

JOLSNA JOHN THOMAS, ESQ.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Licensed Texas and California attorney with 18+ years of experience advising nonprofit organizations. Background includes negotiating collective bargaining labor agreements, overseeing litigation and claims, and supporting operations, governance, and compliance across multi-entity environments. Known for delivering practical, business-oriented legal guidance and partnering cross-functionally with leadership, project teams, and external counsel to mitigate risk and support project execution.

RELEVANT LEGAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Illuminating Growth PLLC (2026-present)

07/2025 – Present *Founder and Managing Partner*

- Provide legal and business advice for the whole life cycle of organizations with a focus on risk mitigation, legal compliance, investigation, contract negotiation/drafting, and operations.
- Experience includes public agency construction protest, contract negotiations, entity formation, and nonprofit policy drafting.

Rosendin (National Electrical Contractor) (2018-2025)

02/2020 – 06/2025 *The Rosendin Foundation President*

- Served as primary legal advisor for foundation and affiliated activities within a national electrical contractor, advising on contracts, compliance, and risk mitigation in a construction-adjacent environment.
- Negotiated and reviewed vendor agreements, service contracts, and partnership agreements, ensuring alignment with corporate risk tolerance and operational objectives.
- Managed outside counsel and coordinated legal strategy related to disputes, compliance issues, and organizational risk exposure.
- Partnered with internal stakeholders, including operations, finance, and leadership, to align legal considerations with business strategy and execution.
- Led RFP and contracting process for enterprise systems, structuring agreements to mitigate liability and ensure performance accountability.
- Advised on regulatory and compliance matters impacting multi-state operations, including governance, reporting, and nonprofit-related legal obligations.
- Increase annual grantmaking from \$185K to \$2.3M (1164% increase), distributing \$4.2M+ since 2020.
- Conceptualized and launched [TRF Camp Build](#), a national construction camp, which involved navigating legal and regulatory requirements for a new program. Graduated 169 campers and managed a volunteer workforce of 200+ construction professionals.
- Lead a diverse team of employees and volunteers nationally. Foster partnerships with internal stakeholders and industry leaders for impactful initiatives.

10/2018 – 04/2021 *Business Development Manager*

- Cultivated relationships with local unions, contractors, owners, and community organizations across Texas and Tennessee.

IBEW 520 (2018)

02/2018 – 10/2018 *Business Development Representative*

- Responsible for taking care of the day-to-day duties associated with creating and maintaining good customer, contractor, and community organization relationships.

Texas State Teachers Association

11/2017 – 02/2018 *Help Desk Attorney/Member Advocate*

- Provided advice, counsel, and legal representation to approximately 68,000 Texas educators from elementary through university level.
- Submitted records requests under the Texas Public Information Act and Texas Open Meetings Act.

Operating Engineers Local Union No. 3

03/2007 – 06/2017 *House Counsel*

- Provided legal counsel to one of the largest construction labor organizations in the U.S., advising on labor relations, collective bargaining negotiations, regulatory compliance, and risk.
- Managed litigation, arbitration, and administrative proceedings, including matters before local civil service commissions, PERB, NLRB, and the Department of Labor.
- Advised union leadership on dispute strategy, risk exposure, and resolution approaches across complex, multi-party matters.
- Oversaw governance, compliance, and risk management across multiple affiliated entities.
- Led Legal Department with two direct report attorneys and three support staff.

ADMISSION	California State Courts (Bar No. [REDACTED]) U.S. District Court (Northern District of California); Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals; Texas State Courts (Bar No. [REDACTED])
EDUCATION	American University – Washington College of Law Washington, DC
05/2005	Juris Doctorate
	The University of Texas at Austin Austin, TX
05/2000	Bachelor of Business Administration. Major: Management Information Systems
CERTIFICATIONS	Nonprofit Leadership Lab Board Boot Camp 06/2022
	University of S. Florida Inclusive and Ethical Leadership Certificate 01/2022
	University of S. Florida Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace 06/2021
	LinkedIn Learning Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging for All 08/2020

SKILLS & CORE COMPETENCIES

Legal & Construction Expertise: Construction Law & Contract Negotiations and Drafting; Upstream & Downstream Agreements; Litigation, Claims & Disputes Resolution; Risk Management & Compliance; Corporate Governance; Regulatory Interpretation; Arbitration & Administrative Proceedings.

Business & Leadership Skills: Cross-Functional Collaboration (Operations, Finance, HR); Strategic Planning & Execution, Stakeholder Engagement & Influence; Process & Policy Development, Presentation Skills.

PUBLICATIONS/ SPEAKING	Invited speaker at 20+ conferences, leadership trainings, and news broadcasts. Complete list
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SELECT COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP	▪ Associated General Contractors of America, <i>Culture of Care Chair</i> (2025-2026), ▪ Austin Community College, <i>Community Advisory Trustee Appointee</i> (2024-present) ▪ National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Austin Chapter, <i>Immediate Past President</i> (2025-present) ▪ City of Austin Firefighter's, Police Officers' and Emergency Medical Services Personnel's Civil Service Commission, <i>Chair</i> (2017-present) ▪ South Asian Bar Association North America (SABA), <i>National Advisory Council Member</i> (2012-present), <i>Co-Chair Endorsements Committee</i> (2012-2019), <i>President</i> (2011-2012)
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SELECT AWARDS	▪ Austin Business Journal, <i>Woman in Business Finalist</i> (2025 & 2024) ▪ National Association of Women In Construction (NAWIC), <i>Red Jacket Recruiter</i> (2025), <i>Member Strong</i> (2025 & 2024) ▪ BisNow, <i>Women Leading Real Estate Honoree</i> (2024) ▪ Luna, <i>Woman of the Year A/C/E</i> (2022) ▪ South Asian Bar Association of North America, <i>Cornerstone</i> (2013)
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