This supplement is devoted to recognizing excellent lawyering and leadership skills among women attorneys in California. To pick a list of 75 litigators and 25 corporate transactions and regulatory specialists, editors at the Daily Journal reviewed hundreds of nominations from law firms, public agencies, nonprofits and universities. Women are helming major litigation and deals and on the cutting edge of regulatory work. They are leaders and rainmakers in their law firms in numbers never seen before.

—The Editors

Amy L. Toro
Covington & Burling LLP
San Francisco

PRACTICE TYPE: corporate

SPECIALTY: technology and life sciences

With a doctorate in jurisprudence and social policy, it’s no surprise that Covington & Burling LLP partner Amy L. Toro enjoys the intellectual rigor — and potential societal benefit — that come with bringing her clients’ products to market.

Her technology transaction practice centers on life science arrangements, such as collaboration and license agreements, and her clients include some of the world’s largest pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and high technology companies. “I love learning about my client’s business,” Toro said. “And the agreements themselves are very analytically interesting.”

Last year Toro led a team that helped client AstraZeneca PLC secure a deal with Ironwood Pharmaceuticals Inc. to develop and market Ironwood’s treatment for irritable bowel syndrome in China. Linaclotide is the first drug of its class to win approval in the U.S., and the deal, announced in October 2012, included an up-front payment of $25 million with additional commercial milestone payments to Ironwood of up to $125 million, contingent on sales targets.

“In these collaborations, there is an understanding that it is not a one-shot deal,” she said about her negotiation strategy. “You are putting together a partnership that will be sustained, and I always try to deal fairly and credibly with the other side.”

She was also lead counsel on a series of combination product collaboration deals in Fall 2011 relating to local bay area client Gilead Sciences Inc.’s HIV treatment booster, cobicistat. Toro secured licensing deals with Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. and Johnson & Johnson subsidiary Janssen R&D Ireland, formerly known as Tibotec Pharmaceuticals Ltd. The terms of the deals were not announced.

She also represented Emeryville-based biotechnology company Amyris Inc. in a 2010 strategic collaboration agreement with French oil and gas company Total S.A. for Amyris’ development program of Biofene, the company’s brand of renewable farnesene to be used in the production of renewable diesel and jet fuels. She helped negotiate an enhanced collaboration agreement in July 2012 and is in the process of establishing a joint venture company with Total for the production and marketing of the fuels.

— Caitlin Johnson