

### Sheppard Mullin Recognized As Having America's Leading Business Lawyers

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Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP announced today that the firm's attorneys have been recognized by clients and fellow lawyers alike as being among America's leading business lawyers, according to the *Chambers USA America's Leading Business Lawyers* survey. Three of Sheppard Mullin's practices were ranked in the top five or higher in California: banking and finance (#3); labor and employment (#4); insolvency and corporate recovery (#4); and real estate (#5).

"We are pleased with the survey feedback and take great satisfaction in the fact that our clients and peers are commending our service. We encourage our attorneys to take our Client Service Standards very seriously, committing themselves to providing prompt, effective, and high quality legal service," said Guy Halgren, Chairman of the firm's Executive Committee. "Sheppard Mullin attorneys know that a client must never be taken for granted. As evidenced by the survey results, our attorneys make it a point to understand our clients' business and the competitive environment in which they operate."

The banking and finance practice was touted as having "an enviable reputation for quality finance work." In addition to noting that the firm's strength in this area is thought to lie in asset lending, real estate finance and bankruptcy-related work, the survey related that Sheppard Mullin has represented bank syndicates on numerous secured lending transactions, and has wide experience of refinancing and workouts of defaulted bonds. With regard to specific lawyers, the survey noted that "the leading light here is John Berchild (ranked #4 in California), who rivals acknowledge as an accomplished finance specialist."

Sheppard Mullin's labor and employment practice was acknowledged as "one of the firm's main specializations." Chambers' research uncovered "...practice with a lot of years in the game." The firm acts mainly on behalf of employers, ranging from small businesses to Fortune 100 companies. Areas of niche expertise include the manufacturing, healthcare, technology and hospitality industries. Over the past year, the labor and employment practice has been especially active on employment litigation claims concerning wage and hour matters, class actions and union/management relations. The survey related that "the team, which includes Doug Farmer, boasts a number of attorneys who are highly-regarded in fields such as wage and hour regulations."

The survey also listed Sheppard Mullin as having a leading insolvency practice, relating that "bankruptcy work is seen by rivals to be a significant component of this California-based, full-service firm's workload." Also noted was that the bankruptcy and financial restructuring group offers experience in all types of insolvency matters and is reputed to be "particularly strong" when acting on the creditors' side. Chair of the Finance and Bankruptcy Practice Group, Richard Brunette, was noted as "a specialist in commercial litigation and business bankruptcies."

Additionally, the firm's real estate practice received recognition. The practice, which boasts over 50 attorneys, offers legal services to all sectors of the real estate industry, including developers, institutional and foreign investors, pension fund and other real estate advisors, banks and other commercial lenders, governmental agencies, and hospitality companies, among others. Robert Thompson, a partner who handles real estate investment, development, and financing matters, was noted as a leading real estate attorney.

**Sheppard Mullin** has more than **380 attorneys** among its **eight offices** in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Orange County, San Diego, Santa Barbara, West Los Angeles, Del Mar Heights, and Washington, D.C. The **full-service** firm provides counsel in Antitrust and Trade Regulation; Business Litigation; Construction, Environmental, Real Estate and Land Use Litigation; Corporate; Entertainment and Media; Finance and Bankruptcy; Financial Institutions; Government Contracts and Regulated Industries; Healthcare; Intellectual Property; International; Labor and Employment; Real Estate, Land Use, Natural Resources and Environment; Tax, Employee Benefits, Trusts and Estates; and White Collar and Civil Fraud Defense. The Firm celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2002.