

SACRAMENTO Lawyer

Vol. 1-2025

SACRAMENTO
COUNTY BAR
ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

Angelina Ray
2025 SCBA
President

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Angelina Ray is the President of the Sacramento County Bar Association. She can be contacted at angelina@pacemtempest.com.

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME: WELCOME TO 2025

By Angelina Ray

I want to take this time to again emphasize the power of collaboration and the unique role we, as attorneys, play in shaping a fairer, more inclusive society. Those principles remain central as we

move forward together.

This year, we will focus on several key priorities:

- **Reinvigorating the Strategic Plan:** We will better define what we are doing and intend to be doing as a bar association both within the profession and toward the wider Sacramento community.
- **Expanding Access to Justice:** We will strengthen our pro bono initiatives and deepen partnerships with community organizations to better serve underserved populations.
- **Serving Through Action:** Service is at the heart of our mission. Whether through legal clinics, outreach, or community partnerships, we will work to strengthen the connection between our profession and those we serve.

Our work requires not only dedication but also compassion. This year, I encourage each of you to think about the legacy we are building together as a Bar. How can we create an enduring impact as a dynamic, inclusive, and service-oriented legal community?

The legal profession continues to evolve, but our core values – integrity, service, and justice – remain constant. Let us face the year ahead with purpose and determination, knowing the work we do transforms lives and strengthens our community.

I am honored to serve as your president and grateful for your trust. Together, we will meet the challenges of 2025 with resilience and optimism. Thank you for your dedication to this Association, to each other, and to the pursuit of justice. I look forward to all we will accomplish together.

Peace & Blessings,

Angelina Ray
President, Sacramento
County Bar Association

Dear Members of the Sacramento County Bar Association:

As we step into 2025, I'm reminded of the enduring themes that define our Association: service, community, and the pursuit of justice. These values will guide us as we build on the successes of 2024 and face the challenges of a new year.

Last year, we achieved remarkable milestones, from expanding our student outreach by increasing student membership and providing new scholarships to enhancing our educational and networking programming to increase in person connection within the Association. These accomplishments were made possible by your dedication and the shared vision that unites us as a Bar. Thank you for being part of a community that inspires, supports, and uplifts one another.

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Meet the New SCBA Executive Director – **Tom Roberts**



The SCBA is excited to introduce you to its new Executive Director, Tom Roberts, a former Santa Barbara city councilmember, among many of his accolades and talents. Learn more about Tom here:

Where did you grow up, and what did you like best about your childhood?

My family immigrated to the United States from England by way of Canada when I was four years old. After a brief stay in Georgia, we settled in Southern California. My fondest memories are of long summer days at the beach with friends – basking in the sun with a transistor radio, swimming in the waves, hanging out at the pier, and mostly staying out of trouble. Looking back, those carefree days felt magical, almost like something out of a movie.



What's your idea of the perfect vacation spot and how you would spend your time?

I've been fortunate to travel extensively in the U.S. and abroad, with one of the most remarkable journeys being to Moldova and Transnistria. However, I'm a warm-weather enthusiast at heart. My perfect vacation is the beaches of Mexico or somewhere tropical – days filled with horseback or ATV rides through the jungle, thrilling zipline adventures, dancing the night away, and countless hours enjoying the warm waves.



You were a councilmember of Santa Barbara for over 8 years; what lessons have stayed with you and influenced your leadership style in subsequent roles?

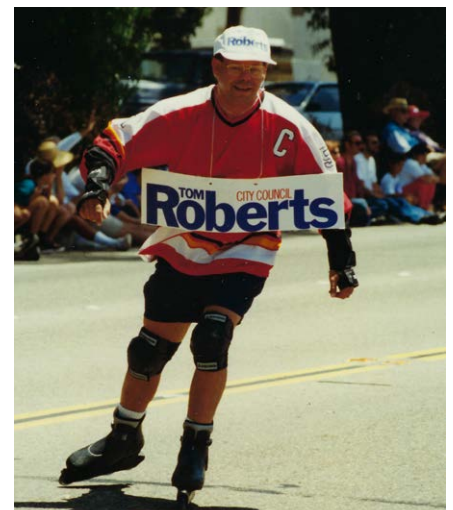
Serving as a councilmember was like earning a PhD in civics – a tremendous gift from the people of Santa Barbara for which I am forever grateful. Those years were transformative, filled with rich experiences and valuable lessons. I learned to deeply respect the diversity of the human condition, learned the art of developing consensus, and discovered that true leadership requires first seeking to understand before seeking to be understood.

You've been invited to the White House and have a history of civic engagement. How have these experiences influenced your leadership style and priorities?

My mother, who passed when I was 10, was a guiding influence. As a new immigrant, she volunteered tirelessly at my elementary school and with my Cub Scout pack. That early example inspired my lifelong commitment to community service. I was appointed to my first city commission at 15, the second at 19, and have since served on numerous nonprofit and public boards. These experiences taught me that great ideas require actionable plans and that seemingly opposing viewpoints can coexist and hold merit. This understanding has shaped my leadership style and my approach to building consensus.

You've received numerous accolades throughout your career. Which achievement are you most proud of, and why?

I am proud to have twice received the Santa Barbara Independent Local Hero Award – first for founding the AIDS Task Force, and





second for transforming a bankrupt nonprofit serving people with disabilities into a national model whose programs have been replicated across the country. These achievements, early in my career, reaffirmed that even in the face of adversity, each of us can bring about meaningful, positive change.



You've had a remarkable career spanning public service and executive leadership. When you look back, what are the moments that stand out to you the most, and why?

One of the most consequential and transformative moments of my life took place during my time on the City Council. Instead of leaving the dais with my colleagues as directed during a tense public demonstration, I chose to stay, waved off the police, and engaged directly with "Homeless Bob Hansen," who had chained himself to the podium. That decision to simply listen and connect on a human level set off a series of events that profoundly changed both my worldview and my understanding of leadership.

Do you have any hobbies or activities away from the office that you're passionate about?

I'm passionate about music and play the guitar, having recorded

several albums just for fun – some tracks are available at ReverbNation.com/TomRoberts. I practice martial arts regularly, love to dance, and am an avid reader of US and world history. These activities keep me grounded and energized.



If you could distill your career and life into a single piece of wisdom or philosophy, what would it be?

Tomorrow is not guaranteed, and in life, it's not the burdens that are the challenge, the challenge is how we carry the burdens.



What is your vision for SCBA under your leadership?

The SCBA has a proud history, and like any organization, it has experienced its share of triumphs, challenges, and transitions. I see a tremendous opportunity to build on its strengths and ensure it continues to provide real and lasting value to its members.

With over 30 years of C-level experience across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, I'm eager to bring best practices in finance, planning, and organizational management to support the Board in maintaining a well-managed, forward-thinking Association that operates efficiently, effectively,

and always prioritizes the needs of its members.



What do you see as the biggest challenges facing our society today, and how can lawyers help?

At the December annual meeting, I said that from the aspirational ideals of the Magna Carta to the day-to-day work in offices and courthouses across the country, the dedication and expertise of legal professionals and our legal system play a vital role in holding together the social fabric of this nation.

Since its inception, our legal system has been foundational to the functioning of a civil and cohesive society. While the legal community continues to give back through pro bono work, I sense a growing need for legal professionals to take a more active role in public education. Helping people better understand the importance of the rule of law and fostering respect for our form of government and its institutions seems crucial in addressing the societal challenges we face today. 🗡️



Judicial Fashion Icon: Justice Ron B. Robie

By Ryan Raff and Holly Lakatos



Photos by **Justice Shama Mesiwala**, Associate Justice on the Third District Court of Appeal and former chambers attorney of Justice Robie.



Ryan Raff is a deputy clerk for the Third District Court of Appeal.



Holly Lakatos is the Third District Court of Appeal librarian.



Justice Robie sports a striped variation of his favorite neckwear while out and about with Chief Justice of California Patricia Guerrero.



Justice Robie's dark-colored bowtie beautifully complements the Tahitian pearls worn by retired Chief Justice of California Tani Cantil-Sakauye.

When most people think about what judges wear, they inevitably think of boring black robes. On the bench, a simple pop of color shaped into a fancy bow has transformed our very own **Justice Ron Robie** of the Third District Court of Appeal into a judicial fashion icon.

Justice Robie first donned a bowtie while he was a child. Pictures document this fashion evolution through the years and show that even in high school, young Ron preferred bowties over ascots, bolos, and even traditional Windsor knots. Early in his career, Justice Robie sometimes succumbed to peer pressure and donned a “regular” tie. The last time he wore one was when

he worked at the California Department of Water Resources. After his appointment to the bench, he went back to the bowtie because, well, he just likes bowties!

Boasting over 40 bowties in his collection, Justice Robie's preference for bowties is rooted in their practical nature, not only aesthetics. Unlike regular ties, bowties don't wear out quickly and are a lot easier to maintain. Although there are some bowties that don't tie well or are made out of material that does not hold its shape, Justice Robie has yet to find “the worst” bowtie. However, he does have favorites. Most of his favorites are just easy to tie, although he does like his red ones a lot. He has a cou-

ple of special ones as well, like his McGeorge bowtie from the Pacific McGeorge School of Law.

As a true bowtie aficionado, Justice Robie bravely wades into the great bowtie controversy by voicing his opinion that bowties are only real if you tie them yourself. Clip-ons simply will not do. So from time-to-time he has graciously donated his time and knowledge to mentoring others in the mechanics of tying these magnificent fashion accessories.

While we cannot find evidence to support or deny the premise that the bowtie has been important to Justice Robie's career, we do think his bowtie eye candy has been instrumental in cementing his status as a judicial fashion icon. 🏛️

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Judge Goodman served on the Sacramento County Superior Court for more than 15 years, presiding over all types of civil and criminal matters. His prior experience includes:

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- Civil Litigator in Commercial and Healthcare Litigation
- Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California
- California Attorney General's Office, Senior Assistant Attorney and Founder of Major Fraud Unit

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**Learn More About
Judge Goodman**

More to Give: Angelina Ray is Ready to Lead SCBA

By Andi Liebenbaum and Jennifer Mouzis



Andi Liebenbaum is the 2023 SCBA President and Lead Policy Advocate for Los Angeles County. She can be reached at liebenbaum@gmail.com.



Jennifer Mouzis is a SCBA Board Member and Founder/Managing Attorney at Mouzis Criminal Defense. She can be reached at jm@jennifermouzislaw.com.



Photo by Dev Anglin

It is an enormous honor to serve the attorneys of Sacramento through leadership on the Board of the Sacramento County Bar Association. That honor is enhanced by also being a first attorney-in-the-family in a family that has many generations from the Sacramento region. Enter **Angelina Ray**.

Angelina Ray's roots in Sacramento grow deep. She is the third-generation daughter of public servant parents who worked for the State. Her mother is retired from PERS, and her father, who retired from STRS, keeps active as a missionary Christian pastor who travels to Africa raising funds and supplies for children's educational needs and providing on the ground resources for rural communities. Angelina, who lives around the corner from her parents and a few blocks from her only sibling (he also works for the State), loves her close family, and spends a great deal of time with them.

Angelina attended Laguna Creek High School and then went to Nebraska where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Creighton University. But she wasn't done learning. After Creighton, she followed up with a master's degree in theology from Fuller Seminary in Pasadena and then pursued both a master's degree in American government *and* JD from Regent University in Virginia, fol-



Angelina Ray and family at age two.



Angelina Ray age four, Alfred Ray IV age six.

lowed by a master's degree in clinical psychology from Pepperdine University.

With a combined five academic degrees (NOTE: the most recent of which was NOT her *juris doctorate*), Angelina has learned a lot, knows a lot, and gives a lot, and not just to her clients, or her five children (preschool to high school), family, or friends, but to all the people in all the spaces she occupies, because she prioritizes the needs, growth, and well-being of others.

If you attended Angelina's swearing in at the SCBA Annual Meeting in December, you will recall the apt introduction by the Honorable **Myrllys Stockdale Coleman**, who, as a law school professor, team leader for the Kennedy American Inn of Court, member of the California Association of Black Lawyers Judicial Luncheon planning committee, and member of the board of the Sacramento Children Fund, has worked with Angelina for years. Judge Stockdale Coleman said Angelina's leadership is defined by her drive to serve the greater good. She noted that Angelina's leadership philosophy "emphasizes empathy, humility, vision,

and a commitment to service over power." While these concepts are aspirational for most, they form the bedrock of Angelina's character and are infused into her work, publicly and privately.

Angelina owns and manages her own boutique law firm, Pacem Tempestate Law, APC (from the Latin "peace in the storm"), which she opened after a brief stint in the labor and employment field. ("I hated labor law," she admitted one evening.) As a small business owner, Angelina has been an active SCBA Solo/Small Division member for six years, sharing her experiences and helping dozens of other solo and small practice lawyers manage the challenges of being both business owner and full-time practicing attorney. (The SCBA considers a firm with four or fewer attorneys a "small practice" firm.)

Professionally, Angelina is what is called a high conflict family law attorney. As anyone who has ever practiced family law or

needed an attorney for a divorce or child custody case knows (or who has heard about the divorce and custody dispute of Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt which took six years to finalize), high conflict cases are easily among the most litigious and emotionally complex. That's why she says she went back to school for a master's in clinical psychology. Angelina realized she needed additional skills to help families in crisis weather the heightened emotions and animus often found in these high conflict cases and reach



Angelina Ray, age six.



Live Lee, the precious little one.



Angelina and her children.

the best possible outcomes for the whole family.

Having the wisdom and drive to obtain another advanced degree to better serve her clients in their time of need seems extraordinary (particularly with four advance degrees already under her belt), but for Angelina it was a common sense solution to an ever present issue: If she could better understand why the parties were acting as they were, she could better understand how to help resolve their conflict.

Her work does not stop with her firm or her SCBA service. Angelina also sits as Judge Pro Tempore in Family Law in Sacramento Superior Court, serves as a Settlement Conference Officer in Yolo Superior Court, and volunteers as a Family Law Clinic Attorney for the Victims Legal Resource Center at McGeorge School of Law.

And that brings us to today, and this edition of *Sacramento Lawyer*: Angelina was sworn in as SCBA Board President on December 11, where she has served since 2022, when she was elected SCBA Board Treasurer. While all of this sounds fulfilling and a little exhausting, Angelina would say she is just getting started.

Over a casual dinner with Angelina and her youngest, a feisty

three-year-old who already knows a lot and has a dramatic flair (after meeting my cat she screamed, “she wants to eat me!”), it became very clear that Angelina is an old soul with a deep core filled with love, learning, and compassion. Perhaps the lesson she learned first and that informs just about everything she does, as a mom, lawyer, community leader, and pastor, is that “a hand extended isn’t just for taking; it’s for giving.” Even the three-year-old understands this about her mother.

Guided as much by faith as her innate desire to do as much good as possible, Angelina wants 2025 to be a year in which SCBA not only does an even better job serving us, the members, but also a year in which all of us members do a little more for the legal profession and our communities. She held up her fingers to show the half inch more we can all do. “If we all do just this much more, we make everything better. The Association, the legal profession, our communities...” And of course, the world. If we all do just a bit more.

High on Angelina’s list of making the SCBA even better is engaging more of us in sections. Are you in one? Join another or move into leadership. Lead a CLE program,



Thula and Temba, age nine.

recruit more people. You get the idea.

Angelina also wants to ensure the Justice Arthur G. Scotland Commitment to Community Scholarship program and event return this year, bigger and better. She wants to make sure the Bench-Bar event on May 15, 2025, wows and inspires us. For those of us serving on the SCBA Board of Directors, she wants us to pitch in a bit more with our time. She wants to help recruit more attorneys to volunteer with Capitol Pro Bono. The list goes on. But it should be noted that everything on this list is attainable, if we all do just a bit more.

Angelina makes strong positive impressions on those who work with her. **Terri Shettle**, a leadership consultant and SCBA’s executive director from 2023 to 2024, said this about Angelina: “While my time at SCBA and working with Angelina was brief, she left a permanent impression on me. In my mind, Angelina is a superhero. She somehow manages to be everywhere at once, leading, directing, contributing to many organizations in the legal community, taking care of her own business and her responsibilities with SCBA, serving her clients, and managing a dynamic, busy family. I have always admired her

willingness to step up and step in wherever needed, especially as a member of SCBA's Executive Committee when there were few staff resources available. To top it off, she does all of this with a brilliant smile that is welcoming, comforting, and alludes assurance that she is one to rely on."

Terri went on to say, "I know Angelina will be an outstanding president who will launch SCBA to new heights, building on the past few years of recovery from the impacts of the pandemic. Her understanding of the big picture matched with her ability to roll up her sleeves to dive into the finer details make for a pretty impressive combination." **Tom Roberts**, SCBA's new executive director, agrees. He recently commented, "In the brief time I've known her, it's clear she is dynamic, passionate, and forward thinking."

And, as Judge Stockdale Coleman reminded us, whether Angelina is navigating complex projects, mentoring the next generation, or finding creative ways to advance the goals of the SCBA, she does so with a steady hand and a clear vision. "Her dedication reminds us that leadership is not about holding power – it's about empowering others," she said. We need to remember this when Angelina extends her hand to us that perhaps we have more to give to help achieve her goals for a better SCBA.

"I'm looking forward to Angelina's upcoming year as SCBA President," said longtime SCBA Board member **Justin Ward**. "She is very qualified for the position – she is detail and goal oriented. She says what she'll do and does what she says. The SCBA is in very capable hands."

Connor Olson, immediate past SCBA Board president, said, "Angelina Ray brings an undeniable energy and strong vision to her role as SCBA President. Her in-

volvement with numerous organizations shows her commitment to community service and her belief in the power of collective action. I am very excited to see where she takes the SCBA in 2025!"

Connor is not the only past SCBA president who looks forward to the SCBA Board with Angelina at the helm. **Shanāe Buffington** said she was thrilled to share her perspective on Angelina's work. She said that Angelina's steadfast commitment to the legal and greater community "is evident in her relentless pursuit of equitable justice." She continued, "[Angelina] has consistently demonstrated her dedication to creating a legal system that serves everyone, especially those who are underserved or overlooked." Shanāe went on to laude Angelina as a passionate advocate for diversity within the legal profession. And **Sean McCoy** agreed that Angelina "has a lot of energy and is involved in just about everything," echoing Shanāe's view that Angelina "will lead the Sacramento County Bar Association with vision, driving meaningful progress within the legal community."

Several of us SCBA Past Presidents – Sean McCoy (2019), Shanāe Buffington (2020), Andi Liebenbaum (2023), and Connor Olson

(2024) – know the job. We are pleased to support Angelina and were proud sponsors of the 2024 SCBA Annual Meeting at which Angelina was sworn in, all of us knowing that Angelina is right for the tasks at hand.

When she advocates for us all to do "just a little bit more," Angelina speaks from personal experience with a global perspective. In addition to raising five beautiful children, running a successful private practice in a high conflict area of the law, and pouring countless hours into helping make SCBA successful over the last three years, Angelina is involved in boards, committees, and MCLE programs across the state. When a leader embodies the principles she espouses, it allows us to see that we too can embody those principles and make the same kind of lasting impact in our community.

Angelina's term as SCBA president promises to be one of action and dedication. What makes it particularly special, though, is that we are all being asked to join in the action, to rededicate ourselves to the practice of law and to support the association that represents us. And our impact will be grand if we do, as Angelina asks, just a little bit more. 🏠



Ray family 2024.

New California Employment Laws for 2025

By Laura McHugh & Katie Collins

Profile photos by Tim Engle



California has several new employment laws that took effect on January 1, 2025, including bills signed by Governor Newsom. Below is an overview. Employers should become familiar with these new laws to ensure compliance. It's time for employers to update their employee handbooks and personnel policies and procedures and train their management team.

Wage and Hour

Minimum Wage Increase

California's minimum wage, effective January 1, 2025, is \$16.50 per hour for all employees, regardless of employer size. Note that some cities and counties have higher minimum wages than the state. Employers must pay whichever minimum wage is higher of the applicable state or local minimum wage for all time worked.

Exempt Employees – Minimum Salary Threshold Increase

The increase in California's minimum wage requires a corresponding increase in the minimum salaries for exempt employees (i.e., professional, administrative, executive exemptions) to \$68,640 per year (i.e., at least two times the state minimum wage).

Laura McHugh, a senior partner at women-owned Duggan McHugh Law Corporation, has been representing companies in employment and labor law matters for over 25 years. Laura can be contacted at laura@dugganmchugh.com.

Katie Collins is a partner at Duggan McHugh Law Corporation, handling employment law advice and counsel and litigation matters exclusively for employers. Katie can be contacted at katie@dugganmchugh.com.

Voters Rejected a Higher Minimum Wage

California voters narrowly rejected Proposition 32, which would have raised minimum wage to \$18 an hour for employers with more than 25 employees and \$17 an hour for smaller employers.

Anti-Discrimination Laws

SB 110: Restrictions on Requiring Driver's Licenses When Hiring

SB 100 amended the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) to make it an unlawful employment practice to include statements about the need for a driver's license in a job advertisement, posting, application, or similar material. The law is intended to prevent discrimination against applicants who do not drive. Employers may only include such statements if they reasonably expect driving to be one of the job functions and believe that using an alternative form of transportation (e.g., carpooling, bicycling, walking, ride-hailing

services, taxis or public transportation) would not be comparable in travel time or cost to the employer.

SB 1137: Protection for "Intersectionality" of Protected Classes

SB 1137 bans discrimination under FEHA based on the combination, or "intersectionality," of two or more protected classes. While California laws have long prohibited discrimination and harassment based on an *individual* protected class, or characteristics, such as race, sex, national origin, age, etc., they now also apply where two or more of the protected characteristics result in a unique form of discrimination. This law affirms a court ruling involving a female Asian professor that found that discrimination may be directed at a combination of protected classes beyond a single category.

AB 1815: Revisions to CROWN Act

AB 1815 amends the definition of "race" in the anti-discrimina-

tion provisions of the Government Code. Race is now defined as “inclusive of traits associated with race, including but not limited to hair texture and protective hairstyles.” Protective hairstyles “include but are not limited to such hairstyles as braids, locs, and twists.” California was the first state, in 2019, to clarify that the definition of race discrimination included hairstyles under the CROWN Act.

SB 1340: Local Enforcement of Civil Rights

SB 1340 mandates the Civil Rights Department (CRD) to collaborate with local agencies to enforce unlawful employment practice violations. Any city, county, or locality can enforce any local law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, age, reproductive health decision making or sexual orientation, if certain requirements are met, including a requirement that local enforcement is pursuant to a local law that is at least protective as FEHA. The law tolls the one-year statute of limitations for filing a complaint in court for as long as the local entity enforcement proceedings continue.

Leave and Benefit Laws

AB 2499: Expansion of Workplace Protections for Employee Crime Victims

Existing law provides crime victims with employment protections, including safety accommodations and leave, to allow them to recover and appear in court, and is enforced by the Department of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE), through the Labor Commissioner. AB 2499 recasts these protections under FEHA and places enforcement with the CRD. It expands the list of crimes for which employees

can take time off and replaces the terms “crime or abuse” and “domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking” with the broader term “qualifying acts of violence,” which applies regardless of an arrest, prosecution or conviction. “Qualifying acts of violence” (QAV) are defined as:

- domestic violence;
- sexual assault;
- stalking; or
- any act, conduct, or pattern of conduct that includes (i) bodily injury or death to another; (ii) brandishing, exhibiting, or drawing a firearm or other dangerous weapon; or (iii) a perceived or actual threat to use force against another to cause physical injury or death.

The new law protects not only employee victims, but also their “family members” as defined by FEHA to include an employee’s “child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner... or designated person.” Paid sick leave may be used to cover qualifying time off. A new notice requirement (to be developed by the CRD) must be given to employees upon hire, annually, upon request, and any time the employer becomes aware that an employee or their family member is a victim of a QAV.

AB 2123: Paid Family Leave – Requiring Use of Vacation No Longer Allowed

AB 2123 eliminates the ability of employers to require employees to use up to two weeks of accrued vacation time before they may access California’s Paid Family Leave Program (PFL) benefits. California’s PFL, administered through the Employment Development Department (EDD), provides wage replacement benefits to workers who take time off to care for seriously ill family members, bond with a minor child, or help family members called to active duty.

General Employment Laws

SB 988: Expanded Protections for Freelance Workers

With the growth of the gig economy, SB 988, the Freelance Worker Protection Act (FWPA), provides basic labor protections for freelance workers, including mandatory contracts for and the right to be paid on time and in full. Under the new law, a “freelance worker” is defined as:

1. An individual worker (i.e., not part of a company or collective entity) whether or not incorporated or employing a trade name
2. Hired or retained as a bona fide independent contractor by a hiring party to provide “professional services”
3. For \$250 or more, whether for a single project or for all work engaged during the immediately preceding 120 days

“Professional services” includes multiple categories of freelance style work such as marketing, human resources, graphic design, grant writing, photography, estheticians, and others, as set forth in Labor Code section 2778(b)(2). Once a freelancer has started providing services, the hiring entity cannot require the freelancer to accept less compensation or provide more services than agreed upon to receive timely payment. The law also prohibits retaliation against freelancers who pursue their rights under their contract.

SB 399: Ban of “Captive Audience” Meetings

SB 399 enacts the union-backed bill, the California Worker Freedom from Employer Intimidation Act, which prohibits employers from requiring employees to attending mandatory meetings on religious or political matters, including anti-unionization. Employers may not terminate, dis-

criminate, retaliate, or take any other adverse action against employees who refuse to attend these meetings. “Political matters” are defined as any matter “relating to elections for political office, political parties, legislation, regulation, and the decision to join or support any political party or political or labor organization.”

Employees scheduled to work during these meetings must be paid for their time, regardless of whether they attend the meeting. Employers can still hold meetings to share legally required and job-related information and certain exceptions apply to religious and political organizations.

AB 3234: Voluntary Social Compliance Audits

AB 3234 requires employers to make certain disclosures if they voluntarily audit their operations for the involvement of child labor. Such employers who conduct “social compliance audits” have new reporting obligations including posting a link on their website to a report detailing the audit findings.

Industry Specific Laws

AB 1228: Fast Food Workers Minimum Wage

AB 1228 requires that certain fast-food workers must be paid at least \$20.00 per hour as of April 1, 2024.

SB 525: Health Care Minimum Wage

Effective October 16, 2024, SB 525 created various minimum wages for “covered healthcare employees,” based on the classification of the employer’s facility:

- Large employers and integrated health care systems: \$23/hour
- Hospitals: \$18/hour
- Clinics: \$21/hour
- All other health facilities: \$21/hour

Exempt covered health care employees must be paid a monthly



minimum salary of 1.5 times the applicable healthcare minimum wage, or 2 times California’s minimum wage, whichever is greater.

AB 1034: PAGA Exemption Extended for Certain Construction Industry Employees Covered By Collective Bargaining Agreements

Under existing law, an exemption from the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) is available for employees in the construction industry if they are covered under a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) that meets certain requirements. AB 1034 extends this exemption for a CBA that does all the following:

- Explicitly covers wages, hours of work, and working conditions;
- Provides premium wage rates for all overtime hours worked;
- Ensures employees receive a regular hourly pay rate of at least 30% more than the state minimum wage; and
- Contains a grievance and binding arbitration procedure to address Labor Code violations.

The exemption was temporary and only applied to CBAs in effect before January 1, 2025 or that expired by January 1, 2028. AB 1034 extends the exemption another 13 years to January 1, 2038, and then it will be repealed.

SB 1089: New Obligations for Grocery Stores and Pharmacies That Plan to Close

SB 1089 imposes new obligations for employers operating grocery stores and pharmacies (covered establishments) planning to close. These establishments are now required to provide 45-day written notice to specified entities, including employees and their representatives, and the EDD. Employers with 5 or fewer employees must provide at least 30 days’ written notice before closure. Exemptions apply for businesses owning 15 or fewer pharmacies nationwide or closures due to natural disasters or acts of war. The new law imposes significant operational and compliance duties on employers, including advanced planning and engagement with state and local agencies.

SB 1105: Sick Leave Expansion for Agricultural Employees

Covered employers must now allow agricultural workers to use paid sick leave when they 1) work outside, and 2) request sick leave to avoid smoke, heat, or flooding conditions created by a local or state emergency, including for preventive care due to their work or such conditions. The new law defines “agricultural employee” as a person employed under Wage Orders 8, 13 and 14. 🛠️

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Aaron Duncan Jr. Joins the Sacramento County Bar Association as a Student Member: *A Passion for Justice, Community, and Empowerment*

By Filomena Yeroshek



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Filomena Yeroshek is the Dean of Lincoln Law School. She can be reached at fyeroshek@lincolnlaw.edu.

Aaron Duncan Jr., a new student member of the Sacramento County Bar Association, a third-year evening student at Lincoln Law School of Sacramento, brings an inspiring story of resilience, determination, and a deep commitment to helping others. From overcoming the toughest of circumstances in Los Angeles to pursuing a career in law, Duncan's journey is nothing short of extraordinary. His entry into the legal field is not just about personal achievement – it's about creating meaningful change, empowering families, and giving back to the community.

A Journey Rooted in Resilience

Born and raised in the unforgiving streets of Los Angeles, Duncan's childhood was marked by hardship. As he puts it, "either the

gangs get you, or the police do." Facing the challenges of homelessness, living in shelters, and enduring difficult personal circumstances, Duncan learned early on what it meant to fight for survival.

"Growing up, I had no clue what I wanted to do in life," says Duncan. "I only knew that I wanted to provide and serve others. For me, providing for my family was always a top priority."

His resilience and determination led him to enlist in the United States Army in 2008, where he further honed his leadership skills, developed a strong sense of responsibility, and learned the importance of leading by example. These life lessons would set the foundation for his next step: pursuing a career in law.

From Correctional Officer to Aspiring Lawyer

After his military service, Duncan worked at the Lea County Correctional Facility as a Classification Officer, where he discovered his passion for law. Over the years, this interest deepened, leading him to earn his degree in Criminal Justice while juggling work and family responsibilities. His role as a Grievance Officer allowed him to

dive deep into legal cases and policies, further fueling his desire to become a lawyer.

Duncan's commitment to justice is driven by personal experience. "I've gone through two divorces, fought for visitation rights, and had to navigate the family judicial system on my own. It's often stacked against fathers, especially in communities like mine," he shares.

His work with incarcerated individuals also opened his eyes to the systemic flaws within the criminal justice system. "I saw so many men who deserved a second chance, but the system failed them. Some of them, like a 73-year-old man serving time for a crime with an excessively harsh sentence, were simply victims of an unfair system," Duncan explains. "That's when I decided to take matters into my own hands and become the change I wanted to see."

A Commitment to Family and Community

Duncan's passion for law is intricately tied to his family and his community. As a father of seven, including two sets of twins, he understands firsthand the challenges



Summer Externship at the Sacramento County Superior Court with Commissioner Heath Langle.



Aaron and his lovely wife Rozelle.



Aaron and his children attending summer league games at Chase Arena in San Francisco.



Father's Day 2022.

fathers face in navigating family law. His own struggles with child custody and visitation rights have driven him to advocate for fathers who feel powerless in a system that often overlooks their rights.

"Men don't know their rights. They don't know how to fight for them," says Duncan. "I want to be the voice for fathers who are lost in the system, helping them understand that they too have a right to be involved in their children's lives."

His goal is to work as a family law attorney, helping fathers secure access to their children and dismantling the systems that undermine family structures. He believes that children need both their mothers and fathers to thrive, and he is committed to ensuring fathers have the support and legal guidance they need to stay engaged in their children's lives.

Networking and Giving Back: Key to Duncan's Vision

Duncan is also a firm believer in the power of networking, particularly when it comes to making a meaningful impact in the community. He is the current President of the Black Law Student Association (BLSA) at Lincoln and a member of the Delta Theta Phi legal fraternity. He is very involved on campus and is a true leader to his peers. He sees the SCBA as an essential part of his journey, not just for personal growth but for building relation-

ships that will allow him to better serve the families and individuals he hopes to help. In the summer of 2024, he had the privilege of a summer externship with the Sacramento County Superior Court. He worked directly with Commissioner Heath Langle doing legal research and drafting bench memorandums and case briefs.

"I believe networking is critical because it's not just about what you know; it's about who you know," he explains. "By connecting with others in the legal field, I can learn more, grow my practice, and ultimately serve my community in a more impactful way."

Duncan views his legal career as a way to give back to the community that shaped him. He is passionate about creating opportunities for others, especially young men who may feel disconnected from their potential. "There are so many young black boys being pushed into the prison system instead of the education system. In Sacramento, like many cities, there is a lack of programs that focus on the youth and education. I want to change that."

The Indomitable Spirit

What sets Duncan apart is not just his legal acumen but his unshakeable drive. "Indomitable" is a word that resonates deeply with him, a term that his pastor once used to describe him. It reflects a spirit that cannot be broken, no

matter the challenges. Duncan's commitment to helping others is a testament to that resilience. He is focused, determined, and unwilling to let any obstacle deter him from his mission.

"I shall, I will, I must," Duncan says, quoting motivational speaker Dr. Eric Thomas. "I shall become a lawyer. I will help fathers and families in need. I must endure the rigorous years of law school to make a difference."

Through it all, his unwavering focus on community involvement and justice for those who have been overlooked or marginalized remains his driving force.

Looking Ahead

As Duncan embarks on this next chapter as a student member of the SCBA, he carries with him a wealth of life experience, a passion for justice, and a profound desire to give back. Whether through advocating for fathers' rights, helping dismantle unjust systems, or simply being a positive influence in the lives of others, Duncan is committed to making a lasting impact in both the legal field and his community.

His story is a powerful reminder that even in the face of adversity, it's possible to rise, rebuild, and ultimately create positive change. Through his work as an attorney, Duncan hopes to leave a legacy of empowerment, justice, and compassion – helping others rise to their own potential, just as he has. 🗡️

A Lifetime of Service: Honoring Pro Bono Volunteer, **John Davis**

By Gary F. Smith



Gary F. Smith has been Executive Director of Legal Services of Northern California and Capital Pro Bono since 1999. He can be reached at gsmith@lsnc.net.



John Davis.

I first met **John Davis** over three decades ago when I served as Managing Attorney of the Yolo County office of Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC). LSNC, which was incorporated in 1956 as the Legal Aid Society of Sacramento County, is a non-profit law organization providing

free civil legal services to low-income people and communities in 23 counties in Northern California, and along with our pro bono sister organization, Capital Pro Bono, we have long appreciated the support of the SCBA.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, LSNC represented low-income clients in a complex, long-running, and extremely acrimonious series of lawsuits over affordable housing and land use issues in Yolo County. Our primary opponents were local government entities, but the litigation swept in several market-rate housing corporations with interest in developing some of the land at issue. John, then a partner at Lewis, D'Amato, Brisbois and Bisgaard, represented one of those developers.

John's client was essentially caught in the middle of a much larger policy dispute over affordable housing development, but John zealously advocated to protect his client's interests, while remaining unfailingly professional and courteous during some very bitter confrontations in that litigation. My co-counsel and I (**Dave Jones**, then a

LSNC staff attorney, who went on to a distinguished public service career) greatly appreciated John's efforts, over many years of litigation and settlement negotiations, to be a voice of reason, amongst many unreasonable ones (including our own, no doubt, from time to time) that ultimately helped produce a successful resolution of that dispute.

Around the year 2000, after John retired from private practice, I received a call from him inviting me to lunch. I hadn't heard from him since the Yolo County litigation, and I had a fleeting concern he was calling about some problem with our old settlement agreement. In fact, he told me that his experience with our organization during that litigation sparked a deep respect for our mission and our commitment to providing legal assistance to the poor, and that he wanted to put his broad array of legal experience to use as a volunteer for LSNC. I gratefully accepted both the lunch and his offer to join LSNC as a pro bono attorney.

I certainly did not expect on that afternoon that John's pro bono services

to LSNC, Capital Pro Bono, and many, many organizational clients would span nearly 25 years. John not only served as a (nearly) full time pro bono staff attorney in our Sacramento office, but because of his extensive background in real estate, small business, and transactional law, which are subject areas quite foreign to many legal aid lawyers, we were able to offer legal assistance to many non-profit, community-based organizations with which LSNC has partnerships, not only in the Sacramento region but throughout our vast Northern California service area. Most of his clients over the years were involved in affordable housing development efforts (including shelters for unhoused persons), and his services ranged from assisting with the actual incorporation of the organization, to advice on business and structural issues within the organization, and drafting contracts with funders and other partners in the community (including local government entities). But the reach of his pro bono work for clients was broad.

Once I received a letter from the director of a small non-profit in Yolo County, which provided free services to very small “sustainable” cotton farmers in rural California. She expressed her gratitude for John’s expert assistance in some complex corporate issues that arose, saying “John was like a lifesaver to my organization and me and I can’t express my appreciation for his expert advice, moral support, and responsiveness to our businesses predicaments.” This kind of specialized legal assistance, rare in our legal aid world, was only possible because of John’s expertise and commitment.

John’s pro bono work at LSNC went far beyond the crucial legal services he provided to our clients, as described above. He served as a colleague, mentor, and friend to a generation of LSNC staff in the Sacramento office. Many of us (including me) learned important lessons in lawyering from our work with John.



John Davis and his companion Tristan.

In 2000, John was appointed to the Board of Directors of LSNC and CPB, serving as treasurer of both organizations for 24 years. In that capacity, he provided oversight of the critical functions of both programs, and he helped guide us safely through a number of severe challenges, including federal and state funding shortfalls and, of course, the pandemic.

Apart from his wonderful work for clients, one of LSNC’s deputy directors, **Amy Williams**, who oversaw John’s pro bono cases for many years, describes John’s contribution to the atmosphere and morale of our workplaces:

“What sets John apart, even more than his transactional law expertise, is his positivity. Regardless of the pressures that often accompany legal aid work, John approaches each day with a calm demeanor and warm smile. He has an uncanny ability to uplift those around him, transforming even the most challenging days into opportunities for growth and joy. He demonstrates that maintaining a

good attitude is not just a choice but a cornerstone of resilience.”


In a letter John once wrote (at my request) to LSNC and CPB supporters in the depths of the Great Recession, he spoke from his heart about his commitment to his pro bono practice:

“In this terrible recession we are serving a large number of people who have worked hard all of their lives but now face particularly tough times and desperately need the legal help that only we can give them.”

He concluded with his characteristic enthusiasm: “I just love this work! I get a boost out of giving free legal advice to help our underpaid staff who are working their butts off to improve our communities.”

In 1999, **Justice Sandra Day O’Connor**, commenting in a law review article on the unique ethical obligation which our legal profession imposes upon its members, to provide some portion of their services free of charge to those who cannot afford them, said:

“Certainly, life as a lawyer is a bit more complex today than it was a century ago, the ever-increasing pressures of the legal marketplace... have made fulfilling the responsibilities of community service quite difficult. But public service marks the difference between a business and a profession. While a business can afford to focus solely on profits, a profession cannot. It must devote itself first to the community it is responsible to serve. I can imagine no greater duty than fulfilling this obligation. And I can imagine no greater pleasure.”

John has modeled the spirit of our profession’s public service obligation and commitment. I am proud and honored to have worked alongside him for so many years, and I know he is only beginning a whole series of new adventures in his “retirement” from LSNC. 

What Must You Report to the State Bar (Or Anyone Else) Regarding Your Professional Conduct and/or Discipline?

By Gayle L. Eskridge



Every attorney surely knows they are required to keep the State Bar informed of their basic contact information, website address, employment, MCLE compliance, all specialties in which they are certified, any other jurisdictions in which they are admitted and the dates of their admission, and information relating to client trust account compliance. What else are attorneys required to report to the State Bar, or report to someone else regarding disciplinary action taken by the State Bar? You may be surprised.

Mandatory Reporting to the State Bar

Current Address

All attorneys must keep the State Bar informed of their current office address and telephone number or, if no office is maintained, the address to be used for State Bar purposes or purposes of the agency charged with attorney discipline. Attorneys must notify the State Bar of any change in this information within 30 days. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6002.1(a).]

Gayle L. Eskridge is a full-time arbitrator and mediator in Sacramento County and the principal of Eskridge Law & Mediation. Gayle serves as a Director of the Sacramento County Bar Association, on the leadership committees of the Labor and Employment Law Section and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Law Section of the SCBA, and on the Bylaws and MCLE committees.

Licensing in Another Jurisdiction

Attorneys who have been newly licensed in another state or federal jurisdiction, or had their license in another jurisdiction terminated, must report it to the State Bar by February 1 of the following year. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6002.1(1)(a); Cal. Rules of Court, rule 9.9(a)(1).]

Criminal Actions

Attorneys must file an Attorney's Report of Criminal Proceedings with the State Bar to report any of the following pursuant to Business & Professions Code §6068(o)(4) & (5): the bringing of an indictment or information charging a felony; or the conviction of the attorney, including any verdict of guilty, or plea of guilty or no contest, of a felony, or a misdemeanor committed in the course of the practice of law, or in a manner in which a cli-

ent of the attorney was the victim, or a necessary element of which, as determined by the statutory or common law definition of the misdemeanor, involves improper conduct of an attorney, including dishonesty or other moral turpitude, or an attempt or a conspiracy or solicitation of another to commit a felony or a misdemeanor of that type. (Arrests are not required to be reported to the State Bar.)

Employment and Termination of an Attorney who is not Eligible to Practice

Prior to or at the time of employing, associating in practice with, or assisting a person the lawyer knows or reasonably should know is an ineligible person, attorneys must serve upon the State Bar written notice of the employment, including a full description of such

person's current bar status. When the attorney no longer employs, associates in practice with, or assists the ineligible person, the attorney shall promptly serve upon the State Bar written notice of the termination. The form to be used for this is the Notice of Employment/Termination of a Disbarred, Resigned, Suspended, or Involuntarily Inactive Attorney. [Rules of Prof. Conduct, rule 5.3.1(d).]

Judicial Sanctions

Attorneys must file an Attorney's Report of Judicial Sanctions with the State Bar to report any judicial sanctions except those for failure to make discovery or monetary sanctions less than \$1,000. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6086(o)(3).] The requirement to report sanctions is **not** stayed while a sanctions order is on appeal. [See *In the Matter of Respondent Y* (Review Dept. 1998) 3 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 862, 866-867.]

Lawsuits and Settlements

Attorneys must file an Attorney's Report of the Filing of Three or More Lawsuits in a 12-month Period for Malpractice or Other Wrongful Conduct with the State Bar to report the filing of three or more lawsuits within a 12-month period against themselves, their firm, or their law corporation, for malpractice or for wrongful conduct committed in their professional capacity as an attorney. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6068(o)(1).]

Attorneys must file an Attorney's Report of Judgment for Fraud, Misrepresentation, Breach of Fiduciary Duty or Gross Negligence with the State Bar to report the entry of a judgment against them, their firm, or law corporation, in a civil action for: fraud, misrepresentation, breach of fiduciary duty, or gross negligence in a professional capacity as an attorney. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6068(o)(2).] Arguably, a judgment for professional negligence which is not "gross" negligence is not re-

quired to be reported.

Attorneys must report to the State Bar any settlement or arbitration award for fraud, misrepresentation, breach of fiduciary duty, or negligence in a professional capacity if they are not covered by professional liability insurance. This even applies to cases which were settled for nuisance value. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6086.8(b) & (c).] This obligation does not require "gross negligence." Regular negligence is all that is required in order to trigger this reporting requirement.

Professional Discipline

Attorneys must file an Attorney's Report of Discipline by Professional or Occupational Disciplinary Agency with the State Bar whenever they, or their firm or law corporation, are disciplined by *any* professional or occupational disciplinary agency or licensing board, *whether in California or elsewhere*, and even if the attorney was acting in a non-attorney capacity. The notice must include the nature and date of any discipline imposed, including the terms and conditions of any probation imposed and, if suspended or disbarred in another jurisdiction, the date of any reinstatement in that jurisdiction. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6002.1(a)(4) and 6068(o)(6).] (Disciplinary agencies include such things as the Department of Real Estate, the California Medical Board, and the California Contractor's Licensing Board, or the California Board of Accountancy.)

Former members of the State Bar who have been ordered by the Supreme Court to comply with Rule 9.20 of the California Rules of Court shall maintain on the official membership records of the State Bar their current address and within 10 days after any change therein, shall file a change of address with the membership records office of the State Bar until such time as the former member is no longer subject to the order. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6002.1(b).]

Reversal of Judgment in a Proceeding for Professional Misconduct

Attorneys must file an Attorney's Report of Reversal of Judgment Upon Findings of Attorney Misconduct with the State Bar to report any reversal of a judgment in a civil or criminal proceeding based in whole or in part on professional misconduct, gross incompetence, or willful misrepresentation. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6068(o)(7).]

It is also important to keep the following in mind:

- Failure to file a required report with the State Bar may itself serve as a basis for discipline. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6068(o)(10).]
- The general requirement is that mandatory reports to the State Bar must be made within 30 days of the time the attorney has knowledge of the triggering event, although there are a few exceptions. [Bus. & Prof. Code §6002.1(b).]
- Even when someone other than the attorney (such as a judge, prosecutor, or the insurance commissioner) is required to report an event to the State Bar, the affected attorney is still required to separately make a report.

Mandatory Reporting to Entities or Persons other than the State Bar

Violations under Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 8.4.1 (Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation) also require notification. Upon being issued a notice of disciplinary charge under Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 8.4.1(a), an attorney must submit a report to the California Civil Rights Department (formerly the Department of Fair Employment and Housing) and the United States Department of Justice, Coordina-

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California's New Pro Bono Reporting Requirement

By Larry Doyle



Larry Doyle is a veteran with decades of experience with the California Legislature, including 18 years as Chief Legislative Counsel for the California State Bar. He is also a former member of the State Bar's Committee on Professional Responsibility and Conduct and is currently a staffer for the SCBA. He can be reached at larry.doyle@sacbar.org.

Everybody loves pro bono. Not only do pro bono legal services provide essential assistance to people who cannot afford representation, they highlight the legal community's commitment to service.

The ABA's Model Rules of Professional Conduct include Rule 6.1 which says that attorneys have a "professional responsibility" to provide legal services to those unable to pay, and that a "lawyer should aspire to render at least (50) hours of pro bono publico legal services per year." All states have a counterpart to this rule, either directly or in spirit.

California doesn't have a direct counterpart to 6.1 in its Rules of Professional Conduct – one was not included in the 2018 overhaul of the rules developed by the Bar and submitted to the Supreme Court. However, California does have Business and Professions Code §6073, which does basically the same thing, except it provides the option of meeting the goal with an appropriate financial contribution. Section 6073 states:

It has been the tradition of those learned in the law and

licensed to practice law in this state to provide voluntary pro bono legal services to those who cannot afford the help of a lawyer. Every lawyer authorized and privileged to practice law in California is expected to make a contribution. (A) lawyer may . . . fulfill his or her individual pro bono ethical commitment, in part, by providing financial support to organizations providing free legal services to persons of limited means.

However, while pro bono service has historically been encouraged, it has not yet been made mandatory, despite calls for a mandatory service requirement from some notable individuals, including Supreme Court Justice **Elena Kagan**.

New Jersey has come the closest to mandating pro bono services with its *Madden v. Delran* system of requiring attorneys to represent indigent defendants without pay when public defenders aren't given the resources. The system is being challenged on the grounds that it exposes lawyers to potential malpractice claims and ethics grievances for representing clients

in cases outside their expertise.

New York imposes a similar mandatory pro bono burden, requiring applicants for a law license to complete 50 hours of pro bono service before they can be admitted to practice. But once admitted to the Bar, these attorneys can forget civic responsibility and be as profit-motivated as anyone else.

California came close to enacting a similar requirement in 2016, but then-Governor **Jerry Brown** vetoed SB 1257 by then-Senator **Marty Block**, which would have mirrored the New York requirements. Brown cited the bill's financial burden on law students as his principal reason for vetoing the bill.

For other states, the trend has been to encourage or require the reporting of pro bono hours provided by individual lawyers, with the object of getting a better understanding of how and where those hours are given and where more are needed.

This year, California joins the ranks of those states that require reporting of pro bono hours. Late last September, Governor **Gavin Newsom** signed into law AB 2505

by Assemblymember **Jesse Gabriel**, a bill that will require a hefty percentage of California lawyers (everyone but public interest lawyers, lawyers employed full-time by, or elected officials of, the State of California or subdivisions thereof, and those lawyers whose employers won't let them provide pro bono services) to report their donated hours to the State Bar.

The reporting requirement doesn't officially begin until 2026 for pro bono hours donated in 2025. However, the Bar has provided the opportunity for a "trial run" for interested lawyers who have kept good pro bono records for the past calendar year "to better understand attorneys' commitment to providing pro bono and reduced fee legal services to low-income Californians."

At this point, the "trial run" isn't easy to find. The attorney needs to log into their "My State Bar Profile" on the Bar's website, call up the "Compliance Tracker" dashboard, and click on "Attorney Record Verification." There, below the many opportunities to correct or improve upon the information in one's State Bar Profile is the place to record pro bono hours or hours for which a

reduced fee was charged. The Bar says that when reporting becomes mandatory, the pro bono record section will move to the mandatory reporting section.

The new law requires the State Bar to retain and maintain the reported information for purposes of historical record for at least five years. It also makes the reported information confidential and exempt from disclosure as a public record, though it would authorize the Bar to publish "aggregated and anonymized reports based on that information." Under the new law, the failure of a licensee to comply "cannot be grounds for disciplinary or administrative recourse," and there is a "decline to answer" option on the reporting form.

The Legislature also made clear that the new system is like an orphan child of the State Bar as far as funding is concerned, specifying in the legislation that the Bar cannot use any moneys received through the annual licensing fees paid by attorneys to cover the cost of implementing it. Funding should not be a real problem, however, given the Bar's access to voluntary funds earmarked for legal services. 🦋

Continued from page 25

tion and Review Section. Upon being issued a notice of disciplinary charge under Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 8.4.1(b), an attorney must submit a report to the California Civil Rights Department and the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Please note that this rule applies to *all attorneys* – not just attorneys who are working in the field of discrimination and harassment and dealing with one of these agencies. [Rules of Prof. Conduct, rule 8.4.1.]

When being considered for appointment as a potential arbitrator an attorney must disclose:

- If they have been disbarred.
- If within the preceding 10 years public discipline other than disbarment has been imposed on them.
- If they have resigned their membership in the State Bar while public or private disciplinary charges were pending.

[California Standards for Neutral Arbitrators in Contractual Arbitration; Code Civ. Proc. §1281.9.]

The moral of the story here is that it's best to stay out of trouble in order to avoid all these reporting requirements! 🦋



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2024 Unity Bar Dinner

By My Tien Doan



My Tien Doan is a deputy city attorney for the City of Roseville. She is the current president of the Asian/Pacific Bar Association of Sacramento and the chair of the 2024 Unity Bar Dinner. She can be reached at mytiendoan@gmail.com.

On October 1, 2024, the Asian/Pacific Bar Association of Sacramento hosted the 35th Annual Unity Bar Dinner at the Doubletree Hotel in Sacramento. Over 375 attorneys, judges, law students, and legal professionals came together to celebrate the rich diversity and achievements of the Sacramento legal community. The Unity Bar of Sacramento was the first unity bar to be formed in California in 1987 with the purpose of increasing diversity on the bench. Since that time, there has been a significant increase in diverse judges and the Unity Bar of Sacramento continues to endorse countless diverse and exceptionally well-qualified judicial candidates. Notably, there were over 50 dignitaries and judges from all over California in attendance, many of whom were endorsed by the Unity Bar. Also in attendance were the three founders of the Unity Bar: Judicial Appointments Secretary **Luis Cespedes**, **Jerry Chong**, and Judge **Renard Shepard** (Ret.).

The Unity Bar of Sacramento has

continued to grow over the years and now consists of nine affiliate bar associations, including the Asian/Pacific Bar Association of Sacramento (ABAS), Cruz Reynoso Bar Association (CRBA), Leonard M. Friedman Bar Association (LMFBA), Sacramento Filipino American Lawyers Association (SacFALA), SacLEGAL, South Asian Bar Association of Sacramento (SABA), Wiley M. Manuel Bar Association (WMBA), Women Lawyers of Sacramento (WLS), and the newly formed association,

the Disability Bar Association of Sacramento (DIBAS).

The theme was the Mid-Autumn Festival, which is celebrated by many East and Southeast Asian cultures to pray and give thanks for a good harvest. This festival is a profound symbol of, among many things, unity. Like the festival, the Unity Bar Dinner is a celebration by people of all backgrounds, from all parts of our community and is a reminder of the power of welcoming and accepting others and embracing our rich diversity. And in the



My Tien Doan moderates a fireside chat with Justice Goodwin Liu.



Judge Sean Riordan, Justice Goodwin Liu, Yang-Ching Liu, Justice Ron Robie, Judge Chi Soo Kim, Justice Elena Duarte, Justice Aimee Feinberg.

spirit of diversity, many attendees wore cultural attire, and the evening featured several API-owned businesses and entertainers.

The featured event of the evening was a fireside chat with Justice **Goodwin H. Liu** of the California Supreme Court, moderated by ABAS President, **My Tien Doan**. Justice Liu is a lifetime public servant and a champion for diversity and equal access to education and the legal profession. Justice Liu spoke (with humility and humor) about his experience growing up as an Asian American child in Sacramento, about whether he thought there has been sufficient efforts to diversify the legal profession, his advice to those still figuring out their career path and dealing with imposter syndrome, and what he enjoyed doing in his free time. The Sacramento legal community is grateful to Justice Liu for his contributions to the legal field and his support of diversity and inclusion.

Each year, the affiliate bar associations award scholarships to local law students and recognize individuals for their contributions to the community. The 2024 scholarship recipients are **James Chuong** (3L, McGeorge), **Min Ji Goo** (3L, UC Davis), **Marcos Guevara** (3L,

McGeorge), **Julissa De Haro** (3L, UC Davis), **Zachary Schiffer** (3L, McGeorge), **Betsy Bush** (2L, McGeorge), **Gitty Shah** (2L, Lincoln), **Maya Alexandria** (3L, McGeorge), **Jason Braun** (2L, UC Davis), **Jasdeep Kaur Hothi** (3L, McGeorge), **Marion Malone** (2L, Lincoln), and **Saleshia Ellis** (2L, UC Davis). The 2024 Community Service Award recipients include **John Tan**, Well-spring Women's Center, **Judge Andi Mudryk**, Jewish Community Relations Council, Placer LGBTQ+ Center, Asian Resources, Inc., International Rescue Committee, City of Refugee Sacramento, and

Single Mom Strong, Inc.

This spectacular event was made possible through the dedication and passion of the ABAS Internal Planning Committee (My Tien Doan, **Kishwer Vikaas**, **John Tan**, **Andrew Mahinay**, **Hollis Kulwin**, **Fay Saechao**, and **Jenny Woo**) and the affiliate bar representatives: (My Tien Doan (ABAS), Hon. **Robert Artuz** (CRBA), **Jill Telfer** (DI-BAS), **Hollis Kulwin** (LMFBA), **Serena Warner** (SacFALA), **Jorge Gaitan** (SacLEGAL), **Aparna Agnihotri** (SABA), **Richard Owen** (WMBA), and **Vanessa Hunter** (WLS)).



John Tan, Kishwer Vikaas, My Tien Doan, Jenny Woo, and Fay Saechao.

SCBA

Annual Meeting 2024

Over 300 SCBA members and local judges attended the 2024 SCBA Annual Meeting at the Sheraton Grand Hotel on December 6, 2024. President Connor Olson led the meeting, reported on the SCBA's many successes, and announced the 2025 SCBA Board of Directors, sworn in by the Hon. Dena M. Coggins, United States District Judge for the Eastern District. Heather Tiffie presented Helen Geoffroy with the Capital Pro Bono Award of the Year. Thien Ho and Fiona Ma presented Ognian Gavrillov with the SCBA Nancy Sheehan Distinguished Attorney of the Year for 2024. Sacramento Lawyer magazine's Editor-In-Chief, Ellen Arabian-Lee, was awarded the 2024 President's Award by Connor Olson, who also introduced the SCBA's new Executive Director, Tom Roberts. And finally, the Hon. Myrllys Stockdale Coleman introduced the SCBA's 2025 President-Elect, Angelina Ray.

Photos by Jessica Wilson Photography





Valentine Run/Walk, Race for Justice

By Nanette Aubut

Photos by Kevin Graft Photography



Nanette Aubut,
Development Director,
Legal Services of
Northern California.

The 22nd Annual Valentine Run/Walk, Race for Justice was a resounding success! Cool but sunny weather graced the event on Saturday, February 8, allowing participants to enjoy a fantastic morning. For 22 years, this event has raised funds to benefit Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC), the non-profit legal aid provider for Sacramento County and 22 other Northern California counties. The annual run provides a unique opportunity for attorneys and legal professionals to connect with colleagues, friends, and family while supporting legal aid for low-income community members. From serious runners in the 4-mile timed race, to casual walkers enjoying the

1.8-mile untimed event and kids participating in their own races, the Valentine Run welcomed everyone. Local attorneys also competed in the 4-mile timed race for Sacramento's Fastest Attorney title. The event's family-friendly atmosphere embraced runners, walkers, wheelchair users, strollers, and even canine companions.

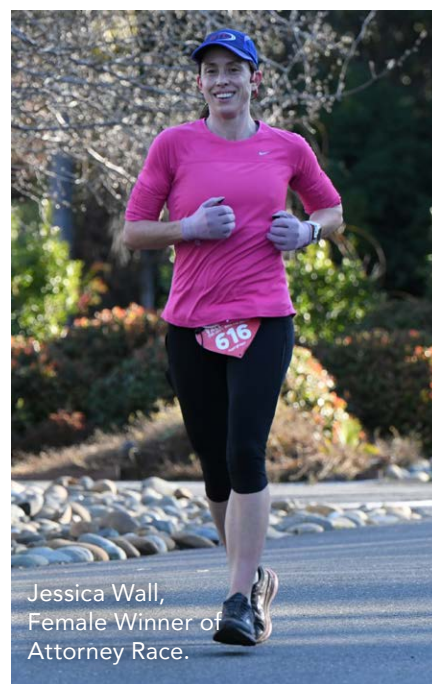
LSNC thanks its 22 sponsors, including Gold sponsors Mur-

phy Austin and Schoenfeld LLP, Seyfarth Shaw LLP, and Dignity Health, whose generous support made this event possible.

Both people and dogs dressed up in Valentine-themed clothing to compete for the best-dressed award. **Axel LaPlante** won the under-18 best-dressed category for the second year in a row! **Nathan Bates** won the over-18 best-dressed prize. **Paul Lewis, Melissa Penwell** and **Christina Nokes** won the



James Stanley, ABAS
Vice President, Male
Winner Attorney
Race.



Jessica Wall,
Female Winner of
Attorney Race.



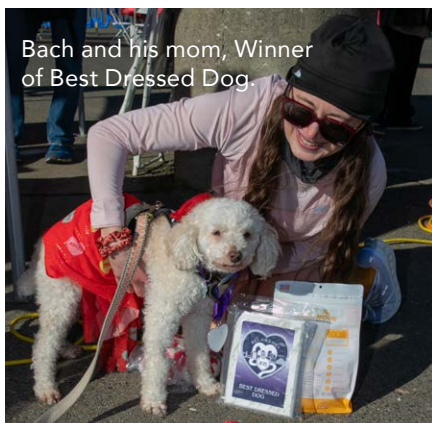
Team Murphy Austin Adams and Schoenfeld LLP.



Gators Legal Aid Congregation.



Ainsley's Angels.



Bach and his mom, Winner of Best Dressed Dog.



Best dressed under 18 Axel LaPlante.

best-dressed team, and the best-dressed "paw pal" was Bach.

The overall race winners were **Chikara Omine**, male, with a time of 20:24, and **Lauren Misenti**, female, with a 24.18 time. Ainsley's Angels' **Chris Arthur** and **Audrua Sysum** with a time of 42:20, were winners of the adaptive wheelchair category. Overall winners of the attorney race were **Jessica Wall**, female, at 29.11, and **James Stanley**, Vice President of ABAS, male, with a 24.44.

"It was a beautiful day for the run, and so great to see so many old friends and supporters. Now, more than ever, vulnerable people and communities need our legal help, and all the sponsors and par-

ticipants in the Run provide critical support for that work. Thanks so much to all of you!" said LSNC Executive Director, **Gary F. Smith**.

LSNC extends its sincere gratitude to all its participants, vendors, sponsors, volunteers, donors, fundraisers, and the SCBA for its help promoting the event. 🦏

LSNC is a legal services organization serving the poor, older adults, and people with disabilities facing legal obstacles related to housing, healthcare, public benefits, and civil rights. More than 50 advocates in eight field offices provide advice, assistance, and representation to clients who otherwise could not afford legal help.



Jenni Gomez-Haddad, Pro Bono Manager at Legal Services of Northern California and her daughter.



Nathan Bates.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Section

By Christine Sanfilippo

Christine Sanfilippo is a certified mediator with Sanfilippo and Haddad.

She can be reached at
csanfilippo@shmediations.com.

The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Section of the SCBA serves as a vital pillar in our legal community connecting, collabora-

rating, and complementing nearly every other section of our organization. The ADR Executive Committee members are active participants in numerous SCBA sections, including ADR, Bankruptcy, Business Law, Civil Litigation, Commercial Law, Construction, Labor and Employment, Public Law, Real Property, Solo/Small Practice, etc., to name a few. Our mission is to support creative problem-solving while addressing the increasing demand for effective alternatives to courtroom litigation.

We provide programs designed to meet the evolving needs of the SCBA membership at large, from

seasoned attorneys to new practitioners. Our workshops and seminars cover negotiation, mediation, arbitration, current case law, and emerging areas of online dispute resolution. We incorporate practical tools, case studies, and interactive exercises that apply ADR strategies to everyday challenges. Together, we aim to strengthen connections within the SCBA, enhancing our collective commitment to professional excellence and effective dispute resolution.

We want to hear from you, whether you attend our events, present expertise, suggest topics for discussion, or collaborate on a joint mixer. Please contact any ADR Executive Committee Member for presentation topics and ideas at: **Christine Sanfilippo** at www.shmediations.com, **Gayle Eskridge** at www.eskridgelaw.net, **Bret Rossi** at www.kmtg.com/attorneys/bret-r-rossi/, **Melissa Aliotti** at www.judicategwest.com/adr/melissa-aliotti, **Ken Malovos** at www.malovoslaw.com, **Anna Niemann** at www.niemannmediation.com, **Janie Winning** at www.winningcms.com, and **Daniel Yamshon** at www.ADRServicesInternational.com. We look forward to connecting with you.

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Business Law Section

The Sacramento County Bar Association's Business Law Section provides networking and continuing education opportunities for professionals practicing in transactional, litigation, and in-house capacities. The term Business Law describes the type of clients or work we perform, as opposed to being focused on the field of law we practice, since business issues

touch so many different areas of law at once. As a result, we regularly look to link with other SCBA Sections and Divisions to collaborate on events and collectively grow our knowledge, abilities, and community.

Our 2025 leadership team is: Chair: **Myles G. Taylor**; Vice-Chair: **Michael Vargas**; Treasurer: **Micah Parandes**.

Labor and Employment Law Section

The Labor and Employment Section of the SCBA serves as a trusted resource for local legal professionals by providing educational and networking opportunities tailored to the labor and employment law community. This Section hosts regular events, including MCLE accredited programs that address emerging trends, legislative updates, and practical insights for attorneys representing employers and employees. In addition to educational programming, we prioritize fostering connections within the legal community. Our networking events offer members a chance to build relationships, share experiences, and exchange ideas with colleagues across the spectrum of labor and employment law.

Whether you are an experienced practitioner or just starting out in labor and employment law, our section offers valuable opportunities for growth and collaboration. We are dedicated to enhancing the Sacramento legal community by providing attorneys with the resources, knowledge, and connections needed to succeed in this ever-evolving area of law.

The Section leadership team for 2025 is: Chair: Daniel **Kozieja**; Vice

Chair: **Angela Cabral**; Treasurer: **Justin Lomas**; Secretary: **Rebal Halabi**; Member at Large: **Andrew Ducart**; Member at Large: **Gayle Eskridge**; Member at Large: **William Bowen**.

Family Law Section

By Melissa Harman

Melissa Harman is chair of the Family Law Section and a senior attorney with Purcell Stowell, PC. She can be reached at melissa@purcellstowell.com.

The Family Law Section is excited for 2025! This year's section leadership includes **Melissa Harman** (chair), **Victoria Linder** (vice-chair), **Jennifer Holdener** (special programs coordinator), **Nathan Erickson** (secretary/ treasurer) and **Jessica Abdollahi** (past-chair/Pro Tem guru). We are committed to our mission of helping our section members, the legal community at large, and the public. We continue our focus on maintaining civility in our practice, with the hope of rebuilding collegiality and camaraderie in the community. This year, we look forward to welcoming all members of the family law community to join us for our monthly 'social hour' – more details to come! We think it will be more fun than working, and who knows... maybe you will accomplish something productive anyway.

The leadership team is always available to members to work on county-wide issues of process or substance. As always, our section will provide fantastic CLE's presentations (at a discount for section members) via zoom and in-person, and we look forward to hosting the annual holiday party, working with our related professional organizations, and coordinating the Judge Pro Tem program. If anyone

has ideas or questions about these topics, or anything related, please reach out to us.



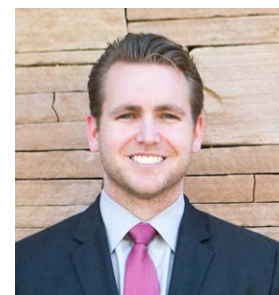
Melissa Harman, Chair



Victoria Linder, Vice-chair



Jennifer Holdener,
Special Programs Coordinator



Nathan Erickson, Secretary/Treasurer



Jessica Abdollahi,
Past-Chair/Pro Tem Guru

Public Law Section

By Kristine Mollenkopf



Kristine Mollenkopf is the chair of the Public Law Section and has been the City Attorney for the City of Lincoln since 2018. She is co-founder of Placer Women Lawyers and plays a pivotal role in shaping municipal law through her involvement with the League of California Cities as a member of the Legal Advocacy Committee. Kristine may be reached at Kristine.Mollenkopf@lincolncal.gov.

The Public Law Section's goals include providing a forum for interaction on public-law related matters between attorneys from the public and private sectors in the Sacramento region. The Board is also focused on mentorship, and the promotion of our field of practice to students of the law, or attorneys considering a change. Our Board is composed of eleven attorneys from both the private and public sectors, including state agencies and several municipalities.

Public sector work is a vibrant, diverse field with multiple areas of specialty, from environmental compliance and CEQA, taxes and regulation, elections, utilities and rate setting, public works operations and construction, development, public policy, and collective bargaining to human resources, to name just a few. The practice balances engagement with elected officials, coordination and cooperation with professional staff, and communication with the community

to ensure transparency and open participation in our government.

In 2024, the section presented a legal update on all of the new laws that may affect our public clients, as well as a continuing education program on the ethical use of AI and GenAI. Looking ahead, the Board will soon be accepting applications from our local law schools in order to award \$500 in scholarship proceeds to a student or students interested in pursuing a career in public law. We will again present a legal practicum on new

laws for 2025 in February, and welcome SCBA members' participation and input.

The Section leadership team for 2025 is: Chair: **Kristine Mollenkopf**; Vice Chair: **Gregory ("Greg") Reaume**; Treasurer: **Dee-Anne Gillick**; Secretary: **Brianne O' Sullivan**; Past Chair: **Jonathan ("Jon") Hobbs**; Members at Large: **Katharine ("Kate") Killeen**; **Olivia Clark**; **Tawnya Southern**; **Sari Dierking**; **Joanna Gin**; **Adam Vasquez**.

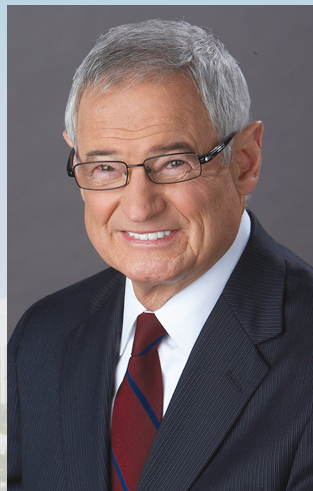
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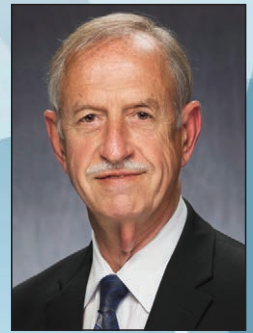
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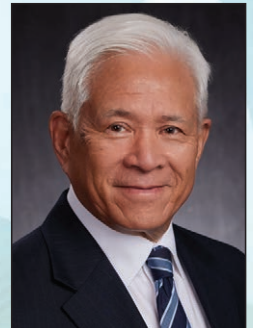
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