



AN NGUYEN RUDA NAMED 2026 TRAILBLAZER AWARD RECIPIENT BY THE VIETNAMESE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Bartko Pavia CEO and Co-Managing Partner will be honored at VABANC's 28th Annual Gala Dinner on October 23 in San José

Honors and Awards

02, September 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAN FRANCISCO, September 2, 2026 — The Vietnamese American Bar Association of Northern California (VABANC) has named [An Nguyen Ruda](#), CEO and Co-Managing Partner of Bartko Pavia LLP, as the recipient of its 2026 Trailblazer Award. She will be honored at [VABANC's 28th Annual Gala Dinner](#) on Friday, October 23, 2026, at the San José City Hall Rotunda.

The Trailblazer Award recognizes individuals whose efforts have blazed a trail and made extraordinary contributions to the Vietnamese American legal community. Arriving in America at the age of five years old as a refugee, her ascension to national law firm leadership is an extraordinary tale of hard work and resilience.

"An's journey from uncertain beginnings to prominence amongst peers is a testament to her resilience," said Thi Tran, President of VABANC. "Rooted in the belief towards uplifting the next generation of young legal talent, she has mentored countless individuals to establish their own pathway. In every sense of the word: An is a trailblazer."

An's family settled in East San Jose, where more than 20 percent of families live below the poverty line. She worked daily on the family's food truck, waking before dawn to prep meals, clean, and serve customers, and returned home for long shifts at the family restaurant even during law school. Those years became the foundation of how she runs a law firm today: an insistence that

legal fees affect real people and real businesses, and a conviction that everyone in an organization deserves the same respect.

"The best advice I received came from watching my parents build their small food service business: treat everyone with respect, from the dishwasher to the CEO — their dignity is equal, only their roles differ," An Nguyen Ruda said. "That shaped my entire leadership philosophy."

Since taking the helm in January 2023, An has expanded Bartko Pavia from a single San Francisco office to a bicoastal platform. In March 2025, she orchestrated the firm's combination with New York-based Pavia & Harcourt, creating a 53-lawyer litigation platform spanning San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York City.

An is widely recognized as one of California's preeminent labor negotiators, serving as Chief Negotiator on landmark collective bargaining agreements across healthcare, media, manufacturing, and hospitality. In one of the largest healthcare bankruptcies in U.S. history, she renegotiated seven collective bargaining agreements in just 70 days, preserving thousands of jobs while protecting the viability of the business.

She is a 2026 Women, Influence and Power in Law (WIPL) Awards dual finalist for Managing Partner of the Year and Mentor & Mentee Collaboration, and a Northern California Super Lawyer (2022–2026).

From her work on a food truck to leading a national law firm through historic expansion, An's career demonstrates that humble beginnings do not limit how high one can rise or how many others one can lift along the way.

About the Gala

VABANC's 28th Annual Gala Dinner will be held on Friday, October 23, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the San José City Hall Rotunda, 200 East Santa Clara Street, San Jose, California. Proceeds support scholarships for future Vietnamese American law students and VABANC's professional development, mentorship, and community-building programs. Tickets and sponsorship information are available at vabanc.org.

About Bartko Pavia LLP

Bartko Pavia LLP is a powerhouse litigation and transactional firm representing both plaintiffs and defendants in high-stakes commercial disputes, real estate transactions, class actions, antitrust matters, labor and employment litigation, and bet-the-company cases. The firm is known for combining elite legal talent with a client-focused, service-oriented culture that prioritizes practical business solutions over conventional law firm metrics. Bartko Pavia's team includes numerous former in-house counsel and business leaders who bring real-world experience to their practice. For more information, visit www.bartkopavia.com

About VABANC

The Vietnamese American Bar Association of Northern California is a community of Vietnamese American attorneys, judges, law students, and legal professionals dedicated to professional development, mentorship, scholarship, and public service. Learn more at vabanc.org.

Media Contact

Katy von Treskow, Chief Marketing Officer

Bartko Pavia LLP

kvontreskow@bartkopavia.com | 310-963-9037

RELATED SERVICES

Labor & Employment

RELATED PROFESSIONALS



AN NGUYEN RUDA

Co-Managing Partner

☎ 415.956.1900