



Michael S. Mars

Senior Counsel

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EDUCATION

JD, Ventura College of Law

BA, California State
University at Northridge

BAR ADMISSIONS

California

COURT ADMISSIONS

United States District Court
for the Central District of
California

United States Court of
Appeals, Ninth Circuit

Michael has been practicing law for over twenty-five years representing commercial defendants, insurance policy holders, employers and insurance carriers through pre-suit, litigation, trial and post-trial matters. His practice includes defending clients against claims high profile injury actions, wrongful death, motorcycle accidents, premises liability, construction defect, construction accidents, mold claims, bad faith, and uninsured motorist disputes. In addition to the litigated cases, Michael in concert with claims professionals have investigated pre-litigation claims which have resulted in resolving these matters prior to suit.

Prior to joining Hickey Smith Dodd, Michael litigated as in-house counsel for Farmers Insurance Group in Los Angeles focusing on commercial automobile and commercial premises liability cases defending trucking companies, tow truck companies, ambulances, commercial property owners and landlords.

Michael has also been senior house counsel for Nationwide Insurance Company and its subsidiaries in defending against construction accidents, wrongful death, and traumatic brain injuries for policy holders and commercial defendants to settlement and verdict.

Michael was a member of S.I.U. (Special Investigations Unit) during his employment at Safeco Insurance Company while also handling general liability and premises liability cases. Additionally, he started and was the head of the Construction Defect Litigation Department. He further coordinated and developed the claims/legal meetings for further cooperation in resolving litigated files.

While with an AV rated law firm in Glendale, California, Michael litigated catastrophic injury, wrongful death, and product liability cases for large nationwide insurance carrier.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Successfully defended an insurance carrier in a motorcycle accident involving shoulder and low back surgeries.
- Successfully litigated a potential multimillion-dollar underinsured motorist matter to a small award.
- Successfully argued in court a motion to exclude for failure to disclose a prior surgery which led to a defense verdict.
- Defended as first chair a 100-unit condominium complex in Santa Barbara over eleven months.
- Successfully argued a motion to disqualify a treating physician in a personal injury mold case which led to a dismissal by Plaintiff.
- Successfully argued a statute of limitation defense after an aggressive and tenacious investigation of City records that resulted in a settlement of 1/20 of the demand.
- Successfully litigated sixteen defense verdicts in binding arbitrations which included automobile rear-end accident cases and slip and fall premises liability cases.
- Successfully argued motions to dismiss and motions for summary judgment resulting in twelve cases being dismissed within one year.
- Successfully argued a motion to dismiss for failure to obey a court order on a multimillion-dollar construction accident case.

ACTIVITIES AND MEMBERSHIPS

- Member of the Ventura County Bar Association and East County Bar Association.
- Ventura County Arbitrator.
- Civil Referee Assisted Settlement Hearing (CRASH) Settlement Officer for the Glendale Superior Court.
- Member of the Association of Southern California Defense Counsel.
- Member of the *Knights of Columbus Holy Cross Counsel 9969* in Moorpark, California.
- Organized and supervised fifty individuals in the collection of food and donations for homeless families and the community over the past twenty years.