

TWENTY FOR THE FUTURE

CALIFORNIA LAWYERS UNDER 40 WHO ARE POISED TO MAKE THEIR MARK.

If life begins at 40, the lawyers featured in the following pages are way ahead of schedule. California Law Business' seventh annual 20-Under-40 list - spotlighting young lawyers who are making their mark in the practice of law - is, once again, a fascinating look into the dedication, creativity and diversity that fuels our future.

Dispute Settler

Few legal disciplines have the paucity of under-40s as does alternative dispute resolution, a field full of neutrals who are veteran, retired judges with 20-plus years on the bench. It isn't uncommon, then, for lawyers who appear before **Gig Kyriacou**, 39, to do a double take when a mediation begins.

"Sometimes you get looks like, 'Oh, you're the mediator?'" says Kyriacou, an independent mediator. "They don't tell you beforehand ... but they give you that look like, 'I was expecting someone with a full head of gray hair.'"

Perhaps his ability to resolve disputes well short of trial is in the blood. In the late 1950s, Kyriacou's grandfather made a name for himself mediating disputes among fellow residents in a village in Cyprus. The younger Kyriacou entered the mediation field four years ago, when opposing counsel in a series of lawsuits told him he had a knack for bringing the sides together. "Attorneys said, 'You're better at it than people who are doing it for a living,'" he recalls.

Shortly after earning his J.D. in 1984 from Boalt Hall School of Law, Kyriacou went to work at North Hollywood's Levin, Ballin, Plotkin & Zimring, a civil litigation firm that has evolved into Plotkin, Marutani & Kyriacou. Though he still works at the firm as a partner, Kyriacou is a full-time mediator, who says he negotiated early settlements for his clients before the term mediation was even in vogue. Says Kyriacou, "I looked at a lawsuit as an opportunity to solve a problem." - **Tom Orewyler**

