority of the potential damages.

In another significant case, Sloat represented an older worker who hadn't received wages for over a year and was misclassified as an independent contractor. When the client died from COVID-19 in 2020, Sloat continued the fight.

"Our client died in 2020 from COVID-19, telling his poor spouse on his deathbed to keep fighting for his money," Sloat said.

Despite the defendants cycling through multiple attorneys and filing frivolous appeals, the court awarded damages exceeding \$2.5 million, plus interest. The case remains active as Sloat works to collect the judgment through bankruptcy proceedings in Texas.

Sloat identifies mentorship as a growing concern in the legal profession. She has guided many young attorneys and advocates for civility and effective communication.

"I encounter younger litigators who believe uncivil behavior is just 'how lawyers should act' or dig their heels in on a procedure or a position that should be negotiated," she observed.

Reflecting on her practice area, Sloat views employment law as consistently relevant. "Employment law is like an annuity -- we will always have employees and employers who need legal counsel on the law and there will always be labor law disputes to handle."