

Ivo Keller

PARTNER

 415-421-6500

 ikeller@sflaw.com



Ivo Keller, a trusted real estate litigator with a national bankruptcy practice, is known as a practical problem-solver who puts his clients' needs first.

Ivo has experience in virtually all facets of real estate-related litigation for a long list of sophisticated clients. His trial and appellate experience and outstanding courtroom advocacy skills allow him to litigate cases to judgment. But he also has a practical, problem-solving orientation that has helped facilitate resolution of many high-value settlements.

Along with his litigation practice, Ivo represents creditors in bankruptcy cases nationwide. He has gained recognition as an expert on landlord-tenant issues under the United States Bankruptcy Code and has a wide range of experience in distressed asset situations in and outside of bankruptcy.

Ivo is also a leader in the San Francisco legal community, having served as President of multiple professional organizations, chaired a statewide conference of bankruptcy professionals, and counselled lawyers' groups and businesses about litigation and bankruptcy issues all over California.

Real Estate Litigation

One of Ivo's greatest strengths is a broad base of experience in real estate matters. He has defended housing and hotel projects against challenges under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

[Litigation](#)

[Real Estate Disputes](#)

[Environmental Compliance & Litigation](#)

[Construction Disputes](#)

[Bankruptcy, Insolvency & Creditors' Rights](#)

EDUCATION

UC College of Law, San Francisco; J.D., 2006
University of California, Berkeley; B.A., 2003

BAR ADMISSIONS

California

ACCOLADES

Selected for inclusion in *Best Lawyers in America*®, 2026

Selected for inclusion in *Northern California Super Lawyers* magazine, 2021-2024

Selected for inclusion in *Northern California Super Lawyers* "Rising Star," 2013-2020

represented Fortune 500 companies in eminent domain proceedings; prosecuted commercial landlord-tenant and loan default cases; and resolved disputes involving takings, boundary issues, HOA governance, easements, mechanic's liens and water rights.

Ivo's litigation experience also informs his approach to other matters, such as representation of developers seeking entitlements, buyers and lenders conducting due diligence, and property owners impacted by development on neighboring parcels. In all these settings, Ivo applies a practical approach that starts with a strong appreciation for his clients' priorities and an understanding of his role as both advocate and advisor.

LANGUAGES

German, fluent

Bankruptcy and Distressed Assets

Recognized nationally for his practice representing landlords and other creditors in bankruptcy proceedings nationwide, Ivo's experience includes large, complex cases, such as:

- Sanchez Energy, in which Ivo represented the owner of the debtor's corporate headquarters
- Sears, in which he represented three landlords holding nine separate properties
- WeWork, in which he represented multiple landlords and resolved a contentious dispute regarding failure to pay administrative rent.

In addition, Ivo has served as a court-approved attorney for receivers, referees and bankruptcy trustees, helping them analyze claims, resolve disputes and win authorization to sell distressed assets.

Experience

- Lead counsel for the California State University in litigation under the California Environmental Quality Act challenging the University's approval of a new master plan for one of its campuses, winning a judgment that denied the challenge in its entirety.
- Represented a group of real estate investors seeking relief from a city's downzoning of their properties, winning an injunction to stop the zoning change based on evidence of illegal involvement by the city's mayor obtained through a Public Records Act request.
- Defended a commercial landlord against a bankrupt tenant's attempt to retroactively reject its lease, leading to payment of several

hundred thousand dollars in administrative rent and an order confirming the landlord's right to take possession and dispose of all remaining personal property.

- Served as court-approved counsel for a receiver over a hotel property, winning approval for the sale of the property over objections from a third party and dismissal of a federal court lawsuit against the receiver.
- Lead counsel for a group of homeowners that sued the Town of Mammoth Lakes and AT&T to prevent construction of an 80-foot-tall cell phone tower in their neighborhood, winning a judgment that forced the town to rescind approval of the tower and negotiating a settlement with AT&T to pay the group's legal fees.

Activities

- Bay Area Bankruptcy Forum
 - President, 2024-2025
 - Board Member, 2018 — present
- California Bankruptcy Forum Conference
 - Conference Co-Chair, 2022
 - Education Co-Chair, 2020-2021
- Bar Association of San Francisco, Commercial Law & Bankruptcy Section
 - Executive Committee, Chair, 2017
- California Receivers Forum, Bay Area Chapter
 - Board Member, Chair 2015-2016
- Friends of Cal Debates