

LITIGATION DEPARTMENT OF THE YEAR

2017

MARC SELTZER,
SUSMAN GODFREY
WINNER, ANIMATION
COMPANIES

GIANT SLAYER: MARC
SELTZER, SUSMAN
GODFREY

BY ROSS TODD

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Marc Seltzer, the head of the Los Angeles office of Susman Godfrey, took on the world's largest animation companies, including Disney, Pixar, Lucasfilm...



Marc Seltzer, Susman Godfrey Photo by Robert Millard

Marc Seltzer, the head of the Los Angeles office of Susman Godfrey, took on the world's largest animation companies, including Disney, Pixar, Lucasfilm Ltd., DreamWorks and Sony, and recovered nearly \$170 million on his animation employee clients.

The settlement meant an average recovery of more than \$16,800 per class member before fees and costs, with a class of about 10,000. Seltzer recently told The Recorder the basic elements of Susman's approach to litigation: Work as efficiently as possible and gear toward trial.

What were the key incremental wins that led to that result?

The critical wins in the litigation included defeating defendants' motions to dismiss the amended complaint filed after the court dismissed the original consolidated complaint as being time-barred. The court granted leave to amend, and we were able to successfully address the court's concerns in the amended complaint. Also of critical significance to our success in the case was winning our motion for class certification over the vigorous opposition of the defendants.

How, if at all, does your approach change when you're representing the little guy going up against a larger competitor—or in this case competitors—in litigation? Our approach to all litigation, big and small, and whether for a plaintiff on a contingency fee basis or a defendant who is paying us by the hour, is the same. We litigate as efficiently as possible, avoiding unnecessary work and keeping our eyes focused with great intensity on getting the evidence we need to win at trial and then trying the case to a verdict when a fair settlement can't be reached.

Does your firm's noted reputation for betting on clients make it easier for Susman to take these types of cases on? We are known for taking on cases on a wide range of alternative billing arrangements. That means we can and do take on cases other firms can't or won't take.

A prospective client with a crisis calls and asks why you and your team at Susman should be retained. What is your answer? We are trial lawyers who can take on any kind of case with the skill, resources and determination

needed to handle the most difficult, complex and demanding cases ever litigated. Our experience in successfully litigating challenging cases is second to none.

Who is a litigator outside your own firm that you admire and why? There are many, and it would be a long list. Among California lawyers, I have the greatest regard for the lawyers at the Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy firm, including Joe Cotchett, Frank Pitre and Steve Williams. They are truly superb lawyers. I also have the highest regard for Patty Glaser, Mark Robinson, Dean Ziehl and Marshall Grossman. I could name many others, but I would be remiss if I didn't mention my former partner, Jack Corinblit, with whom I practiced law for 20 years. He was an incredible lawyer, close friend and mentor and an extraordinary role model for what a great lawyer should be.

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