

Daily Journal

AUGUST 14, 2019

TOP 40 UNDER 40

California's leading lawyers of 2019

Steven E. Hurdle Jr.

Hurdle Jr., a partner and deputy chair of Loeb & Loeb LLP's capital markets and corporate practices, handles multibillion-dollar business combinations and public securities matters for clients in a variety of industries. In the competitive entertainment field, he handles company clients, sources of capital and entertainers in complex business formation, fundraising, investing and business purchase and sale transactions.

"There's a tremendous appetite for entertainment apps and content creation," said Hurdle, who was promoted to partner at age 32. He represents Beverly Hills-based Third Wave Digital, an early state venture capital and marketing company, in making early and follow-on investments in numerous companies as well as co-founding startups.

Publicly announced investments include 88 Rising, a video network for Asian millennials; All Def Digital, a provider of cross-platform programming for urban millennials; Canvas Media, a creator of original series for digital, traditional and other platforms; Core Mobile, a mobile video entertainment network for gamers; Eversport, a distributor of live and recorded sports programming for displaced fans; Famebit, a YouTube marketing platform; GammaRay, a pop-culture video content brand; IndMusic, an independent music distribution network; Insurrection Media, a digital television studio targeting internet distribution platforms; MobLabs, an application optimization platform; Naritiv, the first Snapchat network; Pocketwatch, a creator of children's entertainment programming; and others.

"These startups provide tools for content creation," Hurdle said. "Third Wave is the cutting edge of the entertainment field. As a VC fund its work is so interesting. Since 2014, I've been their primary outside deal counsel. "That said, I may be under 40, but I'm too old for Snapchat," Hurdle said.

Hurdle has also represented investors in a \$46 million financing round for video gam developer Cloud Imperium Games, the creators of Star Citizen. He has also represented Brandblack LLC, an athletic footwear company, as outside general counsel. The job included counseling footwear designer David Raysse, Brandblack's founder, in the acquisition of the company's assets from Sketchers USA Inc.

As a speaker and industry analyst, Hurdle presented at the Motion Picture & Television Fund's professional advisory network on a panel titled "A Celebrity's Role in Capital and M&A Transactions."

"The idea is that historically, someone like George Clooney was paid to wear a Rolex," Hurdle said. "But we've moved beyond endorsements. Now we see celebrities cultivating their own brands, as with Clooney's tequila company." Hurdle made clear that he was giving a general example; Clooney is not a client. "Celebrities are learning to get in early,



Loeb & Loeb LLP

Los Angeles

Practice: Corporate

Age: 36

give direction to the company's creation and marketing, and profit hand-somely when the company is sold."

Hurdle sets up such deals and follows through as the businesses develop. "I'm currently putting together a startup liquor brand with a celebrity, to be announced," he said.

"A lot of lawyers don't enjoy what they do," he added. "That's a hard life to live. The more my career advances, the more fulfilling it gets. Not just because maybe I'm trusted more as I get more graying hair, but also because with many of these businesses I become more of the family."

— John Roemer