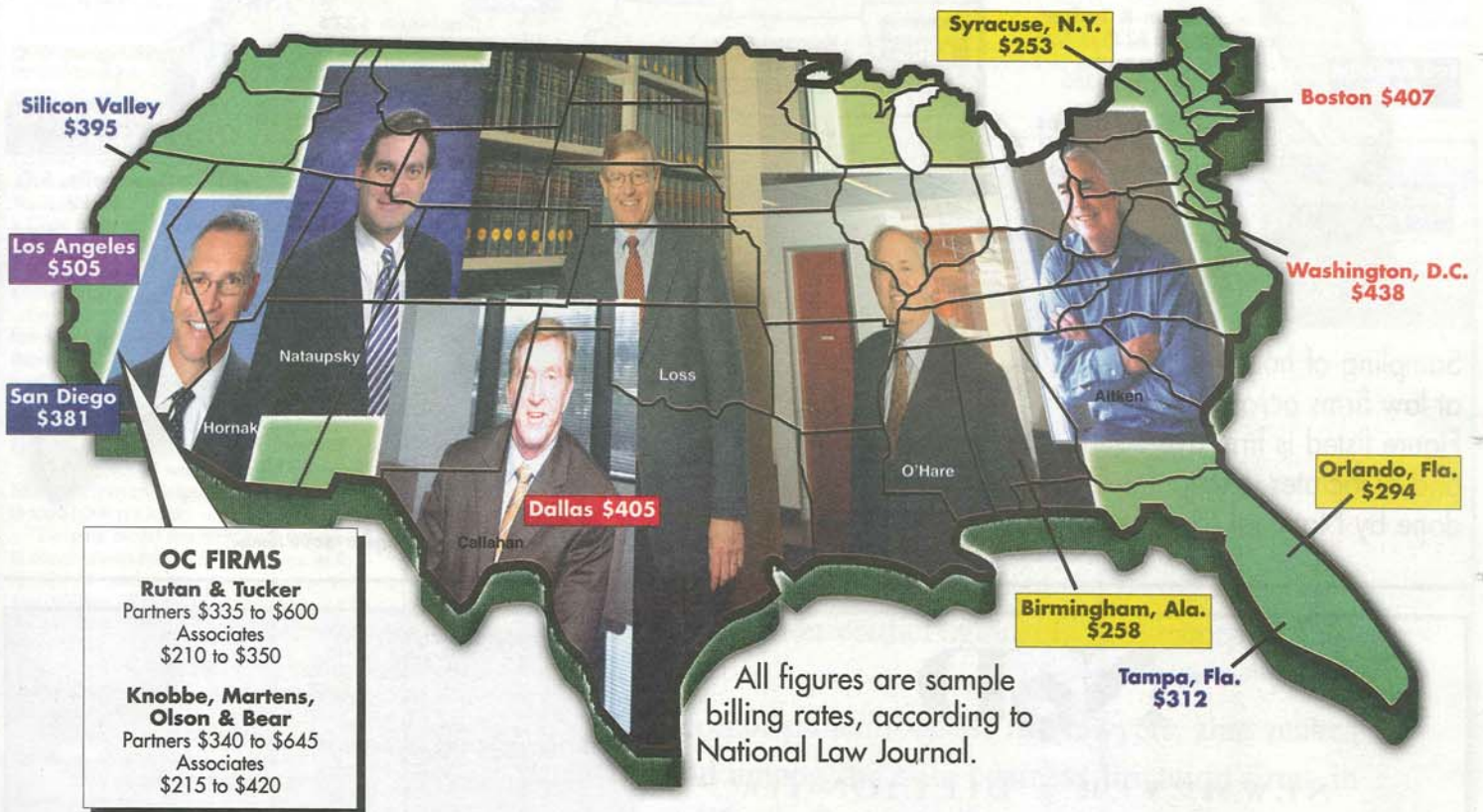


LAW FIRMS



Raising the Bar

Increasingly complex work and added federal regulations have driven lawyer billing rates in OC and across the nation, [page 26](#)

ALSO

- Getting the best and the brightest from grad school requires big money, [page 28](#)
- Hiring associates is bit of a courting process, [page 30](#)
- A who's who of the county's top plaintiffs' lawyers, [page 32](#)
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RUTAN
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

**STRADLING YOCCA
CARLSON & RAUTH**
Attorneys at Law

Snell & Wilmer
L.L.P.
LAW OFFICES
Character comes through.

Daniel Callahan,
*Founding partner
Callahan & Blaine,
Santa Ana*

He's called a "bull dog litigator" in many legal circles.

"My practice is a little different from most in that I handle complex business litigation and personal injury," Callahan said.



Callahan

Callahan is best known in OC for representing Fullerton medical diagnostic test maker Beckman Coulter Inc. in a lawsuit against Singapore's Flextronics International Ltd. over a breach of contract that resulted in a \$934 million verdict, the largest in county history. The companies settled in late 2003 for \$23 million.

"Being a part of a historical verdict was really something," Callahan said.

Callahan recently represented Stacy Neria and Carol Daniel in a lawsuit against the city of Dana Point after a driver struck them in April while jogging in a bike lane on Pacific Coast Highway. Callahan argued that the bike lane they were running in was poorly marked and too wide, leading motorists to believe it was another driving lane.

The case resulted in a \$50 million settlement in November for the now quadriplegic women, the highest ever reported in California for a personal injury case, according to Todd A. Wolfe of Trials Digest, a San Francisco-based publisher of nationwide verdicts and settlements.

Callahan also represented Philip Dorhman in a lawsuit against a trucking company, which resulted in a \$28 million settlement, the third largest personal injury settlement in California.

A good chunk of lawsuits are settled before they go to trial, Callahan said. He likes to prepare for trial no matter what, he said.

"We go into every case aggressively and we prepare every case for trial, not for settlement," Callahan said.

Daniel J. Callahan,
*Founding partner
Callahan & Blaine,
Santa Ana*

Bill Lerach's guilty plea is a wake-up call to plaintiff class action lawyers nationwide. Lerach's former firm, Milberg Weiss, was by far the most prolific and feared class action law firm targeting Fortune 500 and



Callahan

Silicon Valley companies. One can expect a marked decrease in class action suits brought by Lerach's former partners and associates. Certainly a void may have been created that only time will tell how it will be filled.

I suspect that although the government's focus was on Milberg Weiss and its infamous former partner Lerach, the practice of illegally paying class action plaintiffs to bring and maintain lawsuits was not limited to their firm but rather was rampant throughout the industry.

With the light shined upon this illegal activity, I suspect future plaintiff attorneys will be more circumspect, which can cause a reduction in overall suits brought. As far as existing suits by this firm and others, I believe defendant corporations will examine in more detail whether or not there are any prohibited payoffs or other conflicts of interest.

What I do expect is a flurry of lawsuits from corporations that were formerly targets of the attorneys who have now pled guilty to making illegal payoffs. These lawsuits would seek, among other things, restitution for the amounts paid to the lawyers in connection with the class action settlements as monies illegally obtained in violation of the state's Business and Professions Code section 17200 prohibiting unfair business practices in California and its analogous statutes in other states. ■