

# Daily Journal

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## TOP 40 UNDER 40

### California's leading lawyers of 2017

**K**erendian's eight-attorney probate litigation and administration firm is one of the largest probate shops in California, with a new San Francisco office coming on line.

"I have had to prove myself in the probate field, where most attorneys are twice my age," Kerendian said. "Although I interned for a real estate and business litigation firm during law school, my wills and trusts course drew me to the probate practice area. After starting my career in estate planning, I quickly realized I was more interested in the litigation side of trusts and estates."

Kerendian has litigated difficult probate cases, including a dispute between a decedent's child and his spouse over whether the decedent had created a valid trust leaving his assets to his child. Despite the child's lack of a copy of the trust, Kerendian obtained a settlement for the child on terms similar to what he might have attained in litigation.

In one early case for the young lawyer, Kerendian found himself representing the executor of the estate that owned the building housing the Los Angeles Superior Court's Central Civil West Courthouse at 600 S. Commonwealth Ave. The executor was the son of Arthur Blech, the building's owner, who died in 2011. Kerendian oversaw a four-year estate administration process that included the sale of the building plus significant litigation involving creditors whose claims Kerendian helped settle for a fraction of the \$18 million in claims filed against the \$60 million building. The litigation also featured litigation by siblings of the executor, who unsuccessfully sought to suspend and remove him, and by the IRS, which initiated a tax audit that concluded successfully with no challenges to the executor's tax return.

Kerendian said his real estate back-

## Shawn S. Kerendian



**Keystone Law  
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Los Angeles

**Practice:** Probate, trust and estate litigation

**Age:** 34

ground helped him conclude that selling the building was the right move for his client. "The building was a risky investment, because I could foresee that [court] budget cuts were coming and the court was likely not to renew its lease," he said. Indeed, the court announced last year — well after the sale in December 2013 — that it will move into the U.S. Courthouse on Spring Street

sometime this year.

"It came down to my client's wish to sell against the wishes of his siblings," Kerendian said. "I was young, and it was a validation for my client to put his faith in me and for me to deliver." *Estate of Arthur Blech*, BP128711 (Los Angeles Super. Ct., filed Jan. 15, 2013).

— John Roemer