



# CAL-ABOTA

California Chapters of the  
American Board of Trial Advocates

[www.cal-abota.org](http://www.cal-abota.org)

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**PRESIDENT-ELECT**  
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**Members-at-Large**  
Dominique A. Pollara (2016)  
Christopher P. Wesierski (2017)  
Walter M. Yoka (2018)

October 3, 2016

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Jennifer Blevins

**PAST PRESIDENTS**  
\* George W. Bullen 1979-80  
\* Richard M. Sangster 1981-83  
\* Charles A. Lynberg 1984  
\* Warren C. Wetteroth 1985  
Hon. Richard Aldrich 1986  
Eugene J. Majeski 1987  
Robert N. Stone 1988  
\* Marjorie W. Day 1989  
\* John J. Collins 1990  
George J. Shelby 1991  
John D. Barr 1992  
Edward D. Chapin 1993  
Dennis J. Sinclitico 1994  
David P. Freitas 1995  
Jack Daniels 1996  
Edward J. Nevin 1997  
Christopher Helenius 1998  
Donald R. Warren 1999  
Margaret M. Holm 2000  
John A. McGuinn 2001  
Stephen R. Cornwell 2002  
Rudolph Nolen, Jr. 2003  
Jeffrey S. Raynes 2004  
Darrell A. Forgey 2005  
Charles R. Grebing 2006  
Christopher J. Day 2007  
John F. DeMeo 2008  
David B. Casselman 2009  
Alan K. Brubaker 2010  
Frederick H. Ebey 2011  
James D. Weakley 2012  
Douglas M. DeGrave 2013  
Steven C. Glickman 2014  
Dennis LaRochelle 2015

\* Deceased

**Distinguished Member of CAL-ABOTA,**

The CAL-ABOTA Executive Committee and board met again in August 2016 in Newport Beach. Reports from our various committees were received. Each chapter gave a detailed presentation of its activities and there were thoughtful discussions concerning the need to promptly respond to attacks on the independence of judicial officers and the benefit of taking published, public stands on issues related to the Seventh Amendment.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD**

A new member of the Executive Committee and new members-at-large to the board were elected. Effective January 1, 2017, Chris Wesierski of Orange County will be our newest member of the Executive Committee and CAL-ABOTA Treasurer. Our new members-at-large will be Don Carlson of San Francisco, serving a term ending December 2018, and Greg Rizio of Orange County, serving a term ending December 2019. Wally Yoka of Los Angeles will continue as member-at-large through December 2017. Dominique Pollara will be completing her service as an elected member-at-large this year with sincere appreciation for her steady leadership and important contributions to CAL-ABOTA.

The Executive Committee and members-at-large join the presidents, vice-presidents and immediate past presidents of all eight chapters of ABOTA in California to form the CAL-ABOTA board. It's a dynamic and energetic group doing great work on behalf of the American Board of Trial Advocates.

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## **COMMITTEES**

The Civil Justice Committee headed by Bill Smith of San Francisco is investigating ways for CAL-ABOTA to make timely comment on attacks against the independence of the judiciary. Jesse Rivera of Sacramento proposed and the CAL-ABOTA board adopted a resolution of support for a paper on judicial independence authored by San Joaquin County Superior Court Judge Barbara Kronlund and ABOTA member Michael Kronlund. It can be found on our website [www.cal-abota.org](http://www.cal-abota.org).

The Education Committee, co-chaired by Bryan Reid of San Bernardino and Dominique Pollara of Sacramento, is working to coordinate CAL-ABOTA's numerous education programs, including Masters in Trial, Civility Matters, Teachers Law School, Journalist Law School, the Jack Daniels Trial School, the Mendez School program, and the James Otis lecture series. The Board also approved sponsorship of the California Commission of Social Studies program to be conducted in 2017. The Long Range Planning Committee, led by Chris Wesierski of Orange County and Don Carlson of San Francisco, is drafting a series of public positions on matters relating to jury trials in civil cases which the Board will consider, adopt and publish in the near future.

CAL-ABOTA has four ad hoc committees dealing with expedited jury trial legislation, membership in the ABOTA Foundation, public service announcements, and the continued development and expansion of the CAL-ABOTA website. Our support for the ABOTA Foundation needs improvement. Please consider becoming a fellow and encouraging your colleagues to join as well.

## **CAL-ABOTA PROGRAMS**

All of our chapters sponsor programs throughout the state to help preserve and protect the right to a jury trial in civil cases. This year we have focused on efforts to make civil jury trials faster and cheaper — which we believe to be the antidote to the vanishing jury trial. As president, I have appeared before the Chief Justice's

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Futures Commission to express our support for its work to streamline the civil jury trial experience while being respectful of the right to due process and the right of trial counsel to interact with juries during voir dire. We are also focused on our support for the Chief's commitment to the restoration of civics education in California. Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye has identified this as her legacy issue and CAL-ABOTA fully embraces it. The Chief is a frequent speaker at CAL-ABOTA events, such as the upcoming California Coast Chapter meeting in Santa Barbara, the James Otis lecture in San Francisco, and the Town Hall meeting in Sacramento. The partnership we have formed with the Chief Justice regarding the restoration of civics education is one which should be sustained.

### **INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY**

CAL-ABOTA occupies a permanent seat on the Open Courts Coalition, which is a principal advocate for the proper funding of the judicial branch of government. CAL-ABOTA has also publicly commented twice this year on attacks at judicial independence and will continue to do so on a case by case basis. There is a protocol for the coordination of efforts by local chapters, regional chapters like CAL-ABOTA and national ABOTA which can be found on the CAL-ABOTA website. We are also reminding our chapters to have a designated member to serve as point person in the event of an attack on the independence of a judicial officer.

### **REGIONAL AND CHAPTER VISITS**

Each year the president or designated Executive Committee member of CAL-ABOTA visits the other three ABOTA regions, TEX-ABOTA, FLA-ABOTA and SEABOTA. We gain insight into new ideas and activities for ABOTA throughout the nation and offer our own. The president is also expected to visit all of the eight California chapters during the year and it looks like I will make it to all eight chapters this year. The hospitality each chapter has extended during these visits has been wonderful. While there are nuanced differences among our chapters, our membership is

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strongly united in its commitment to the preservation and protection of the right to a jury trial in civil cases. The chance to visit with fellow ABOTA trial lawyers throughout the state has been an enriching experience and I am most grateful for it.

### **2016 HAWAII CONFERENCE**

We are returning to the Mauna Kea Resort again for the third year in a row to celebrate CAL-ABOTA's conference from October 31st through November 5th. The conference is chaired by President Elect N. Denise Taylor and she has done tremendous work to put together a program that will be both relaxing and educational. We hope that you will join us to celebrate with our Trial Lawyers of the Year, Doug DeGrave and Mike Bradley, and to enjoy the traditional ABOTA camaraderie and the luxury of the Mauna Kea Resort. You are encouraged to register with Carrousel Travel and you may do so through the CAL-ABOTA website: <http://cal-abota.org/hawaiiConference.asp>. The Hawaii Conference will be the last meeting of CAL-ABOTA during calendar 2016.

Thank you for your continued involvement and support in CAL-ABOTA. We are the organization with the single best ability to preserve and protect the right to a jury trial in civil cases and this is a responsibility we must discharge. It is likely to be a challenge which lasts for a considerable period of time, but it is a challenge that we must meet for fear that if this precious right goes away it will never return.

Most sincerely,



Michael P. Bradley  
2016 President, CAL-ABOTA