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Angelica Acosta Samaniego

Partner

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Angelica Acosta Samaniego is a Trial Attorney and Equity Partner at Varner & Brandt's Riverside office, where she returned in 2015 after accepting a special assignment position with a law enforcement oversight agency in 2008. She became an Equity Partner in 2026 and brings years of legal experience in both the private and public sectors to her practice.

Angelica's private-sector practice focuses primarily on civil and business litigation, while her public-sector experience included representing numerous public entities in litigation matters involving governmental tort claims, CEQA matters, and the defense of law enforcement in use-of-force cases. Her experience in both sectors has provided her with a broad perspective on complex litigation and the diverse legal challenges faced by her clients.

Prior to returning to Varner & Brandt, Angelica served as an attorney for the nationally recognized Office of Independent Review (OIR) in Los Angeles. In that role, she provided civilian oversight of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Internal Affairs Bureau investigations into officer misconduct, use of force, officer-involved shootings, and other critical incidents.

Today, Angelica is one of Varner & Brandt's partners overseeing multiple attorneys and staff who work together to handle numerous litigation files. Throughout her career, she and her team have litigated thousands of cases from start to finish, and she has obtained several defense verdicts for Varner & Brandt's business clients. Most recently, she and her team secured a complete defense verdict for a large corporation in a case in which the plaintiff asked the jury to award more than \$20 million in damages. Angelica brings a deep passion for the law to every case and creatively channels that passion into the courtroom in advocating for her clients.

In addition to her litigation practice, Angelica currently serves as General Counsel to the National Orange Show ("NOS") in San Bernardino. NOS is a nonprofit association that was formed in 1910 to promote and preserve the citrus industry in San Bernardino.

Angelica's commitment to public service has also been recognized throughout her career. She has been recognized for her service by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff of Los Angeles for her service to the citizens of Los Angeles County, as well as by the National Association for Equal Justice in America for her service to the Black and Latino communities. In 2019, she was honored as the Keynote Speaker for La Sierra University's graduating class, Criminal Justice Division.

Angelica received two B.A. degrees, in Political Science and Liberal Studies, with honors from California State University at Fullerton, and earned her Juris Doctorate from Fowler School of Law, formerly known as Chapman Law School. When she is not working hard for her clients, Angelica enjoys spending time with her family and friends in the mountains or near a lake.

FOCUS

- Business Litigation
- Trial Practice - Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Los Angeles and San Diego Counties
- Insurance Defense
- Personal Injury
- Public Entity Representation

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & PRO BONO

- Volunteer, Attorney Judge for the Riverside High School Mock Trial Competition

HONORS & AWARDS

- Dean's Award for Excellence in Trial Advocacy and Advanced Evidence, Chapman University School of Law
- Regional Finalist, Mock Trial ALTA Competitions 2003 and 2004
- First President, Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society, California State University at Fullerton

EDUCATION

- Chapman University School of Law (Fowler School of Law), JD, 2004
- California State University at Fullerton, BA, with Honors, 1999

ADMISSIONS

- The State Bar of California
- Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals
- Supreme Court of California
- Riverside County Bar Association
- San Bernardino County Bar Association