

## Putting Puzzles Together

*The Kent Pincin Law duo learned about court strategy as children.*

By Shane Nelson

Special to the Daily Journal

Plaintiffs' attorney Emily R. Pincin started visiting Los Angeles County courthouses as a child.

"I was really little, probably 4 or 5," said Pincin, whose mother is a longtime court reporter. "I would go to work with her on days when I was quote-unquote sick and couldn't go to school. Really, I just wanted to hang out with my mom in the courtroom."

Fascinated by what she saw there, Pincin said her dream of pursuing a legal career took root in grade school. Pincin still has a drawing – which she keeps in her Redondo Beach office – that she completed in first grade in response to a teacher's question asking what she wanted to do when she grew up.

"I drew myself at a little desk, and I wrote I wanted to be a lawyer, and I spelled it L-O-Y-E-R. ... By that point, my path was chosen," Pincin said with a laugh. "And today, I love what I do. I can't see myself doing anything else."

Pincin practices alongside Michael J. Kent, whom she met about four years ago while both worked at McNicholas & McNicholas LLP in Los Angeles. Kent struck out on his own, launching a Redondo Beach employment and personal injury litigation boutique in the summer of 2022. This year, Kent invited Pincin to join him, and the duo renamed the firm Kent Pincin Law in September.

"Mike is excellent at what he does," Pincin said. "I've learned so much from him, and it's fasci-



Michael J. Kent and Emily R. Pincin | Justin L. Stewart / Special to the Daily Journal

nating watching the way his brain works through these unique legal issues. ... He is so creative in the way he approaches these complex employment fact patterns."

Kent said working with Pincin has been a natural fit since their days at McNicholas & McNicholas, so partnering up was an easy decision.

"She has a natural ability to understand what the law is, analyze it, and she's an exceptional writer," Kent explained. "It's also great that we can now say we are a woman-owned business. And especially in terms of cases where we have allegations of either sexual abuse or sexual harassment – which Emily has experience with – it allows our

female clients the ability to say, 'Hey, I'm more comfortable speaking with a woman on this issue,' as opposed to being forced into an uncomfortable situation with a male attorney."

Like Pincin, Kent was introduced to the law early in life. He was raised in Madison, Wisconsin, where his father was an environmental law attorney.

"He would always talk to me about what he was doing and the strategy involved," Kent recalled. "I learned a lot from him growing up, including to have a plan A for how you want to attack a complaint or a lawsuit, but that you should also have a plan B and potentially a plan C in the works."

Kent loved puzzles, chess and logic games as a kid, and he said he often approaches his employment and personal injury cases these days with a similar mindset.

"A lot of times it can be like putting a puzzle together, where we have to show that the employer discriminated, or retaliated or harassed and intended to do so," Kent explained. "That particular puzzle is something I enjoy putting together. I enjoy diving into the facts, I enjoy putting the timeline together, I enjoy putting the pieces together to show that the employer actually discriminated, retaliated or harassed the employee."

The law firm is handling a retaliation lawsuit against the city

of Glendale, representing Brian Julian, a battalion fire chief for the city who claims he was demoted after reporting what he believed to be an improper distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations in December 2020. *Julian v. City of Glendale*, 23STCVO5609 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed Mar. 14, 2023).

“Back when the vaccine first came out, there were limited supplies, and only a handful of people could get them. They were only supposed to be given to front line workers,” Kent explained. “In this lawsuit, Julian alleges that the fire chief was giving them out to city officials and individuals who were not on the front line in order to

garner favors. [Julian] opposed that and was ultimately removed from his position.”

Kent and Pincin both talked about the fulfillment they take from their work, saying the opportunity to assist clients enduring intensely difficult challenges is especially gratifying.

“It feels great helping out someone who has, for example, spent 15 years working for a company and then suffers through some form of discrimination or retaliation and loses their job,” Pincin said.

Pincin noted she’s also helped women and men navigate sexual harassment and sexual assault complaints.

“When you have a female client who’s being harassed at work or sexually assaulted or touched and groped by her supervisor, they don’t necessarily feel super comfortable working with a male attorney. That’s part of the reason why I take on a lot of those cases from the beginning,” she explained. “But I’ve also noticed in our rare instances where we have male clients who have sexual harassment claims, they tend to feel a little more comfortable speaking with the female attorney as well.”

Longtime criminal defense attorney Michael Norris shares Redondo Beach office space with Kent Pincin Law and sees the duo

nearly every weekday. Norris said that the clients Kent and Pincin assist are tremendously grateful.

“In private practice, you can’t hide. One either sinks or one swims,” Norris said. “And I can tell you – from having seen it happen – that Michael and Emily have not only been referred cases by other lawyers – many cases by other lawyers – but they’ve actually been referred cases by lawyers that they have opposed in court. And as far as I’m concerned, that’s the ultimate barometer of someone’s worthiness and ability to practice law.”

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