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TOP 40 UNDER FORTY 2024



Kent | Pincin

REDONDO BEACH • AGE 38

Michael J. Kent is a co-founder of the employment, personal injury and professional liability boutique Kent | Pincin Law. He and law partner Emily R. Pincin joined forces in 2023 after having worked together at a Los Angeles firm.

"I wasn't too sure at first about going into the law because my dad was a lawyer

Michael J. Kent

who was always stressed and worked long hours," said Kent, who grew up in Madison, Wisconsin. "But he taught me chess and logic and thinking games and strategies in the legal world and I grew into it. He'd edit my school papers into legal arguments. I clerked for his firm one summer, and that was fun."

Kent said opening his own shop was satisfying if nerve-racking at first. "To do rewarding litigation and to make my own decisions and to develop my own style and brand has been great. But the first week was a little scary. My second son was born just when I no longer had a steady income."

A bonus was his new firm's location. "We're right on the pier at Redondo, and I can bike to work," he said.

Kent said a significant mentor was J. Patrick McNicholas IV of McNicholas & McNicholas, at whose firm he worked, as did Pincin. "Pat taught me litigation strategy and skills, and trial work, and he developed my interest in plaintiff-side employment and personal injury law."

In August, Kent settled for \$650,000 a disability discrimination case for a client who was fired by an employer who made no effort to accommodate her recovery from surgery. "That was a good recovery, given her low economic loss,"

said Kent, who asked to keep the client's name confidential.

In February, he obtained a \$1.65 million settlement for a Los Angeles jail psychologist, Sara Hough, who faced retaliation when she reported safety and due process violations affecting inmates — only to be placed on administrative leave for three years and demoted. *Hough v. County of Los Angeles et al.*, 18STCV-09247 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed Dec. 20, 2018).

"It was a factually complex case, and the client was happy to feel vindicated by the outcome," Kent said.

He settled for \$1.45 million the case of a Glendale Fire Department battalion chief, Brian Murphy, who was demoted after reporting that a superior was misappropriating government funds. *Murphy v. City of Glendale et al.*, 20STCV29677 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed Aug. 5, 2020).

"That one settled on the eve of trial," Kent said.

Still in progress is the case of another Glendale firefighter, Brian Julian, who claims he was demoted after reporting what he believed to be the improper distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations in December 2020. *Julien v. City of Glendale*, 23STCV05609 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed Mar. 14, 2023).

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