

# Daily Journal

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## TOP WOMEN LAWYERS 2026



### MARY E. ALEXANDER

MARY ALEXANDER  
& ASSOCIATES

SAN FRANCISCO

PERSONAL INJURY

**M**ary Alexander came to plaintiffs' law through loss. Her first husband developed leukemia after benzene exposure, and the experience reoriented a career that had begun in public health and toxicology. "I realized I could make a greater impact through the legal system — holding companies accountable and securing justice for people whose lives had been permanently altered by preventable harm," she said.

More than four decades later, Alexander leads the San Francisco firm bearing her name, with a record concentrated in sexual abuse, mass-tort and consumer-protection matters. Her recent caseload reflects the range and scale of the work.

Alexander represented three former students sexually abused by a tutor recommended by school personnel. *Jane Doe 1, 2, 3 v. Castilleja School Foundation*, 25CV458088 (S. Clara Co. Super. Ct., filed Feb. 3, 2025).

The case exposed oversight failures at the institution and resolved for \$2.25 million.

She also represented survivors in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles clergy abuse litigation, which produced total settlements exceeding \$1.5 billion, including an \$880 million resolution covering more than 1,300 survivors.

Lastly, she served as liaison counsel for plaintiffs, helping secure over \$32.7 million in settlements while defeating governmental immunity defenses. Thirty-six people died in the 2016 Oakland warehouse fire. The case overcame government immunity and held the city of Oakland accountable for years of neglect, marking a landmark result for public safety and accountability. In re: Ghost Ship Fire Litigation, RG16843631 (Alam. Super. Ct., filed Dec. 23, 2016).

Alexander describes the structural obstacles these cases routinely involve.

"These cases often involved institutional defendants with substantial resources. We faced decades of concealment in abuse cases, governmental immunity in fire litigation, and complex scientific causation in toxic exposure matters," she said.

Among the cases that defined her career is the lead paint public nuisance litigation against major manufacturers, brought on behalf of multiple California counties. The litigation spanned nearly two decades, survived multiple appeals, and ultimately produced a landmark \$1.15 billion verdict that contributed to a \$305 million settlement for lead hazard remediation. "At stake was not only compensation, but the ability to force systemic change and protect future generations," Alexander said.

Alexander has long held leadership roles in the plaintiffs' bar, including past president of Consumer Attorneys of California. She describes her standard for what a successful outcome requires. "A successful outcome means more than financial recovery," she said. "It means clients are heard, believed, and validated. It means accountability and change."

The profession, she notes, continues to shift. Corporate defendants invest in delay, and technological change reshapes how litigation is conducted. "Ensuring access to justice — especially in abuse, toxic exposure and catastrophic injury cases — remains one of the most pressing challenges."