

THE RECORDER

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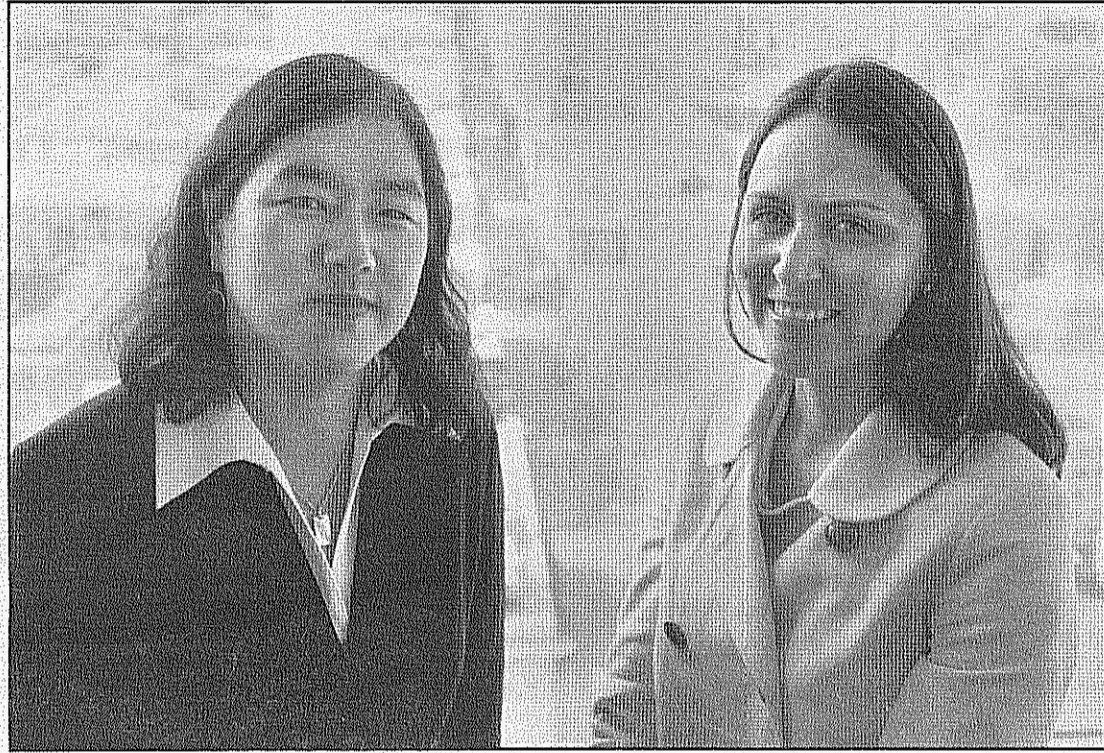
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FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2007

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TEAM EFFORT: Hastings Civil Justice Clinic attorney Donna Ryu, left, handled the appeals for an employment case that went to the state Supreme Court, while Siegel & LeWitter associate Sarah Beard was lead counsel at trial — back when she was just a student.

SHELLEY EADES



A Pinnacle Case

Suit goes all the way from Hastings to the high court, and it's a whopper

By Mike McKee
RECORDER STAFF WRITER

Sarah Beard was under extraordinary pressure in December 2003 while handling a wage-and-hour case for a Bay Area man in San Francisco Superior Court.

Not yet a lawyer, she was dealing with the stress of a trial for the first time, while simultaneously prepping for final exams

at San Francisco's Hastings College of the Law.

The second-year student got some relief by getting her test in evidence class postponed until after the trial. And one of her teachers, Donna Ryu, covered redirect examination in court one morning to give Beard time to study.

"But," Ryu recalled last week, "she came back that afternoon to do the closings."

Beard's work, alongside two other students, paid off.

Superior Court Judge Anne Bouliane ruled in their favor after a six-day trial, and their success set the groundwork for a major wage-and-hour ruling by the California Supreme Court just two months ago.

The students were assigned the case as part of the Hastings Civil Justice Clinic, a division of the law school that gives students experience by letting them represent clients — most of them low-income — in actual cases.

Beard was lead counsel, handling direct examinations and closing arguments. Co-counsel Suzanne Delgin did the cross-examination of witnesses, and co-counsel Monica Hernandez conducted opening statements and some direct and cross-examinations.

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