

Jennifer Lefton

Senior Attorney

📞 (949) 996-7617 ✉️ leftonj@rmolawyers.com

📍 [Orange County](#) 📄 [Download vCard](#)

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Overview

Jennifer “Jen” Lefton is a California licensed Senior Attorney in RMO’s Orange County office with more than fifteen years of legal experience. She focuses on complex contested matters in the areas of trusts, probates, conservatorship of estates, and financial elder abuse disputes. She represents trustees, conservators, personal representatives, beneficiaries, and other interested parties in these disputes and is frequently retained as the second or third attorney to help resolve stalled cases, develop litigation strategy, and guide matters toward efficient resolution.

Jen brings a distinctive perspective to her practice as one of only a few attorneys in California to hold both a Juris Doctor and a Master’s degree in Legal and Forensic Psychology. Her graduate studies focused on mental/legal capacity and undue influence under probate and civil law, providing her with unique insight into the psychological and legal issues that often arise in the cases that she handles.

In addition to her litigation practice, Jen is a Certified Mediator and regularly helps families, beneficiaries, fiduciaries, and other parties navigate contentious disputes outside the courtroom. She is also a frequent speaker and educator, having presented continuing legal education programs and seminars for attorneys, financial advisors, professional fiduciaries, and community organizations on topics including estate planning, fiduciary duties, financial elder abuse, mental/legal capacity, and trust and estate litigation.

Before joining RMO, Jennifer operated her own law practice for a decade, concentrating almost exclusively on contested probates, trusts, conservatorships, and financial elder abuse matters. Earlier in her career, she did estate planning and briefly worked as a licensed financial advisor, experience that provides additional perspective when disputes involve interpretation of documents, financial management, and fiduciary obligations.

Jen is active in the elder advocacy community and has served in numerous volunteer leadership roles. She currently serves as a Specialist on the Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST) through the Council on Aging Southern California and previously served as a founding board member of Ageless Alliance, a nonprofit dedicated to elder abuse awareness and prevention, and as a member of the Board of Directors for AgeWell Senior Services.

Jen enjoys spending time with her three adult sons and her fox-red yellow lab, traveling, and reading.

Community & Professional Involvement

- **Member**, California Lawyers Association, Trusts & Estates and Litigation Sections
- **Member**, Orange County Bar Association, Trust & Estates and Conservatorship Guardianship Protective Proceeding Sections
- **Specialist**, Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST), Council on Aging – Southern California (COASC), 2012–present
- **Former Founding Board Member**, Ageless Alliance (nonprofit for elder abuse awareness and prevention awareness and prevention)
- **Former Board Member**, AgeWell Senior Services – Meals on Wheels South Orange County
- **Former Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)**, Education Representative for two teen foster children
- **Former professional licensed Financial Advisor**, with Paine Webber/UBS

Bar Admissions

- **Member**, State Bar of California

Education

- **University of California, Irvine**, MLFP Masters in Legal & Forensic Psychology, thesis and expertise in mental/legal capacity and undue influence on Probate/Civil matters
- **University of Denver Sturm College of Law**, J.D.
- **University of California, Riverside**, B.A., Art History, Anthropology, and French (studied abroad in France Junior year at the Université de Poitiers)

Certifications

- **Certified Mediator**, Requisite training completed through OC Human Relations and years of experience mediating cases

Representative Matters

- Brought in as second attorney six years after the probate case had been opened by the primary beneficiary of this late mother's estate, secured removal of the personal representative and a judgment for breach of fiduciary duty and damages; also worked on the resulting appeal which upheld such.
- In a highly contested matter, secured the appointment of client as Conservator of Person and Estate for her mother, whom siblings had victimized by means of financial and emotional elder abuse, as well as undue influence.
- Neutralized a hostile Conservator and Trustee in highly contested cases that interrelated and spanned years.
- Successfully argued legal aspects regarding mental/legal capacity in the Court of Appeal, wherein the Opinion then clarified that nothing therein equated to a determination of a lack of capacity regarding the Trustor.

Representative Matters (cont.)

- Successfully prevented a senior in her late eighties from being put under a conservatorship of the estate (ie. Conserved) by the City of Newport Beach during a Receivership Proceeding and ensured that her home was not foreclosed on and she remained therein.
- Successfully defended Trustee from renegade beneficiaries' allegations of breach of trust, financial elder abuse, and undue influence in a highly contested case.
- Obtained a Temporary and Permanent Elder Abuse Restraining Order at the request of the client to stop the harassment and financial elder abuse by the youngest adult child and mediated a settlement to return all of the client's assets that had been taken.
- Successfully petitioned the Court of Appeal, Fourth District, Div. 3 for a Writ of Mandate to challenge a judgment by the Superior Court of Orange County Probate Department Judge, whereby the petition was granted and peremptory writ issued.

Appellate Opinions

- Karamooz v. Karamooz, Cal. Court of Appeal, Fourth Dist., Div. 3
- Jonathan Starr v. Ashbrook, Cal. Court of Appeal, Fourth Dist., Div. 3
- In Re Estate of Nahid Karamooz, Cal. Court of Appeal, Fourth Dist., Div. 3

Speaking Engagements

- **Guide to Wills and Trusts** Financial & Estate Literacy | **Presenter**
- **Understanding Financial Elder Abuse and Mandated Reporting**
Financial Planning Association of Orange County Continuing Education | **Presenter**
- **Understanding Aspects of Competency and Undue Influence** PFAC of Orange County Education
Presenter
- **Understanding Mental/Legal Capacity and Undue Influence**
Council on Aging Financial Abuse Specialist Team (COA/FAST) Education | **Presenter**
- **Understanding Legal Capacity, Financial Abuse & Mandated Reporting**
Professional Fiduciary Association of California (PFAC) Annual Education Conference | **Presenter**