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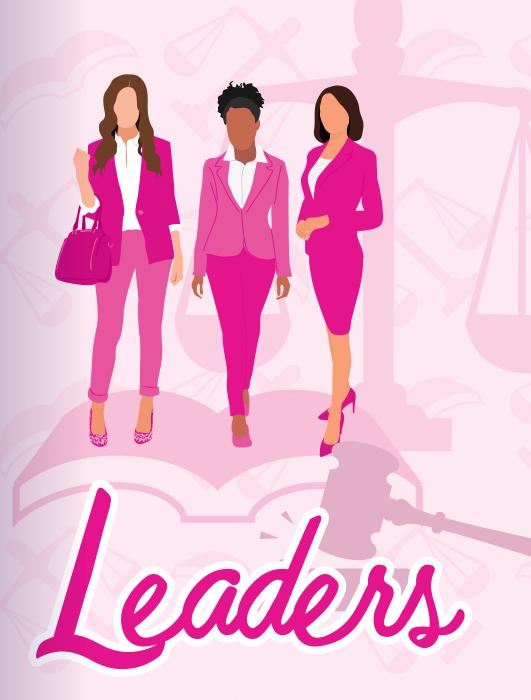
**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**Southern California School Boards on LGBTQIA+ Rights



A LOOK BACK



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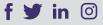
Lawyers Club welcomes contributions to the newsletter, as well as your comments and suggestions regarding Lawyers Club News; contact Julia Sherwood at jsherwood@fisherphillips.com

The deadline for articles is the 1st of the month prior to the month of publication. Articles should be submitted in Microsoft Word. The advertising deadline is the 1st of the month prior to the month of publication.

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#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# THIS BARBIE IS A FEMINIST

Headlines about women dominating the entertainment industry commanded summer 2023. Taylor Swift's Eras Tour is on track to gross a staggering \$1.3 billion. Beyonce's Renaissance Tour is headed for more than \$500 million in ticket sales alone. And Greta Gerwig's Barbie – the unapologetic and bright pink feminist film of the summer – shattered box office records and positioned Gerwig as the first female director in history to



have sole directing credit on a billion-dollar film. Collectively, the Eras tour, the Renaissance tour, and the Barbie movie are stimulating the economy and empowering women within the entertainment realm and beyond. This triad is catalyzing a profound transformation of women's roles, aspirations, and narratives, and in turn further normalizing women as legendary and powerful leaders.

The entertainment field and the legal profession, while distinct in nature, share a common thread when it comes to women's representation. The legal profession currently reflects a dynamic mix of progress coupled with persistent challenges. Women continue to be underrepresented in leadership roles, partnership roles, and judicial offices. Women account for just 38% of judicial officers across all court levels in California, and in law firms nationwide equity partners are only one quarter women. In entertainment, the ratio of speaking roles for males is nearly double that for females, and the percentage of girls and women on screen has not changed since 2008.

As professionals, and members of Lawyers Club, we have the power to shape perceptions, challenge stereotypes, and stimulate change. While it's inspiring to see Gerwig shattering entertainment ceilings, we must use that inspiration to accelerate change in our own community and increase the representation of women. It doesn't take magic, but it does take effort. Give the female associate at your firm the chance to work with a big client, so she can one day inherit the client and build her book of business. Volunteer to help campaign for a woman running for a judicial vacancy. In fact, if you are interested in mingling with our distinguished San Diego bench, save the date for our members-only Judicial Reception on October 4. This event sells out every year and offers the unique opportunity for Lawyers Club members to form meaningful connections with our judiciary. I am confident these connections will ignite a spark to keep moving the needle past 38%.

Summer 2023 wasn't just about famous women in the headlines. It was about how these female entertainers brought the collective power of women to the forefront, and the gob-smacked reactions turned into reverence as the world acknowledged their achievements. Lawyers Club's efforts to increase women's roles and representation aligns with this broader cultural shift, ultimately fueling a more just and equitable society for all.



# CaseyGerry is a proud member of Lawyers Club of San Diego.



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# Annual Dinner

## **LIMITLESS!**



Lawyers Club's Annual Dinner took place on Thursday, June 22. The event hosted over 600 guests at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel. Attendees joined the new Board of Lawyers Club in celebrating another momentous year of vast achievements. The theme "Limitless" paired perfectly with the keynote speaker, attorney Gloria Allred, whose dedication to women's rights knows no limits.

The evening began with a welcome from Annual Dinner Committee co-chairs Christine Fitzgerald and Mikhak Ghorban, and a special thank you to the 2023 Annual Dinner Title Sponsor, Casey Gerry. After, four Lawyers Club members were recognized for their dedication to its mission as well as to the San Diego legal community.



George W. Brewster Jr. received the Charles A. Bird Ally Award, which recognizes an individual who self-identifies as male, exemplifies a lifetime commitment to Lawyers Club's mission, and shares the organization's values. Brewster embodies the definition of an ally as demonstrated through his decades of service to the organization.

Alexandria N. Hopson received the C. Hugh Friedman New Lawyer Award established in 2013 to recognize a Lawyers Club member in practice for seven years or less. Hopson has been an active member since law school. She is a champion for advancing Lawyers Club's mission and has demonstrated leadership and professionalism within the San Diego legal community.

The Community Service Award was presented to Anna M. Romanskaya in recognition of her tireless work as a service-oriented leader in the community. Lawyers Club established the Community Service Award in 1985 to honor a member whose local community activities have served to improve the status of women and promote equality.

The Honorable Wendy Behan received the Belva Lockwood Award. The Belva Lockwood Award was established in 1985 to recognize members whose contributions to the organization are outstanding. The award recognized Judge Behan's years of service to the organization, including serving as president from 2010-2011, and her numerous contributions to the community that further the mission.



Next, Lawyers Club past president, Shannon Finley, introduced and thanked the outgoing Vice Presidents for their dedication and continued support of the organization. Finley also highlighted the past year's accomplishments. She noted the 50th Anniversary Celebration, an evening with Justice Sotomayor, and the incredible bench to bar pipeline. She also emphasized the wonderful programming provided and the time and dedication shown by the cochairs and volunteers.

Finley passed the gavel to incoming Lawyers Club president Audrey Surridge, who shared her theme for the upcoming year, "Accelerate Equity."

Surridge explained that "to accelerate equity, we will focus on identifying what resources, support and advocacy are necessary to allow women, people of color and the LGBTQ+community to maximize their potential for success." She continued with, "Equality is the goal, but equity is the means to get there. Equity levels out the playing field by fighting disparities to ensure everyone has what they need to achieve success. The practice of equity means promoting and supporting women in all aspects of life."



Finally, Gloria Allred took the stage to a standing ovation. Allred's passion and sense of humor were evident throughout her speech. She highlighted cases that have brought her recognition as well as those that have brought controversy. She motivated and empowered the attendees, spreading awareness about the importance of gender equality and the need to be a proactive advocate for justice.

Ko Sharif, partner at Sharif Faust, noted, "the Annual Dinner was just as impressive as it was emotionally passionate







and touching." Sharif continued his praise for the keynote speech and "how much Gloria Allred's courage to stand up to a male lawyer as a young attorney moved me." Ko felt that "her courage illuminated the room."

Attendee and volunteer, Laura Kass-Moreno, of National Conflict Resolution Center noted that Allred "did not disappoint. Her passion was so prevalent and that is what stayed with me."

Events like the Lawyers Club Annual Dinner leave a lasting impact on its members, supporters, and the broader community. The Annual Dinner provided an excellent opportunity to meet new acquaintances, foster a sense of community, and reinforce the importance of Lawyers Club's mission. It also served as an important reminder that Lawyers Club members are stronger together and the future is limitless!



Christine Fitzgerald is an attorney at Robberson Schroedter LLP and vice president of Community Relations.



Mikhak Ghorban is the principal at Ghorban Law APC and vice president of Policy and Membership



# Mixer

## SUMMER SEND-OFF



Lawyers Club's Membership Development Committee (MDC), co-chaired by Carrie Holmes, Kristin Kameen, and Jaclyn Reinhart, hosted the final member mixer of the Lawyers Club year on June 6 at Blue Door Winery's San Diego production facility and tasting room. Blue Door's winemaking philosophy and techniques follow a straightforward approach: keep it as simple and as natural as possible, then fill it with passion and commitment.

Generously sponsored by Pemberley Realty's Roxanne Govari, the event featured a decadent spread from Le Charcuterie Bar and Blue Door's wines. Blue Door's Kameron Robbins (and winery dog, Oliver) graciously hosted over 75 attendees at Lawyers Club's private event mixer, ensuring a joyous summer send-off.

As members and soon-to-be members mixed and mingled among oak barrels, the crowd discussed upcoming Lawyers Club events and summer plans. Outgoing Lawyers Club president Shannon Finley welcomed the crowd, introduced members of the bench and affiliate bar associations, and reminded attendees to join and renew their Lawyers Club membership for the upcoming year, encouraging the 1200-strong organization to continue to grow and advance the status of women in the law and society.

After introducing incoming president Audrey Surridge, the MDC co-chairs gave special thanks to Robbins and Blue Door, and highlighted membership renewal rates and upcoming events.

Govari, a minority woman business owner and real estate broker who has been serving the San Diego market for over 20 years, assisted Reinhart with the evening's prize drawing; each attendee who brought a non-member received an opportunity drawing ticket for a "prize buffet" of summer staples to welcome in the season.

Attendees savored Blue Door's house-made sangria while networking and discussing upcoming summer plans and Lawyers Club events. The air buzzed with excitement as discussion turned to Lawyers Club's much-anticipated June 22nd Annual Dinner featuring keynote speaker Gloria Allred and the July 15th walk in the San Diego Pride Parade.

As the mixer came to an end, attendees picked up special surprise summer-themed goodie bags from Govari and made plans to reunite at upcoming Lawyers Club events throughout the year.



# Pride 2023

### THRIVE!



This year's San Diego Pride Parade was a jubilant expression of the diverse LGBTQ+ community. The air was filled with celebratory music. Participants and spectators were creatively designed ensembles with splashes of vibrant color.

The festive atmosphere and San Diego Pride's 2023 theme, "Thrive," stood in direct contrast to the 492 anti-LGBTQ+ legislative measures tracked by the ACLU this year. Lawyers Club member Vaani Chawla marched in the parade and said, "It was important for me to be here today to make it clear to those who are watching that the LGBTQ+ community has countless allies, and we will stand together to prevent a reversal of the community's civil rights."

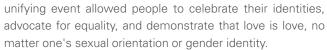
Co-chairs Roxanne De La Rocha and Tara Vukovich organized the event. Throughout the parade, Lawyers Club members engaged with spectators and other participants, sharing positive messages of love and support. They also handed out rainbow-colored fans provided by Fell Law.

This year was also the debut of Lawyers Club's special edition merchandise designed specifically in support of Pride month. The matching tee shirts provided the members with an instant sense of unity and solidarity. They proudly wore them to demonstrate their support for the LGBTQ+ community.

After the parade, attendees continued to the Pride Festival where LGBTQ+ entertainment, interactive exhibits, cultural



presentation, and community resources were showcased. The entire weekend was a celebration of people coming together in love and friendship. Overall, this powerful and









Mikhak Ghorban is the founder of Ghorban Law, APC, and Lawyers Club vice president of Policy and Membership.





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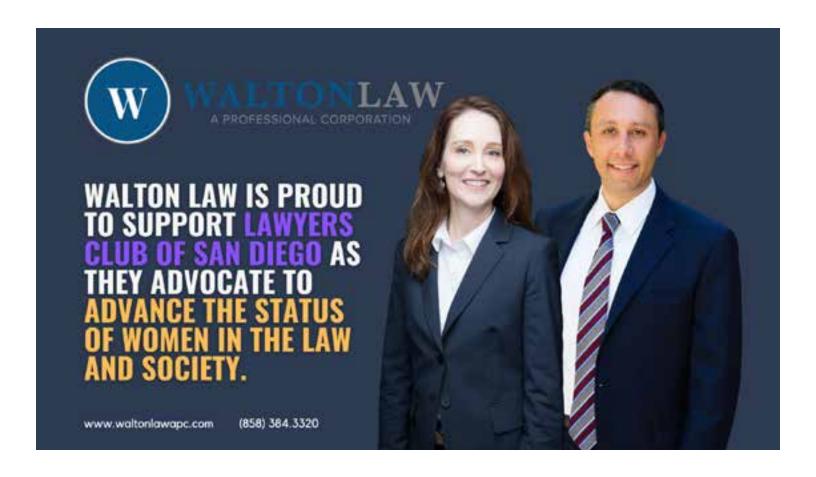
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# **MEDIATOR** ROUNDTABLE

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2023** 

CHECK-IN/RECEPTION 5:15 PM | DINNER BUFFET 5:45 PM | PROGRAM 6:15 PM

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## **JONATHAN ANDREWS**



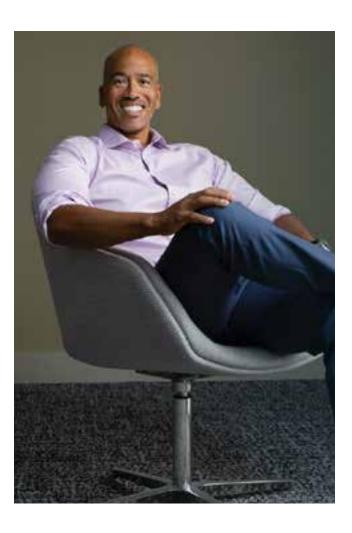
Originally from Minnesota, mediator Jonathan Andrews expected to stay in the Midwest after graduating law school from University of Michigan. However, his job as an associate

attorney with Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison brought him to San Diego where he has lived ever since.

During his time as a lawyer, Andrews practiced labor and employment law. After working at Gordon Rees, he became a founding partner of Andrews Lagasse Branch + Bell LLP, and then became a partner at Atkinson, Andelson. Loya, Ruud & Romo. He is currently a mediator with Signature Resolution, where he focuses on labor and employment matters. He enjoys mediating matters throughout California and the country, including in New York, Florida, and Washington, D.C.

As a member of Lawyers Club, Andrews supports the organization's mission, activities, and events. His wife, Dawn, is also a Lawyers Club member and currently serves as the co-chair of the Gender Equity Committee. Andrews is excited to become more involved in Lawyers Club and contribute to its mission in a meaningful way. He values being a part of the organization because it allows him opportunities to connect with his community.

Aside from his involvement in Lawyers Club, Andrews has been a proud member of the San Diego County Big Brother/ Big Sister program for over 15 years. He is also a member of their Board of Directors.



#### Chloe Mietzel is a Lawyers Club member and second year law student at the University of San Diego.



#### Modified Proust Questionnaire:

#### What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Being in a place of total self-acceptance.

#### What is your greatest fear?

Not living my truth.

#### Which living person do you most admire?

My two boys, Jade and Jordan.

#### What or who is the greatest love of your life?

My wife and sons – and the family we have created together.

#### Which talent would you most like to have?

Playing an instrument! And surfing. And being a writer.

#### What do you consider your greatest achievement?

It's still a work in progress!

#### Where would you most like to live?

Vancouver.

#### What is your most treasured possession?

My health.

#### What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?

When even dreaming seems impossible.

#### What do you most value in your friends?

Kindness.

#### Who are your favorite writers?

Langston Hughes, Carlos Ruiz Zafon, Paulo Coelho, Pierce Brown.

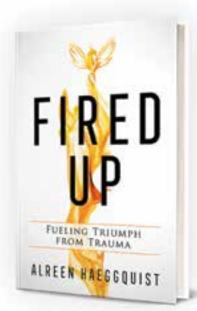
#### Who is your hero of fiction?

Samwise Gamqee.

#### Who are your heroes in real life?

My mom.







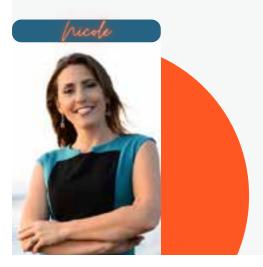


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# Coming This Fall JUDICIAL RECEPTION



Lawyers Club's Bench Bar Committee is pleased to announce that the annual Fall Judicial Reception will be held on October 4, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at the University Club atop Symphony Towers. One of Lawyers Club's special events, the Judicial Reception provides a unique opportunity for in-person mingling and relationship building between Lawyers Club members and the judiciary. This year, the event is generously sponsored by Signature Resolution, a southern California-based dispute resolution service with offices in downtown San Diego.

This popular event always draws a large crowd of lawyers, professionals, and judges at all levels of our local state and federal bench. Register early to reserve your spot at this year's reception.

Come join us for an evening of networking, welcoming San Diego's newest judicial officers, and celebrating the benchbar community.

The Bench Bar Committee's purpose is to "honor and engage with the judiciary, facilitate meaningful interaction and dialogue among Lawyers Club's members and judges, offer our members opportunities to take on leadership roles through programming or publication efforts, and educate our members about the various roles and duties of judicial

officers and pathways to the bench." This Committee hosts events and monthly meetings throughout the year. For more information about the committee and how to get involved, contact co-chairs Danna Nicholas (dnicholas@sandiego.gov), Phil Stephan (pstephan@klinedinstlaw.com), or Ana A. De Santiago Ayon (Ana.DeSantiago@sdcda.org).

# Fall Judicial Reception

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### Southern California School Boards on LGBTQIA+ Rights

While summer is a time of graduations and summer vacation, school board meetings during this time cover routine matters preparing for the coming school year. This summer, three southern California school districts found themselves at the center of controversy.

During a May 16th board meeting, Temecula Valley Unified School District Board of Education ("TVUSD Board") voted to reject the social studies curriculum recommended by a panel of 47 district teachers. The curriculum at issue—"Social Studies Alive"—is a State Board of Education adopted social studies curriculum program. Some of the board members objected to a particular chapter in a fourth-grade textbook, "California's Promise." The chapter provides an overview of California's contribution to arts, entertainment, education, and culture proceeded by a section on "Civil Rights in California," including history on school segregation, peaceful protests, and three paragraphs on gay rights. Supplemental material for this book also mentions Harvey Milk, California's first openly gay man elected to office.

Prior to the controversial vote, TVUSD board president, Joseph Komrosky, referred to Milk as a "pedophile," questioning, "why even mention a pedophile?" Ultimately, the TVUSD Board voted to adopt the curriculum but exclude the chapter highlighting civil rights in California. The new vote came two days after Governor Newsom announced that the state would order the books and charge the district the \$1.6 million for the cost plus a fine of \$1.5 million.

Just north of Temecula, Chino Valley Unified School District Board of Education ("CVUSD Board") voted to approve Policy 5020.1-Parental Notification that would require schools to inform a student's parent if the student requests being identified or treated as a gender other than the student's biological sex or gender; including when the student asks to use a name other than their legal name. The policy also requires the schools to notify the parent when the student accesses "sex-segregated school program and activities" such as participating in a sport or using a bathroom for a sex or gender not in alignment with the student's biological sex.

California superintendent of public instruction, Tony Thurmond, appeared in person and spoke during the July 20th board meeting in which the CVUSD Board adopted Policy 5020.1. Thurmond spoke in opposition to the policy, citing concerns about the privacy and safety of students "who may not be in homes where they can be safe." CVUSD board president, Sonja Shaw, calling a point of order, confronted Thurmond as he was walking away and

accused him of "proposing things that pervert children." Shaw criticized Thurmond for campaigning for Shaw's opponent, Christina Gagnier. Thurmond returned to the podium, at which point, Shaw cut him off calling for a five-minute break when Thurmond was asking to respond to the point of order. Seconds later, Thurmond was surrounded by four uniformed district security guards and escorted away. Later that day, Thurmond tweeted that Shaw had ordered him to be removed from the meeting without warning.

In the west, Trustee Ryan Bent of the North Orange County Community College District ("NOCCCD") Board of Trustees drafted and proposed resolution No. 23/24-02 that would ban public displays of the LGBTQ Pride flag at the district's two colleges, Fullerton College and Cypress College. Bent argued that the policy would encourage neutrality in the college community and increase enrollment. Jodi Balma, a political science professor at one of the district's colleges is quoted saying, "[t]he idea that this resolution is neutral or apolitical is coming from a place of privilege for people who have never had their humanity questioned." In a letter opposing the resolution, Jeff Freitas, the president of California Federation of Teachers, wrote that the resolution "carries the potential to foster division, hinder knowledge dissemination, and exacerbate hatred and violence." Community members packed the July 25th NOCCCD Board meeting, and after hours of public comment that primarily opposed the resolution, the board voted 5-1 against the resolution.

In support of the LGBTQIA+ community, local San Diego Community College District ("SDCCD") Board of Trustees passed a resolution declaring the month of June to be a districtwide celebration of LGBTQIA+ Pride including the raising and flying of the Pride Flag. In a news release, acting chancellor of SDCCD, Gregory Smith, proclaimed, "[w]e do not merely accept you, we celebrate your authenticity. We do not merely welcome your participation, we encourage your leadership. We do not merely seek to include you, we offer you belonging. We do not merely offer safe spaces, we seek to empower you."

The Advocacy & Reproductive Justice Committee (ARJ) will continue to monitor such state and local school district votes pertaining to issues of LGTBQ+ rights. ARJ is always open to having members present a bill they believe to be of importance to the mission of Lawyers Club.

Danielle Short is in-house counsel for AFT Guild, Local 1931 and co-chair of the Advocacy and Reproductive Justice Committee



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## **MEMBERS MAKING NEWS**











Stacy L. Fode

Robert Juskie

Jodi Cleesattle

Alreen Haeggquist

Dan Lawton

AWARDED – Lawyers Club past president Stacy L. Fode has been named as the General Counsel for the National Association of Minority and Women-Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF). Her official title is "GC Board Emeritus." Fode is currently the managing partner of Nukk-Freeman & Cerra's West Coast office. Fode served on the NAMWOLF Board of Directors for 3 years, and is actively committed to working on issues related to diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. She is the immediate past chair of NAMWOLF's Communications Committee and is involved in the organization's Labor & Employment Practice Area Committee.

Robert Juskie will receive The Daniel T. Broderick III Award at this year's Red Boudreau Dinner on September 30, which recognizes an attorney who practices law with civility, integrity, and professionalism. Juskie, a partner at Wingert Grebing Brubaker & Juskie LLP, is a trial attorney and focuses on premises liability, product liability and personal injury litigation, including catastrophic injury claims on behalf of plaintiffs and defendants. He also handles a wide variety of cases involving complex real property and business disputes, legal malpractice (defense), malicious prosecution and claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**PRESENTED** – **Jodi Cleesattle** moderated a panel on LGTBQ+ legislation hosted by the Tom Homann LGTBQ+ Law Association. The panel discussed anti-LGTBQ+ legislation being passed throughout the United States, and its impact on the LGTBQ+ community. Cleesattle is a former board member, and currently serves as a senior assistant attorney general at the California Department of Justice.

AUTHORED – Alreen Haeggquist, managing partner at Haeggquist & Eck, LLP, has shared her personal story in her new book, "Fired Up: Fueling Triumph from Trauma." Motivated by the pains of her childhood, Haegguist became a lawyer in order to stand up for victims of abuse. Through founding her firm in San Diego, she helps women who suffer from sexual abuse, harassment, and discrimination in the workplace stand up for themselves. Haeggquist's core message is that, as a society, we need to break the silence and help women stand up to their abusers.

**Dan Lawton** is adding author to his credentials with his narrative non-fiction book, "ABOVE THE GROUND: A True Story of the Troubles in Northern Ireland," a chronicle of the false conviction of an innocent man for an Irish Republican Army murder, and his daring escape from the Maze prison in the 1980s. Lawton is a shareholder at Klinedinst PC, where he practices with the firm's appellate and commercial litigation groups.

## SHARE THE GOOD NEWS!

Lawyers Club invites its members to submit their career accomplishments to aboutus@lawyersclubsandiego.com.

The deadline for each issue of LC News is the first of the month prior to that issue.



#### A LEGACY OF LEADING VOICES



Lawyers Club has a longstanding history of taking positions on issues pertinent to gender equity and related issues, and making those positions known throughout the community. September of 1993 was no different. 30 years ago, through its

Gender Bias Committee, "Lawyers Club voiced its concerns about Deputy District Attorney August Meyers' courtroom statements regarding female and minority jurors and jury selection criteria." Lawyers Club's condemnation of the prosecutor's statements prompted action by the San Diego District Attorney's Office; the prosecutor was transferred to a different office and "strongly counseled" regarding his error. His office denounced his conduct, and issued a response to Lawyers Club affirming that his actions did not reflect the views or policy of their office.

In a similar vein, September of 1993 also marked Lawyers Club's announcement of its newly formed Political Appointments Committee, geared toward encouraging the appointment of Lawyers Club members to governmental commissions and other positions of power. Its aim was to "maintain a data base of information about members interested in serving on various commissions and provide information to governmental officials who are seeking potential political appointees." The Political Appointments Committee's focus on elevating Lawyers Club members—both within the organization and beyond it—resonates to this day.

Notwithstanding the newly formed committee, Lawyers Club members were already on the move. Its then-executive director, Beverly Schneider, was unanimously elected to serve as chair of San Diego's Equal Opportunity Commission. Other Lawyers Club members were recognized for their newfound leadership roles throughout the community, as well. Maria Arroyo-Tabin was installed as president of the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Board, Deborah Huff was selected to coordinate San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program's pro bono services in North County, and Virginia Weber was appointed by the San Diego Port District Legal Counsel to handle their transportation matters. Members Luis Aragon and Carl Poirot were honored as Public Lawyer of the Year and Legal Professional of the Year, respectively, by the San Diego County Bar Association.

And to cap off the month, September 23, 1993 marked Lawyers Club's annual luncheon featuring keynote speaker Delaine Eastin, who then served as a State Assemblymember and chair of its Committee on Education. Eastin's speaking engagement with Lawyers Club was followed by a long career in politics and advocacy, including as the California State Superintendent on Public Instruction only two years later, and eventually a gubernatorial campaign in 2018.

Ally Keegan is an attorney at the Law Office of David P. Shapiro, a Lawyers Club board member, and chair of the History, Bylaws & Policy Committee..



## **JacksonLewis**

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# Event Calendar



## **SEPTEMBER**

#### **Mediator Roundtable**

Monday, September 18, 2023, 5:15 PM - 8:15 PM

Hear from some of San Diego's most skilled mediators about how they successfully transitioned from practicing law, serving as a judge, or foregoing practicing entirely, to become full-time mediators. Networking, program, and dinner included.

#### CLICK HERE FOR ALL EVENTS!

Lawyers Club continues to follow the recommendations and regulations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and San Diego County and city officials, and encourages its members to do the same. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns — staff can be reached via email or phone. Lawyers Club will continue to adapt as the situation demands and give as much advance notice as possible.

#### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

#### **OCTOBER**

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 FALL JUDICIAL RECEPTION

Thursday, October 19, 2023
DIVERSE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
LUNCHEON

#### **NOVEMBER**

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 TASTE OF NORTH COUNTY























