

Daily Journal

DECEMBER 18, 2024

Top White-Collar Lawyers 2024

Our annual list honoring the top performing attorneys specializing in white-collar law.



SHAFFY MOEEL

MOEEL LAH FAKHOURY LLP
BERKELEY

Shaffy Moeel is a seasoned attorney with 19 years of experience. In 2020, Moeel, along with partners Andrew Lah and Hanni Fakhoury, founded their Berkeley-based firm, Moeel Lah Fakhoury LLP. The firm specializes in criminal defense, investigations, and appeals and is expanding its civil litigation practice to focus on housing, employment, civil rights, and law enforcement misconduct.

Moeel, Lah and Fakhoury have a long-standing professional relationship, having started their careers together at Federal Defenders of San Diego Inc., where they represented indigent clients in the Southern District of California.

Moeel said she looks up to Jeffery Robinson, a friend and mentor, who has had a distinguished career as deputy legal director and director of the ACLU's Trone Center for Justice and Equality and later founded the Who We Are Project. Robinson's influence and guidance have been instrumental in shaping her legal career.

"The most important lesson I've learned from Jeff through the years is to do the work," Moeel said. "Whether that work is advising a potential witness or target of an investigation, representing my client in court from arraignment to trial at the highest level, Jeff has shown me through his example to work as hard as I can and to expect excellence from myself and others."

In 2023, Moeel achieved a significant victory when the government dismissed Medicare fraud charges against a doctor client after a deadlocked jury and four years of litigation. *US v. Jaime Cortes*, 18-CR-373 (N.D. Cal., filed Aug. 16, 2018). This dismissal allowed the client to continue practicing medicine and providing life-saving care to patients.

In 2024, Moeel and the team obtained another major win when the government dismissed conspiracy to defraud the U.S. charges against a client following a mistrial. *US v. Len Turner*, 17-CR-175 (N.D. Cal., filed April 6, 2017). The case—which had been in limbo for years after legendary attorney Dennis Riordan

secured a mistrial—required a concerted effort, including meetings with the U.S. attorney and first assistant U.S. attorney, to convince the government to dismiss the charges. This outcome was particularly rewarding as it allowed the client to move past a nightmare that had destroyed their construction company business.

"Obviously, jury trials are heated and emotional on both sides and it's not surprising that the government and the defense do not see things eye to eye," Moeel said. "That's especially true following a mistrial, where each side wonders and brainstorms what they could do differently to get the jury to see things their way. Both of the dismissed cases described above required us to acknowledge the government's interests (and the defense risks) in a retrial."

Moeel also observes a generational shift in the Northern District, with new judges, long-time federal prosecutors moving into private practice and many stalwart defense attorneys retiring or winding down their practice. This evolving landscape presents both challenges and opportunities for Moeel and the firm as they continue to advocate for their clients and uphold justice.

"We're excited to be part of a new crop of younger, aggressive, trial-forward and battle-tested defense lawyers ready to handle whatever the incoming DOJ administration throws at us," Moeel said.