

Women Who Mean Business Awards- 2008

Honoree



Regina Petty

Wilson Petty Kosmo & Turner LLP

Regina Petty, a civil attorney with more than 25 years of legal experience, co-founded Wilson Petty Kosmo & Turner in 1991. Today, WPKT is one of the largest women-owned law firms in the United States. Petty has gained much attention for her successful work representing private businesses, Fortune 500 firms and public agencies.

Raised by single mom, Petty grew up in a socio-economically challenged area of inner-city Los Angeles. Against the odds, Petty worked hard and became the first African American to be valedictorian of her junior high school and her high school, which helped her earn a place at

Stanford University and then at Stanford Law School.

Petty has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to help advance her industry by volunteering her time with several legal associations. Petty is one of California's leading litigators representing corporations in product liability and mass tort litigation, including the defense of such high profile cases as Union Carbide's breast implant litigation and Johnson & Johnson's latex glove litigation. She has also served as liaison counsel for all retailer and distributor defendants in the PPA-coordinated litigation involving over-the-counter cough and cold medications and weight loss products.

This year, Petty and the California Supreme Court handed a major victory to employers in *Jones v. The Lodge at Torrey Pines*. Petty successfully argued before the state Supreme Court on behalf of The Lodge at Torrey Pines Partnership that supervisors cannot be sued individually for retaliation claims under California law. In March 2008, the high court issued its ruling and agreed with Petty that wording under the Fair Employment and Housing Act made no mention of individual liability.

Petty also serves as general counsel for public agencies. After she responded to an RFP for litigation representation issued by the San Diego County Employees Retirement Association, the Association hired her as general counsel. Petty also impressed the Southeast Economic Development Corporation so much that it hired her as its general counsel, despite the fact that she did not have an extensive background in redevelopment law. She is honored to be working with the agency, whose work attracts businesses and housing to an area similar in socio-economic status to the one in which she grew up.

Petty regularly speaks on pharmaceutical, medical device, trial practice and diversity topics. She also volunteers her time on the Minority Corporate Counsel Association board and is the only private practice member of the committee. She also served as president of the San Diego County Bar Association, where she expanded the professional staff of the association to move from a volunteer-run organization to a professionally run and managed association. She is a former member of the house of delegates of the State Bar; former lawyer representative to the Ninth Circuit Judicial

Conference; served on the faculty of the American Bar Association Trial Academy at the Judicial Center in Reno, Nevada; served as one of only 15 faculty members for the National Association of Defense Counsel; and has served on multiple American Bar Association committees.

In addition to her extensive volunteerism within the legal industry, Petty also makes time to help organizations and causes that affect a broader cross-section of San Diego residents. She serves on the board of directors for Sharp Healthcare; on the Pacific Life Bowl Game Association Redcoat Committee, overseeing the Holiday Bowl and Poinsettia Bowl; and on the Greater San Diego Chamber of

Commerce board and executive committee. Because of her extensive background in employment law, which touches the topic of workplace violence, Petty and her colleague Lois Kosch were chosen to write a chapter in the book "Stalking Crimes and Victim Protection: Prevention, Intervention, Threat Assessment and Case Assessment." She was also recognized as a "Cool Woman" by the Girl Scouts of San Diego & Imperial Counties for her community commitment and received a Distinguished Leadership and Meritorious Service Award from the United Negro College Fund.