

## COVER STORY

# YOUNG GUNS

In the Wild West of the legal world, a new generation of attorneys is pioneering at the frontier. From high-powered deal makers to a \$10 million rainmaker, an animal rights activist and a hotshot government lawyer, our list of the Top 20 Under 40 proves the sky's the limit, no matter what your age.

**Melissa Ingalls, 36**  
Kirkland & Ellis

When Melissa Ingalls engages opponents in court, she relies on a skill set few counterparts can match: a keen mind, a sense of empathy that juries respond to quickly and a drive to excel forged on a different court, by playing volleyball at the University of Pennsylvania.

"Getting in the courtroom and telling a good story, plus having the background of an athlete and a coach [at the University of North Carolina], has really helped me along the way," says Ingalls, 36, a corporate litigation partner in the Los Angeles office of Kirkland & Ellis. "It's a combination of competitiveness and working within a system as well as getting the best out of your players, or attorneys, as the case may be."

Ingalls says she has worked with legal teams ranging from three attorneys, as when she conducted complex litigation for DirecTV last year, up to 40 lawyers, namely the attorneys who landed \$400 million in punitive damages for inventor Gary Michelson in his patent-infringement struggle against rival Medtronic.

A Tennessee federal court awarded the damages in October, and Ingalls says her role was to work with experts versed in patent values to accurately calculate the damages Medtronic inflicted on Michelson.

Other clients have included several companies in Howard Hughes' business empire, plus Motorola Inc. and General Motors Acceptance Corp., now known as GMAC Financial Services.

Ingalls says she has handled breach-of-contract torts for Hughes Aircraft and DirecTV; defended Motorola against toxic-tort claims; sought recovery from insurance companies on behalf of Hughes Aircraft and MEPC, which owned the Northridge Mall during the 1992 Northridge earthquake; and defended DirecTV, GMAC and Hughes Electronics against claims of unfair business practices filed under Section 17200 of the state Business and Professions Code.

"It takes talent to know your people and get the most out of their efforts," Ingalls says. "I love working with the clients that I'm privileged to represent. I enjoy the intellectual challenges and the challenges of getting people to work together on a team while having fun at the same time."

Kirkland & Ellis' senior attorney on the Michelson case, Bob Krupka, praises Ingalls for having "good gut," or the ability to read people and circumstances.



**MELISSA INGALLS**

"It's the judgment to read situations and know what's working and what isn't, and putting it all together to see if a jury or judge is getting it or not, and whether or not they're buying your side," says Krupka, who heads the firm's litigation practice group. "It's not a matter of manipulating or hoodwinking them; it's resonating with them to see why you're right and the other side is wrong."

— **Draeger Martinez**