

Daily Journal

OCTOBER 22, 2025

TOP 40 UNDER 40 LAWYERS



2025



MARI HENDERSON

QUINN EMANUEL URQUHART
& SULLIVAN, LLP

LOS ANGELES

Mari Henderson has built her litigation practice on lessons learned from an unlikely combination of careers: television news reporting and criminal prosecution. Over a decade in law, she has tried more than 30 cases at trial and arbitration, representing both plaintiffs and defendants in sensitive harassment, discrimination and assault matters.

Before law school, Henderson worked as a television news reporter. "I was grateful to have a platform to share others'

stories and amplify their voices, but I wanted to advocate for those in need and help make a more meaningful difference," she said. That desire led her to become a prosecutor fighting for crime victims.

Henderson's trial skills were shaped early by watching her father, medical malpractice attorney Bruce Fagel, in court. "He taught me the most impressive trial attorneys are not the most bombastic but those who are calm, courteous and catch witnesses off guard," she said. As a prosecutor, she quickly earned a reputation as the "expert slayer."

At Quinn Emanuel, Henderson has secured notable defense victories in racial harassment cases. She represented Tesla and Menzies Aviation in jury trials where former employees alleged they faced racial harassment and that human resources ignored their complaints. *Arthur Henry v. Menzies Aviation* 19STCV21848 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed June 21, 2019).

"The key to the defense victories in both these matters was shredding the credibility of the plaintiff on cross-examination, carefully going through each of their prior accounts and statements to show how their false allegations grew exaggerated over time," Henderson said. The firm slashed prior damages against Tesla by 98% and secured a complete defense verdict for Menzies Aviation after two hours of deliberation.

Between those trials, Henderson switched sides to represent the University of Pennsylvania law school dean in a faculty senate hearing. She examined former students who shared accounts of feeling belittled and marginalized by a professor because of their race. The professor was ultimately sanctioned.

Henderson has also handled assault cases for both victims and defendants. This year, she represented performer Megan Thee Stallion in securing a civil harassment restraining order against rapper Tory Lanez following his criminal conviction for shooting her. She was also part of the team defending Shawn Carter against an assault claim before it was dismissed with prejudice.

"I have also seen in other matters how devastating it is when defendants are falsely accused of heinous crimes in civil complaints, with the media and public quick to brand the defendant before the truth has been revealed," Henderson said.

She notes that expanded statutes of limitations for sexual abuse claims have created challenges on both sides. Plaintiffs with decades-old claims face skepticism due to lack of corroborating evidence, while defendants struggle to disprove allegations when records have disappeared and witness memories have faded.