

# Daily Journal

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## TOP WHITE COLLAR LAWYERS 2020

### Michael J. Proctor

**P**roctor, a white collar criminal defense specialist, opened Durie Tangri's temporary new Los Angeles office in 2018 and oversaw the building out of the firm's permanent digs in the Arts District. "It was ready in February—just in time to close it" for pandemic safety reasons, he said. "So we did, but I'm a dinosaur who likes to be in our beautiful new space, so I still come in."

He's relatively new to the firm, but he's an old colleague of founding partners Daralyn J. Durie and Ragesh K. Tangri from the days when the three worked together at Kecker & Van Nest, now Kecker, Van Nest & Peters LLP. Proctor was later a name partner at Caldwell Leslie & Proctor PC before it merged into Boies Schiller Flexner LLP. Earlier, he was a federal defender in the Central District.

"John Kecker told me, 'You will learn to be a trial lawyer as a federal defender, because the cases brought against your clients will usually be very strong, and you have to be creative,'" Proctor said.

He recently headed the representation of author and businesswoman Jane Buckingham, who faced federal criminal charges in the "Varsity Blues" investigation over claims she and others paid money to facilitate their children's admission into college. *U.S. v. Buckingham*, 1:19-cr-10117-3 (D. Mass., filed April 8, 2019).

Buckingham pleaded guilty and was sentenced to two months' confinement; prosecu-

tors had sought eight months. "At sentencing we brought to the court's attention the vulnerability parents find themselves in when trying to counsel their kids regarding college," Proctor said. "We showed why people make wrong choices in high stress situations and then accept responsibility for it."

Proctor serves as counsel for Pamela Conboy, a former regional manager for Wells Fargo Community Banking, in joint criminal investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District into the bank's sales practices. "We looked at the root causes of the problems and we convinced the prosecutors that Ms. Conboy did the best job she could to manage within the Wells Fargo environment," Proctor said. Conboy has not been charged.

And Proctor represented Patrick Hogan, who was the head of Pacific Gas and Electric Co.'s electrical transmission and distribution grid during the 2018 wildfire season when the Camp Fire and others were found to have been caused by the utility company's equipment. "There was intense investigative pressure to scapegoat individuals for the fires," Proctor said. "Mr. Hogan was the one who decided whether to turn off the grid or leave it on, either of which choices risks the death of individuals. Those were difficult decisions." PG&E pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge in Butte County; Hogan emerged with neither civil nor criminal liability.



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Proctor said he's glad he made the move to Durie Tangri. "It's a great environment to practice in. I really look forward to being colleagues together again."

— John Roemer

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