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TOP

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EDITORS' NOTE

Every year, the editors of the *Daily Journal* look at the work of hundreds of California lawyers. Lawyers who have impact – on an industry or on the larger society – are whom we seek to honor. They get results by the sheer force of their intellect and skill and sometimes just by sheer force.

Lawyers in California

LITIGATION

ELIZABETH PIPKIN

McMANIS FAULKNER | SAN JOSE

SPECIALTIES: civil rights and commercial disputes



For eight years, trial lawyer Pipkin worked to clear her client's name off the no-fly list, a difficult task under the post-9/11 tactic to stop individuals with alleged terrorist ties from using U.S. air travel.

Dr. Rahinah Ibrahim was finishing a doctorate at Stanford when she was handcuffed and jailed at the San Francisco airport as a person on the no-fly list. When she was later released and flew back to Malaysia, Ibrahim's visa was revoked.

Though an ocean divided her from her client, Pipkin finally received a ruling last January that Ibrahim will be removed from the no-fly list after two dismissals in the District Court followed by two reversals in the 9th Circuit. *Ibrahim v. Department of Homeland Security et al.* (N.D. Cal., filed Jan. 27, 2006).

"That case was a historic case and continues to be a historic case," she said. "The firm took on this case because it was the right thing to do."

It's considered the first successful case in forcing the government to disclose why it put someone's name on the list. Pipkin learned in discovery that the government wanted to conceal an FBI agent's mistake of checking the wrong box by Ibrahim's name.

The Ibrahim case varies from Pipkin's usual caseload, where she deals with companies and individuals accused of stealing trade secrets and straying from contracts in the heart of Silicon Valley. Last year, Pipkin worked with defendant Juniper Networks, a networking equipment manufacturer, in a case where rival Alcatel-Lucent alleged Juniper's recent purchase of a startup would affect its company to the tune of a \$65 million loss it wanted Juniper to pay. *Alcatel-Lucent USA, Inc. v. Juniper Networks* 1-11-CV-206910 (Santa Clara County Sup. Ct., filed August 9, 2011).

At first, the jury ruled in favor of Alcatel, but awarded a fraction of the damages. Pipkin however found enough evidence for the court to rule in her client's favor in granting judgment notwithstanding the verdict with Juniper not having to pay anything. Alcatel filed an appeal in July.

A daughter of a wheat farmer and a speech teacher, Pipkin said she learned how to deal with business matters at a young age.

"I learned to work through difficult issues," she said of working on the farm in a Texas town with a population of 3,000.

Pipkin now represents SK Hynix, Inc. in a case against SanDisk, which is accusing her client of giving up information on its flash memory technology. *SanDisk v. SK Hynix, Inc.* (Santa Clara County Sup. Ct., filed March 13, 2014).

KIBKABE ARAYA