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Mentoring, the Apprentice Way

MacKenzie (“Mac”) Brown was a second-generation "dirt bond lawyer," one of a very few attorneys practicing in the arcane field of California public finance law, also referred to as assessment district law. Mac was a master craftsman of this field. In 1984, after a stint as a municipal lawyer, I became his apprentice.

My apprenticeship combined learning by doing and learning at the feet of the master. The assessment district law, contained in acts from the early 1900s, and the associated proceedings were foreign to me. Fortunately, Mac had compiled a set of comprehensive form books containing every letter, notice, contract, resolution and other document. Mac, a sole practitioner most of his career (prior to my arrival) who spent much of his time on the road, had his secretary prepare drafts of any document from those templates for his review. Before I was permitted to use any form, I was required to understand the statutory basis on which the form was based.

I was forced to digest each of the applicable acts on my own. My research was supplemented with long discussions of his intimate knowledge of assessment district financing and an uncanny recall of the minutest detail of every applicable case.

Mac controlled every aspect of an engagement by scripting it all. He had his agenda for every meeting with public agencies, developers or property owners. Every party—even clients—had to know Mac's ground rules. We had scripts that a mayor or board president was required to use for the public hearings.

When it came time for me to become first chair on financings, I found myself instinctively using his templates, agendas and scripts as if they were my own. Mac’s dedication to detail proved to be a great learning foundation for me as I moved forward in my career.

Warren Diven (wbdiven@bbklaw.com) is partner in charge of the San Diego office of Best Best & Krieger.

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1333 Seventh Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101-4309
Phone (619) 231-0781 Facsimile (619) 338-0042
E-mail sdlawyer@sdcba.org Website www.sdcba.org

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Our new Law Practice Management & Marketing (LPMM) Section is a great place to learn and share ideas about business development and overall practice management. As a special member benefit, you can join the LPMM Section in 2009 at no cost. Through LPMM and our other sections and committees, we have planned unique events and educational programs to help our members through this difficult period of time.

For private practitioners, we know that client development is key . . . and the SDCBA is here to help. We will be offering several opportunities to market your practice and network to build your book of business in 2009. On June 3, we will host “Relationships & Resources,” a business networking event with the California Society of Certified Public Accountants (CalCPA), held in conjunction with a Vendor Fair at the Bar Center. At the event, SDCBA and CalCPA members will mix and mingle to discuss potential business opportunities, and they can also meet various vendors at the fair to learn about products and services that may aid in their particular practices. Some of the participating vendors may be providing special discounts to SDCBA members.

Later in the year, we will be hosting a special program titled “Economic Downturn = Opportunity,” which will be followed by another client-development mixer in early October. More information on these programs will be available soon on the SDCBA website and in our weekly e-Communication, This Week at the Bar.

Who wouldn’t want to save a few dollars these days? With budget cutbacks, you may wish to consider taking advantage of our relationships with various vendors. For example, LexisNexis offers special packages and pricing exclusively for SDCBA members; and Ahern Insurance offers members access to comprehensive lawyer professional liability insurance with savings of 15 to 20 percent. Also, through Ahern’s employee benefits division, Ahern | ELT, our members have access to medical, disability, life and retirement plans. Many other discounts are available to members, ranging from theme park tickets to rental car discounts. An up-to-date list of all SDCBA member benefits can be found at www.sdcba.org/benefits.

Perhaps now more than ever, it is important to take time to give back. Through our 2009 Community Service—Lawyers Giving Back campaign, our members can really make a difference in our community. In June, I encourage you to volunteer for two great community service projects. On June 6, the SDCBA will participate in a FaceLift project, in partnership with Community Housing Works, to help rehabilitate a neighborhood block in the City Heights area of San Diego. Volunteers are needed to help with cleaning, painting and minor landscaping.

On June 20, we will be hosting our third Ask-a-Lawyer legal education event in 2009, held at La Jolla Village Square shopping center. Our Ask-a-Lawyer events have been extremely popular with the public, and we have experienced a record number of attendees who are in need of basic legal education as well as referral and resource information. More information on these events and all volunteer opportunities can be found on our website at www.sdcba.org/volunteer.

And speaking of helping, congratulations to our 2009 SDCBA Service Award recipients! Their dedication to the community is truly inspiring, and they serve as role models for all of us. I hope you enjoy reading about our awardees and their accomplishments in this issue.
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Thanks for your fascinating article on the life of Leland Stanford (“From Lawyer to Librarian” by George Brewster, Rewind, March/April 2009). As a history lover and a discipline defense counsel, it held a double fascination for me.

David Cameron Carr
Law Office of David Cameron Carr

I enjoyed your article on Leland Stanford. I was surprised to learn he had been disbarred, but I did a little research in preparation for the Law Library’s recent 50th anniversary celebration. Stanford actually had two separate lawsuits against him. The second was for overcharging a client, and he lost the case. I know that the Stanford family was able to retain their home until the early 1990s when Mrs. Stanford died, but I continue to wonder whether the [first] client ever received her life savings back.

Leland Stanford collected a great deal of information about San Diego attorneys and judges who worked during the first half of the 20th century. He used this information to write his books and newspaper columns. These files are still held at the San Diego County Public Law Library. I have collected newspaper articles and other documents that more accurately reflect his total career. These are now part of the Leland Stanford file.

I wonder if Leland would smile if knew we are as interested in him as he was interested in others in the legal profession.

Janet Liggett
Assistant Director, Technical Services
San Diego County Public Law Library

[“Mingei under the Microscope” by Keith Rutman] is very interesting and might make a good movie. I hope you will be able to follow up and let us know how the investigation goes and what happens to those charged with looting antiquities.

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On Firm Ground

Law firms are finding some areas shaky in today’s economy, while others are surprisingly strong.

In speaking with law firm executives across the country about the impact of the current economy on law firms, a strange dichotomy emerged. Despite what many described as their best year ever, the common theme is uncertainty, and some are reacting with fear and anxiety that 2009 will be a dismal year, which may become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

One executive described it as a paralysis in the business community, where activity is being curtailed or, in some cases, has come to a grinding halt. What seems to be most relevant—and what may well be the difference in a law firm’s success—is the practice area and client mix. The more diverse, the more likely the firm is to emerge from the recession ready to grow once more. Many practice areas are doing very well, including labor and employment defense, energy, financial restructuring and white-collar criminal defense.

While most firms are watching costs and eliminating or significantly reducing nonessential expenses, management is also seeing an opportunity for changes that would not be supported in good times. When plenty of money is coming in, there’s far less support for increasing attorney/secretary ratios, limiting expensive parties or curtailing birthday lunches. Atop many lists: eliminating pricy events, which are often couched as business development but produce little, if any, new business for the firm. Partners’ pet charities or special events are receiving well-deserved scrutiny.

Forward-thinking law firm executives are curtailing expenses that will not impact their ability to bounce back as the economy starts to move. They view the current situation as an opportunity to grow, adding partners and practice groups from failed firms, opening offices in strategic locations and expanding practices that thrive in down economic times.

Despite “Black Thursday” and reports of other major layoffs, most firms have not had layoffs. Some of the world’s largest firms are hiring and expanding practice areas.

Pressure on billing rates has caused firms to freeze rates or move them up very conservatively. Clients expect and are asking for deeper discounts, with law firms factoring the discounts in revenue forecasts. Slower payments and closer scrutiny of invoices are also quite prevalent. Clients who once paid in 45 days are now paying in 90 days (or more), which then forces law firms to pay their vendors on longer terms and, in some cases, seek discounts as well.

Management is watching trends in hours, billing and collection on a monthly (or semi-monthly) basis, aiming at appropriate midcourse corrections and looking closer at productivity in practice areas and individual lawyers.

Law firms are increasingly outsourcing legal work and document processing. Lawyers have been somewhat slow to embrace the concept; however, with digital dictation and the ability to easily exchange documents via the Internet, it is almost irrelevant to the lawyers whether the work is done on the sixth floor or in a facility in Fargo, North Dakota. Also reported: cutbacks or elimination of summer associate programs and the bonuses for incoming first-year associates.

Cash flow challenges, even for sound firms, have emerged as a result of the tightening credit market. Law firms traditionally rely on lines of credit to fund the first few months’ expenses because they pay out most of their cash in year-end bonuses. This approach is becoming problematic as lenders scrutinize their law firm clients; in some cases, credit lines have been cut off or severely reduced.

The times most likely will result in more mergers, as firms seek to balance practice areas and client bases to weather the storm. One key seems to be whether firms look at the silver lining and take advantage of opportunities, or hunker down and hope to survive long enough to wait it out.

Patti Lane (plane@mckennalong.com) is legal administrator for McKenna Long & Aldridge.
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Commissioner Clements joins the following distinguished members of the JAMS San Diego Panel:

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Campaigning: Six lawyers are candidates to succeed District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis as the District 9 representative on the State Bar Board of Governors from San Diego and Imperial counties. They are: Michael Begovich, Office of Assigned Counsel, Stephen Grebing of Wingert, Grebing, Brubaker & Goodwin, Garrison Klueck of the Law Office of Garrison Klueck, sole practitioner Wells Lyman, Paula Roach of the Office of County Counsel and Adam Van Sustern. Ballots were mailed on April 30, and the voting closes on June 30. The winner will serve a three-year term and be sworn in when the State Bar holds its annual meeting in San Diego September 10-13.

Inspirational: Brian Monaghan has written The Power of Two: Surviving Serious Illness with an Attitude and an Advocate, about the battle he and his wife, Gerri, waged with cancer when doctors gave him only a few months to live. The Monaghans kicked off a nationwide book-signing tour on April 27 at Warwick’s Bookstore in La Jolla.

Heels: Assistant U.S. Attorney Randy Jones was at home glued to his television set last month when North Carolina’s Tar Heels won their fifth national men’s basketball championship. Jones, a graduate of UNC Law School, is former president of the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association and the National Bar Association. The NBA’s 84th national convention is in San Diego August 1-8 for the first time ever.

McGovern and Lincoln: Former U.S. Senator George McGovern, defeated by Richard Nixon in the 1972 presidential election, discussed his most recent book, Abraham Lincoln, during an appearance at La Jolla Public Library. “This was the most enjoyable,” said McGovern, a Ph.D. historian from Northwestern, of his 13 books. When his publisher asked which president he would enjoy writing about, he unhesitatingly said Lincoln, but that opportunity had already been taken by former president Bill Clinton. But Clinton later notified the publisher he was too busy, so McGovern got his chance. Attorneys Shelley Siegan (widow of University of San Diego School of Law professor Bernard Siegan) and Cary Bond attended the program.

Happy Birthday: Norman Seltzer of Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek celebrated his 91st birthday on March 20. (Send birthday notices to mkruming@aol.com.)

Honors: Superior Court Judge Lorne Alksne received a Distinguished Jurist Award from the Southern California chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

Passing: Marine Colonel Michael Stahlman (Cal Western ’93), one of the highest-ranking officers to die in Iraq.

Running: In late 1988, Craig Higgs of Higgs, Fletcher & Mack vowed to run 1,000 miles a year for 10 years. By the end of this year, he’ll have logged more than 20,000 miles.

The King: Bail bondsman George “King” Stahlman died this past February 13. An envelope postmarked February 23 contained a note that read, “Still doing business from on high . . . KS” along with a business card.

Wendy Mazzarella (wendy.mazzarella@sdca.org) is a deputy district attorney.
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Love it or loathe it, U.S. News & World Report’s annual law school ranking, while controversial, is here to stay. Since 1990, the magazine has ranked all American Bar Association (ABA)-accredited law schools based on weighted criteria across four broad categories: quality assessment; selectivity; placement success; and faculty resources. The top 10 law schools for nine specialty areas, including clinical training, legal writing and trial advocacy, are also ranked.

San Diego Lawyer asked deans Kevin Cole (University of San Diego School of Law), Rudolph Hasl (Thomas Jefferson School of Law) and Steven Smith (California Western School of Law) to comment on the ranking system.

How important are the annual U.S. News & World Report law school rankings to your school?

Kevin Cole: While we don’t see rankings as a very good measure of the quality of a law school, we understand that some prospective students and employers find them significant.

Rudolph Hasl: The rankings are not particularly significant to the Thomas Jefferson School of Law. The school received full ABA approval in 2001. As a very young law school, it is difficult to receive the reputation and recognition that older schools enjoy. Furthermore, with the inherent deficiencies in the criteria used, the rankings are very misleading and should be read with a high degree of skepticism.

Steven Smith: Ranking law schools is a great way to sell magazines but not a thoughtful way to assess law schools. In selecting a law school, prospective students consider a myriad of factors including: location; diversity; a rigorous and innovative curriculum; experienced and supportive faculty; programs offering real-world experience and proximity to legal and judicial resources.

What makes these rankings important to your school?

Cole: It’s hard for prospective students and some prospective employers to get good information about the quality of the legal education at law schools with which they are unfamiliar. People and employers in the San Diego region know the quality of our program and graduates, so are probably savvy enough to take these rankings with a grain of salt. Many people who get the survey are not very well informed about the nearly 200 schools they are asked to rank. Lawyers and judges from across the country are asked to rank every school, and part of that becomes a name-recognition game.

Still, as we recruit new students and place recent graduates in law positions across the country, we need to take these rankings seriously, in addition to the other steps we take to publicize the school’s quality outside the area.

Hasl: Prospective students and employers use the rankings in evaluating schools. But they are highly misleading and do not reflect significant components to a quality academic program. They do not consider, for example, the quality of the faculty; degree of interaction between students and faculty; overall academic atmosphere; quality of faculty achievement and scholarship; innovative curricular designs that prepare students effectively; quality of the library and physical facilities; engagement by graduates with students and faculty; overall technological infrastructure to educate students effectively for practice in the current marketplace; and other measures of academic quality.

A study by Stephen P. Klein, Ph.D. (“The Validity of the U.S. News & World Report Ranking of ABA Law Schools,” Association of American Law Schools, February 18, 1998, www.aals.org), concluded that the most dominant factor in the rankings is the LSAT score. This reliance on the LSAT has caused many schools to abandon good decision-making in admissions to boost LSAT scores. The impact has made it more difficult for students of color and students from nontraditional backgrounds (older, returning students and nonacademic family backgrounds as examples) to gain admission to law schools.

Smith: As former chair of the ABA Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, I have seen repeatedly how narrow and misleading these rankings can be. A number on a list tells you very little about whether a student is a good fit for a school—and perhaps more important, whether a law school is a good fit for a student. Students from large universities to small, independent
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What changes, if any, would you recommend to the ranking methodology?

Cole: Once people find out the basis for these rankings, the rank-manipulation games begin. As a result, many factors that might seem useful in assessing school quality become less useful once schools find out about them. A couple of methodology changes could include changing the employment figures to take account of how many students get jobs for which their J.D. degree is actually helpful, and changing the surveying methods to give less weight to those who are less knowledgeable about what is happening in legal education.

Hasl: I do not believe there is an easy fix. The LSAT really drives those rankings, and it is hard to craft an instrument that will measure the more intangible elements of a quality academic program. As long as these rankings exist, there will be a perverse incentive to make bad allocations of institutional resources to boost the LSAT scores of admitted students and to play games to achieve those results. It has been documented that schools admit lower-LSAT students into part-time programs so they do not have to report the LSAT scores for the rankings; they accept transfer students they would not consider for first-year admission because they do not have to count those students for the rankings; and schools will hire their graduates on a part-time basis in order to boost placement numbers.

Smith: A majority of law school deans signed a letter (“Law School Deans Speak Out About Rankings,” Law School Admission Council, April 2006, www.LSAC.org) decrying such rankings and discouraging reliance on the rankings. This is good advice for applicants to law school and members of the bar.

U.S. News & World Report provides information about its law school rankings—including methodology, how to use the rankings, frequently asked questions, proposed changes and online discussions—at www.usnews.com. As of this writing, U.S. News & World Report’s new law school rankings for 2010 were available online on April 23, 2009.

The American Bar Association provides a position statement on law school rankings and additional information at www.abanet.org.

Brian Brunkow (brian@mindvenue.com) is a freelance writer and lawyer.
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At some level, everyone has a sweet tooth. Your passion may be chocolate or cookies or apple pie, but we all crave something sweet from time to time. Luckily, San Diego has some great options to satisfy a sweet tooth. Here are our favorite spots for sweet treats.

Extraordinary Desserts
1430 Union Street, San Diego 92101, 619-294-7001, and 2929 Fifth Avenue, San Diego 92103, 619-294-2132; www.extraordinarydesserts.com
Karen Krasne’s much-loved Extraordinary Desserts is still going strong after many years. Both the original venue in Hillcrest/Bankers Hill and the second spot, on the downtown edge of Little Italy, offer a huge assortment of decadent desserts, from rich cakes to superlative scones. These creations are also absolute works of art, almost too pretty to eat. Extraordinary Desserts also carries its own line of excellent teas—try the chocolate mint parfait.

Michele Coulon Dessertier
7556-D Fay Avenue, La Jolla 92037, 858-456-5098; dessertier.com
If you blink, you might miss this tiny storefront, hidden in a strip mall on Fay Street, where Michelle Coulon shares her delicious creations. Every day there is a different assortment of bite-size desserts such as pecan caramel tarts, banana cake, German chocolate cake and more. Because they’re miniature, it is possible to indulge in several flavors without (much) guilt. Michele also offers really good salads, sandwiches and soups during lunch, along with a nice variety of Belgian beers.

Uncle Biff’s Killer Cookies
650 University Avenue, San Diego 92103, 619-291-2433; www.unclebiffskillercookies.com
Sometimes you just want a good old-fashioned cookie. For our money, Uncle Biff’s in Hillcrest is the place to go for this simple treat. Our favorites are the semi-sweet chocolate chip, peanut butter chocolate chunk, double fudge and the golden oatie (oatmeal chocolate chip). Bring these cookies to any meeting and you will be a hero. And did we mention Uncle Biff delivers?

Mille Feuille
3896 Fifth Avenue, San Diego 92103, 619-295-5232
This relatively new spot in Hillcrest offers perfect truffles made of deep dark chocolate dusted in cocoa powder, as well as French macaroons in every flavor imaginable and all manner of cakes and tarts. The space is clean, fresh and Zen-like. It feels like a place to take your aunt or your mother for a sophisticated dessert and some sugar-fueled conversion.

Azúcar
4820 Newport Avenue, San Diego 92107, 619-523-2020, iloveazucar.com
In Ocean Beach, Azúcar makes Cuban pastries with a French influence. The patisserie carries Cuban and Latin classics like pastelitos (puff pastries with guava and cheese) and quatro leches, the moistest cake you will ever eat. There are also some new twists on Cuban flavors, such as ginger scones and mojito cookies. Azúcar also offers a great Cuban coffee (espresso brewed with sugar) and one of the best Cuban sandwiches in town.

INSIDE TIP
Cooks Confab is a group of San Diego chefs who get together every few months to create incredible meals centered on a theme or central ingredient. These events feature the executive chefs from some of the best restaurants in town. The next gathering is June 7 at Nine-Ten in La Jolla, and the theme is “meat.” For more information, check out www.cooksconfab.com.

Krista Cabrera (kabrena@wpkt.com) is an attorney with Wilson Petty Koome & Turner. Gil Cabrera (gil@cabrenafirm.com) is an attorney and principal with The Cabrera Firm.
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The San Diego Bankruptcy Forum (SDBF) is a non-profit organization of professionals working in the areas of bankruptcy and insolvency. Membership includes attorneys, accountants, trustees, bankers, real estate professionals, auctioneers, appraisers, consultants and others involved in the bankruptcy and insolvency process. The bankruptcy judges and the United States Trustee for the Southern District of California are ex officio members of the board of directors. SDBF was founded in 1989 and is affiliated with the California Bankruptcy Forum, together with six other local forums: Orange County, Los Angeles, Bay Area, Sacramento, Inland Empire and Central California.

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Making a Difference for Many
Bankruptcy professionals band together to offer help to each other and to clients

Dean Schiffman (dean@LawAndNumbers.com) is a San Diego attorney and expert witness. This concludes our Profiles series. If you have a story idea, please e-mail mkruming@aol.com.
“I moved to San Diego and re-started my career from scratch. The Bankruptcy Forum was instrumental in my efforts to join the insolvency legal community here in town. Through it, I had access to the majority of bankruptcy professionals in San Diego and to the world in which they operated. The forum allowed me to establish longstanding relationships with people who are still vital to my career success today, and I made some good friends along the way.” Christopher Hawkins

“I went to law school to help people, and as a bankruptcy attorney I get to be a hero every day—for 15 years now. Whether it’s saving a debtor’s home, representing a trustee in bankruptcy court or protecting a creditor’s interests, I feel that I’m making a difference. Being a bankruptcy attorney may not be for everyone, but as a former accountant with lots of empathy, it’s the perfect profession for me.” Leonard Ackerman

“For young attorneys, the SDBF provides great opportunities to meet local judges and experienced attorneys, through social events and CLE programs. I feel that bankruptcy attorneys in our community strive to be aware of developments in our field, and it is wonderful to be able to discuss these developments with each other. Being involved with the SDBF has increased my enthusiasm toward the bankruptcy field and the San Diego legal community.” Kelly Ann Tran

“The Bankruptcy Forum has always set the standard when it comes to great bankruptcy programs and events, including our annual statewide meeting where judges and practitioners get together to share news and ideas. I’m honored to have been a director for more than two years. In the process I’ve come to know some really outstanding lawyers.” Kit James Gardner

“Serving on the board of the San Diego Bankruptcy Forum has been a great experience. As a more recent convert to bankruptcy law, I’ve been impressed with how collegial the community of San Diego bankruptcy practitioners is.” J. Barrett Marum

“I became a corporate bankruptcy lawyer by accident, and I am really glad I did. It is a wonderful area of law in which to practice, in terms of the satisfaction of helping clients navigate issues of financial distress, and of the high level of quality and camaraderie among the bankruptcy bar. The San Diego Bankruptcy Forum epitomizes these qualities, and it is a real pleasure and privilege for me to sit on its board of directors.” Christine Baur

“The San Diego Bankruptcy Forum is among the most collegial, interesting groups of professionals you will ever meet.” Drew Lyman

“Bankruptcy professionals in San Diego enjoy unique opportunities to interact with judges and practitioners on a regular basis outside of the courtroom. The Bankruptcy Forum, through its social events and educational programs, has played a large part in fostering the collegial professional environment in this community. I’m proud to play a part in maintaining and building on that tradition.” Joseph Dunn

“Once we would say a debtor, by definition, has no money. Over the years, that has changed, and in many cases a debtor, by definition, may have some money but can’t add and subtract.” Ken Noorigian
SAN DIEGO LAWYER’S fourth annual Career Issue focuses on mentoring and networking. Many thanks to a talented group of law students and career advisors, which included Elizabeth Blust, Eric LaGuardia, Courtney Miklusak and K.A. Van Voorhees from California Western School of Law; Beverly Bracker, Wendy Dimpfi, Justin Hannant, Sarah Kalaei, Jakeem Mays and Denise Menard from Thomas Jefferson School of Law, and Annie Hu, Daniel Kanter, Cara Mitnick and April Tatton from the University of San Diego School of Law. Finally, a special thanks to Warren Diven, managing partner of the San Diego office of Best Best & Krieger, and the firm for their support and enthusiasm for this project. We hope you enjoy their stories.
NANCY STAGG, a principal in the San Diego office of Fish & Richardson, has an impressive career. But she admits she didn’t get to this point on her own.

“As an attorney, I have had the great fortune to have had several mentors at different parts of my career,” says Stagg. She credits six very special people who helped guide her.

“Each mentor helped me in different aspects of the law, trial skills and law practice management. What’s interesting about the mentoring process is that in my case—and I think this is true for most successful or meaningful mentoring relationships—the relationship was not formal or predetermined; it developed organically while working together,” she says.

Stagg credits her past mentors as the reason she decided to become a mentor and assist young attorneys with their futures. “I have several attorneys I work with in my practice, and I feel it’s my responsibility to give them some of the same mentoring and support I was privileged to receive.”

Being on the mentoring side feels just as good as being the mentee, she says. “You benefit because you have people you are working with whom you trust and can rely upon because of that relationship. You both get something out of it.”

Finding a mentor should come naturally, Stagg feels, but she does have some advice. “One important point is that you may need to look for mentors for different aspects of your career. For example, almost everything I feel I learned from Denny Schoville has to do with case strategy and trial skills. But Marcie Mihaila taught me so much about law practice and client management.”

The key is to understand that not every relationship will provide you with the same insights. “It’s beneficial to have several mentors at once to help you advance to the next level,” she says.

In fact, Stagg knows all about taking things to the next level. In 2008 she was a finalist for Mentor of the Year in the international Stevie Awards.

“My own interest in mentoring is most likely the natural result of the great mentoring I have received in my life,” she says. “It’s something I enjoy doing, and I am sure there is a part of it that is personality-based. I happen to be drawn to communicating and teaching. Those are the same skills that I hope also make me a good trial attorney.”

Mentoring has truly enriched Stagg’s life. “So much of what we do can be isolating or adversarial; mentoring is the opposite. Mentoring is a great way to strengthen relationships, create loyalty and share in someone else’s success as they develop their career.”

Stagg receives a great deal of personal satisfaction from seeing those with whom she works succeed in their careers. She loves being a mentor, and she remains forever grateful to the six who helped inspire her to help others.

Denise Menard (dmenard@tjsl.edu) is communications coordinator at Thomas Jefferson School of Law.
Filling the Gap

Minority bar associations provide programs designed to bridge formal and informal mentorships

BY CARA MITNICK

There are two kinds of mentorships: formal and informal. The former is the result of an institutionalized program sponsored by an organization. The latter is an organically and often fortuitously evolved beneficial relationship between a more seasoned practitioner and a law student or new lawyer. Both ensure the flourishing of competent, satisfied new attorneys. “Matchmaker” setups can fizzle from lack of interpersonal chemistry or shared experience, background or interest that helps encourage such chemistry. Often young lawyers are uncomfortable showing vulnerabilities or what they perceive as ignorance or deficiencies and are not sure how to ask the questions they need answered to progress.

Therefore, equally important are the informal mentorships. These may develop at work between junior and senior attorneys with a common interest or affinity. They may result from introductions from a respected friend, or through any number of ways people meet and develop nurturing, educational relationships between senior and junior professionals.

However, because minority law students and new lawyers are underrepresented in the legal community, such individuals, according to Ida Abbott Consulting’s Management Solutions newsletter, may have more difficulty both in finding mentors informally and sustaining formally created mentorships. Abbott says minority lawyers who leave the profession early often report “feelings of isolation, alienation or lack of connectedness to others at a firm” or, occasionally, the legal community in general.

Therefore, equally important are the informal mentorships. These may develop at work between junior and senior attorneys with a common interest or affinity. They may result from introductions from a respected friend, or through any number of ways people meet and develop nurturing, educational relationships between senior and junior professionals.

There are certain cultural values and nuances which minority lawyers view the mentorship program as vital. There are at least nine such programs, including those offered by the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association, Filipino American Lawyers of San Diego, Iranian American Bar Association, Korean-American Bar Association of San Diego, Pan Asian Lawyers of San Diego, San Diego La Raza Lawyers Association, South Asian Bar Association and Tom Homann Law Association. Lawyers Club of San Diego also has a mentorship program.

According to La Raza Lawyers Board member Lizzette Herrera, public interest advisor and diversity coordinator at USD Career Services, “There is a fundamental need for mentors to guide minority attorneys through law school and the legal system. There are certain cultural values and nuances which a diverse student might not pick up on.” As someone who encourages law students to take advantage of such programs, she continues, “Mentorship programs offered by diversity bar associations make perfect sense for law students.”

Similarly, Assistant U.S. Attorney Carol Lee, president of the San Diego chapter of the Korean-American Bar Association, states, “We know that law students and new attorneys play a critical role in the future of the organization, and through mentoring and career guidance, KABA-SD can provide a very valuable service in return. We believe our mentorship provides opportunities for our student and new lawyer members to learn from professionals in the San Diego legal community while developing valuable relationships with potential employers.”

The programs sponsored by our diverse bar associations fill a gap between formal and informal mentorships. They serve a great need in the community and are a source of empowerment and strength for aspiring and new lawyers. For these reasons, plus the simple fact that one never knows when or whether a mentor relationship is going to gel and move forward, it is important to find many mentors through various methods and programs. Cara Mitnick (cmitnick@sandiego.edu) is assistant dean for career service at the University of San Diego School of Law.
IN 1999, RITA HANSCOM, a former board member for the San Diego County Bar Association, developed the idea to create an attorney mentorship program in the local legal community. In its early stages, the program’s main concept was to pair newer attorneys with more experienced attorneys to foster a mentor-mentee relationship.

Later, in 2006, Anne Richardson, an SDCBA Young/New Lawyer Division (YNLD) committee member, continued the mentorship program. The next year, YNLD president Cirrus Alpert and other YNLD board members collaborated to make their vision of the program come to life.

Along with the revamping came a new name and concept. “The board changed the official name to the Lyceum Mentoring Program and extended participation in the program to law students,” says Alpert. “We wanted a name that would properly convey the philosophy behind the program.” The idea, she says, is to teach soon-to-be and newer attorneys the “philosophy of professionalism where one can be an effective advocate and still maintain one’s civility, integrity, good manners and a sense of humor.

“The name comes from a location outside of ancient Athens that served as a training facility for competitors,” Alpert explains. “The Lyceum was where everyone went to socialize and engage in intellectual discussions.”

Continuing with the Greek philosophy theme, the mentors and mentees are given unique names to characterize their respective groups. The more-experienced attorneys are deemed the Socrates group; the Plato group comprises newer attorneys and law students.

Alpert, an attorney with Callahan McCune & Willis, serves as a mentor. Over the last two years, she says, the program has evolved to accommodate lawyers’ and law students’ packed schedules. Currently, 80 mentors and mentees actively participate during each of two annual sessions. In the spring, newer attorneys who have practiced for fewer than five years are paired with more-experienced attorneys. In the fall, attorneys mentor law students.

“The program requires little effort or investment of time but is truly rewarding,” says Alpert, because “it brings people together in a social setting to learn from one another about the procedural and substantive practice of law and all the things that are not taught in the law school classroom.”

Will Fork of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman is the current chair of the Lyceum Mentoring Program. He supervises, organizes and coordinates the program and its events.

In an effort to find the perfect pairing of mentors and mentees, Fork says, the board members “try hard to connect people whose backgrounds as attorneys are similar and also those law students who have an interest in a particular area of law.” Mentors and mentees are introduced to one another at the Lyceum kick-off events. Held at venues such as the W Hotel and the Napa Valley Grille, these kick-offs are hosted with food and beverage; guest speakers, including members of the San Diego judiciary, discuss the value of mentoring and the role it has played in their lives. The pairs meet at least twice more to attend continuing legal education seminars, grab a cup of coffee or go to a local event such as the opera. A mentee also can shadow the attorney mentor at a court appearance.

Rob Chambers, an attorney with the McClellan Law Firm, was program chair last year. He notes, “It’s our responsibility as lawyers to get involved and give back to our community. It’s a chance for law students to meet people around San Diego and people who will be their future colleagues.”

Fork echoes Chambers’ beliefs. He says the Lyceum Mentoring Program opens the door “for younger attorneys and law students to connect with and learn from San Diego’s more experienced attorneys. Mentors serve as role models and coaches, helping create the unique professional legal culture we have here in San Diego.”

Third-year law students, new attorneys or more experienced attorneys who are interested in participating in the Lyceum Mentoring Program events can register through the San Diego County Bar Association at www.sdcba.org.

Wendy Dimpfl (dimpflwl@tjsl.edu) is a 3L at Thomas Jefferson School of Law and law student editor of San Diego Lawyer magazine.
The Great Divide

Are age-related dynamics a big deal between younger and older attorneys in a mentoring relationship?

BY K.A. VAN VOORHEES

MANY YOUNG ATTORNEYS have a preconceived notion of the dynamic between older mentors and younger mentees. In their twenties, some mentees feel strange calling an older attorney by his or her first name. Even if 56-year-old Mr. Smith insists on being called Chuck, younger attorneys may feel they are violating some unstated rule that requires attorneys over 30 to be addressed by their honorific title.

For some, reaching across this generational divide feels like disrespecting your elders. Will older attorneys view younger attorneys as unprofessional? If a junior associate calls the mentor Chuck, can that same junior associate give Chuck a high five and drink a beer with him? To what extent is an older mentor a friend, colleague or superior?

The answer: “Relax. Mentors, even if they are 80 years old, are people too.”

Bob Steiner, a partner at Luce Forward, says age was never a factor. Although the words “mentor” and “mentee” did not apply when he began practicing law, the guiding relationship between experienced and new attorneys existed. Admitted to the California bar in 1957, Steiner says the practice of law has always been on a first-name basis, even when a young associate would address a partner. To older attorneys, younger associates have a fresh view of the law, and any generational insecurity only hinders a law practice and the relationship the younger attorneys have with older attorneys.

“Even if a younger attorney is intimidated by me, I talk them out of it,” Steiner says. “All young associates have insecurities, but hopefully the experience with an older attorney gives them confidence sooner rather than later.”

Scott Finkbeiner, a cofounder of Wilkinson & Finkbeiner and a member of the California bar since 2003, says he rarely feels insecure or intimidated when addressing older attorneys. He stresses that young attorneys will be placed in leadership positions where they will be directing and guiding older attorneys and staff. According to Finkbeiner, “It is important to remember that age does not always equate to seniority, and there will be times that new attorneys will be required to assert themselves over a more experienced, and possibly older, attorney.”

He advises that the first thing in any legal relationship is to be considerate, professional and humble. Then be yourself. “If you’re outgoing and gregarious, then be that way. Matching the personality of your mentor or mentee won’t work.” Finkbeiner likens forming a mentor/mentee relationship to making a friend. Similarly, mentors and mentees may not always connect, but that should not discourage a potential mentee from finding an invaluable mentor.

After practicing for six years, Finkbeiner serves as both mentor and mentee. He turns to many mentors for substantive law questions in each area of practice where he needs
assistance. Having more than one opinion is always very helpful, he says. He discusses anything from family to ethical issues to opening a law firm. Sure, he can relate more to younger attorneys, but he values all of his mentors for their different perspectives.

“A mentor can serve in several capacities, including legal expert, career advisor and, at times, Happy Hour accomplice,” Finkbeiner says. “There is nothing wrong with wearing more than one hat so long as all participants remain respectful of the role they play.”

Melissa Listug Klick, a young associate at Paul Plevin Sullivan & Connaughton LLP, sought a mentorship from Mike Sullivan when he taught as an adjunct law professor at the University of San Diego. Klick took an employment law class from Sullivan, and when she was hired at Paul Plevin Sullivan & Connaughton in 2004, he became her mentor. Now, at 47, Sullivan continues to mentor Klick, who is 15 years his junior.

“I don't think I ever called Mike ‘Mr. Sullivan,’” Klick says. “While it may seem weird at first calling someone older by their first name, especially when they were first a professor, you quickly get over it.”

Klick attributes the casual relationship she has with Sullivan to her firm’s culture. This allows her to have an open and more rewarding mentor/mentee relationship. Sullivan agrees, pointing out that even when he began practicing at Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich in 1987, there were no “casual Fridays” — but partners were never referred to as “mister” or “miss” but instead as David.

Having a casual relationship regardless of age dovetails into the essence of mentorship. For Sullivan, it’s about analyzing one’s career path and getting over any intimidations a potential mentee may have. For example, an accomplished attorney is not necessarily more gifted; rather, the accomplishments are a function of time and effort. A mentee should utilize that and let the mentor know the mentee’s goals.

“I cannot stress how important it is for a mentee to say where they want to go and how they want to get there,” Sullivan says. To do that, a mentee must be candid, open and honest — all qualities Klick exuded despite her younger age, Sullivan says, which made her a wonderful mentee.

K.A. Van Voorhees (kavan@law.cwsl.edu) is a 3L at California Western School of Law.

SMOOTH SAILING WITH NETWORKING

A BRIEF CHAT WITH MY ADMIRALTY LAW PROFESSOR after class created an opportunity to sail aboard the historic Medea with federal district and circuit judges and several judges from the high courts of Ukraine. The sail was part of a program to educate the Ukrainian judges about the American legal system. Having a background in the Russian language, the chance to participate in an activity with such honored members of the domestic and international judiciary was especially exciting. And this experience arose from a great networking resource that all law students have standing in front of them — their professor.

Before I started law school, I worked as a legal assistant at a civil litigation boutique firm in Santa Monica. When the firm started downsizing, my position was eliminated, and I suddenly found myself without a job. I had established a good working relationship with a lawyer who was co-counsel in a major breach-of-contract case I had worked on. I contacted the attorney and asked if his firm had an opening for a legal assistant. Less than a week later, I received a call from his partner, whose assistant was going on maternity leave and might not be returning. I immediately interviewed for the job and was offered the position, which happened to be in a better location and at a higher salary. I wasn’t even out of work long enough to qualify for unemployment benefits.

Although this involved an administrative job, I believe the lesson of the story is easily transferable to more senior positions. Everyone in your professional network — not just your supervisor or the other people in your law office — can have an impact on your career. Remember to always put your best foot forward, work hard, and continuously strive to make a positive impression.

Daniel Kanter (daniel.kanter@gmail.com) is a 3L at the University of San Diego School of Law.
A Female Focus
Lawyers Club program pairs women for progress

BY ELIZABETH BLUST

WHILE THE LAWYERS CLUB of San Diego’s membership consists of women and men, its mentoring program pairs experienced female lawyers and judges with newer female attorneys and law students. This focus on women is not surprising, since Lawyers Club began in 1972 as a way to make permanent the collaboration among local lawyers to advance the status of women in the law and in society, a collaboration that began in earnest with San Diego lawyers’ support of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Although many law students and lawyers have mentors of the opposite sex, a woman can provide a unique mentoring perspective to another woman. “Having a female attorney guide me, through her mentorship, has been an invaluable experience,” says Marissa Dragoo, cochair (with Eran Burmudez) of the Lawyers Club mentoring program. A young attorney may have questions she would not be comfortable asking a partner or senior associate, Dragoo says, but she would be willing to ask a mentor. “There is a sense of comfort in knowing that this person is there to help you and is not simultaneously judging your performance.”

“It is hard to me to imagine how my entry into the legal community would have benefitted from having a mentor who was a practicing attorney,” says Betty Boone, a lawyer since 1965 and the second woman to graduate from the University of San Diego School of Law (the first was Mary Harvey). “There were many times I wished I did have a mentor. In those days, women were generally not welcomed by the legal profession, although the few women who were practicing in San Diego . . . were welcoming to the few women law students.”

Sandra Morris, a “founding mother” of the Lawyers Club who began her practice in 1970, echoes Boone’s sentiments. “There were no women in practice who could have mentored me,” she says. She suggests one reason young women find the Lawyers Club program so attractive: “The women who have been through the process bring to the table a different perspective and have had to create novel coping mechanisms.” Younger attorneys don’t have to reinvent the wheel, even though “there is not a long tradition to fall back on, as there is for men.”

Retired Superior Court Judge Patricia Cowett had several women mentors and has been a mentor herself. “The Lawyers Club mentoring program has the potential of being unique in that your mentor can be someone outside of your workplace and thus may allow greater candor by both the mentee and mentor when issues or problems arise,” she says. Also valuable is “the opportunity to be mentored by someone who has had very similar or very different experiences that may be unique to women.”

One of her first mentors as a young attorney at CalTrans was Court of Appeal Presiding Justice Judith McConnell, herself the founder and first president of the Lawyers Club of San Diego. Lynn Schenk, later the first woman to represent San Diego in the U.S. House of Representatives, was Cowett’s mentor a few years later at SDG&E.

As a mentor, Judge Cowett met three or four times a year with each mentee. “Getting the most out of a mentoring relationship relies on each party putting energy into the partnership,” she says. “Don’t be shy to ask questions; no question is too basic or silly. Meet frequently enough or talk often enough to get to know or read each other’s needs.”

Cassandra Wolf, president of the Lawyers Club chapter at California Western School of Law, promotes the mentoring program as an incentive for students to join the club while in school. Kathryn Lee, a 3L at Cal Western, agrees that the program attracted her to Lawyers Club as a 1L. New to San Diego, she felt the mentoring program would help her gain a foothold in the local legal community. Her mentor shared thoughts on which classes turned out to be the most helpful when she started to practice, which outside activities she felt were most valuable and how she balances work, family and other interests.

“I felt like she had to go through many of the same obstacles I will have to,” Lee says. “Knowing that it is quite different as a woman practicing is something I might not have realized until I got to that point.”

Young lawyers—men and women—would do well to heed Judge Cowett’s advice: “Having a mentor is critical to gaining practical skills that are invaluable in the work and professional environment, and I do not believe any new lawyer is able to flourish without one.”

Elizabeth Blust (egblust@law.cwsl.edu) is a 3L at California Western School of Law.
COFFEE AND COINCIDENCE

NETWORKING CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE, anytime, anywhere. It happened to me, more than a year before law school, hundreds of miles away in the sleepy little mountain town of Park City, Utah.

As I did almost every day for 10 years, I was simply going about the business of serving coffee and baked goods in my coffee shop. I often engaged in pleasant conversation with my customers. As I helped one particular customer with the fax service, sending and receiving some documents, I noticed they appeared to be legal in nature. Because I was planning to begin law school the following fall, I asked him if he was an attorney, by any chance. He said he was but that he didn't really practice. When I asked this friendly patron of mine where he was from, something I ask so many people day after day in a tourist ski town, he replied, "San Diego."

"Really?" I said, "What a coincidence — I am moving there soon to attend law school."


"I went to California Western," he said with a smile.

We chatted for some time about my business and my plans for going to law school, and he explained that he was working on opening his own business, in San Diego. His concept would combine a club where the best names in jazz music perform within a top-notch fine-dining restaurant experience.

He showed me the website for his future establishment. Then he gave me his card and said, "Give me a call when you get settled in San Diego. I'll give you a job."

More than a year later, I packed everything I owned in and on top of my '89 Toyota 4Runner, and drove away from my coffee shop to San Diego. After meeting some new friends downtown, during the short walk home through my new city, I noticed something. A buzzing crowd of well-dressed, festive people, milling about around the entrance to a place on the block just behind my apartment building caught my attention. There was infectious music emanating from inside, and the whole scene looked like the kind of place that was the place to be.

I asked the valet outside if someone named Howie owned the place in front of which I now found myself standing in awe. The answer: "Yeah, Howie, he's a great guy."

It was Howard Berkson, owner of Anthology — Fine-Tuned Music and Cuisine, the person I had met in my coffee shop in Park City, Utah, more than a year earlier. Here was his place, which hadn't been built when we met, now right next to my newly found apartment in downtown San Diego.

Howard and I catch up and chat when our busy schedules permit. And though I never ended up working for him because I procured a fantastic clerkship, I have that contact, and it came to fruition more than a year before I began school, 700 miles away from San Diego.

Eric LaGuardia (ealaguardia@law.cwsl.edu) is a 2L at California Western School of Law.
Guiding the Leaders
San Diego lawyers and judges talk about their own mentors
BY DANIEL KANTER

FOR THIS ARTICLE, I spoke with 10 distinguished lawyers and judges in San Diego and asked: “Who was your mentor, and what is one good thing you took away that helped you?” Here is what they had to say.

According to U.S. District Court Judge Dana Sabraw, it is essential to have a mentor to practice law at the highest level. On graduation from law school, he worked with Gary Ricks at Price, Postel & Parma. He later worked at Baker & McKenzie with David Doyle, who is now a partner at Morrison & Foerster. Both taught him the importance of protecting his reputation. His uncle, former 1st District Appellate Justice M.O. Sabraw, and Senior U.S. District Court Judge William Enright imparted the dignity of the courtroom. Judge Sabraw strives to provide a respectful forum where people feel they’ve been heard and can accept the decision based on the facts and the law. He says, “The hallmark of a society is how it addresses its civil and criminal disputes.”

Craig McClellan is among the most successful trial lawyers in the country. His mentors were Jerry Davee and Superior Court Judge William Yale. Davee was a partner at Luce, Forward, Hamilton & Scripps and recommended a Daniel T. Broderick III Award for integrity, civility and professionalism in the practice of law. He had a lot of trial experience and taught McClellan “strategies for taking depositions of bad guys” and that the most important thing in the practice of law is your reputation. Yale was presiding judge of the San Diego Superior Court before he retired and went to Luce Forward, where he had the office next to McClellan. Yale valued what you do” that matters. His dad also taught

Robert Brewer Jr., a trial lawyer with the San Diego office of Jones Day, is the former managing partner of the San Diego office of McKenna Long & Aldridge. He is also this year’s recipient of the Daniel T. Broderick III Award. Brewer was mentored by his godfather, Frederick Bryant, a lawyer who later became a judge in Tompkins County in upstate New York. One helpful thing he told Brewer was that if you want to become a trial lawyer, you should try to work at the local prosecutor’s office. Brewer’s wife is Chief Judge Irma Gonzalez of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California.

No one in Judge Irma Gonzalez’ family had been a lawyer; in fact, she thought of becoming a doctor. While working as an assistant United States Attorney in Los Angeles, she met Malcolm Lucas, who later became chief justice of the California Supreme Court. He encouraged her to have confidence and recommended she gain trial experience at a civil firm. He advised her to continue to develop her good reputation and to treat people with respect.

U.S. District Court Judge Larry Burns is grateful for the support of Judge Larry Irving (retired) and Judge Fiorenzo Lopardo, who passed away in 2004. Irving recommended Burns for the American College of Trial Lawyers and spoke on his behalf when he was being considered for magistrate judge and later for district judge. Irving, says Burns, valued integrity, preparation and professionalism. Burns tried a lot of cases in front of Lopardo, a stickler for decorum, courtesy and professionalism. If a lawyer did not stand when addressing the judge, Lopardo would say, “I can’t hear you.” Eventually, the lawyer would realize it was because he was sitting down, not because he was speaking too quietly.

Hon. Kevin Enright, assistant presiding judge of the San Diego Superior Court, says his dad, Senior U.S. District Court Judge William Enright, is his mentor, a “wonderful inspiration” and a “tremendous role model.” When the younger Enright was a teen, father and son visited the British Isles and Stonehenge. They had walked an extremely long distance from the ticket counter and had almost arrived at the monument when his dad realized that the clerk had given him too much change. His dad immediately walked all the way back, and they returned the extra change. The clerk was flabbergasted, and the experience made a lifelong impression on the future jurist. He learned that “It’s not so much what you say but what you do” that matters. His dad also taught
him to “Never, never, never give up. Never be afraid of losing. Strive to win.” Another lesson: “Respect engenders respect. Treat others the way you would want to be treated.” Finally, Enright learned to “Never, ever compromise your reputation.”

David Casey Jr., a senior partner in Casey Gerry Schenk Francavilla Blatt & Penfield, has practiced more than 30 years in the areas of serious personal injury and wrongful death litigation. His dad founded the firm in 1947 and was his mentor and best friend. David Casey Sr. was, says his son, a “fighter” who tried 700 jury trials. He taught him: “Always take the high road.” Innumerable clients have said his dad made them feel special and important—and he told his son, “That is 90% of what you can do for that client.”

San Diego City Attorney Jan Goldsmith has had several mentors as a lawyer, judge and politician. At Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek, Gerald McMahon and Reg Vitek taught him the importance of thoroughness and over-preparation to compete with more experienced lawyers. Goldsmith worked as a legislator with Pete Wilson and Willie Brown, who “was as much of a listener as an orator.” As mayor of Poway, Goldsmith says, he had an extraordinary city manager, Jim Bowersox. Judge Harrison Hollywood, Bill Howatt and Goldsmith’s wife (Superior Court Judge Christine Goldsmith) helped in the transition back to law. He shares this advice:

• “Passion is good. Letting your emotions get out of control in a professional setting is not.”
• “More than half of communication is listening to jurors, witnesses, the judge and the other side.”

Mike Attanasio, a partner in the Cooley Godward Kronish litigation department, teaches about white-collar and corporate crime at USD School of Law. His mentor was U.S. District Court Judge Rudi Brewster, for whom he clerked from 1990 to 1991. Judge Brewster had had an exemplary career as a trial lawyer, and Attanasio came to appreciate that being a lawyer is a very high calling. As an attorney and advocate, he says, you owe the highest duty possible of hard work, dedication and ethics to your clients and to the profession as well. “You will always get more clients. You will only have one reputation,” says Attanasio. And last but not least, you need to have your shoes shined!

Daniel Kanter (daniel.kanter@gmail.com) is a 3L at the University of San Diego School of Law.
WANT TO KNOW THE KEY to being a good mentor? Spend a few minutes with retired San Diego Superior Court Judge Richard Haden, or ask Eric Hart of Teeple Hall and George Seikaly, a senior deputy county counsel for San Diego—two of his former student law clerks. They explain that Judge Haden really takes people under his wing. When giving feedback to clerks, Judge Haden would challenge and coach them precisely where necessary and in a way that said to them that they were capable individuals who can do great things. He passed along valuable information in an encouraging, positive way. As clerks for him, Hart and Seikaly were not motivated by fear of reprisal but by wanting to do their very best for someone they like, respect, and admire.

Both Hart and Seikaly say Judge Haden had a unique way of giving clerks the opportunity to be a part of the process. He allowed clerks to sit in on just about any meeting they wanted. Afterward, he gave clerks like Hart and Seikaly advice by analyzing every facet of the meeting. He pointed out things attorneys did (or did not do) that were less or more effective and went out of his way to bring every detail into focus for his law clerks to show them how to be effective lawyers.

In addition to discussing the legal arguments made or the strategies employed, Judge Haden would comment on many other details the student clerks might not have noticed but that can make a big difference: how the attorneys entered the room; their level of preparedness; the way they held themselves; and their demeanor. He would discuss the level of respect the attorneys showed—or did not show—to him or opposing counsel, and in what ways. He helped clerks like Haden and Seikaly understand that all of these things add up and matter.

Judge Haden took steps to introduce Hart and Seikaly to prominent members of the legal community, both in and out of the professional setting. He made a point of regularly having lunch with his clerks. Additionally, every year or two, Judge Haden hosts a barbecue at his home for many of his friends as well as his former law clerks. The number of guests at the barbecue, once a small intimate event on the judge’s patio, has grown over the years to the point it now requires caterers.

Judge Haden humbly points out what an enormous benefit it was to have law students working with him—that having young, fresh, new thinkers involved in the process helped and challenged him. He notes that student clerks make wonderful sounding boards and helped keep him on the forefront of what was up and coming within the schools and the legal community. He sees it as a symbiotic relationship, as valuable to his success on the bench as it was for the clerks and their future—an inspiring level of reciprocal appreciation and respect.

According to Hart and Seikaly, Judge Haden is a great mentor because he leads by example. His love for the legal profession and his desire to improve the legal community are apparent in everything he does. From his interactions with his clerks to the fairness with which Hart and Seikaly say he always presided over a courtroom, Judge Haden creates connections with those around him and instills confidence in others to achieve great things.

Judge Haden is an active member of the
NETWORKING BEATS NAPPING

I RECENTLY FLEW to the Sundance Film Festival after an evening at the Lakers game. Exhausted from networking with the VIP Suite owner’s friends, I was in no mood to talk at 7 a.m. Sunglasses on, I boarded the plane, and the flight attendant took my coat. I went after her to grab something out of my pocket, and a woman standing in the aisle says hello to me. I say hello back, look at her and realize it’s Denise Richards. It dawns on me that I’m surrounded by actors, directors and producers in the first-class cabin.

Determined to get a nap in, I return to my seat—and Richard Kiratsoulis, one of the principal producers of the Charlize Theron movie Monster, engages me in conversation and shows me clips of his new movie starring Tea Leoni. I walk off the plane with an invite to his screening, and several substantial contacts in the film industry.

Jakgeem Mays (maysj@tjsl.edu) is a 2L at Southwestern Law School and Thomas Jefferson School of Law.

American Inns of Court, an institution devoted to formal mentorship and the promotion of civility in the legal profession—both causes about which he cares deeply and works to promote. He makes clear what an important role his own mentors played in his life, how valuable the lessons were that he gained from them, and as any great mentor does, he now involves others in passing this along. Hart and Seikaly are active members in the American Inns of Court as well and serve as examples of Judge Haden’s mentoring and leadership.

Although Judge Haden is not my mentor, both on the phone and in person he instantly made me feel as though he was. In the end, the key to what makes one a great mentor is not something easily expressed in words, it must be experienced.

Eric LaGuardia (ealaguardia@law.cwsl.edu) is a 2L at California Western School of Law.

“Agree, for the law is costly.”
-William Camden

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Networking: Now More than Ever

The nurturing of professional relationships matters even more in tough times

BY BEVERLY BRACKER

WITH THE RECENT ONSLAUGHT of dreary economic news and attorney layoffs, it would behoove all of us to pause and evaluate the state of our professional relationships.

Taking time to develop and nurture those relationships “can go a very long way in this town,” advises Sabrina Stuart, an associate at Hiden, Rott & Oertle. “When people know you and like you, they are inclined to go out of their way to help you.”

Over the years, studies have consistently shown that 70-80 percent of job-seekers end up getting a job through someone they know. In tough economic times, that number is probably even higher.

“A difficult job market means fewer opportunities yet more attorneys competing for those same opportunities,” states Roy Newman, a May 2008 graduate of Thomas Jefferson School of Law. “The difference networking can make is a personal introduction, pairing a face to a résumé so that the hiring attorney can reach into the tall stack of anonymous résumés on her desk and pull out yours.”

Networking may even trump other factors. Peter Prestley, a recent graduate who is currently a judicial law clerk at the Superior Court in the Northern Mariana Islands, says, “I had friends on the Law Review who couldn’t find work for months after graduation, and friends who made poor grades who, nevertheless, landed excellent jobs even before graduation. The difference seemed to be networking.”

Even if you currently have a job, “Nothing is certain, and you never know when you may need some advice or a change,” advises Anna Romanskaya, an associate at Stark & D’Ambrosio. “Building contacts and relationships is extremely important, whether the people you meet end up being great resources, referral sources or future employers.”

Being able to bring in those referrals goes a long way toward increasing your value and marketability. “Networking has already produced results for my law practice, including client generation and my current work as lead counsel for multimillion-dollar trust litigation,” says Newman, who was admitted to the bar in December 2008.

For those who would like to direct more energy to networking, approaching it may be easier than you think. As Woody Allen famously said, “Eighty percent of success is showing up.” And there seems to be some truth to that.

“Just get out there and start attending events. The County Bar [San Diego County Bar Association] is a great organization to join because it has something for everyone’s interest.” A good way to get started, suggests Romanskaya, is “merely being present at events and having people recognize you.”

Stuart agrees. “Once you start to meet and get to know people, it can really be enjoyable.”

And according to Prestley, “It’s never as bad as you think. Once you’re there, you realize that almost everyone is interested in meeting you and helping you if possible.”

To avoid putting too much pressure on yourself or the situation, try Prestley’s method: “I decided to approach my networking both very seriously and very casually. I took it seriously because I made a concerted effort to put myself in front of people even when it was uncomfortable and awkward. I
was also casual about networking in the sense that I didn’t approach anyone looking for a job. I figured that would only stress me and the other person out. Instead, I tried to make an effort to really get to know a handful of people I admired. I didn’t expect a job from any of them, though. At best, I hoped there would be a handful of people who knew me well enough to offer good advice as I was navigating the job market and would be happy to recommend me for a position if an opening arose.”

Most attorneys express that they would gladly give advice, share their own experiences and act as a mentor to a law student or recent graduate. Their desire to help seems to stem from the fact that someone assisted them along the way.

“When I started practicing 38 years ago, I frankly did not know how much I had to learn,” notes Wayne Alan Hughes, president of the Consumer Attorneys of San Diego, who practices with Lorens & Associates. “Quite a few experienced attorneys must have smiled as they watched me. Often these same people also took the time to help me in situations where they had nothing to gain. These gifts made me both a better person and a better attorney.”

He says, “We usually cannot give back to the people who have helped us most. Being a mentor is a way of honoring those who helped us and to ‘pay it forward.’”

The San Diego legal community offers a wealth of support and resources to those who seek them out. Just remember to show up.

Beverly Bracker (bbracker@tjsl.edu) is the director of career services at Thomas Jefferson School of Law.
THE AMERICAN INNS OF COURT were created to improve the skills, professionalism, and ethics of attorneys and judges. Members of the Inns of Court include judges, lawyers, and sometimes law professors and law students. Each group meets about once a month. Not to be confused with a fraternal order, the American Inns of Court strive to help their members rise to higher levels of excellence.

Typically, the members are divided into pupillage teams, drawing from different categories (i.e., judges, experienced attorneys and new attorneys). The pupillage team then puts on programs for the Inn. This process allows less-experienced attorneys to learn from more-experienced attorneys and judges.

San Diego County is currently the home of five Inns of Court: Enright, Wallace, Lopardo (formerly known as Holmes), Todd and Welsh. While the goals of the San Diego Inns of Court are similar, their histories set them apart and enable them to enrich the San Diego legal community in different ways.

The Hon. William B. Enright American Inn of Court chapter was created in 1991 and named in honor of U.S. District Court Judge William Enright. Judge Enright's dedication to the goals and principles of the American Inns of Court movement is widely recognized, and he was a major force in the movement's acceptance in California. Judge Enright was also a founding member of the Louis Welsh American Inn of Court and has assisted in the formation of many other Inns at both the state and national level.

The Enright Inn of Court's purpose is to share knowledge and to build camaraderie amongst judges and lawyers in San Diego County. Its members are divided into teams of judges, experienced attorneys and new attorneys, and each team is assigned a topic to present at the monthly meetings. This year's theme is "Civility in Practice." Currently, Superior Court Judge Kevin Enright serves as president.

The Enright Inn of Court meets on the second Thursday of the month from September through May at the San Diego County Bar building. Meetings begin at 5:30 p.m., and dinner follows at 7 p.m.

For more information, visit the website at www.innsofcourt.org/Content/InnContent.aspx?Id=204 or call 619-450-5024.

The William L. Todd Jr. American Inn of Court was named after Justice William L. Todd Jr. It was established to enhance professionalism, civility and legal skills for members of the San Diego legal community. Founded in 1992 by alumni of the University of Southern California, Todd Inn membership focuses primarily on undergraduates and law students from the University of Southern California.

Throughout the year, Todd Inn provides six MCLE educational programs for its members that include a lecture followed by a question-and-answer session. Additional networking opportunities for members include an annual golf tournament and a dinner with the other San Diego chapters of the American Inns of Court. Todd Inn holds its meetings at the San Diego County Bar Center.

For more information, visit the website, www.innsofcourt.org/inns/toddinn. To find out about attending a meeting or membership, contact Christopher Todd at 619-232-8151.

While the goals of the San Diego Inns of Court are similar, their histories set them apart and enable them to enrich the San Diego legal community in different ways.
The Honorable Fiorenzo V. Lopardo American Inn of Court was founded in 1997 to service the legal community in North County San Diego. Formerly named after Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., this Inn was renamed in 2008. The Lopardo Inn of Court’s mission is to provide mentorship and networking opportunities for its members. The members are divided into teams, which are each responsible for presenting educational programs throughout the year. This year, Lopardo’s theme is “Practicing Law in the 21st Century.”

“Whether you are a new attorney, changing jobs, focusing on a new specialty, starting your own practice or are simply interested in meeting other attorneys in the area,” says Christine Mueller, the membership chair, “this organization is a great tool for professional development.”

The Lopardo Inn of Court holds its meetings at the Vista Courthouse (325 South Melrose, Dept 33/Annex, Vista 92081) on the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. Currently, Superior Court Commissioner Ernest Michael Gross is the president of the Lopardo Inn of Court.

For more information, check the Internet at www.innsofcourt.org/inn/lopardoinn/. To find out about meetings or membership, contact Christine Mueller at 760-931-9070.

San Diego County is currently the home of five Inns of Court: Enright, Wallace, Lopardo (formerly known as Holmes), Todd and Welsh.

According to Michael Conger, a Master in both the Enright and Wallace chapters, “Wallace serves as a mentoring and educational program between the Masters, Barristers and Associates, in place to raise the standard of professional practice.” Founded three years ago, Wallace is the newest Inn in San Diego County, and its current president is Robert Gerber.

For more information, contact Mark C. Zebrowski at 858-720-5100 or visit the site at www.innsofcourt.org/Content/InnContent.aspx?id=1466.

For information on the Louis M. Welsh Inn of Court (and a tour through some of its history), see the November/December 2008 San Diego Lawyer Magazine, page 30, or visit www.innsofcourt.org/inn/welshinn.

Justin Hannant (hannantj@tjsl.edu) is a 3L at Thomas Jefferson School of Law. Sarah Kalaei (skalaei@gmail.com) is a 3L at Thomas Jefferson School of Law. Jakgeem Mays (maysj@tjsl.edu) is a 2L at Southwestern Law School and Thomas Jefferson School of Law.
Congratulations to the San Diego County Bar Association’s 2009 Service Award recipients. Each of the 11 winners was honored during the Bar’s annual Awards Luncheon and Celebration of Community Service on Wednesday, April 29, at the Westin Gaslamp in Horton Plaza.

2009 Service Award

OUTSTANDING ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR

KAREN HEWITT
U.S. Attorney, Southern District of California

School: University of California, Berkeley and University of San Diego School of Law
Seatmate: United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts
Would Ask: How do you work to build a consensus with the other eight justices on a case when you are dealing with many strong and often irreconcilable viewpoints?
Dinner Guests: Bill Gates and Sandra Day O’Connor, although we would likely eat out because I’m not much of a cook.
Dream: To have a long and happy marriage, to raise our two sons to be good men, and to perform work that is meaningful.
Tip: When you visit a new city, ask the locals about the best restaurant in town, and be sure to eat there before you leave.

THESE QUESTIONS WERE ASKED OF THE INDIVIDUALS:

• Where did you go to undergraduate and law school?
• Which judge or lawyer would you like to sit next to on a cross-country flight?
• What’s the first question you’d ask him or her?
• Which noteworthy persons would you invite to dinner?
• What’s a lifetime dream of yours?
• What’s your business travel tip?
• What’s your e-mail address?

Compiled by Matthew Gilson
Photographs by Lauren Radack
Community Service

JAY JEFFCOAT
Partner, DLA Piper

School: University of California, Santa Barbara and UCLA Law School
Seatmate: Former United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes
Would Ask: I would ask him how his position on the “clear and present danger” doctrine evolved.
Dinner Guests: Barrack Obama and Thomas Friedman (but not together)
Dream: To live a full and healthy life, with family and friends with similar good health, working to improve the prospects of the less fortunate in our communities (locally and internationally).
Tip: Get a briefcase/computer bag with the TSA-approved computer sticker so you don’t have to take your computer out of the case on the conveyor belt.
E-Mail: jay.jeffcoat@dlapiper

Service to the San Diego County Bar Association

CHARLES DICK JR.
Partner, Baker & McKenzie

School: University of Iowa, both undergraduate and law school
Seatmate: United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts
Would Ask: Does oral argument really make a difference, and if so, what makes oral argument convincing?
Dinner Guests: Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Yo-Yo Ma
Dream: Writing an autobiography and actually having somebody bother to read it.
Tip: Do not get uptight about connections.
E-Mail: charles.h.dick@bakernet.com
2009 Service Award

Service to the Legal Profession

PETER QUON JR.
Supervising Deputy Attorney General, California Attorney General's Office

School: University of California, Davis and Thomas Jefferson School of Law
Seatmate: California Supreme Court Justice Ming Chin
Would Ask: What are some of the activities you do to manage the stress inherent in your judicial responsibilities?
Dinner Guests: Condoleezza Rice and Warren Buffett
Dream: To travel to and explore at least two major cities in each of the seven continents in the world.
Tip: Carry an empty water bottle through security check, fill it with your beverage of choice from a vendor inside the security area, and carry it on board. Carry office work that does not require a computer to complete.
E-Mail: peter.quon@doj.ca.gov

Service to Legal Education

AUGUST LARSEN
President, AJL Litigation Media

School: University of Washington
Seatmate: Mark Lanier, the Texas attorney who successfully deployed groundbreaking visual presentation strategies in the first Vioxx case to be tried
Would Ask: What preceding courtroom experiences led him to the visual strategy he came to employ in the Vioxx case?
Dinner Guests: Barack Obama and David Gergen
Dream: Peace of mind. So far, distance running has contributed the most to that goal.
Tip: Given the fact that I enjoy a California-based practice and that my work usually involves media gear, my best travel advice is to enjoy the ride.
E-Mail: august@ajlmedia.com
Winners

Service by a Public Attorney
VICTOR NUÑEZ
Deputy District Attorney
School: UCLA (undergraduate and MBA) and University of San Diego School of Law
Seatmate: Lilia Garcia
Would Ask: Will you marry me all over again?
Dinner Guests: Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr.
Dream: I have accomplished my dream by working at the district attorney’s office and doing the right thing every day and working with great people.
Tip: None. I am a public servant, and we do not have the money to do extravagant business trips. However, if I had the opportunity to go on one, I would say get the job done and enjoy yourself.
E-Mail: victor.nunez@sdcda.org

Service to Diversity
DOC ANTHONY ANDERSON III
Law Offices of Doc Anthony Anderson III
School: Tuskegee Institute, University of Albuquerque, Troy State University and Thomas Jefferson School of Law
Seatmate: United States District Court Judge John Houston
Would Ask: How is your family?
Dinner Guests: Martin Luther King Jr. and Barack Obama
Dream: Retire (for real) with no debt or financial obligations
Tip: Stay away from the credit cards.
E-Mail: ShaftSavr@aol.com
Distinguished Citizen

MIDGE COSTANZA
Office of the District Attorney

School: I did not attend college. I was awarded a doctor of laws degree with full honors from Framingham University in Massachusetts in 1978.

Seatmate: Clarence Darrow
Would Ask: If you were alive today, what social issue that we currently face would most surprise you as still an issue, given that you fought the same issue almost 100 years ago?

Dinner Guests: Golda Meir and Maya Angelou
Dream: World peace, justice, civil rights and equality and the right of all people to choose their own destiny.
Tip: Go first class.
E-Mail: midge.costanza@sdcda.org

Outstanding Jurist

HON. FREDERIC LINK
Superior Court Judge

School: University of California, Santa Barbara and University of San Diego School of Law
Seatmate: United States Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens
Would Ask: I would ask him how his golf game is, since we were supposed to play the last time he was in San Diego.
Dinner Guests: Justice Stevens, Mike Ditka and Bo Diddley. That discussion would be incredible, since all of us are and were fans of the Chicago Bears.
Dream: I am living it. My family, my friends and my profession are everything I had hoped for.
Tip: If I have to go somewhere on a business trip, I try to go someplace where it is interesting and fun. There is nothing wrong with mixing business with pleasure.
E-Mail: Frederic.Link@sdcourtcz.gov
Distinguished Organization

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COLLABORATIVE
Established: Founded by Myrna Pascual and formally incorporated in December 2006
Leader and Title: Appaswamy “Vino” Pajanor, president and executive director
Mission Statement: “To promote equal access to housing for all persons in the region, especially low-income and underprivileged individuals and families, by educating the public concerning home ownership and landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities, seeking financial and capacity building resources, providing financial and other resources, monitoring compliance with housing-related laws, and conducting related activities.”
Motto: “Housing for all”
People Helped in 2008: 2,677 families
Major Accomplishments in 2008: Increasing the number of partners in the collaborative; increasing the number of outreach programs (seven HOME Clinics in 2007, 20 in 2008); threefold increase in number of people served
Website: www.housingcollaborative.org

Winners

Myrna Bryn Pascual, Appaswamy “Vino” Pajanor

Public Service by a Law Firm

MINTZ LEVIN
Established: In Boston in 1933; the San Diego office opened in June 2006
Partner in Charge: Craig Hunsaker
Number of Attorneys in San Diego: Currently 34 attorneys/professionals
Pro Bono Hours in 2008: Timekeepers firm-wide devoted a total of 26,175 hours to pro bono projects in 2008.
Three Pro Bono Projects: Here are three representative pro bono projects, handled out of San Diego:
• Domestic Violence Project. The office has teamed up with the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program (www.sdvlp.org) to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence.
• Women of Color in Law. The office incorporated Women of Color in Law and provides continuing advice to the organization on obtaining tax-exempt status.
• Downtown YMCA. Provides real estate-related legal advice.
Website: www.mintz.com

Matthew Gilson (Mgilson100@pointloma.edu) graduates in May from Point Loma Nazarene University.
Holding the Klan Accountable

San Diego’s Jim McElroy discusses the Kentucky trial victory against one hate group // BY ROBERT HUIE

The Southern Poverty Law Center, since being founded in Montgomery, Alabama by civil rights lawyers Morris Dees and Joe Levin in 1971, has used litigation to hold hate groups and their leaders accountable for the violent acts of those groups’ members. San Diego lawyer Jim McElroy first met Morris Dees at a deposition in San Diego more than 15 years ago; just minutes after McElroy expressed his admiration and offered to help the center, Dees was served with a lawsuit, and McElroy had a new client. McElroy, on the center’s board since 1996, has been board chair since 2003.

In this interview, McElroy discusses the center’s November 2008 trial victory in Meade County Circuit Court in Kentucky. The center represented a Panamanian American, Jordan Gruver, in a lawsuit against the Imperial Klans of America, its leader, Ron Edwards, and several of its recruiters who without provocation brutally beat Gruver at a county fair in Brandenburg, Kentucky.
Please tell us about your case.

Jordan Gruver was 16 years old at the time, stood 5-foot-3 and weighed about 150 pounds. He is an American citizen born in Kentucky, and his mother was born in North Dakota. His father, also an American citizen, was from Panama. Jordan Gruver was at the county fair with his brother and some others and wandered away to get a soda.

Also at the fair were four skinheads from the Imperial Klans of America, handing out cards on a recruiting mission. They had been drinking for about four hours when they saw Gruver. They circled him, called him a “spic” and other terms, pushed him, spit on him and knocked him down. Fairly typical of skinheads—when they fight, they try to get you to throw the first punch. But when they knock you down, they have what they call a “boot party”—they go after you with Doc Martens, steel-toed boots. Two of the four were wearing red shoelaces, which means you have shed blood for your race. They kicked him around the head. They fractured his jaw. He was trying to protect himself with his arms around his head, and they fractured his arm too and cracked a couple ribs.

One of the perpetrators was 6’7” and weighed 270 pounds; another was 6’2” and weighed 240 pounds. All four of them had been convicted of crimes, and I think three were convicted of felonies and had served time. That was important to our theory of the case, because what Morris has done in almost every one of these cases is allege that the perpetrators—the actual guys who do the hitting, kicking and killing and generally see some jail time—never would have done what they did if it weren’t for the leader of the organization. The leader of the organization washes his hands and says, “I wasn’t there; I didn’t have anything to do with it.”

We used a respondeat superior theory—Ron Edwards, the Imperial Wizard of the Imperial Klans of America, negligently hired and trained these people. He knew they were violent thugs with felony convictions, and yet he made them Grand Cyclops or gave various other titles. He gave them some sense of authority in the organization and told them that their job is to go out and recruit. The way he gets money is primarily through dues paid by people who are recruited.

So we brought a civil action against Edwards, his organization and of course the actual perpetrators.

Going into the trial, what was your biggest concern?

You go into a small town like Brandenburg, Kentucky, and you’re accusing people from that town or areas around that town of these horrible things. You worry about the jury perception of you riding in from out of town to stir up trouble and call the local boys bad names. A defense I’ve heard over and over again is “It’s just a bunch of good old boys that got drunk and got in a fistfight with somebody, and it didn’t have anything to do with race”—even though here they called Gruver a “spic.” When the cops caught the 6’7” perpetrator, he told the cop, “That guy’s the illegal alien, arrest him; why are you bothering me?”

Those are the things you worry about before trial. But once the jury saw the evidence, it did the right thing.

Did the defendants represent themselves at trial?

Yes. It is not atypical. That’s often more of a disadvantage to us than an advantage. Juries identify with normal people, not lawyers. I tell young lawyers, “When you think you’re having a good time beating up on a witness, you can bet the jury is identifying with the witness, not with you as a lawyer.” So it makes the trial more difficult. Here we are, this civil rights organization running into town, and these guys don’t have any lawyers.

I don’t know if it’s a tactical decision or financial decision on their part, or maybe a combination of both. Edwards raised money for a legal defense, but I don’t know what he did with the money.

They jury came back with a $2.5 million award, including $1.5 million in punitive damages against Edwards. They took about six hours, and the foreperson reported that it had been a difficult decision. What do you think was the difficulty?

It took the jury a little longer than I expected. We heard some raised voices. It was a Friday night, and the case closed around 3 p.m. They sent out for pizza at 6 p.m. The judge said that the jury would be back on Saturday if they didn’t decide, because he had another
trial on Monday. I think he was maybe also accommodating us because he knew we were from out of town. There were a lot of news media waiting around. It was around 9:30 p.m. that the verdict finally came in.

I assume the biggest issue was, as in all our cases, our legal theory—the jury may have had some questions about holding Ron Edwards responsible for the acts of other people. He wasn’t there when it happened. He didn’t say, “Go beat up that specific person.”

One of your trial witnesses, Kale Kelly, testified that Edwards had actually instructed him in 1989 to assassinate Morris Dees.

It was a stunning development in the case. A book called *Into the Devil’s Den* was published in 2008, cowritten by an FBI agent and an informant. The informant had been asked to infiltrate a biker gang, and instead he ended up among all these skinheads with weapons, including Ron Edwards. This informant was active back in 1999, around the time the Southern Poverty Law Center was going to trial against Aryan Nations leader Richard Butler, who had a compound in Hayden Lake, Idaho. Hayden Lake was the center of the skinhead movement at the time. Edwards knew that if we got to Idaho for trial, we had a very good chance of winning the case; and if we won the case, we were going to take this compound at Hayden Lake away from Butler. We were on our way to Idaho, and apparently that’s when Edwards tasked a man named Kale Kelly to take out Morris.

So a book gets published about all this. Morris, typical of him, calls the FBI and asks, “Where is this guy who was going to kill me? I’d like to talk to him.” The FBI says, “He’s out of prison; we’ll give him your number.” Then Kale Kelly calls Morris, who goes out to see him. They hit it off like nobody’s business. He cried on Morris’ shoulder and asked for forgiveness, and Morris said, “It’s water under the bridge; don’t worry about it.” Kelly invited Morris to his daughter’s birthday party, and they stayed in touch.

Far and away, Kelly was the most powerful and credible witness at the trial. He was older, clean-cut, married, articulate and admitted that his life had been in shambles, that he’d been in and out of prison, until he finally got straightened out. He testified that back in 1999 he didn’t want to take the gun with him to Idaho because he was a convicted felon, and if he was caught with a firearm, that was it for him. Edwards was supposed to meet him in Idaho. Somebody tipped off the FBI, and Kelly was arrested just before he got on a bus to Idaho, disguised as a homeless person. I don’t think he was charged with a conspiracy to kill Morris, because they didn’t have enough evidence of that, but he was charged with some other things, and his arrest prevented Morris from getting killed.

At our trial, right after Ron Edwards testifies that he never tells people to break the law, Kelly gets on the stand and gives his testimony.

I understand that Edwards had showed up for his deposition in February 2008 with the words “Fuck SPLC” tattooed on his head. Could you see the tattoo at trial?

It was a little hard to see, but he sure didn’t grow his hair out. At the deposition, Morris was admiring the tattoo, and asked if he could take a picture to show the people at the center. Edwards said sure.

Edwards actually showed up to the deposition with a gun, but the sheriffs wouldn’t let him bring it into the courthouse.

Security at the courthouse during trial was pretty intense. There were a lot of skinheads there. Some of the skinheads had turned against Edwards, and testified for us. There was a lot of staring down going on the first couple of days. We had security inside and outside the courtroom, and security at our hotel, but that’s fairly
typical. As we get closer to trial, the death threats tend to in-
crease significantly.

What is the center’s goal in suing hate groups?

Our goal is threefold. One, to try to get some com-
promise for our victims. Two, to shed light on something that
people don’t see. And three, to put these groups out of business.

Are these groups on the decline?

There has been a substantial increase in hate groups re-
cently, and I think it’s primarily the result of anti-immigrant
sentiment.

We’ve also seen a lot of increased chatter among hate
groups as a result of Obama’s election. These people, who
have a tendency to feel marginalized anyway, tend to blame
everything that’s wrong in their lives on someone else—
blacks, immigrants, Jews, gays. These groups may feel even
more marginalized now that a black man is leading this coun-
try. There’s other chatter that some white supremacists were
actually in favor of Obama getting elected because they think
that will help spur the race war.

If readers want to help the center, what can they do?

Visit our website, splcenter.org. Find out what you’re in-
terested in—whether a particular case or a particular type of
work, and then call the center and you’ll get directed to the
right person.

Suing hate groups is just a piece of what the center does,
although it seems to be the piece that gets the most publicity.
We also have an intelligence project that sends out a magazine
to law enforcement groups, tracking hate groups and identi-
fying leaders. The biggest growth at the center in the last five
years has been the Immigrant Justice Project, to address the
needs of migrant workers, particularly in the southeast. So
far our class actions there are getting good results. On top of
that, we also do a lot of education, including our Teaching
Tolerance program.

There’s an awful lot of legal work to be done. Of course,
we can use financial support too.

Robert Huie is an attorney in San Diego.
Race to the Top

BY GEORGE BREWSTER

THOMAS JEFFERSON PHOTOGRAPH
BY CHRIS SAUNDERS

DISTRICT COURT PHOTOGRAPH
BY STEVE SILVA

The U.S. District Court (opposite page) and Thomas Jefferson School of Law (this page) are both building new facilities in downtown San Diego. Which one will be completed first? In upcoming issues, we’ll include more photos of the progress, along with tidbits about the San Diego legal community. The first pictures were taken on April 10, the same date in 1999 when the North County Regional Center expansion opened. Please submit legal tidbits to sandbrews@aol.com.

THE FIRST San Diego courthouse was located in Old Town and was under the First Judicial District, which included Los Angeles, San Diego and San Bernardino counties. The founder of The San Diego Union was attorney William Jeff Gatewood, who came to San Diego in 1868. He sold his interest in the paper in May 1869 and stayed in Old Town to practice law.

The youngest woman in California history to pass the state bar exam was Grace Rittoff, who took the exam in 1933 at the age of 22. She practiced in San Diego until her retirement in 1975.

The first female judge in San Diego County was Madge Bradley, appointed to the Municipal Court by Governor Goodwin Knight in 1933.

The Superior Court did not have any courtrooms in the South County Regional Center before the opening of four courtrooms on the third floor on February 20, 1992.

THOMAS JEFFERSON SCHOOL OF LAW
11th and Island Avenues
The San Diego Municipal Court–Civil Building (now the Madge Bradley Building) was dedicated on December 4, 1992.

Prior to completion of East County Regional Center courtrooms in 1993, Superior Court operated in El Cajon City Hall and borrowed courtrooms from Municipal Court.

The Superior Court Annex at the NBC Tower opened in 1992 after the abandonment of make-shift courtrooms in Hotel San Diego, and it closed when the Hall of Justice opened in 1996.

The San Marcos traffic court closed down when the North County Regional Center Annex traffic court opened in July 2003.

During 2009, Higgs Fletcher & Mack and Sullivan, Hill, Lewin, Rez & Engel celebrate their 70th and 40th anniversaries, respectively.

U.S. DISTRICT COURT
Broadway Between State and Union Streets
Bench/Bar Mixer

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREN RADACK
The annual Bench/Bar Mixer was held on March 25 at the County Bar Center.
Focus on Diversity

SDCBA’s Ethnic Relations and Diversity Committee hosted a mixer at the County Bar Center on March 27 and welcomed members of the American Bar Association's Presidential Commission on Diversity in the Profession.

Reception for ABA President

The president of the American Bar Association attended a reception at the County Bar Center on March 2.
Red Boudreau Dinner

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREG LAMBERT

The 25th annual Red Boudreau Trial Lawyer Dinner on March 28 raised funds for St. Vincent de Paul Village.
Black & White

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARRY CARLTON

The Association of Corporate Counsel held its annual Black & White Ball on March 21.
PHOTO GALLERY

Witkin Awards
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARRY CARLTON
The Bernard E. Witkin Award Dinner on March 12 benefited the Law Library Justice Foundation.

San Diego Lawyer apologizes for the incorrect identification of those pictured in two shots included in the March/April inauguration photos on page 50 and 51. The names are given here in the correct left-to-right order.
The SAN DIEGO COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION

invites the members of the San Diego Legal Community to join us for the installation of

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The Bar Center • 1333 Seventh Avenue
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gives special and permanent recognition to deceased lawyers and judges of the San Diego County Bar who demonstrated superior legal skills and high ethical standards throughout careers of significant length.

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is the charitable arm of the San Diego County legal community, and in partnership with the San Diego County Bar Association, strives to provide access to justice by investing in sustainable results and advocacy for people and communities in our region that are impacted by poverty, abuse, and discrimination.

By offering an effective means for the legal community to engage in law-related philanthropy, the San Diego County Bar Foundation strengthens the profession by providing lawyers the opportunity to contribute to the quality and benefit of San Diego County. Based on the belief that justice serves as the great equalizer in our society, we ensure access to justice by investing in legal aid and public interest organizations along with expertise, leadership and advocacy. We serve as a leader in our community and a model bar foundation nationwide. We maintain the highest level of commitment to the permanence of the Bar Foundation and its work by building law-related philanthropy.

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Who is this prominent member of San Diego’s legal community?

Please submit answers by June 1 to mkruming@aol.com. Your name will be entered to win a luncheon for two at Dobson’s Bar & Restaurant in downtown San Diego. Congratulations to Fred Schenk of Casey Gerry Schenk Francavilla Blatt & Penfield, who won the March drawing after correctly identifying litigator Virginia Nelson. Thanks to everyone who participated.
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Prior to 1958, May 1 had generally been known as May Day, a holiday of ancient and pagan origins, as well as International Workers’ Day or Labour Day. The concept of Law Day was proposed by Charles Ryne, legal counsel to President Dwight Eisenhower and president of the American Bar Association. Ryne believed it was important to acknowledge the use of law to achieve individual and social justice as well as to contrast democracy with communism during the Cold War era.

Law Day was established by President Eisenhower in a proclamation denoting the first of May each year for its observation. He declared it “a day of national dedication to the principles of government under law” to be celebrated throughout the nation. The very first Law Day was also designed to provide a counterpoint to the Soviet Union’s May Day displays of weapons and military prowess each year. Law Day was given formal stature by Public Law 87-20 on April 7, 1961, and has been appropriately observed ever since.

In 1958, Robert Conyers (later Superior Court Judge Conyers) was president of the San Diego County Bar Association of 557 members. The Bar Association already was celebrating Law Week, which began on April 28, chaired by Eugene Horton. Conyers included in that celebration a special luncheon to recognize and honor the judges of the county for the first Law Day in San Diego. Special tribute was given to retired Superior Court Judge Charles Haines, who recognized the opening of the University of San Diego School of Law. Approximately 350 lawyers, judges and their guests attended this lunch. The keynote speaker was Louis Kelso, author and lawyer, who spoke on the topic “Law and Freedom.”

As part of Law Week and Law Day activities, lawyers were encouraged to be guides to school and civic groups for open houses held in the courts, and to communicate with the press and the media about the legacy of the rule of law and how important it is to the protection of individual liberty and human rights. Another luncheon was hosted at the U.S. Grant Hotel by Conyers, Roger Ruffin, president of the Barristers Club (later Superior Court Judge Ruffin) and George Lazar Jr. (later Superior Court Judge Lazar) for leaders from 10 San Diego high schools.

The Public Relations Committee of the Bar Association reminded the membership that “Bar Association Week also fits into the long-range planning in that it is designed to be a part of the integrated whole, to show the public that an attorney is a friend and counselor who can be invaluable, and should be consulted first, not last” (Dicta, February 1958, page 4).

The San Diego Union acknowledged the first Law Day in an editorial titled “Law: Free Society’s Cement” noting the importance of a rule of law and stating, consistent with the initial purpose of the day, “The world’s tensions stem from one basic evil: the attempt to substitute the law of force for the force of law. When the legal institutions and the respect for man’s basic rights are weak, the defenses against totalitarianism and brute authority are weak.” As William Pitt observed: “Where law ends, tyranny begins.”

Law Day this year was celebrated along with the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s birth and the legacy of liberty he left us. Traditional Law Week activities of the Bar Association included a poster and essay contest for students throughout the county and a Law Week Luncheon on April 29.

Hon. William Howatt Jr., who retired as presiding judge of Family Court, currently works for JAMS.
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Chas Muckenthaler (chas.muckenthaler@gmail.com) is a staff photographer for San Diego Lawyer.
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