TRAILBLAZERS

WEST

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What was the genesis of the path that has made you a trailblazer?
As a fifth-year associate, I was assigned to an insurance recovery case involving software piracy—a true novelty at that time. The jury awarded a $6.2 million verdict to my client including punitive damages, which was a great result for my first jury trial. After managing a 66-site environmental contamination insurance case, my practice grew into a variety of insurance recovery areas, with both domestic and international implications. I enjoy the complexity and diversity of my practice. It's a bit like playing three-dimensional chess, with the insurance issues informing the progress of underlying cases ranging from directors and officers liability, entertainment, and financial issues to cyber claims, property, and casualty matters. The California wildfires, followed by COVID-19 pandemic losses, have also had major insurance implications for businesses, restaurants, hotels, and the entertainment industry.

What sort of change has resulted from the concept?
I was lucky to become involved with the ABA Litigation Section's Insurance Coverage Litigation Committee 20+ years ago. After various committee positions, I co-chaired the Committee and then expanded my leadership roles to serve as Division Director, Managing Director, and now national Revenue Officer of the Section. That also led to my position as President of the American College of Coverage Counsel, where I remain active. I am blessed with terrific colleagues, a great networking and referral system, friends around the country, and a practice that is always challenging.

What bearing will this have on the future?
Insurance recovery will continue to be a critical aspect of every business dispute, lawsuit, and catastrophe. Although many practitioners are focusing on COVID-19 issues, I expect an increase in insurance claims relating to cyber losses, new technology, entertainment, and D&O issues as the country adjusts to the "new normal."