

Daily Journal

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Top Women Lawyers 2018

*The Daily Journal's Annual List of
Leading Women Lawyers in California*

Janet E. Hong

In January, Hong secured the dismissal of murder and conspiracy to commit murder charges against a minor who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Her client, A.B., appeared on video with five other individuals charged in the crime shortly before the incident in question occurred. Fifteen minutes later, A.B. was sitting in the backseat of a car, watching as one of her friends killed someone in rival gang territory.

It didn't look good for the 17-year-old A.B.

But Hong limited the scope of a gang expert's testimony under recently decided California Supreme Court case law barring gang expert opinions based on hearsay and showed the court that the thousands of pages of social media activity detectives searched showed no evidence that A.B. was aware of a plan to kill anyone. *People v. A.B.*, YJ39308.

Days after the court found the charges against A.B. not true, the young woman became a mother, giving birth to a child. Hong saw it as a chance to encourage her client to refocus her life.

"I was telling her, 'You're such a bright girl,'" Hong recounted, adding that her client had received stellar grades while in custody. "I'm sure this is a wakeup call. I don't know what will ever be, but you have to go to college. All she knows is a five-block ra-



dius. She has so much potential. I hope she goes further in her education."

It's work like this that attracted Hong to the legal profession. She went to law school to pursue a career in civil rights and criminal law attracted her early on.

THE HONG FIRM APLC
LOS ANGELES

Practice Type:
Criminal defense

Having spent time as a public defender in New York, an alternate public defender in Los Angeles, a plaintiffs-side labor lawyer, and now a criminal defense attorney in private practice, Hong has become a seasoned veteran of the courtroom. To date, she has tried over 40 cases to jury verdict.

Now, she's turning a case that has bounced between juvenile and adult court under Proposition 57's new mandate. The trial court ruled that Hong's client, who was 17 at the time, is now too old to be rehabilitated within the juvenile system.

Hong has filed a writ to the court of appeals. *People v. A.O.*, YJ39038.

Hong is also a member of the Criminal Justice Act Panel, a federal organization of private attorneys appointed by the Central District to represent indigent defendants.

She is also a co-founder and co-chair of the diversity committee of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles.

— Nicolas Sonnenburg