



CAL-ABOTA

California Chapters of the
American Board of Trial Advocates

www.cal-abota.org

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Jennifer Blevins

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- * Charles A. Lynberg 1984
- * Warren C. Wetteroth 1985
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- * Marjorie W. Day 1989
- * John J. Collins 1990
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- David P. Freitas 1995
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- 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

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Walter M. Yoka (2018)

December 22, 2016

Distinguished Member of CAL-ABOTA,

The CAL-ABOTA Board held its final meeting of 2016 at the Hawaii Conference on November 2. The conference was held for the third consecutive year at the fabulous Mauna Kea Resort. It was very well attended and a spectacular success due to the tireless efforts of our conference chair, N. Denise Taylor. It began on Halloween night with a costume party and reception which was enthusiastically embraced by our members. The oath of office to the 2017 officers was administered by ABOTA icon Gil Jones. We celebrated our 2016 Trial Lawyers of the Year, Doug DeGrave and Michael Bradley. We also recognized the Civility Award winners from our eight chapters: Dennis LaRochelle from California Coast; Jack Girardi from Los Angeles; Bill Haggerty from Orange County; Patrick Little from Sacramento; Virginia Nelson from San Diego; Bryan Reid from San Bernardino/Riverside; Gene Brown from San Francisco; and Judge Sidney Chapin from San Joaquin Valley. The newest member of the Executive Committee, Chris Wesierski, who will serve as 2017 Treasurer, was welcomed and we honored and acknowledged the exemplary work of retiring Executive Committee member, Doug DeGrave.

COMMITTEES

Civil Justice. Bill Smith reported on the excellent work done to perfect our chapter-level response to attacks on the independence of the judiciary in an accurate, prompt and effective manner.

Education: Bryan Reid brought us up to date on the extensive work of this important committee for our numerous educational outreach programs, including the James Otis Lecture Series, the Civility Matters programs, our Masters in Trial presentations, the Teachers Law School and the Journalists Law School. All eight chapters are actively involved in our educational programs and

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understand that they are central to the protection and preservation of the civil jury trial.

Long Range Planning: Chris Wesierski and Don Carlson led this committee, which recommended the publication of policy positions by CAL-ABOTA. This follows the model of National ABOTA, which has historically taken policy positions on matters of fundamental importance to ABOTA over the years. The Board adopted six policy positions which will be published on the CAL-ABOTA website.

Expedited Jury Trial: Wally Yoka and Frank Pitre led this committee and reported on CAL-ABOTA's ongoing support of the expedited jury trial legislation and commitment to expansion of the expedited jury trial concept through work with the legislature and the judiciary. It is expected that faster and cheaper jury trials will continue to evolve with the support of CAL-ABOTA.

Foundation: The Foundation Committee was led by Chris Beeman. CAL-ABOTA is the only regional organization within ABOTA where half of its chapters have a Foundation membership of greater than fifty percent. Good progress has been made, but greater participation remains the goal. Emphasis on Foundation membership by new members and increased levels of participation for existing Foundation fellows have been and will be encouraged.

Public Service Announcements: Steve Glickman has done significant work in the development of audiovisual orientation for jury panels. The CAL-ABOTA orientation video is now used by over a dozen California counties and Steve is going to continue his work to make these valuable jury orientation tools available to even more counties throughout the state. They have been very well received by the presiding judges so far and it is expected that their expanded use will happen.

Website: Increasingly, the CAL-ABOTA website is perhaps the most effective tool for communication to our membership and to the public by CAL-ABOTA. Dennis LaRochelle has worked

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closely with our Executive Director, Jennifer Blevins, to develop and improve the website.

Amicus Committee: There was enthusiastic support for the idea of developing an Amicus Committee for CAL-ABOTA. It is very clear that the California Supreme Court regards ABOTA highly. We have the opportunity to weigh in on matters affecting the constitutional right to a jury trial in civil cases and should exercise it with letters supporting the grant of a petition for review where appropriate. It is anticipated that this committee will be developed in 2017 and the Board will be attempting to identify members of CAL-ABOTA willing to serve.

MANAGEMENT

We are in the very capable hands of California Advocates Management Services (CAMS) through our Executive Director, Jennifer Blevins. With her help we were able to make a very accurate budget and operate within it. The quality of Jenny's work and professionalism is a blessing.

NATIONAL ABOTA

We were privileged to welcome the attendance of National President Chuck Baumberger, National Foundation President Carlyle Chapman, and National Executive Director Brian Tyson. All spoke on their admiration of the activities of CAL-ABOTA and gave reports on how our work meshed nicely with the nationwide efforts of ABOTA.

HAWAII CONFERENCE 2017

The Hawaii Conference in 2017 will be leading us to the island of Maui in 2017 under the guidance of Bill Smith, November 6-11. It is not too early to begin plans to attend this conference, especially those members who have never attended a Hawaii Conference in the past.

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Please permit me to boast that CAL-ABOTA enjoyed an exceptional year in 2016. California is the birthplace of ABOTA and, at 1,658 strong, CAL-ABOTA is a well-respected and important component of the imperative work to preserve and protect the Seventh Amendment. We are in good shape but there is work to do. The ABOTA Foundation needs greater membership. Our partnership with Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye to restore civics education and to properly fund and protect the judicial branch needs continued support and growth. Finally, we must never tire in our efforts to remove the word “vanishing” from the vanishing civil jury trial. There is good reason for optimism, but our commitment and work must be unending. I am completely satisfied that we are equal to this task. We must be.

The sense of privilege I have enjoyed in serving as CAL-ABOTA president for 2016 is beyond my ability to express with adequacy. Thank you for allowing me to be one of you — the best trial lawyers in the world.

Mostly sincerely,



Michael P. Bradley
2016 CAL-ABOTA President