



VARIETY



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Bierman Came to the Rescue of Many Shows

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IVY KAGAN BIERMAN's father was a jazz trumpet player. Her mother was a ballet dancer.

When the Loeb & Loeb partner is honored on Sept. 16 by the Beverly Hills Bar Assn. as its Entertainment Lawyer of the Year, her brother, jazz pianist Shelly Berg, will give a special musical tribute, along with singer Patti Austin.

The tribute will take place at a dinner at the Beverly Wilshire hotel.

Bierman herself was an actress, singer and dancer in her youth — and even though she chose a legal career, she has specialized in trying to bring quick harmony to acrimonious labor disputes.

The contentiousness been especially acute recently as a result of shifts in the entertainment industry workforce brought about by such changes as the rise

of reality television and online streaming.

She's represented high-profile shows like "American Idol" and "Fashion Police" host Joan Rivers in high-profile disputes, and forged agreements with guilds for online platforms. For example, she helped soap operas "All My Children" and "One Life to Live" secure online platforms and continue production after they concluded their network runs.

"I think the common thread for me is I have always focused on maintaining good relationships in the entertainment industry," she says. Even though she often represents companies taking positions adverse to those of guilds and unions, "I have maintained credibility. We are more often than not able to resolve disputes in a short period of time."

Often she is tasked with resolving labor issues that threaten to shut down production in a matter of hours.

"I actually thrive in difficult and tense situations," she says. "So much of my practice has involved instances where unions are organizing a production and I have a very short time to work out a deal with them."

Bierman spent her early childhood in Ohio, but her family moved to Texas when she was 12. Her Houston neighborhood was populated by families connected to the space program, including astronauts. In her first year of law school at Northwestern U. she found a contract law class the most interesting. The professor wrote the textbook that included labor cases. "He wanted us to understand that not all contracts are one-time transactions, that they can be a bigger structure for long-term relationships," she says.

After joining Loeb & Loeb as an associate starting in 1987, she worked with attorney and Lionsgate exec John Delaverson, specializing in representing entertainment industry clients. She considers him her first mentor as she developed a specialty in the industry and in labor relations. She left Loeb in 1993. After working at Morrison & Foerster and other firms, she returned to Loeb in 2006 as partner.

Bierman says she has learned that "most of the time, by remaining cool and credible, I am generally able to get matters resolved."

That includes negotiating with different personalities, both on the labor side and among her clients. Most of the ones she works with, she says, are savvy and have been in the business for a long time.

One of her challenges has been to bring some new digital companies up to speed on what she calls "industry labor relations 101."

And always, she maintains a calm attitude. "My approach doesn't necessarily change because someone on the other side has a difficult personality or is overly aggressive," she says. "The goal is still to work toward a resolution."