

# Daily Journal

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When Kristina Royce is helping a couple draft a prenuptial agreement, she prefers not to use that term. It has a negative connotation, but more importantly, Royce thinks a better descriptor is a partnership agreement.

"I'm a significant proponent of... looking at a marriage a lot like a business partnership," she said. "I believe very strongly that when two people enter into a marriage, they're entering into a business partnership too, and if they understand that and they understand the rights and obligations associated with it, there's... a lot more chance of success."

At the other end of a marriage, she prefers a transparent, open approach to reaching settlements. "I'm not about hiding things and making things difficult to obtain," she said.

Her perspective well fits her position as co-chair of Blank Rome LLP's matrimonial & family law practice group and its three dozen attorneys.

Doing family law within a large commercial law firm is invaluable for her clients, she said. For instance, when



## Kristina Royce

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LOS ANGELES

she represented a major civil litigator who had a complex real estate issue, she could turn to the firm's real estate attorneys for help. In other cases, she can call on intellectual property experts or corporate lawyers as needed.

Being based in Los Angeles, Royce regularly represents people in the entertainment industry. One client is an extremely wealthy actor and former politician whose extensive art collection needed to be evaluated and allocated. Because the couple took a long time to work through their divorce, the art later had to be re-evaluated.

A current client is a Hollywood A-lister who

had created a brand and intellectual property during his marriage. After the split, he continued to develop and promote the material, including movies and other shows. That raises the question of what income should be attributed to the community and what to his post-separation efforts. "There's very little case law on the issue," she said. "It becomes a very difficult negotiation."

Her favorite clients, though, are venture capitalists and private equity executives. "I love the complicated components that arise from dealing with [their] business interests."

She represents a successful venture capitalist from

Marin County, and the issues again are what value derives from his efforts before, during and after the marriage. But that's not all. "We have to value the general partnership interest, the carry interest, the return on their investments," she said. "I just love that. That's, to me, the puzzle that I love."

And Royce makes a point of understanding every detail in every balance sheet and financial report for her cases. "Once you start to break it down and start to ask the questions and become knowledgeable, it's really not that complicated," she said.

– DON DEBENEDICTIS