

# Daily Journal

MAY 19, 2021

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# TOP WOMEN Lawyers 2021

## Julia B. Strickland



**S**trickland is managing partner of Stroock’s Los Angeles offices, a member of the firm’s executive committee and the chair of the financial services litigation, regulation and enforcement group.

In December 2020, Strickland obtained a groundbreaking opinion from a 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel in favor of client Verizon Wireless Services LLC on a question relating to appellate review of arbitration orders. The panel reversed its earlier view of the matter. The court at her urging turned away an argument by a plaintiff seeking to get around a trial judge’s order compelling arbitration in a potential class action over warranty coverage of cell phones. *Langere v. Verizon Wireless Services LLC*, 983 F.3d 1115 (9th Cir., op. filed Dec. 29, 2020).

When the trial judge stayed the matter so an arbitration could proceed, the plaintiff voluntarily dismissed the action and then appealed his own dismissal, seeking to avoid arbitration by manufacturing appellate jurisdiction over the matter, citing case law from 2010.

“This plaintiff was perhaps too clever by half,” said Strickland, who argued the issue virtually.

She pointed out that the maneuver—even though allowed by the 2010 opinion—had been overruled by the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2017 *Microsoft Corp. v. Baker* decision, which nixed a similar effort. The panel agreed, dismissing the appeal, affirming the primacy of arbitration and stressing that the American Arbitration Act limits appeals from arbitration orders.

In a series of arbitration decisions over the past three years stemming from Strickland’s winning 2017 argument before the state Supreme Court in *McGill v. Citibank NA*, she has successfully compelled arbitration of all claims in potential class actions against Chase, Citibank and American Express. She has ended other cases with modest settlements of potential class claims for Discover and Synchrony.

In each case, the issue has been over “public injunctive relief,” which can render a bank’s arbitration provision unenforceable. Strickland has successfully persuaded courts that the outcome sought was not in that category. “It’s a very hot issue right now,” she said.

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**Practice Type:**  
Litigation, Regulatory

— John Roemer