

# Super Lawyers

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BY DAWN WEINBERGER

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*Lynn Nakamoto fights for Oregonians' civil rights*

Published in Oregon Super Lawyers 2008 — November 2008

Twenty-one years ago, Lynn Nakamoto moved to Oregon without a job. Today, she's managing partner at the prestigious Markowitz, Herbold, Glade & Mehlhaf in downtown Portland.

After coming to the Pacific Northwest with her partner, who had lined up a medical residency at an Oregon hospital, it didn't take long for Nakamoto—who had worked for Bronx Legal Services in New York—to secure a job with Marion-Polk Legal Aid Service.

Since 1989 she has worked at her current firm, where her practice focuses on employment law and civil appeals, helping clients who find themselves involved in civil-rights disputes—particularly those centered on discrimination. Though she sometimes represents employers, most of her clients are on the employee side.

Nakamoto also serves as a pro bono attorney for the Oregon ACLU, and in 2006 she joined the board of the new Q Center, a non-profit organization for Portland's gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender community.

"To me, it is a very good idea to have a place where the communities can come together," says Nakamoto, 48, adding that in two years the group has outgrown its space.

Her desire to make a difference isn't limited to her legal career. She's also the mother of a 10-year-old girl, adopted from Vietnam, and she and her partner make it a priority to regularly visit their daughter's place of birth.

"It's great that we are in a position that we can do that for her," she says.

A graduate of New York University School of Law, Nakamoto initially intended to devote her career to public-interest law. But eventually, she changed her mind for "practical reasons," she says, explaining that her need to earn a living wage prevailed over her desire to stick with her original career plan.

Nakamoto is glad that life circumstances gave her the opportunity to advance her legal career in the Pacific Northwest.

"It is a place where an individual can still make a difference," she says, "and I like that."

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[Lynn R. Nakamoto](#)

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