



◀ TOP FAMILY LAW LAWYERS  
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### Steven K. Yoda

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#### Walzer Melcher & Yoda LLP



WOODLAND HILLS - Steven K. Yoda is a name partner at the family law boutique Walzer Melcher & Yoda LLP, where he brings a decade of experience as a commercial litigator to the celebrity divorce arena.

Among his clients whose names have become public is Kanye West, whom Yoda represented in his \$2.1 billion divorce from Kim Kardashian. The case concluded last year and Yoda no longer represents West. Marriage of Kim Kardashian West v. Kanye West, 21STFL01626 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed Feb. 19, 2021).

Yoda joined Walzer Melcher in 2015 after working at firms such as Kecker, Van Nest & Peters LLP; Bird, Marella, Boxer, Wolpert, Nessim, Drooms, Lincenberg & Rhow PC; and Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP.

Yoda said he enjoyed being a trial lawyer but wasn't fond of the asbestos litigation defense work he'd been assigned. That prompted his search for a new career.

"I'm the wayward sheep who left the flock," he said.

"Chris Melcher suggested I try family law because the kind of high asset, high conflict cases his firm does end up being like commercial litigation -- our clients hire firms like Orrick in their daily business lives. It's worked out really well."

Earlier, Yoda clerked for U.S. District Judge James Ware of San Jose, now a JAMS neutral. "As far away as divorce court might seem from the hallowed halls of federal court, I think about my clerkship all the time, especially when I write my briefs," Yoda said.

"Writing briefs, I channel my old clerk self. What would have been persuasive to me? I'm even more punctilious with citations. A lot of family law practitioners are so used to working in person in court that they don't always appreciate the power and importance of written advocacy. I enjoy that art and craft."

Yoda represented a partner in a Singapore law firm in a post-judgment dispute over spousal support. The client's ex-wife claimed he owed more than \$600,000 in arrearages. Yoda's briefing and oral argument persuaded the judge to deny the wife's claims in their entirety.

And he represented a Bay Area software engineer whose wife abducted their child to Japan. Working with Japanese counsel, Yoda filed Hague applications for international child abduction relief and ultimately negotiated a global settlement on all custody and financial issues.

In a current case, Yoda represents a wealthy commercial landlord in a marital dissolution in which more than \$20 million in assets are in play. The dispute involved the interpretation of a premarital agreement.

Yoda is a fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers, a board member of the Japanese American Bar Association and the editor of the American Bar Association's Family Advocate magazine.

"I'm buried and jammed with work. It's like drinking from a fire hose," Yoda said.

- JOHN ROEMER

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