



MANNING KASS APPOINTS CO-MANAGING PARTNERS TO LEAD ORANGE COUNTY OFFICE

ORANGE COUNTY, March 30, 2026 — Manning Kass, a nationally recognized litigation firm, is pleased to announce that Equity Partners Lawrence D. Esten and Karen Liao have been named Co-Managing Partners of the firm's Orange County office. In their new roles, Esten and Liao will jointly lead the office's strategic growth, client service initiatives, and continued commitment to excellence and collaboration.

Fostering a positive and cooperative environment is a priority for both managing partners. Ms. Liao shared her perspective on the transition, stating, "I am extremely proud and honored to be managing the Orange County office of Manning Kass. For me, it is not just about the title. This is an opportunity to build an environment that is supportive, collaborative, and where people are excited to come to work and engage with each other. I'm really excited for the future of our office."

An accomplished trial attorney, Ms. Liao focuses her practice on the defense of health clubs, sports organizations, retailers, and entertainment venues in general liability, premises liability, and business litigation matters. She also advises clients on risk management, loss prevention, and the development of exculpatory and membership agreements, and is particularly experienced in cases involving liability waivers and the doctrine of primary assumption of risk. She currently leads a team of five attorneys and several paralegals.

Mr. Esten, who launched the firm's Orange County office in 1995, brings decades of leadership and litigation experience to his new role. A member of the firm's Special Investigations Unit / Insurance Fraud Litigation and Trucking and Transportation teams, his practice spans professional liability, premises and product liability, and SIU matters. Prior to joining the firm, he served as a deputy district attorney in Contra Costa County, a background that continues to inform his work advising clients and lecturing on strategies to combat fraudulent claims. He holds an AV Preeminent® rating from Martindale-Hubbell and is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA).

Reflecting on his new role and vision for the office, Mr. Esten said, "I am honored to step into this role alongside my partner, Karen Liao. Our Orange County office is built on a strong foundation, and I look forward to continuing that momentum by fostering a more collaborative environment where our attorneys can connect, grow, and develop. Karen is an exceptional trial attorney and trusted partner, and I am confident that together we will continue to strengthen and expand the office in meaningful ways."

Firm Managing Partner Dennis Kass also expressed confidence in the appointment, noting the strength of their combined leadership and its impact on the firm's continued growth. "Larry and Karen are both accomplished trial attorneys. They can help train the next generation of trial attorneys. We are excited to watch them collaborate and lead our Orange County office. Under their steady leadership, we look forward to years of growth."

Together, Mr. Esten and Ms. Liao bring complementary experience and leadership styles that position the Orange County office for continued success, innovation, and client-focused service.

About Manning Kass

Manning Kass, established in 1994, has evolved from a team of 16 attorneys to a premier full-service national law firm, now boasting over 165 attorneys across 39 specialized practice areas. Manning Kass has established a reputation for its decades of groundbreaking legal accomplishments, indexed as a top firm amongst such esteemed publications as the *Los Angeles Business Journal*, *National Law Journal*, *Law360*, and *Los Angeles Times*. Additionally, the firm's deep commitment to fostering a culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) has earned it widespread recognition and accolades. For three consecutive years, *Law360's* Diversity Snapshot has placed Manning Kass in the top ten for diversity, and in 2023, the firm was honored with the Aspire Diversity Award by Lawyers of Color, acknowledging the firm's outstanding diversity numbers and policies. This commitment to excellence, combined with its dedication to diversity and inclusion, uniquely positions the firm to meet the challenges of the modern legal environment, while continuing to set influential precedents and contribute to shaping the nation's legal landscape. For more information about Manning Kass and its services, please visit www.manningkass.com.

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