



# CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

*Seeking Justice for All*

## Dale Galipo selected as CAOC's Consumer Attorney of the Year

Doyle, Gianelli, Davis named Street Fighters of the Year

**SACRAMENTO (Nov. 21, 2020)** – **Dale Galipo** of The Law Offices of Dale K. Galipo in Woodland Hills is Consumer Attorneys of California's 2020 Consumer Attorney of the Year for a case that held police accountable for the use of excessive force.

The announcement was made Saturday night at the online awards ceremony as part of CAOC's Annual Convention, held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic.

**Conal Doyle** of Doyle Law in Beverly Hills and **Robert Gianelli** and **Joshua Davis** of Gianelli & Morris in Los Angeles were also honored Saturday night as CAOC's Street Fighters of the Year for a case that led to amputees being able to get prosthetic limbs after being unlawfully denied by their insurer.

Consumer Attorney of the Year is awarded to a CAOC member or members who significantly advanced the rights or safety of California consumers by achieving a noteworthy result in a case. Eligibility for Street Fighter of the Year is limited to CAOC members who have practiced law for no more than 10 years or work in a firm with no more than five attorneys. To be considered for either award the case must have finally resolved between May 15, 2019 and May 15, 2020, with no further legal work to occur, including appeals. The winners are determined by a vote of CAOC's Board of Directors.

In *Schroeder v. County of San Bernardino, et al.*, Galipo represented Jayd Schroeder, who suffered a torn retina when he was beaten by Rialto police officers after a traffic stop. Schroeder was driving home from work when officers claimed to have observed him speeding and failing to signal for a turn. After the officers activated their lights and siren, Schroeder continued driving, making several turns until he pulled into his driveway. The officers stopped, drew their handguns, and began giving commands. Schroeder contended that he complied with the officer commands, while the officers contended that he did not and continually dropped his hands towards his waistband. After Schroeder exited the vehicle, walked backwards to the sidewalk, and went to his knees, the officers claimed that Schroeder tensed up and refused to go to the ground. In response, the officers pushed Schroeder to the ground then claimed that Schroeder rolled partially on top of the officer. The 6'5", 260-pound officer then began punching Schroeder, claiming that Schroeder was resisting. Schroeder suffered a torn retina, which went untreated and resulted in blindness. After less than two hours of deliberation, a unanimous jury found the force used against Schroeder to be excessive and awarded full compensation for his unnecessary injuries, 68 times what the city had offered to settle.

In the case honored with the Street Fighter award, *Trujillo and Harden v. United Healthcare Insurance Company*, Doyle discovered United Healthcare, the nation's largest health insurer, would deny prosthetic limbs to amputees insured through group health plans. The litigation was able to establish that United denied claims without identifying an alternative device that would meet the insured's functional needs. The health insurer also improperly denied claims if even one of multiple component parts that comprise a prosthetic limb were deemed by United to be "not covered." United's denial letters did not inform the insured that some component parts were covered or that an alternative device would be covered if requested. As a result, prosthetic claims nationwide were denied or delayed, leaving amputees with valid insurance coverage without the use of a prosthetic limb. Gianelli and Davis took the lead on the legal and class issues, while Doyle secured the deposition testimony establishing the unlawful claims practices. The case was settled the week prior to trial, forcing United to change its unlawful claims practices and reprocess more than 1,000 prosthetic claims that had been denied over a five-year period.

Also honored at Saturday's event were:

**Julia Yoo** (partner, Iredale & Yoo, San Diego), winner of the Robert E. Cartwright, Sr., Award, given "in recognition of excellence in trial advocacy and dedication to teaching trial advocacy to fellow lawyers and to the public." Yoo is a frequent speaker on civil rights topics at CAOC education seminars and played a key role in advocating at the Legislature this year for major civil rights reform.

**Christopher Dolan** (founder and chief legal counsel, Dolan Law Firm, San Francisco), winner of the Marvin E. Lewis Award, given "in recognition of continued guidance, loyalty and dedication, all of which have been an inspiration to fellow attorneys." Dolan was CAOC's president in 2010, and he has frequently been at the State Capitol in Sacramento over the years to testify regarding legislation on behalf of the association.

**Greg Bentley** (partner, Bentley & More, Newport Beach), winner of the Edward I. Pollock Award, given "in recognition of many years of dedication, outstanding efforts and effectiveness on behalf of the causes and ideals of consumer attorneys." Bentley was CAOC's president in 2016 and serves on CAOC's PAC board. His deep knowledge, negotiating skills and longtime relationships have been invaluable.

The awards dinner also included the installation of CAOC's 2021 President **Deborah Chang**, founder of Athea Trial Lawyers in Hermosa Beach and Of Counsel with Panish Shea & Boyle in Los Angeles.

*Consumer Attorneys of California is a professional organization of plaintiffs' attorneys representing consumers seeking accountability against wrongdoers in cases involving personal injury, product liability, environmental degradation and other causes.*

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