

# VALLEY LAWYER

MARCH 2010 • \$4

A Publication of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association

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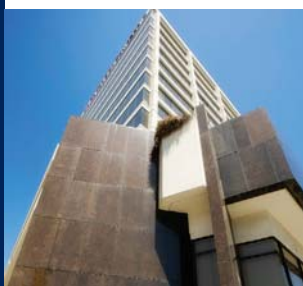
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# VALLEY LAWYER

A Publication of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association

## VALLEY LAWYER

### SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BAR ASSOCIATION

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## Diversity Means More Than You Think



**ROBERT F. FLAGG**  
SFVBA President

“¡SI SE PUEDE!” HAS BECOME a familiar phrase since Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez of United Farm Workers conceived it in 1972. The phrase literally means, “Yes, it can be done” and is more commonly translated into English as, “Yes, we can!”

You may recall that President Obama adopted the common translation as a campaign slogan for the 2008 presidential election. But did you know that the phrase, translated into Hebrew was used as a rallying cry by the Shas party in the 2009 Israeli legislative election? (That's **כן, אנחנו יכולים** for the scholars among us.)

From Hispanic-American farm workers, through an African American presidential hopeful, to a legislative campaign in the Jewish state – the phrase is on its journey around the world!

Back home in the Valley, the SFVBA has been promoting diversity in the practice of law, the judiciary and in society for many years. Our Diversity Committee, chaired by Past President Richard Lewis, is currently at the forefront of our ongoing efforts, leading and encouraging the Bar's participation with local, state and country-wide efforts to promote diversity in the judiciary.

Among our current efforts: our adoption of Maurice Sendak Elementary School in North Hollywood, where we participate in law-related programs and activities with the students and teachers, and our sponsorship of Law Explorer Post #1926, with activities for high school age students. In those instances, SFVBA lawyers interact with elementary and high school students of diverse backgrounds in formal and informal settings. But we could be, and should be, doing more.

For example, as some of our members have noted, we should be reaching out to college students, to encourage those of all backgrounds to consider law school. That's how I got here: I was a biology major with an interest in medicine or perhaps becoming a veterinarian. Someone encouraged me to consider law school and the rest, as they say, is history.

Further, we should be engaged with both law students and practicing attorneys of diverse backgrounds to encourage consideration of a judicial career. Remember, a judge must first have been a lawyer for at least ten years before she or he can serve on the bench.

California society as a whole, including our Valley, includes a plurality of Hispanics, to name just one diverse group, who are projected to be the majority in our state by 2042. In order to avoid the appearance of elitism and favoritism, the bench should be more reflective of the composition of the community it serves.

Great strides and advances have been made and much yet remains to be done. Members of diverse groups of all kinds formerly excluded, for reasons now discredited and abandoned, now sit on the bench as judges at all levels,

from our Superior Courts to the United States Supreme Court. Yet we must continue our efforts, with a clear goal in sight. That goal was articulated almost fifty years ago, by then Ethiopian leader, Haile Selassie, in his address to the UN General Assembly of October 4, 1963: “[we will not be done] until bigotry and prejudice and malicious and inhuman self-interest have been replaced by understanding and tolerance and good-will.”

For us as lawyers, we will start this process with ourselves and in our courts, knowing that all people, great and small, are affected by the administration of justice. This, then, is a call for volunteers.

If you are interested in starting outreach programs to encourage interest in the law as a career for diverse college students in the Valley, or if you want to work with law students or young lawyers, let us know. You can contact me or the Bar's Director of Public Services, Rosie Soto ([referrals@sfvba.org](mailto:referrals@sfvba.org)). Let us raise the torch yet higher as we pass it to another generation of lawyers and judicial officers. “¡Si se puede!” 🗣️

*Robert Flagg can be contacted at [robert.flagg@farmersinsurance.com](mailto:robert.flagg@farmersinsurance.com).*



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# From the Editor

For questions, comments or candid feedback regarding *Valley Lawyer* or *Bar Notes*, please contact Angela at (818) 227-0490, ext. 109 or via email at [Angela@sfvba.org](mailto:Angela@sfvba.org).



ANGELA M. HUTCHINSON  
Editor

Welcome New Members!

Inside this issue of *Valley Lawyer*, we focus on diversity in law from the Bench to the Bar. Be sure to read our MCLE article on Elimination of Bias. When we think of the term, "A Pot of Gold," it is usually referring to the treasures at the end of a rainbow after a rainy day. And one is considered lucky if they find it.

Similar to the value placed on a pot of gold, diversity brings richness to our Valley community and the legal profession. The San Fernando Valley Bar Association has taken strides toward achieving a diverse membership, representing all practices of law, large firms, sole practitioners and attorneys from all walks of life in terms of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The SFVBA Board and staff strive to be a bastion of diversity. Also, the SFVBA ARS is continuously serving an array of clients from various economic and social backgrounds, and we also have bilingual ARS consultants.

Diversity is valued and practiced at the SFVBA on a consistent basis. Our communication efforts also reflect diversity – covering light-hearted and comedic topics through our Above the Law cartoon and new LOL section, and also in-depth substantive articles related to the law, as well as informative Q&As with judges, attorney members and prominent members of the Valley community. The SFVBA Communications Department strives to cater to young attorneys, new attorneys and seasoned attorneys. From Family Law to Entertainment to Real Estate, *Valley Lawyer* is committed to providing its members with information on a variety of interesting legal-related topics.

We also communicate with our members through diverse means of communications via e-blasts, invitations, flyers, phone, and website, speaking of which – the new SFVBA website will be launching this month. It is more interactive, easier to navigate and more resourceful for our members. We will indeed keep you posted.

As we celebrate diversity this month, let's all continue our efforts in investing in our diverse Valley community. As individual SFVBA members, we ask that you actively participate in our events and programs to ensure that our Bar association remains at the cutting edge of pursuing and achieving excellence in diversity. 🐾

Have an inspiring month!

Angela M. Hutchinson

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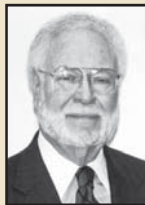
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## Diversity in the Valley is Not Bland



**ROSIE SOTO**  
Director of  
Public Services

**T**HE MONTH OF MARCH REPRESENTS A variety of diverse functions and celebrations, such as Women's History Month, St. Patrick's Day, the first day of spring, baseball's spring training and every decade, census forms are mailed to all U.S. households.

The Census hopes to count every resident in the United States, and is required by the Constitution to take place every 10 years. The data collected by the Census helps communities receive more than \$400 billion in federal funds each year for projects like hospitals, job training centers, schools and more.

Census forms will be delivered to every residence in the United States and Puerto Rico. The majority of the country will receive English materials. Households in areas with high concentrations of Spanish-speaking residents may receive a bilingual (English/Spanish) form. This form consists of 10 questions; the U.S. Census Bureau suggests it takes 10 minutes to complete. The task should be simple, but historically lack of participation showed otherwise. Now, there is progress, nationally there was a 67% final response rate for census 2000, which exceeded the 65% response rate from the 1990 census.

On a local level, the San Fernando Valley Economic Research Center at CSUN's College of Business and Economics, focuses on the economy of the San Fernando Valley. This special statistical district was created by request of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Instead of releasing population, social, economic, and housing data for a large sample of the population every 10 years, the Census Bureau is conducting a smaller sample of the population every year.

The San Fernando Valley, as defined by the Census, includes all of Burbank, Calabasas, Glendale, Hidden Hills, San Fernando and the Valley portion of Los Angeles. The Valley houses over 1.8 million people and contains 48,000 unemployment insurance-covered private sector business establishments and organizations.

The bilingual community newspaper *San Fernando Valley Sun* published data provided by the American Community Survey (ACS). The data indicates that the Latinos comprise the largest numbers of people living in the San Fernando Valley. The article credits the Valley for being rich in cultural diversity due to migration of immigrants from such diverse places as Mexico, El Salvador, Iran, Israel, Armenia, Vietnam, Korea, India and China.

The information published is useful, not only for Valley stakeholders to get their fair share of funding for transportation improvements, housing and social service

programs, but for business establishments and organizations such as the ARS that serve the people living in the Valley. The data acquaints the ARS with the people in the community and helps the organization serve its purpose.

On any given day at the Attorney Referral Service of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, over a hundred people and their loved ones are assisted in countless ways. It is important for the ARS to regularly examine the program's purpose and consider who is being served. Doing so will help us gain perspective, and ultimately drive better results for the ARS. 🐾

*Rosie Soto can be contacted at [referrals@sfvba.org](mailto:referrals@sfvba.org).*

### The purpose of the SFVBA's Attorney Referral Service is to:

- 1) Acquaint people in need of legal service with the value of consultation with an attorney;
- 2) Provide general information about lawyers and the availability of legal services that will aid the selection of a lawyer who has the required experience in a particular field of law;
- 3) Provide legal and general information as well as referrals to consumer, government, and other agencies when such is in the best interests of the individual concerned;
- 4) Provide referrals to attorneys, taking into consideration the type and complexity of the legal problem presented, and a person's financial circumstances, spoken language, and geographical convenience;
- 5) Provide a public service for the benefit of the public. In addition to providing referrals to private attorneys, ARS shall provide information about reduced fee and pro bono legal services and may establish such additional programs as are necessary and appropriate;
- 6) Provide service so that no person shall be deprived of the right to be referred to an attorney because of race, religion, country of origin, gender, color, age, sexual orientation, or disability.



# Diverse Attorneys Working Towards True Diversity

## Spotlight on the Multicultural Bar Alliance of Southern California

By Jeffrey Bollinger,  
Luci-Ellen Chun and Audrea J. Golding

**O**N A RECENT SATURDAY MORNING IN JANUARY, forty attorneys from the Los Angeles area gathered for an annual ritual – to renew their commitment to work collectively to increase diversity in California's legal profession and to continue the fight for justice for Los Angeles' minority communities. The annual gathering is known as the Multicultural Bar Alliance's Annual Unity Breakfast and was first held in June 1991. The first Unity Breakfast had a much more serious undertone. It was held in response to various communities' reactions to the shooting death of Latasha Harlins, a 15-year-old African-American girl, by Korean-American shopkeeper Soon Ja Du on March 16, 1991.

At the time, the leaders of a number of minority bar associations met informally to discuss what actions the bar associations could initiate to defuse the racial tension in Los Angeles arising from the defendants' controversial sentence of probation in the criminal case of *People v. Du*. The consensus at the first Unity Breakfast was that minority bar associations have an important role to play in providing leadership to fight racism, misunderstanding and discrimination and to facilitate an open dialogue and positive relations among Los Angeles' various cultural communities and the Multicultural Bar Alliance (MCBA) was formed.

Today, MCBA is made up of seventeen Los Angeles area bar associations, including: Arab American Lawyers Association of Southern California, Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Los Angeles County (APABA), Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance (APAWLA), Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (BWL), Iranian American Lawyers Association (IALA), Italian American Lawyers Association (IALA), Japanese American Bar Association (JABA), John M. Langston Bar Association, Korean American Bar Association (KABA), Latina Lawyers Bar Association (LLBA), Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (LGLA), Mexican American Bar Association (MABA), Philippine American Bar Association (PABA), South Asian Bar Association of Southern California (SABA), Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association (SCCLA), Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA), and Associate Member San Fernando Valley Bar Association (SFVBA).

Twenty years after MCBA was established, many have asked whether such an organization is still relevant at a time when an African-American attorney is President of the United

States, an African-American attorney is the nation's Attorney General, a Latino judge has been appointed to the nation's highest court, two federal judicial districts are now led by Asian Pacific American jurists and an openly lesbian attorney has served as Speaker pro Tempore of the California Assembly.

While the gains that minority attorneys have made over the last two decades are certainly significant, minority attorneys across the state remain in agreement that much more needs to be done to ensure full equality of opportunity in the legal profession. Several statistics point to the disappointing fact that minority attorneys continue to lag behind their white male counterparts in several key areas in the profession, and minorities' numbers in the legal profession are woefully underrepresented when compared to their representation in the overall population. According to an August 2006 State Bar of California Diversity Pipeline Task Force report, in California, racial and ethnic minorities make up only 17% of the state's lawyers – a very low representation compared to other professions.

For example, 45% of the state's accountants are racial and ethnic minorities, 40% of the state's dentists are racial and ethnic minorities and 35% of the states doctors are racial and ethnic minorities. The same report states that while Whites make up 44.6% of the population of California, they represent 54.5% of the students enrolled in California's accredited law schools. In contrast, while African-Americans are 6% of the state's population, they account for only 4.1% of accredited law school enrollment, and Latinos who make up 35% of the state's population represent only 8.4% of accredited law school enrollment. Even worse is the lack of minority representation in California's judiciary. In September 2009, during the State Bar of California's Annual Meeting, the State Bar's Council on Access and Fairness reported on the results of a 2006-2008 study by the Diversity Pipeline Task Forces' Courts Working Group (CWG), which found that although Whites comprised 40.8% of the population at that time, they represented 72.6% of the CWG judiciary. African-Americans who comprised 7% of the population represented only 5% of the CWG judiciary. Asian- and Pacific Islander Americans comprised 11% of the population represented only 4.9 of the CWG judiciary in 2008.

Finally, Latinos who comprised 32% of the population represented only 7.1% of the CWG judiciary. Given the wide divide between minorities' representation in the overall popu-



lation and their low representation across various levels of the legal profession, MCBA member organizations recognize the ongoing role that they must play in increasing the numbers of minorities in the profession and their representation at all levels.

In recent years, MCBA has largely focused its efforts on achieving diversity across the legal profession. It has supported efforts to diversify the state and federal bench by organizing workshops for attorneys interested in applying for judicial appointments and election to the bench, and publicizing available positions or appointment opportunities. It also sponsors an Annual Networking Reception for members of the individual bar groups to meet and expand their professional networks, and for minority summer associates to establish mentoring relationships with MCBA members.

MCBA has had a longstanding commitment to expanding the pipeline of minorities into the legal profession. In 2007, the MCBA led a significant effort to oppose a request by UCLA Law Professor Richard Sanders to obtain certain Bar Applicant Data from the California State Bar Committee of Bar Examiners. Professor Sanders sought to examine data related to race, ethnicity, gender, bar passage score, law school grades and other data, to prove his theory that "ambitious" affirmative action programs and efforts to diversify elite law schools are a disservice to minority students, who in his view tend to perform at a lower level in those schools, and are generally set up to fail bar examinations.


MCBA was concerned that releasing the bar data would compromise the privacy of minority law students and attorneys and send the message that they cannot compete with their White counterparts. Although the Committee of Bar Examiners initially denied this request for the private data of bar applicants going back to 1994, the State Bar Board of Governors Committee of Regulations, Admission and Discipline (RAD Committee) elected to reconsider the Committee's decision denying release of the confidential data at its Board Meeting, held in Los Angeles in November 2007. The MCBA prepared a legal brief expressing its opposition to the release of the data to protect the privacy interests of minority law students and lawyers and testified before the RAD Committee on the issue.

At the end of the hearing, the RAD Committee unanimously upheld the decision of the Committee of Bar

Examiners, and on November 9, 2007, the full State Bar Board of Governors voted not to release the bar data. For the MCBA and its member bars, it was yet another example of the power of unity behind a common purpose, in its long history of collaboration.

Although many of MCBA's recent efforts have focused on the legal profession, MCBA has not abandoned its initial commitment to facilitating positive relations among communities in Los Angeles. MCBA has adopted three core issues that they view as common goals for all member bar associations to work on collaboratively on behalf of their communities: affirmative action, immigration reform and marriage equality.

MCBA member bar organizations have coalesced in support of many efforts to ensure equality for all Californians. For example, in 2009, MCBA joined a coalition of California organizations from diverse racial and ethnic communities in California to issue a strong public statement in response to the California Supreme Court's decision in the lawsuits to stop the implementation of Proposition 8. MCBA continues to work with its member organizations to ensure that all groups are treated equally under the state Constitution, and to make California a place that guarantees equality and justice for all.

As MCBA enters its 20th year, its leaders are more engaged than ever in the effort to ensure true diversity in the legal profession and the full participation of minority attorneys at every level of the profession in our state. This year it will focus on projects on diversity on the bench and maintaining diversity in the profession during a period of economic crisis. Given their strong record of collaboration in the past, MCBA is sure it will continue to make an impact in these areas through collective action. 

*Jeffrey Bollinger is an Associate with the family law firm Phillips, Lerner, Lauzon & Jamra, LLP in Century City and 2010 Co-Chair of MCBA. Luci-Ellen Chun works on the Joint Strike Fighter Program at Northrop Grumman Corporation and is an Advisor to MCBA. Audrea J. Golding is a Senior Attorney with the immigration law firm Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy, LLP in West Los Angeles and 2010 Co-Chair of MCBA.*



*L-R: Tangelia Terry (BWL President), Helen Kim (WLALA President), Courtney Chavez (LLBA Board Member), Angeli Aragon (PABA President Elect), Holly Fujie (State Bar of California Past President), Richard Lewis (SFVBA Diversity Committee Chair), Tamila Jensen (SFVBA Immediate Past President) and Robert Flagg (SFVBA President).*



*L-R: Audrea Golding (MCBA Co-Chair), Justice Candace Cooper, California Court of Appeal (ret.) and Jeffrey Bollinger (MCBA Co-Chair).*



# Q&A with a Diverse SFVBA Member

## Criminal Defense Attorney

### Arvand Naderi

By Angela M. Hutchinson



**I**N SUPPORT OF A CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY, VALLEY LAWYER is excited to introduce to one of the SFVBAs culturally diverse members, Arvand Naderi of Schwartz & Naderi. As a criminal defense attorney, Naderi is dedicated to criminal defense and the pursuit of justice in Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley.

Born in Tehran, Iran in 1976, Naderi moved to the United States in 1985. He later graduated from Thomas Jefferson Law School in San Diego. Naderi has handled numerous cases ranging from simple traffic tickets to complex murder cases. His practice is devoted exclusively to criminal defense. Naderi uses his knowledge and experiences to fight for his clients.



**Arvand Naderi**

#### **Q: Why is diversity within the legal field important?**

**A:** Diversity within the legal field is important because it maintains the application of equal standards to everyone in the field. Diversity also allows us to benefit from the different perspectives and experiences that unrepresented or marginally represented views and unique backgrounds can bring to the system. Diversity also ensures a well rounded perspective as it applies to the administration and maintenance of our legal system. It also enhances the perception of fairness by the public.

#### **Q: How can discrimination in the criminal justice system be reduced or eliminated?**

**A:** I think part of the answer comes down to enforcement. Although equal rights are easy to put down on paper, the greater challenge is the strict enforcement of these laws, regardless

of background. If equality truly is the ultimate goal, then it must be brought about by the major players in the criminal justice system. That includes judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and police officers. Our criminal justice system has come a long way and improved significantly. A little extra effort from each one of us will ensure continuous improvement.

#### **Q: Why did you choose to practice criminal law?**

**A:** I chose to practice criminal law because I did not want to be stuck behind a desk for the rest of my career. I enjoy interacting with people on a daily basis and would not enjoy being tied to a desk.

#### **Q: How is your area of law affected by the economy?**

**A:** As the economy gets worse, the crime rate generally increases. This is good for a criminal defense attorney.

The downside is that people do not have the home equity lines of credit, credit cards, or easy access to funding the way they had it a few years ago. Thus, many of them cannot afford private defense attorneys. This obviously affects the business aspect of any firm. I have seen it with my colleagues. At the same time, I have seen the caseload of public defenders increase dramatically.

#### **Q: What is the most challenging aspect of having your own firm?**

**A:** The most challenging aspect of having your own firm is running a business while lawyering at the same time. You have to learn to balance the two. If you are spending too much time on your business, then you take away from lawyering, and vice versa. It is a delicate balance that I believe is achieved through years of practice. In the end, however, you have to, even if

detrimental to you, do what benefits the client the most so long as it is ethical, and of course legal.

**Q: Why did you join the SFVBA?**

**A:** I joined the SFVBA because I live in the community and practice primarily out of the Valley courts. I believe in being active in the community you work and live in. Also, the events that are hosted by the SFVBA have proven to be a great way to get together as a community.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about practicing law?**

**A:** What I enjoy most about practicing criminal law is that I am not stuck behind a desk from 8 to 5. I enjoy having my own practice. I enjoy being in a criminal defense community where generally you can pick up the phone and discuss a particular situation or case with other attorneys and get and give feedback. The support system is huge.

Also, contrary to what most people think and believe, the relationship between prosecutors and criminal defense attorneys is not a vicious one. Although it is an adversarial system, the means of communication do not have to be hostile. That is not what I hear about civil practice.

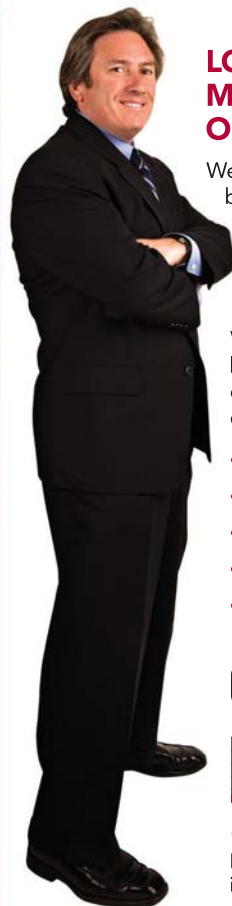
**Q: What advice would you give to new criminal law attorneys?**

**A:** Play the lotto constantly and try to retire early. If that doesn't work, there are other things you can do:

1. The most important thing is finding a mentor. You must have a support system. You need someone to answer your questions and guide you in your practice.
2. Buy the CEB book titled *California Criminal Law – Procedure and Practice*. It is a must have.
3. Treat your colleagues and clients with respect.
4. Always maintain the highest level of integrity. Your reputation will follow you the rest of your career. In other words, don't be shady. 🐱

To contact **Arvand Naderi**, email [wehatejail@hotmail.com](mailto:wehatejail@hotmail.com).

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# LOL

## The Lighter Side of Law

### ABOVE THE LAW, By Marc Jacobs



"DADDY, CAN YOU TELL ME THE ONE AGAIN ABOUT THE JUDGE WHO FOUND YOUR ARGUMENTS TO BE COMPLETELY WITHOUT MERIT?"

### Family Law Attorneys Share 'Love' Stories

#### Unforgettable

Sometimes, spouses forget their wedding anniversary. But have you ever met anyone that forgot their wedding? It happened in Nebraska. A woman claimed she was married to a man who died and she sought her widow's inheritance. Her story was questioned and at trial she was asked about the wedding. The woman could not remember the date, time or place of the wedding. She said she slept during a long drive to the wedding place, went in a house for a short ceremony, signed a marriage certificate that no one could find, and then drove home. A jury, and the state Supreme Court, found this unforgettable story unbelievable, saying any mature person would know the details of their wedding.

#### Missed the Wedding

There may still be one good excuse for not knowing details of your own wedding, but not being there? Indeed it happened. A man did not attend his own wedding. He tried to get an annulment, claiming the wedding was not valid since he wasn't there. The wedding was in Cuba. Unfortunately for the groom, Cuba allowed weddings with a stand-in substituting for one of the couple. (The person really getting married had to sign a power of attorney). The husband fulfilled Cuba's requirements for a wedding by his substitute standing in at the ceremony. So his request for an annulment was denied.

#### What is Love?

Having ruled on marriages and divorces, can courts say what "love" is? Yes, it turns out. In an official published opinion coming from a divorce case, the Supreme Court of Iowa ruled: "Love is an emotion evidenced by words and acts. Sometimes acts are more important than words... The basic acts establishing love are kindness, consideration, understanding, patience, sacrifice or sufferance, if necessary, and certain words and physical acts and demonstrations which constitute evidence of affection between the persons involved." The court went on to grant a divorce to a man whose wife said she loved him but ran away after 40 days of marriage and never returned.

Acknowledgment for this month's LOL to **Marc Fein** of Attorney Newsletter Services and **David Gurnick** and **Michelle S. Robins** of the law firm Lewitt Hackman Shapiro Marshall & Harlan.

If you have a LOL (Laughing Out Loud) story or moment that you have experienced with a client or would like to gather funny courtroom or law office stories from your colleagues, email them to [Angela@sfbva.org](mailto:Angela@sfbva.org).



# New Members

The following new members joined the SFVBA in December 2009 and January 2010:

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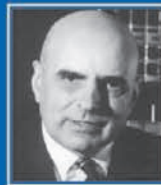
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# Capturing the Competitive Advantage

By John F. Stephens

**C**HANGE BECOMES MANIFEST IN DEMOGRAPHIC shifts and economic realities that call upon us to consider new strategies. This is why diversity is so important. In order to serve and expand your client base in an increasingly diverse society, you must grow to understand various customs, languages and decision-making processes.

An organization whose people all share the same background, culture and ways of looking at the world is likely to stagnate. Superior performance in today's global marketplace requires tapping new resources to gain new perspectives. Preparation to work with a wide variety of world views leads to a competitive advantage.

This article focuses on a recent Diversity in the Workplace video, "The Diversity Factor: Capturing the Competitive Advantage," that explores the growing demand for a culture of diversity within corporations and law firms, along with providing sound business reasons why diversity is such an imperative.

Two leading corporations – the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies and Microsoft – have put forth the effort to transform their respective business cultures. These companies have put into practice steps to achieve cultural diversity and have enjoyed the advantages that a diverse talent pool brings.

## The Chubb Group of Insurance Companies

The Chubb Group of Insurance Companies is the eleventh largest property and casualty insurer in the United States and has a worldwide network of some 120 offices in 27 countries staffed by more than 10,000 employees. Chubb is recognized

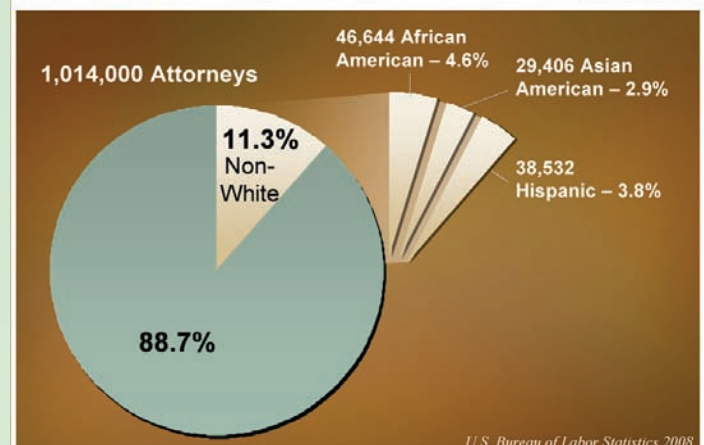
as a leader in making diversity integral to its corporate environment and business strategy.

Chubb has been a pioneer in expanding the definition of diversity beyond the traditional boundaries of race and gender. Chubb's diversity practices are rooted in the philosophy that an environment that welcomes all people will greatly enhance the comfort level and capability of each employee to contribute his or her unique perspective and characteristic on decision-making processes, as well as help to discover new marketing opportunities from a variety of diverse communities.

Over the past few years, Chubb has taken great strides in making the company a hospitable and welcoming workplace for all employees, specifically including women, people of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees.

## Diversity in the Legal Profession

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Over the same period of Chubb's diversity push, Chubb's financial performance has improved greatly. That's no coincidence. Chubb's vision is to create a workplace where every employee can feel that Chubb is the place he or she can make his or her career, a place where talent and hard work are the only tickets to success.

Chubb squarely addresses the pipeline issues that go to the heart of its strategy, working to educate and develop staff members to their highest potential. If a senior leadership position opens up, and there is no diversity among internal candidates, Chubb takes that as a sign of failure. Chubb's diversity manager assists in making sure that minority employees don't fall off the radar of career development.

Another innovative and successful concept is Chubb's "Employee Resource Groups." These are peer groups that provide support on career development. They also help to identify and tackle issues specific employee groups may face, and ultimately reach out to that group's larger community, both for marketing potential and further employee recruitment.

### Supplier Diversity

One of the benchmarks of Chubb's strategies is to work with a diverse base of outside suppliers – as an important means by which Chubb's legal team ensures a broad and inclusive perspective in its business decisions. As with other core departments, a variety of viewpoints from its outside counsel will ensure that Chubb's actions represent the variety of voices in the communities that it serve. Chubb therefore closely examines the diversity of its outside counsel when looking at whom to hire on its matters. Furthermore, it looks to the diversity of outside counsel to educate it on how to maximize its own internal diversity efforts.

Chubb recognizes that the influx of new and different people into an organization brings an infusion of fresh perspectives, ideas and solutions, which allows Chubb to reach out to the priorities and biases of communities historically outside of our traditional sphere of influence.

### Microsoft Legal Services

Microsoft has been at the forefront of diversity issues. The Microsoft legal team works on the cutting edge of business and regulatory issues around the world. It has a diverse and multidisciplinary team of legal, business, and corporate affairs professionals operating from 68 locations in 44 countries worldwide. Microsoft has subsidiaries in more than 110 countries. There are employees in Redmond alone from more than 130 countries.

First and foremost, Microsoft believes that diversity in its legal teams is a business necessity. Microsoft is best served through a highly talented, committed, diverse, and collegial group of legal specialists, working as part of effective teams.

The reality is that a company cannot be effective if it cannot understand and appreciate the interests and needs of the incredibly diverse individuals who make up stakeholder

groups, from employees and customers to business partners, regulators, and judges. However, when looking at large law firms across the country, only 18 percent of the partners are women. Only 5.4 percent of the partners at these firms are minorities. Only 1.94 percent of these partners are APA attorneys.

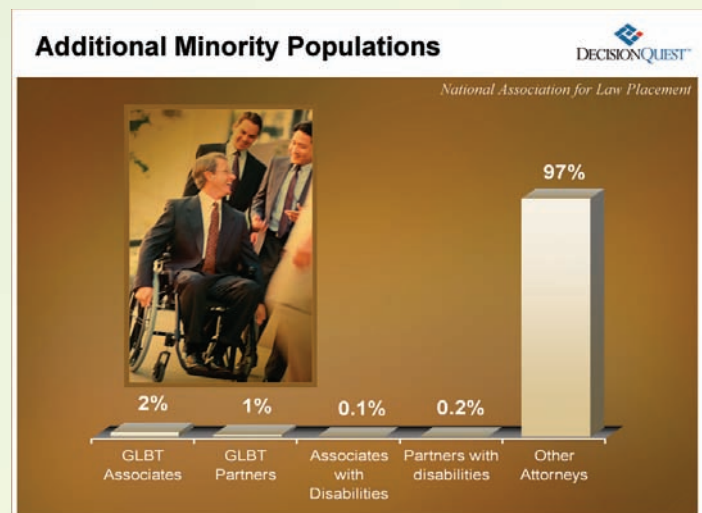
As a result, Microsoft understood that its Legal and Corporate Affairs (LCA) team needed to reflect the diversity of these groups. At Microsoft today, 36 percent of the company's attorneys are women, and 39 percent of its most senior attorneys are women. And 20 percent of its attorneys are minorities, with 15 percent of Microsoft's most senior attorneys being minorities.

### Microsoft's Three-Year Plan

Within LCA, Microsoft established a three-year plan that included goals of increasing the diversity of Microsoft's department, along with vendor diversity. These goals are tracked quarterly through Microsoft's Diversity Team that drives the tactical execution around the internal departmental goals.

Made up of about 70 volunteers of the department, the Diversity Team impacts Microsoft's diversity strategy for outreach, retention and awareness, in addition to building a pipeline for building an ongoing, qualified diverse legal workforce. Key activities and successes include:

- *Women and Minority Law Student IP Law Summit.* Since 2005, Microsoft has been inviting area law students to consider intellectual property related legal careers. Microsoft invites law firms and in-house counsel to participate, introducing interested firms to a pool of interested students, and share best diversity practices between law firms and corporate law departments. To date, more than 1,200



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participants have attended events in New York, San Francisco, Boston, Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

- *High school-level programs.* An LCA attorney serves as board president of the Future of the Law Institute (FLI), a Seattle-based program that introduces minority students to a career in law through workshops, mentoring, scholarships, and internships. LCA attorneys participate as mentors and panelists. Additionally, in 2008, LCA sponsored the Just the Beginning Foundation, a high school program based in Chicago created by a network of African-American federal judges.
- *Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA).* LCA is the single largest contributor to the MCCA's Lloyd M. Johnson Scholarship Program. LCA has also hired several of its scholarship recipients as summer interns.
- *LCA's summer intern program actively recruits diverse 1L candidates to work in its department* (last summer, 8 of 10 interns were women and/or ethnic minorities). Two years ago LCA added a historically black college to its recruitment tour.

Just as important for its internal law department, Microsoft aims to work with outside counsel who share its commitment to diversity. In July 2008, Microsoft launched the Law Firm

Diversity Program, a new initiative to encourage diversity progress in LCA's Premier Preferred Provider (PPP) counsel through "pay for performance." Law firms opting into the program have the opportunity to earn an additional 2 percent bonus by either increasing the diversity of their firm's workforce, or increasing the hours worked on Microsoft matters by diverse attorneys.

The program has three core components:

1. **Incentivize:** New diversity incentives for its PPP law firms.
2. **Walk the Talk:** A new similar commitment by Microsoft's departments, including to partner together with PPP firms to increase diversity in both its organization and the legal profession as a whole.
3. **Assess:** A process to assess the progress a year from now to learn from Microsoft's experience and decide on improvements for the future.

In addition to the 2 percent bonus, 5 percent of the annual bonus paid to the company's most senior departmental leaders similarly is based on law firm diversity progress.

**Judicate West congratulates Hon. Judith C. Chirlin for her 24 years of distinguished service on the Los Angeles Superior Court. We are privileged to welcome her to our distinguished Panel of Neutrals**



Judge Chirlin has handled Law & Motion, Civil Trials, and MSC's while on the bench. As a litigator for over 10 years, she practiced business and employment litigation. Throughout the years she has frequently traveled to several countries for special programs designed to educate students, lawyers, judges, and governmental agencies.

Judge Chirlin has been the recipient of numerous awards by various bar groups including "Trial Judge of the Year" by the Los Angeles County Bar Association. Attorneys who have appeared before her praise her courteous and respectful judicial demeanor, intelligence, and fairness.

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### Leading the Community

To remain vital to the changing needs of current and future clients, the industry needs to lead the community, not drag behind. A diversity initiative is neither a face-lift nor a band-aid to put over familiar modes of working, but a transformation from within. It is not a spotlight on some key personnel touted as representatives, but an enhanced world view within the culture that manifests substantially integrated, multi-faceted decision making processes and marketing strategies.

When you mirror the complex make-up of diverse communities and clients, you improve your competitive edge. Legal firms that are better able to attract, discover and retain diverse talent will have a significant competitive advantage. Efforts like these will help create a profession where firms continue to be successful as the foundation of business and society. 📈

*John F. Stephens focuses his practice on media and entertainment litigation, intellectual property licensing and transactions, and specialty insurance coverage and litigation. He can be reached at [john.stephens@sdma.com](mailto:john.stephens@sdma.com). The Diversity Factor video is available this Spring at the ABA TIPS website at [www.abanet.org/tips/](http://www.abanet.org/tips/).*



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*Along the way, the SFVBA provides many benefits: friendships, referrals, education, leadership and fun. SFVBA is an essential part of being and achieving all you can as a lawyer in the Valley."*

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# Voices of America: *Enhancing Diversity on the Bench*

By Hon. Cynthia Loo, Los Angeles Superior Court

**W**HEN JACQUELINE Nguyen was 9, her parents made the heartbreaking decision to send their children alone from Ho Chi Minh City so they would not be killed by the violence in April 1975 when South Vietnam fell to Communist forces. The children were taken to the military airport and one by one, tossed over a fence. Her father's colleague caught the children on the other side and ran them to the evacuation plane.

Jacqueline's father faced certain execution if captured, but refused an offer to leave without his family. A miracle reunited Jacqueline and her siblings with her parents and led the family to an American civilian who saved the family by declaring them to be part of his family, which allowed them to be airlifted out of Saigon. The family arrived in California and lived in a refugee camp. Jacqueline's parents worked as laborers and later became small business owners.

They believed anything was possible in America. But even they could not imagine that one day their daughter would be the first Vietnamese-American woman judge on the Superior Court bench of the State of California. And then on January 27, 2010 to be amongst numerous state and federal judges in honor of the confirmation of their daughter as the first Vietnamese-American Article III judge in the history of the United States.

### History in the Making

With the confirmation of Justice Sonia Sotomayor to the United States Supreme Court, it is undeniably a historic time not only for the judiciary, but for the country. And as to the recent confirmations of Jacqueline Nguyen and Dolly Gee to the Central District of California, the first Vietnamese-American and Chinese-American woman respectively to serve as Article III federal judges, historic progress towards achieving a diverse judiciary, is not reserved for Washington, D.C. but here locally. Encouragingly over the past 20 years law school populations have been growing more diverse. Many states such as California as well as the Los Angeles Superior Court have implemented policies to diversify their bench.

Despite these successes and the best of intentions, in this nation, as well as in California and the San Fernando Valley, the diversity of judges lags behind the diversity of the general population. As noted in a 2009 empirical study that spanned a twenty-year period, *Myth of the Color-Blind Judge* done by Professor Pat Chew and Robert Kelley of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and Carnegie Mellon respectively, in the federal courts, out of a total of 805 active judges, non-White judges constitute about 19% of the bench. Of those, 11% of judges are African Americans, 7% are Hispanics or Latinos, and fewer than 1% are Asian

Americans. In some places such as the San Fernando Valley, the discrepancy is rather large.

The 2008 Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law's study *Improving Judicial Diversity* is a comprehensive study addressing the magnitude of the problem and how successful courts are at appointing women and racial minorities.

With regard to gender, although women make up approximately 50% of the population, state judiciaries are predominantly male at almost every level. Only approximately 26% of state court judges are women. Today, almost every other demographic group is underrepresented when compared to their share of the nation's population. White males are overrepresented on state appellate benches by a margin of nearly two-to-one. Some research suggests the situation for African Americans have worsened, for example, with regard to the enrollment of African American students in law school, as well as the number of African American jurists as they are said to be retiring at a rate quicker than they are being appointed.

"Diversity" can mean any number of different goals, besides gender and racial parity, including people from different ages, economics, sexual orientation or professional backgrounds. Increased diversity does not mean appointing judges who have pre-determined



positions but instead those who have different ways of looking at the world.

Those having experienced prejudice or bias have often developed empathy resulting from that experience. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg comments that a "system of justice is the richer for the diversity of background and experience of its participants." Justice Ginsburg herself grew up with the sense of being an outsider. Being both a woman and a Jew made her conscious of harmful stereotypes against outsiders. She recalls vividly driving in rural Pennsylvania past a bed and breakfast. The sign on a lawn read, "No dogs or Jews allowed." She was surprised at the reaction of legal employers. Though on the law review at Harvard, she was rejected by every potential employer. When interviewing, employers did not hesitate to post on the sign-up sheets for interviews, "Men Only."

Magistrate Judge Edward M. Chen, who was recently re-nominated by President Obama to be the first Asian-American federal judge in the Northern District of California stated, "How can the public have confidence in such an institution if it is segregated; if the communities it is supposed to protect are excluded from its ranks?"

There is empirical support for the proposition of a more diverse judiciary. Professor Chew and Kelley's study noted above found that a judge's race significantly affects outcomes in workplace racial harassment cases. Their data demonstrated that African American judges rule differently than White judges, a finding counter to the traditional myth that the race of a judge would not make a difference. Professor Chew and Kelley believe the answer as to why race matters is that race affects a judge's ability to appreciate the perspective of a plaintiff of another race.

### **Progress but Room for Improvement**

Nearly 20 years ago, the policymaking body for the California judiciary, the Judicial Council, made a commitment to promoting diversity. Progress has been made. In 2009 the diversity of the bench within California increased; women now constitute 28.8% of the bench, and in terms of ethnicity, the number of non-

white jurist has increased to 22.1% of the judiciary.

Many credit the improvement due to Governor Schwarzenegger's appointment of Appointment Secretary Sharon Majors-Lewis, who is both the first woman and African American to hold the post. In an effort to draw a broader array of applicants, she revised the application. It now asks with regard to other non-trial experiences/skill sets such as mediation, as well as other disciplines such as administrative or family law. Indeed, the Governor's recent appointments are more diverse. Women now account for approximately 33.6% of Schwarzenegger's appointments, and about 23.6% have been minorities.

The Los Angeles Superior Court also views the issue of diversity to be of great importance and boasts being one of the most diverse benches in California, including more Latino judges, proportionately, than any other large court in the state.

Still, while Los Angeles may be diverse as compared to other counties, there still is room for improvement. Judicial Council statistics reflect that only 32.2% of the Superior Court bench are women. Los Angeles County is ranked tenth out of 45 California Counties with regard to gender parity; 67% of the population in Los Angeles County are ethnic minorities, yet only approximately 30% of the judicial officers are minorities. The greatest disparity is reflected in the Latino or Hispanic population in Los Angeles County; 45% of the population is Latino, yet only 9.4% of the judicial officers are Latino.

The San Fernando Valley is extremely rich in cultural diversity, and has become more diverse in the last decade. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of ethnic minorities in the San Fernando Valley has grown from 2000 to 2008, most notably in the Hispanic or Latino community, while the white population has dropped. Whites constitute 41.8% of the population, and 56% were minorities. Of those minorities, 42.4% were Latino or Hispanic, 3.6% African American, and 10% Asian.

The judiciary in the San Fernando Valley unfortunately does not reflect

the community's rich diversity. Women make up far less than half of the judiciary. Of the 83 judicial officers permanently assigned to San Fernando Valley courthouses, 31.2% of them are women.

With regard to ethnic diversity, the San Fernando Valley judiciary is significantly less diverse. Only 7.2% of the jurists sitting in the San Fernando Valley's courthouses are minorities. What is particularly striking is that only 4.8% of the jurists are Hispanic or Latino given that approximately 42% of the community is Hispanic or Latino.

### **Barriers to a Diversified Bench**

The Brennan Center Justice study identifies a number of obstacles to the diversification of the bench, as well as a number of best practices to increase diversity. Implicit bias is said to be a primary reason hindering efforts to diversify the bench. Many studies by influential experts such as UCLA Professor Jerry Kang note that nearly all people stereotype others unconsciously.

## **APPEALS & WRITS**

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- *Family Law*
- *Criminal Law*

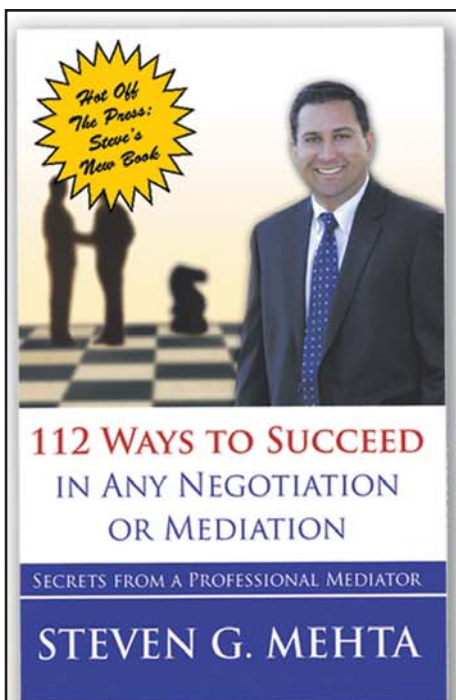
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It arises from ordinary and unconscious tendencies to make associations.

Substantial evidence shows the magnitude of implicit bias toward members of disadvantaged groups is significant and often conflicts with conscious attitudes and intentional behavior. The research demonstrates why a focus on diversity must include proactive steps to counteract the unconscious tendency to appoint white male judges. As Professor Jerry Kang explained, "[a]s a threshold matter, in order to correct bias, decision makers . . . must be made aware of their own implicit biases."

Many prospective female and minority applicants are not applying. They have a pessimistic perception that applying for a judicial opening would be pointless. They may not see themselves as fitting their stereotypes of what a judicial candidate should look like, such as not being a prosecutor or being of a different political party than that of the governor.

*Improving Diversity on the State Courts*, a research project conducted by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law and the Center for Justice, Law, and Society, interviewed women and minority judges as to what they thought were the key factors that contributed to their rise to the bench. In nearly every interview the judges spoke of the importance of political influences, as well as networking and mentoring. Some voiced concerns that minority candidates don't have the political connections who could help them through the appointment process.

#### **Collaborative, Systematic Efforts**

The Brennan Center study recommends that an effort to increase diversity is best done by a collaborative, systematic effort. Also crucial is leadership of high-ranking officials who can set the proper inclusive tone. If diversity is going to be a priority, the effort must be from top to bottom, including a governor who pushes the issue, to the minority and women bar associations who must recruit qualified candidates. While judicial nominating committees need to be background checkers, those courts desirous of diversifying the bench must also see themselves as "headhunters" taking responsibility for recruiting.

Maryland is a model of how a state can diversify its bench with a pro-active leader with a vision and a process that embraces diversity and encourages qualified men and women of all groups to apply. During Governor Parris Glendening's term (1995-2003), his appointments were half women and 28% nonwhite "breaking a long tradition in Maryland of predominantly white men." In addition, the state's first Hispanic and Asian-Pacific judges were appointed as well as the first female judge and the first African American judge to the Anne Arundel County Circuit Court. Today Maryland is considered to have one of the most inclusive courts in the nation with 18.3% minority judges and 31.3% women judges.

President Obama, Governor Schwarzenegger, and the Los Angeles Superior Court all voice concern regarding diversity on the bench. The extent to which sincere effort is made to diversify the bench is a work in progress.

It is not only a historic time, it is a hopeful time. Change comes slowly, but with the inspiration of the recent appointments of Judge Jacqueline Nguyen, a recognition of the value that different voices bring to the judiciary and affirmative steps led by someone with vision – that what Jacqueline Nguyen's parents know will become a reality – that anything is possible in America. 🇺🇸

*Cynthia Loo has been a judicial officer with the Los Angeles Superior Court for the last ten years. She currently is the Chair of the MultiCultural Bar Alliance of Southern California's Diversity on the Bench program and serves on the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Minorities in the Judiciary which leads the association's efforts to foster greater diversity in the judiciary. She can be reached at [CLLoo@LASuperiorCourt.org](mailto:CLLoo@LASuperiorCourt.org).*



**Referee Loo wishes to thank SFVBA Past President Richard Lewis, Hon. Patricia Ito, and the Hon. Dalila Corral Lyons for their assistance with this article.**



# MCLE Test No. 20

This self-study activity has been approved for Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) credit by the San Fernando Valley Bar Association (SFVBA) in the amount of 1 hour in Elimination of Bias. SFVBA certifies that this activity conforms to the standards for approved education activities prescribed by the rules and regulations of the State Bar of California governing minimum continuing legal education.

1. There are currently only seven Vietnamese-American Article III federal judges in the entire United States.  
True  
False
2. In the federal courts, out of a total of 805 active judges, non-White judges constitute about 38% of the bench: 22% of judges are African Americans, 14% are Hispanic or Latino, and fewer than 2% are Asian Americans.  
True  
False
3. Dolly Gee is the first Chinese-American woman Article III judge in the history of the United States.  
True  
False
4. White males represent 60% of the state appellate benches.  
True  
False
5. While women make up roughly 50% of the population, they make up only approximately 26% of state court judges.  
True  
False
6. In 2010, inclusion of African American judges has clearly improved from what it was ten years ago.  
True  
False
7. The term "diversity" typically refers to racial and gender diversity.  
True  
False
8. Research suggests that African American judges rule differently than White judges. Professor Chew and Kelley argue that race affects a judge's ability to appreciate the perspective of a plaintiff of another race.  
True  
False
9. In 2009, the diversity of the bench within California increased; women now constitute 28.8 percent of the bench, and in terms of ethnicity, the number of non-white jurist has increased to 22.1 percent of the judiciary.  
True  
False
10. The application for Superior Court judge seeks to determine the percentage of time an applicant spends doing jury trials, and makes no specific inquiry as to areas such as administrative, family and juvenile law, and other skill sets such as mediation.  
True  
False
11. 67% of the population in Los Angeles County are ethnic minorities, yet only approximately 30% of the judicial officers are minorities.  
True  
False
12. 32.2% of the Superior Court bench are women. Los Angeles County is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> out of 45 California Counties with regard to gender parity.  
True  
False
13. In the San Fernando Valley, the greatest disparity in ethnic diversity is reflected in the Latino or Hispanic population. 30% of the population are Latinos, yet only 9.4% of the judicial officers are Latino.  
True  
False
14. Of the 83 judicial officers permanently assigned to San Fernando Valley courthouses, 31.2% of them are women.  
True  
False
15. Implicit bias is said to be a primary reason hindering efforts to diversify the bench. Many studies note that nearly all people stereotype others unconsciously. It arises from ordinary and unconscious tendencies to make associations.  
True  
False
16. The magnitude of implicit bias toward members of disadvantaged groups is greatly minimized by individuals who have an attitude of inclusiveness, especially those who have articulated a need for diversity.  
True  
False
17. Given that implicit bias is an unconscious tendency to make associations, there is very little that can be done to overcome implicit bias.  
True  
False
18. Many prospective female and minority applicants are not applying. They have a pessimistic perception that applying for a judicial opening would be pointless. They may not see themselves as fitting their stereotypes of what a judicial candidate should look like such as not being a prosecutor or being of a different political party than that of the governor.  
True  
False
19. In a study in which women and minority judges were interviewed as to what they believed were the key factors that contributed to their rise to the bench, in nearly every interview the judges spoke of the importance of political influences.  
True  
False
20. The Brennan Center study recommends that an effort to increase diversity is best done by a collaborative, systematic effort that includes leadership of high-ranking officials who can set the proper inclusive tone. The minority and women bar associations must recruit qualified candidates, and judicial nominating committees need to be both background checkers, as well as being "headhunters" taking responsibility for recruiting.  
True  
False

## MCLE Answer Sheet No. 20

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Accurately complete this form.
2. Study the MCLE article in this issue.
3. Answer the test questions by marking the appropriate boxes below.
4. Mail this form and the \$15 testing fee for SFVBA members (or \$25 for non-SFVBA members) to:

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5. Make a copy of this completed form for your records.
6. Correct answers and a CLE certificate will be mailed to you within 2 weeks. If you have any questions, please contact our office at (818) 227-0490, ext. 105.

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### ANSWERS:

- Mark your answers by checking the appropriate box.  
Each question only has one answer.

- |     |                               |                                |
|-----|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1.  | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 2.  | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 3.  | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 4.  | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 5.  | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 6.  | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
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| 10. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 11. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 12. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 13. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 14. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 15. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 16. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 17. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 18. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 19. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 20. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |



# Diversity at Neighborhood Legal Services

## A Priority at All Levels

By Neal S. Dudovitz

**N**EIGHBORHOOD LEGAL Services of Los Angeles County (NLS-LA) has embraced “Diversity” as a program-wide priority for many years. As an organization that focuses its services on some of the most diverse communities in the United States, NLS-LA has long recognized that credibility with clients, effectiveness as advocates, and the strength of Neighborhood Legal Services as an organization is directly tied to the public’s recognition of commitment to diversity as an over-riding program priority.

Embracing and encouraging diversity comes at a price. It must be organization-wide. It is not acceptable to just talk about diversity for some aspects of work – for Neighborhood Legal Services it means:

- Working with the diverse client communities served;
- Recruiting a diverse staff with a variety of socio-cultural, and exceptional language skills;
- Ensuring there is diversity “at the top” the organization (i.e. program management);
- Maintaining diversity on the Board of Directors.

Embracing diversity requires NLS-LA to examine everything done as an organization through a diversity lens. That means (1) taking affirmative steps to promote the values of diversity within Neighborhood Legal Services; (2) educating our workforce, the Board and the community about the those values; and (3) reviewing every program action or policy description and announcement to ensure that it does not inadvertently use discriminatory language or promote actions that will be perceived as insensitive. For “diversity” image and perception matter.

NLS-LA strongly believes the full “breadth” of diversity must be recognized. Diversity at Neighborhood Legal Services is not limited to the typical or classic references to race or ethnicity. NLS-LA is interested in being as diverse possible, using the broadest definition of the term. The organization also cares about geographic diversity, having lawyers with a variety of backgrounds and experiences, bi-lingual capacity in a wide variety of languages, expertise and skills, etc. NLS-LA’s goal is to have an organization that is comfortable and welcoming (from a client, staff and Board perspective) to everyone encountered.

Finally, there must be an organizational commitment not to lower standards to meet diversity goals. Diversity and competence are not competing principles – they are companion principles. If sufficient time and attention is devoted to diversity, NLS-LA can accomplish these goals and maintain, if not increase, the over-all competency of the organization. When the organizational path to diversity gets tough, as it inevitably will at some point, it is important not to take the easy path and ignore diversity “just this one time.” It is a very slippery slope that must be avoided.

In the end, experiencing the full benefits of embracing diversity often takes time. The commitment to diversity accepts that changing institutional values and cultures does not occur over night, but requires constant vigilance and nurturing. Neighborhood Legal Services prides itself in its diversity accomplishments, and acknowledges that it can still grow and improve.

The demographics of NLS-LA’s overall staff, program management and Board demonstrate how successful an

organization can be when it embarks upon this journey. Currently, two-thirds of staff and Board, and nearly 60% of program management, are people of color. Neighborhood Legal Services looks, and ‘feels’ like the full breadth of the diversity of Los Angeles, perhaps the most diverse county in the United States.

The NLS-LA staff comes from a myriad of backgrounds and cultures, ranging from the large Mexican-American community that surrounds us, to the many Asian-Pacific Islander cultures (Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese), to African-American communities in the south, to the Jewish communities of the Midwest, to the varied Spanish speaking cultures of Central America, and the Armenian immigrants from around the world.

Incredibly, a full 75% of the staff is bilingual. Neighborhood Legal Services commitment to having a bilingual staff is visibly apparent at all levels of the program. Even within the most senior advocacy and administrative management staff, a diverse workforce with bilingual skills is demanded. More than 50% of the Senior Management Team is also bilingual.

NLS-LA recognizes that bilingual skills and diversity are not synonymous. On the other hand, NLS-LA’s understands that one of the clear benefits of a diverse workforce is making clients feel that they will be treated with respect and dignity and will be heard. That they can access services, having staff readily available that speak their languages, look like them and understand them, is crucial.

For example, if Armenian clients peak through the window in the Glendale office and do not see a friendly face or hear someone speaking Armenian, they are far less likely to



come inside to talk to the staff. This is similar for El Monte, often viewed as a Spanish-speaking community, where having someone at the front desk who speaks Mandarin is essential for the large Chinese community to feel comfortable.

Not too long ago, it was often difficult to find bilingual Spanish speakers in legal aid programs. Today, Spanish and English are interchangeable to Neighborhood Legal Services. One goal is that Armenian and Mandarin will reach that same level in the not too distant future – NLS-LA is on the way, but not quite there.

It is important to remember that embracing diversity begins at the top and the top of Neighborhood Legal Services is its Board of Directors. Their dedication is not just to hire a diverse workforce, but it is also to maintain a diverse Board. With 69% people of color, 50% women, people living and working in a variety of Los Angeles communities, and lawyers coming from different types of practices it is probably the most diverse group and respectful of each other's differences and backgrounds.

A quick look at where the most recent Board presidents have come from exemplifies the Board's commitment to diversity. Four of the last six were people of color: Latino, African-American and Asian Pacific Islanders. The current Board President, Tiffany Tai is a partner in a small Pasadena law firm who lives in the San Gabriel Valley and comes from a Chinese immigrant family. She will be succeeded by our Vice President, Tamila Jensen, the Immediate Past President of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association and a long-time sole practitioner in the Northeast Valley with roots in Santa Clarita. Diversity at all levels of Neighborhood Legal Services remains a priority. It is a hallmark of the organization and a key to its success. ♣

**Neal S. Dudovitz** is Executive Director of Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County. He can be contacted at [ndudovitz@nls-la.org](mailto:ndudovitz@nls-la.org).



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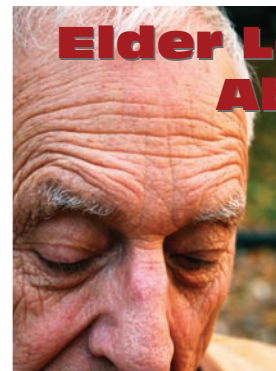
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**BRIAN E. KOEGLE**  
SCVBA President

## Volunteer Help Wanted!

**T**HE LEADERSHIP OF THE SANTA CLARITA Valley Bar Association has set several lofty goals for 2010. In order to realize those goals and to break through into the “next level” as an effective bar association, though, the SCVBA desperately needs more of its members to participate in the process, and to help share the burden of the projects and scheduled events.

In addition to the existing committees (Programs and Bench/Bar), the SCVBA has implemented five new committees to encourage the participation of a diverse and talented membership. The following is a summary of each of the committees, the goals and needs.

### Community Outreach

The Santa Clarita Valley community has been an essential factor in the success and growth of the SCVBA and its members’ businesses. However, until now, little has been done by the Bar to recognize, appreciate or give back to the residents and businesses in the Valley.

In 2010, the Association plans to launch a *pro bono* program where local attorneys can volunteer their time, talent and treasure to provide legal services for the underprivileged and underserved. Details of the program, including infrastructure and policy, are being developed now, by the Community Outreach committee and any input from the membership would be appreciated. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Committee Chair Mark Young at [myoung@donahoeyoung.com](mailto:myoung@donahoeyoung.com).

### Marketing and Public Relations

Successful bar associations have effectively used the local media and press to distribute its message to members, potential members and the community at-large. In 2010, the Marketing and Public Relations Committee has been tasked with spreading the message about the SCVBA, and ensuring that members and non-members are informed about the Association’s events, special projects and contributions.

Press releases, advertisements and attendance at community events will help to elevate the visibility of the Bar, especially as it continues to expand and implement new programs. For more information or to volunteer, please contact either Committee Co-Chair Robert Mansour at [rmansour@donahoeyoung.com](mailto:rmansour@donahoeyoung.com) or Jane McNamara at [jane@janemcnamara.com](mailto:jane@janemcnamara.com)

### Membership

With over 430 active California attorneys listing the Santa Clarita Valley, or one of its surrounding communities, as their home or work address, the SCVBA has a wonderful opportunity to expand its membership in 2010.

Approximately 150 of those 430 are also members of the SCVBA. The Membership Committee will work diligently to properly identify and contact the remaining 280 members of the State Bar to communicate the message of the SCVBA, and advise those non-members of the benefits and perks associated with membership. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Committee Chair April Oliver at [aoliver@reaperickett.com](mailto:aoliver@reaperickett.com).

### Special Events

In addition to the regular, monthly membership meetings – most of which provide continuing legal education credit to members – the SCVBA hosts a number of special events every year. The Association’s benchmark event, Law Appreciation Day, will be celebrating its 6<sup>th</sup> year on October 1, 2010. Additionally, three After Hours Networking Mixers, quarterly networking breakfasts and an inaugural New Attorneys Lunch will cap the 2010 calendar of special events.

The Special Events Committee, working in conjunction with the Executive Board, help to coordinate these events

from the initial planning stages through the clean-up process. For more information or to volunteer, please contact either Committee Co-Chair Paulette Gharibian at [pgharibian@reaperickett.com](mailto:pgharibian@reaperickett.com) or Barry Edzant at [valencialaw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:valencialaw@sbcglobal.net).

### Courthouse Planning

The “pet project” for SCVBA President Brian KoeGLE is to ensure that the Association is positioned to present a unified voice on behalf of the local legal community when it comes to the planning and development of a new, local courthouse for the Santa Clarita Valley. Although tenuous in light of recent budget cutbacks, over \$50 million was approved for the new courthouse, and the site selection process has commenced.

The Courthouse Planning Committee has been charged with collecting information from the local legal community to determine preferences, concerns and opinions regarding the proposed project. Those community voices will then be blended, and a written statement regarding the SCVBA’s position will be prepared and submitted. For more information or to volunteer, please contact either Committee Co-Chair Amy Cohen at [acohen@ahslawyers.com](mailto:acohen@ahslawyers.com) or Barry Edzant at [valencialaw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:valencialaw@sbcglobal.net).

2010 is shaping up to be a tremendous year for the Santa Clarita Valley Bar Association. However, much like any other organization, this Association is only as strong as its membership. The leadership team needs help! Please volunteer today to lend support and skill to one or more of the committees outlined above. 🙋

For more information, please visit [www.scvbar.org](http://www.scvbar.org).

“  
Many hands make  
light work.”

– John Heywood, 16<sup>th</sup>  
Century English writer

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Three separate first floor window office suites available. Square footage from 625 to 1350, monthly rent from \$750 to \$2,000. B-class building with covered parking and security system. Call Joanne at (818) 264-0610.

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## Probate & Estate Planning Section Seven Things You Should Know About Property Taxes

MARCH 9  
12:00 NOON  
MONTEREY AT ENCINO RESTAURANT  
ENCINO

Attorney Robert Slavin will outline the key provisions you must know regarding property taxes.

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>NON-MEMBERS</b>
\$35 prepaid	\$45 prepaid
\$45 at the door	\$55 at the door
<b>1 MCLE HOUR</b>	

## Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section Demystifying SLAPP and Anti SLAPP

MARCH 10  
12:00 NOON  
SFVBA CONFERENCE ROOM

Attorneys from Marcin Lambirth will discuss this important issue.

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>NON-MEMBERS</b>
\$30 prepaid	\$40 prepaid
\$40 at the door	\$50 at the door
<b>1 MCLE HOUR</b>	

## Women Lawyers Section Mainstreaming Mediation in Your Practice

MARCH 16  
12:00 NOON  
SFVBA CONFERENCE ROOM  
WOODLAND HILLS

Mediator Darryl Graver will give invaluable tips on how to best utilize mediation in your practice.

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>NON-MEMBERS</b>
\$30 prepaid	\$40 at the door
\$40 at the door	\$50 at the door
<b>1 MCLE HOUR</b>	

## Santa Clarita Valley Bar Association Quarterly Networking Breakfast

MARCH 17  
7:00 AM TO 8:30 AM  
TOURNAMENT PLAYERS CLUB  
VALENCIA

Please RSVP by March 15 to Katie at (661) 287-3260 or [rsvp@scvbar.org](mailto:rsvp@scvbar.org).

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>NON-MEMBERS</b>
\$20 prepaid	\$25 prepaid

## Workers' Compensation Section Ogilvie: Looking at Both Sides

MARCH 17  
12:00 NOON  
MONTEREY AT ENCINO RESTAURANT  
ENCINO

Attorney Hediye Golshani and Vocational Expert Keith Wilkinson will discuss Ogilvie from the perspective of both the applicant and the defense.

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## Litigation Section The Judge and Limited Jurisdiction Court

MARCH 18  
6:00 PM  
SFVBA CONFERENCE ROOM  
WOODLAND HILLS

Join us for this informal dinner and discussion with Judge Gregory Keosian on limited jurisdiction court and its importance to you and your clients.

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>NON-MEMBERS</b>
\$25 prepaid	\$35 prepaid
\$35 at the door	\$45 at the door
<b>1 MCLE HOUR</b>	

## Family Law Section Personal Security for the Family Law Practitioner

MARCH 22  
5:30 PM  
MONTEREY AT ENCINO RESTAURANT  
ENCINO

Commissioner Scott Gordon and Judge James Brandlin will address this important topic and outline what you need to know in order to practice in a safe and secure environment.

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>NON-MEMBERS</b>
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\$55 at the door	\$65 at the door
<b>1 MCLE HOUR</b>	

## Business Law, Real Property & Bankruptcy Section Got Your Judgment?

MARCH 24  
12:00 NOON  
SFVBA CONFERENCE ROOM  
WOODLAND HILLS

Our annual judgment debtor exam. Your judgment is not worth much if you can't collect it. A distinguished panel will pursue a wily debtor and his hidden assets through a judgment debtor examination.

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>NON-MEMBERS</b>
\$30 prepaid	\$40 prepaid
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The San Fernando Valley Bar Association is a State Bar of California MCLE approved provider. To register for an event listed on this page, please contact Linda at (818) 227-0490, ext. 105 or [events@sfvba.org](mailto:events@sfvba.org).





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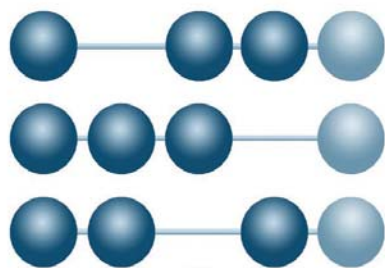


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