

CALIFORNIA'S TOP 50

ENTRALS

And 10 Rising Stars

Michael D. Young

Judicate West

Los Angeles

Specialties: intellectual property, employment, business

Though Young only became a full-time neutral in March, he has been thinking, writing and teaching about mediation for more than 20 years.

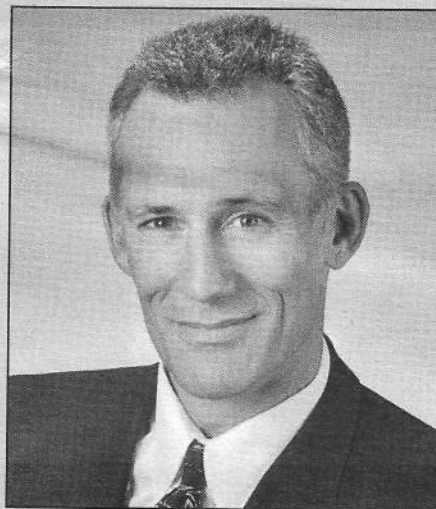
Young handled mediation matters alongside his litigation practice beginning in 1989 and taught negotiation and ADR processes at USC Gould School of Law for nearly a decade. His litigation work also exposed him to mediators across the country.

"Because of my interest in mediation, I was collecting and analyzing what the mediator was doing and trying to collect good ideas and avoid bad ones," Young said. "That, I think, has helped shape who I am as a mediator today."

Some of his most challenging matters are intellectual property disputes, such as trade secret cases. Not only are thorny legal issues involved, but the cases often are deeply personal, requiring him to facilitate the parties to a common emotional as well as legal understanding.

Young notes that with the state and federal courts ordering mandatory mediation, many cases are being turned over to mediators at the wrong time.

"Often when you get parties who are before you for a [court-ordered] mediation, they haven't done discovery so that there is an imbalance in the information, and one side knows a lot more than the other or they don't want to be there because they still want to



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win, and it's almost impossible to get the case settled," Young said.

He makes a point of talking to the lawyers individually before mediation begins. This practice often helps him to understand the underlying dynamics of a case and to ensure that both parties are on the same page.

But it is the International Academy of Mediators' pro bono mediation initiative, which he heads, that gets Young really excited. It's an effort to pair the pro bono departments of Los Angeles' top law firms with established mediators from the academy.

"To get the best mediators is really expensive. Our members have donated their time through this program to mediate pro bono cases because we understand that mediation is such a powerful process," he said.

— Caitlin Johnson