

# Daily Journal

JANUARY 24, 2024

## LEADING COMMERCIAL LITIGATORS 2024



### AELISH BAIG

Robbins Geller Rudman &  
Dowd LLP

San Francisco

Consumer Fraud and Privacy

**A**elish Baig, a partner at Robbins Geller Rudman & Dowd LLP, has made a significant impact in the realm of consumer fraud and privacy, particularly in the context of high-profile corporate fraud cases. Her legal prowess and dedication have positioned her as a national leader in pivotal litigations that address some of the most pressing social

issues of recent years, including the opioid crisis and unfair marketing practices in the pharmaceutical industry.

One of the major cases where Baig served as co-lead trial counsel was part of San Francisco's action against various drug companies, including manufacturers, distributors, and pharmacies like Walgreens, Allergan, Teva, and Anda, holding them responsible for their roles in the opioid crisis. *City & County of San Francisco v. Purdue Pharma L.P.*, 18-cv-07591 (N.D. Cal., filed Dec. 18, 2018).

Baig's expertise and leadership were instrumental from the complaint stage through discovery, dispositive motions and the trial. Her compelling presentations in opening statements and closing arguments, alongside the astute examination of witnesses, significantly contributed to the narrative of the defendants' responsibility in the crisis. The case was a crucial part of the nationwide opioid multidistrict litigation, ultimately facilitating a monumental recovery of \$50 billion for communities affected by the opioid epidemic. Specifically, the plaintiffs' team, with Baig's significant contributions, secured a nearly \$230 million settlement with Walgreens for San Francisco.

In addition to her role in the San Francisco case, Baig was a prominent figure in the *In re McKinsey & Co., Inc. National Prescription Opiate Consultant Litigation*. Although not serving as lead

counsel, she was an integral member of the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee. This litigation underscored the accountability of McKinsey, a global consulting firm reputed for its business strategies, in designing marketing strategies that significantly contributed to the opioid epidemic. The case spotlighted the consulting firm's role in shaping the deceptive marketing tactics of companies like Purdue, resulting in a substantial \$230 million recovery — a landmark achievement in holding consultants accountable for their indirect yet profound impact on public health crises.

"McKinsey is an important litigation which holds accountable an entity that, while behind the scenes, helped orchestrate the unfair marketing practices which fueled the national opioid epidemic," Baig said.

Looking ahead, Baig said she thinks access to the court will continue to be a very important issue.

"There continue to be sophisticated efforts to limit people's ability to petition the courts — ever-evolving arbitration clauses and no-class-action clauses in various instruments," she said. "There is something very egalitarian and democratic about a trial — convening a group of everyday people from the community to hear one's grievance, carefully consider the law, and decide what's right."