

Across the Bar

San Joaquin County Bar Association

MIDYEAR 2023



JOSE RODRIGUEZ
2023 Law Day Award Recipient



HOW TO REACH ACROSS THE BAR:

ATB@sjcbar.org

PUBLISHED BY:

San Joaquin County Bar Association
343 East Main Street, Suite 408
Stockton, CA 95202

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MESSAGE FROM THE **President**



Dear Members of the San Joaquin County Bar Association:

I want to take a moment to reflect and report on the progress we've made at the Bar Association.

Financially, your association is in a strong position. There is ample money in reserve in case of a financial emergency. The financial position is reviewed by the Board of Governors treasurer and the Board of Governors no less than once a month. The Board has the opportunity to review and question the financial reports. I am immensely proud of this group of Governors because they have exhibited the true meaning of their duty serving on the Board. The true meaning of this is that they put the interest of the Association above their own interests. That is not always easy to do. However, I have seen each and every member do exactly that on more than one occasion. This is a big part of why we have a strong association.

Another big reason we have a great bar association is because of all the various sections and committees that exist in the organization. Among other things, these sections help us attorneys maintain our competency in the areas of law we practice which in turn helps serve the community at large.

This year, the Criminal Law Section hosted a poker tournament. Me and 30 other members happily played poker in the inaugural Vitorria Bossi Poker Tournament. This tournament supports the scholarship in her name. It was a huge success – good games, good food and good people. Everyone had fun. Even though I ended up bubble boy (for you poker players, you know what that means). Participants continue to ask me when the next one will be held. The plan is to hold this event the Saturday after tax day. The Criminal Law Section hosted Bowling and Beer - a memorial bowling night for Isaac Choy. It was simply a blast. Everyone who participated had a fun time. We would like to continue this as an annual event. Thank you to everyone who attended the SOLD OUT Bar Association Member Appreciation Night at the Stockton Ports! We had over 100 members, family, and friends join us at the ballpark.

I encourage each of you to remain actively involved in our association's activities and initiatives. Your participation and engagement are what make our Bar Association truly exceptional. Together, we will continue to shape the future of our legal profession and uphold the principles that define us.

Lastly, none of these accomplishments would be possible if it were not for the hard work and dedication of the staff at the Bar Association. Please, when you see them or talk to them on the phone don't forget to thank them. I am sure they will appreciate it.

In a nutshell, the Bar Association and Foundation are in great hands.

As always, if you every have any concerns, questions or comments, the association is just a phone call away.

Sean Geddes

President, SJCBA Board of Governors



MESSAGE FROM THE **Executive Director**



As the days grow shorter and the warmth of the sun gradually gives way to the cool embrace of autumn, the legal community finds itself at the crossroads of another seasonal transition. The end of summer signifies more than just a change in weather; it symbolizes an opportunity for lawyers to reflect on the past and prepare for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. In this article, we delve into the significance of the end of summer for lawyers and explore strategies for navigating this transition effectively.

Reflection and Renewal

The end of summer is a natural time for reflection. Just as the leaves change colors, lawyers can use this season to evaluate their own growth and development. Take a moment to assess the goals you set at the beginning of the year. Have you achieved them? What lessons have you learned along the way? Reflecting on your successes and setbacks can provide valuable insights that can shape your approach in the coming months.

Consider also the relationships you've nurtured over the past months. Networking events, conferences, and social gatherings are more abundant during the summer, and you might have connected with new colleagues or strengthened existing bonds. Use this time to follow up with your contacts and maintain the momentum you've built.

Preparation for the Future

As the legal landscape continues to evolve, it's crucial to use the end of summer as a springboard for the future. Anticipate the shifts that the fall may bring – changes in legislation, emerging legal trends, and evolving client needs. Staying informed about these developments positions you as a proactive and invaluable resource for your clients.

Furthermore, consider the professional development opportunities that await in the upcoming months. Whether it's continuing legal education seminars, workshops, or skill-building courses, planning ahead for your growth ensures that you're equipped to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

Maintaining Work-Life Balance

While the end of summer can be a time of increased activity, it's important not to neglect the need for balance. The relaxed vibe of summer often gives way to a busier

schedule as the year progresses, but this should not come at the cost of your well-being. As a lawyer, it's easy to become immersed in your work, but taking time for yourself is essential for sustained success.

Consider integrating outdoor activities and mindfulness practices into your routine. A walk in the crisp fall air or a few minutes of meditation can provide the mental clarity needed to approach your work with renewed focus. Striking a balance between professional demands and personal well-being is a hallmark of effective lawyering.

Embracing Technological Advancements

The legal profession is undergoing a digital transformation, and the end of summer presents an ideal opportunity to embrace technological advancements. As remote work, virtual court proceedings, and digital case management become more prevalent, consider investing time in mastering the tools that can enhance your efficiency and effectiveness.

From legal research platforms to virtual collaboration tools, the end of summer can be a prime period to explore and integrate these technologies into your practice. Adapting to these changes positions you as a forward-thinking lawyer who is equipped to navigate the evolving legal landscape.

Conclusion

As summer gives way to fall, lawyers are presented with a chance to reflect, recalibrate, and rejuvenate. By taking stock of your achievements, preparing for the future, and prioritizing your well-being, you can successfully navigate this seasonal transition. The end of summer is not merely an end but a new beginning – a chapter of growth, learning, and advancement in the ever-evolving journey of a legal career.

Susan M. Bartman
Executive Director, SJCBA

2023 LAW DAY AWARD RECIPIENT

Jose Rodriguez

President & CEO, El Concilio California



On May 3, 2023, San Joaquin County Bar Association hosted the 2023 Law Day Luncheon at the Hilton Stockton. Mr. Jose Rodriguez, local attorney and President/CEO of El Concilio California, received the 2023 Law Day Award in recognition of his commitment to the legal community and the direct impact he has made as an advocate for issues affecting the Hispanic community.

Mr. Jose Rodriguez was born and raised in Olivehurst, California, the son of immigrant farm workers. In his bio on the El Concilio website, Mr. Rodriguez said, “It is through those life experiences that I understand the importance of a strong family, an appreciation of education, and a values system that recognizes the responsibility to take action by making a difference in the lives of young people, underserved communities and immigrant farm workers.”

Mr. Rodriguez graduated from the University of the Pacific and Humphreys Law School, and remained in Stockton, California, where he started his family and legal career. His law practice focuses mainly on family law, although he has helped many community members with all types of legal issues. Mr. Rodriguez has given his time, expertise, knowledge, and skill to anyone who has needed legal help, and many times without compensation.

As President/CEO of El Concilio California, a Hispanic and Latino advocacy not-for-profit agency in the San Joaquin Valley, the organization has grown into the largest non-governmental service provider in San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties. Many of the programs that have developed under Mr. Rodriguez's leadership have had a direct impact on the local community and provide support for local governments in addressing issues affecting the Hispanic community. Mr. Rodriguez is also a Board Member for UnidosUS, formerly known as the National Council for La Raza. UnidosUS is an influential Hispanic political and social organization in the United States.

“Through his leadership, El Concilio has thrived, [and] Jose Rodriguez has shown an unwavering dedication to this community,” said Gurjit Srail, attorney and SJCBA member.

Many programs established by Mr. Rodriguez continue to flourish including comprehensive Immigration Legal Services, the Alcohol and Drug Diversion Program, Re-entry Services & Mandated Programs, Senior Living & Caregiver Legal Services, transportation services, and early childhood education/low cost after school programs.

Please join San Joaquin County Bar Association in congratulating Mr. Jose Rodriguez as the 2023 Law Day Award recipient!



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**2023 LAW DAY
 AWARD RECIPIENT**

**Jose
 Rodriguez**
 President & CEO,
 El Concilio California



SJCBA



CALIFORNIA'S NEW "SNITCH RULE" –

Navigating Our New Duty to Report Attorney Misconduct



BY COURTNEY S. HAYES & PAUL J. BORGES
Kroloff, Belcher, Smart, Perry & Christopherson

On June 21, 2023, the California Supreme Court adopted a new rule of professional conduct aimed at curbing attorney misconduct. Rule 8.3 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct, dubbed by some the “snitch rule,” establishes a duty to report any attorney who:

- commits a criminal act, or
- engages in “conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or reckless or intentional misrepresentation or misappropriation of funds or property that raises a substantial question as to that lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness.” (Cal. Rules of Professional Conduct (“CRPC”), rule 8.3(a).)

Effective August 1, 2023, this new rule requires attorneys to report to either the State Bar or to a tribunal when the attorney is aware of “credible evidence” that another attorney has committed any of the above misconduct. (CRPC, rule 8.3(a).)

Notably, the new rule requires attorneys to report misconduct “without undue delay.” (CRPC, rule 8.3(a).) This requires attorneys to report misconduct as soon as they reasonably believe the reporting will not prejudice or harm the interests of a client of the attorney or a client of the attorney’s firm. (CRPC, rule 8.3, comment 3.)

What prompted the adoption of this rule?

Variations of the “snitch rule” exist in all 49 other states. While some jurisdictions mandate reporting misconduct, others strongly encourage it. Past efforts to enact a mandatory reporting rule in California were long resisted by opponents who argued such a rule would overwhelm the State Bar’s disciplinary system with complaints, not to mention interfere with the lawyer-client relationship.

But, given mounting cases of severe attorney misconduct in California, particularly that of Tom Girardi, a famed trial attorney facing criminal charges for misappropriating over \$18 million of client settlement funds¹, the California State Bar drafted a mandatory reporting rule, which was submitted to the California Supreme Court for review earlier this year. Following a comment period and some revisions, the Court adopted the new rule².

When is reporting misconduct mandatory versus discretionary?

Rule 8.3 limits mandatory reporting of misconduct to the most serious offenses – offenses that “a self-regulating profession must vigorously endeavor to prevent.” (CRPC, rule 8.3, comment 4.) Attorneys may, but are not required to, report other violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct to the State Bar. (CRPC, rule 8.3(b).) Whether conduct rises to the level mandating reporting depends on the “seriousness of the possible offense and not the quantum of evidence of which the lawyer is aware.” (CRPC, rule 8.3, comment 4.)

In addition to required reporting to the State Bar or to a tribunal, attorneys may, in their discretion, report misconduct under the rule to another appropriate agency. (CRPC, rule 8.3, comment 8.) However, attorneys may not threaten to report misconduct to obtain an advantage in a civil dispute, as prohibited by rule 3.10. (Id.; CRPC, rule 3.10.) Further, attorneys may not enter into any agreement whereby they agree to limit or refrain from reporting misconduct. (CRPC, rule 8.3, comment 9; CRPC, rule 5.6(b); Bus. & Prof. Code., § 6090.5.)

When should I report misconduct to the State Bar versus to a Tribunal?

Under the rule, attorneys may report misconduct either to the State Bar or to a “tribunal with jurisdiction to investigate or act upon such misconduct.” (CRPC, rule 8.3, comment 6.) This begs the question – when should a lawyer go to the State Bar, and when should they go to a court? According to the rule comments, an attorney should report misconduct

1 “In major reform, California attorneys must report misconduct by their peers.” Los Angeles Times. June 22, 2023. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2023-06-22/california-attorneys-must-now-report-misconduct-by-their-peers>

2 “California Supreme Court Approves New Rule Compelling Attorneys to Report Misconduct by Other Attorneys.” Supreme Court of California, News Release. June 22, 2023. <https://supreme.courts.ca.gov/news-and-events/california-supreme-court-approves-new-rule-compelling-attorneys-report-misconduct>



Cal. Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 8.3

to a court if the misconduct in question arises during pending litigation and the court overseeing the litigation has the power to “investigate or act upon” the misconduct. (Id.) If the litigation is pending before a non-judicial tribunal, such as an arbitrator, the non-judicial tribunal may lack the power to “investigate or act upon” the misconduct. (Id.) Consequently, reporting to the tribunal may not be sufficient, and reporting to the State Bar may be necessary. (Id.)

While reports made to the State Bar relating to misconduct are privileged under Business and Professions Code section 6094, evidence of misconduct presented to a court may be admissible in later disciplinary proceedings. (CRPC, rule 8.3, comments 6, 10; *Caldwell v. State Bar* (1975) 13 Cal.3d 488, 497.) Additionally, reports made to a court may trigger an obligation for the court to report the misconduct to the State Bar or to take other “appropriate corrective action.” (CRPC, rule 8.3, comment 6; Bus. & Prof. Code, §§ 6049.1, 6086.7, 6068.8; and Cal. Code of Jud. Ethics, canon 3D(2).)

Whether reporting to the State Bar or to a court, attorneys may be subject to criminal penalties and/or discipline for filing false or malicious reports or submitting false evidence. (CRPC, rule 8.3, comment 10; CRPC, rule 3.3(a); Bus. & Prof. Code, §§ 6043.5(a), 6068(d).)

Are there any exceptions to the rule?

Rule 8.3 contains specific exceptions. Attorneys are not required to disclose misconduct learned of while participating in a substance use or mental health program. This exception is intended to encourage attorneys to seek treatment through such programs. (CRPC, rule 8.3, comment 5.) Without this exception, attorneys may be deterred from participating in these support programs, resulting in harm to their careers, to their clients, and to the public. (Id.)

Information protected by the attorney-client privilege is also exempt from disclosure. The rule comments clarify that the rule is not intended to discourage attorneys from seeking counsel, or to interfere with the attorney-client relationship in the context of a legal malpractice suit. (CRPC, rule 8.3, comment 2.) Accordingly, the rule does not require disclosure of information learned by an attorney retained to represent an attorney whose conduct is in question, or to advise on an attorney’s duty to report misconduct. (Id.) Likewise, the rule does not apply to information learned from a State Bar ethics hotline or similar service. (Id.)

Final Thoughts

How rule 8.3 will be interpreted and enforced remains to be seen. What rises to the level of a “reckless” misrepresentation? What constitutes “a substantial question as to [a] lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects”? How much discretion can attorneys exercise in determining what conduct rises to the level requiring reporting? Despite its exceptions, will this rule chill the attorney-client relationship or deter attorneys from seeking mental health or substance abuse treatment for fear of being reported? How will this rule impact our interactions with fellow attorneys, whether in a law office, a government agency, a bar association, or the legal community at large?

Getting acquainted with this new rule and pondering these and other questions will help equip attorneys to navigate misconduct by fellow attorneys, if and when it arises.

Courtney S. Hayes and Paul J. Borges are attorneys with the Stockton-based law firm of Kroloff, Belcher, Smart, Perry & Christopherson. Ms. Hayes specializes in estate planning and trust and probate administration, and Mr. Borges primarily handles business transactions and litigation.

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- State of the Court Address by Honorable Michael Coughlan •
 - State of the Bar •
- Announcement of the Outstanding New Lawyer and Law Day Award Recipients •
 - Introduction of 2024 Board of Governors •
 - and more! •

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Constitution Month is a time to reflect on the enduring principles of the U.S. Constitution, promote civic education and engagement, and celebrate the document that has played a pivotal role in shaping the American democracy and legal system.

Constitution Day, also known as Citizenship Day, is celebrated on September 17th each year to commemorate the signing of the United States Constitution in 1787. Constitution Month extends the celebration throughout September to provide more opportunities for educational and civic activities related to the Constitution.

"What better time than the start of the school year to reaffirm our commitment to our country's founding document and to students in our classrooms interested in understanding its importance," said California Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero, honorary chair of the Power of Democracy Civic Learning Initiative, in a news release from the California Courts Newsroom on August 30, 2023. During Constitution Month, various educational



institutions, government organizations, and community groups often organize events, programs, and activities to promote civic education and raise awareness about the Constitution's role in shaping the United States.

In San Joaquin County, Judge Erin Guy Castillo will speak at the "Constitution Day and Civic Learning Celebration" happening on Friday, September 15, 2023, at the Wentworth Education Center in Stockton. It will be "a day to recognize Constitution Day and consider ways to

enhance civic learning in our schools." For more information and to register for the event, visit <https://formbuilder.sjcoe.org/form.aspx?f=872>.

Other events and activities taking place across the state include educational programs for teachers and students, Judges in the Classroom Visits, and the Reading of the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 21 at 12 p.m. on the plaza of the Robert T. Matsui Federal Courthouse in Sacramento.

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A WORK IN PROGRESS: REMEMBERING LIBERTY, GRACE, AND BRANDING

BY JEREMY M. EVANS
*President
California Lawyers Association*



In the legal profession and with societal norms, people are often restricted by rules, regulations, and responsibilities. Attorneys, as officers of the court, must follow the law and lead by example, particularly with our families, clients, the profession, the community, and ourselves. Attorneys must be standard bearers for good.

It is a tough burden to carry. However, in practicing law and life, we have to remember to give ourselves and others grace and patience. No one is perfect. Nothing is immediate. When something is immediate, one is often unprepared, unwilling, or the timing is incorrect.

The principle of liberty is no further evident in how careers are made. We are all a work in progress. Remember, work towards perfection to reach excellence.

Prior to law school, after watching many “Law & Order” episodes and Hollywood feature films about attorneys, I envisioned that the path to success would be through the district attorney’s office. Being in court, brokering deals, handling prosecutions, and giving second chances seemed like a great career.

However, my experiences during and after law school—interning for the public defender, working for three civil litigation law firms, and serving as a graduate law clerk in the Superior Court of California—led me to a different path.

Colleagues reminded me that being an entrepreneur would be a much better path based on skills of connecting with people and the enjoyment of building things. Law school taught me how to write more concisely, and, combined with a passion for the literary arts, it made sense to get into writing and podcasting. Creating content also served as a great marketing tool. Social media was truly starting to hit its stride and provided the best distribution platform since the printing press. Virtual offices also began to catch on. This meant that building a business and law practice was much less expensive and approachable.

Deciding to open a practice was very difficult—it took time, patience, grace, and liberty. There is no immediate success moment once launching or really after. After determining that going solo was the path, it was simple to decide what to practice—entertainment, media, and sports—because those were the practice areas of passion and childhood dreams.

Going back to law school for a moment, I experienced two significant things that watered the seed of entrepreneurship. First, a law school study abroad program led me to 29 cities and 19 countries in a three-month period, which allowed me to write articles and share pictures of the experience on websites and social media. The experience showed a positive reaction

that encouraged further exploration. Next, competing in a baseball arbitration competition at Tulane Law School led me to build, develop, and run the first of its kind, National Sports Law Negotiation Competition, and eventually to another development, the California Sports Lawyer® Negotiation Competition at the Rose Bowl Stadium. My early law school experiences provided the evidence and foundation to want to build and explore more.

Reading about and meeting with hundreds of attorneys prior to and after launching a practice saved a lot of headache, heartache, and overhead. It also served unknowingly as a marketing experiment as attorneys asked about the next move. It helped to establish the principles and application of geography, branding, and community in business development, career, and life decisions, which I use daily.



Knowing your brand and understanding how others receive your brand is of the utmost importance. One must be willing to ask the harder personal and business questions and accept, learn, and change from a place of failure. If being an entrepreneur is one thing, it is knowing, accepting, and embracing the challenge of uncertainty. It is also the ability to improvise, adapt, and overcome, and diversify revenue streams. It also means being, as Benjamin Franklin said, a “Jack of all trades, master of one.” (Note the Franklin quote is often misquoted to none).

As attorneys, we must be willing to work for change but also accept challenges and failures gracefully. People must learn to live with mistakes and missteps and forgive themselves and others for the same.

California Lawyers Association demonstrated this principle recently in a branding seminar. During the session, the panel moderator asked, “If you could go back and give advice to your younger self, what would it be and why?” I responded that ‘naiveté is often a great tool to accomplish greatness because

one does not realize the difficulty of the task ahead.' I added that 'I would remind myself that great things come with grace and patience.' Time is your ally.

The branding event was entitled "Branding for Attorneys: What You Did Not Learn in Law School About Social Media, Public Relations, and Business Development." Law school is, for better or worse, not about business development and marketing. However, building a brand is essential to life and business success. Before and during law school, everyone is creating something that tells a story about themselves. In many ways, people are a collection of their choices. But again, there is grace and patience. Our experiences in law school and life outside the four-walled or virtual classroom are where much work is done.

California Lawyers Association is a place where attorneys, law students, and legal professionals can build their brand through professional development, education, networking, and leadership opportunities. Ask yourself often, what will your story say? Challenge yourself to tell the story you want to tell. If my story says anything about branding, grace, liberty, freedom, and patience, it is that everyone has the opportunity to tell their story at the California Lawyers Association through hard work and grace.



Pictured (L-R): Oyango A. Snell, Esq., CEO and Executive Director, California Lawyers Association; Sheila Johnston, Associate Executive Director, Communications, California Lawyers Association; Sheenika Gandhi, Chief Marketing Officer, Attorney, Greenberg Glusker; Jeremy M. Evans, President, California Lawyers Association; Tej Baath, Associate Executive Director, Membership, Marketing & Technology, California Lawyers Association.

Mr. Jeremy M. Evans is the CEO, Founder, and Managing Attorney of California Sports Lawyer®. He hosts the California Sports Lawyer® Podcast with Jeremy Evans on the Bleav Network, which focuses on the latest topics and most interesting legal angles in entertainment, media, and sports law. Within the community, Mr. Evans serves as the 2021-2023 President of the California Lawyers Association, a voluntary bar association of over 80,000 members. Mr. Evans received his Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Political Science from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and his Juris Doctor (J.D.) from Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego, California. Additionally, Mr. Evans holds a Master of Laws (LL.M) in Entertainment, Media, and Sports Law from Pepperdine University's Rick J. Caruso School of Law, and a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) in Entertainment, Media and Sports Management from Pepperdine University's George L. Graziadio School of Business and Management.




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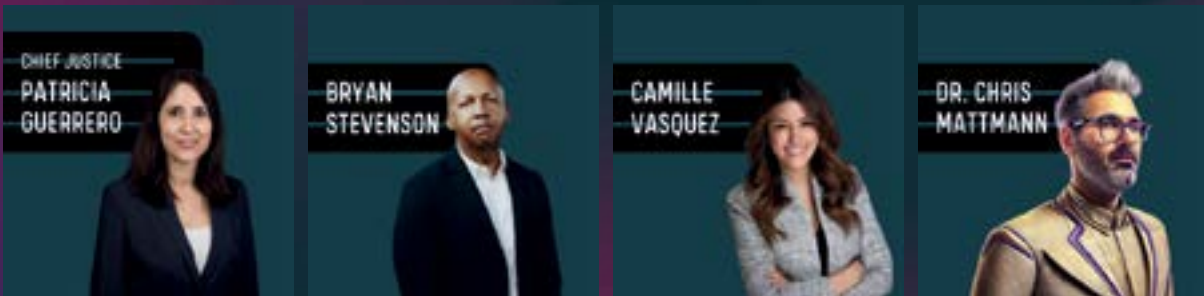
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Effective communication is the cornerstone of the legal profession. Attorneys must be able to convey information accurately and comprehend their clients' needs and concerns. However, in an increasingly diverse and multicultural society, language barriers can often hinder the legal process. This is where Boostlingo Interpreting Services comes into play, providing invaluable support to our legal community. In this article, we'll explore how Boostlingo's interpreting services are transforming the legal landscape in San Joaquin County.

The Challenge of Language Barriers in Legal Practice

San Joaquin County, located in California's Central Valley, is a melting pot of cultures and languages. Attorneys practicing in this diverse environment often encounter clients who are not proficient in English. In such cases, the potential for miscommunication is high, and this can lead to misunderstandings, legal errors, and inefficiencies in the legal process. To address these challenges, the San Joaquin County Bar Association (SJCBA) has partnered with Boostlingo Interpreting Services, a leading provider of on-demand interpreting solutions.

Boostlingo: Bridging the Language Gap

Boostlingo is a cloud-based platform that offers real-time interpreting services in over 300 languages. It empowers attorneys and their clients to communicate effectively, ensuring that all parties understand and are understood. Here's how Boostlingo is revolutionizing the legal experience for both attorneys and their clients:

1. **Instant Access to Professional Interpreters:** Boostlingo connects attorneys with certified interpreters within seconds, eliminating the need to schedule appointments or wait for interpreters to arrive on-site. This immediate access is crucial in time-sensitive legal situations.
2. **Multilingual Support:** Boostlingo offers a vast pool of interpreters proficient in a wide range of languages, including Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and many others. This breadth of language support is essential in San Joaquin County's diverse community.
3. **Secure and Confidential:** Legal matters often involve sensitive information. Boostlingo prioritizes security and confidentiality, ensuring that all communications are private and protected under attorney-client privilege.
4. **Cost-Effective:** Traditional interpreting services can be

costly, especially for smaller law firms and nonprofit organizations. Boostlingo's pay-as-you-go model allows attorneys to control costs while still accessing high-quality interpreting services.

5. **Remote and On-Site Options:** Whether attorneys prefer to work with interpreters on-site or remotely, Boostlingo accommodates both options, offering flexibility to suit various legal settings.

Enhancing Legal Access and Equality

Boostlingo's presence at the San Joaquin County Bar Association has had a significant impact on the legal community. Attorneys are now better equipped to serve clients from diverse backgrounds, ensuring that justice is accessible to all, regardless of language barriers. Here are a few ways in which Boostlingo's services are enhancing legal access and equality:

1. **Improved Client Relations:** Boostlingo's interpreting services foster trust and understanding between attorneys and clients. Clients feel heard and respected when they can communicate in their preferred language.
2. **Streamlined Legal Proceedings:** The ability to communicate clearly and efficiently with clients and witnesses accelerates legal processes, reducing delays and enhancing the overall efficiency of legal proceedings.
3. **Legal Aid and Pro Bono Services:** Nonprofit legal organizations and attorneys providing pro bono services can leverage Boostlingo to extend their reach to underserved communities, making legal assistance more accessible to those in need.

Boostlingo Interpreting Services, hosted by the San Joaquin County Bar Association, are a game-changer for attorneys. By breaking down language barriers, Boostlingo empowers legal professionals to provide more inclusive and effective legal services. As San Joaquin County continues to grow and diversify, such innovative solutions will play a crucial role in ensuring equal access to justice for all members of the community.

Boostlingo Interpreting Services are available 24/7. The San Joaquin County Bar Association offers this member benefit at little cost to you. Pricing begins at \$0.95 per minute. Contact SJCBA at info@sjcbar.org or (209) 948-0125 for more information.

SJCBA MEMBER APPRECIATION NIGHT

AUGUST 31, 2023



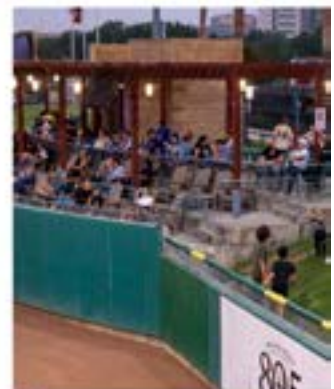
Over 100 members, staff, and guests attended the SJCBA Member Appreciation Night at the Stockton Ports on August 31, 2023. Everyone enjoyed a beautiful night out with a win for the Ports over the Rancho Cucamonga Quakes. The ceremonial first pitch was thrown out by Terry Lao's grandson. The SJCBA Member Challenge Winner was Sasha Sloup who had 19 guests. Thank you to everyone who joined us!



© Justin Gomes, Stockton Ports



© Judge Tony Agbayani



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Viviana Varela





Asian/Pacific Islanders

Women Lawyers

Family Law

Paralegal

SJCBA Sections

Criminal Law

Civil Litigation

Young Lawyers

Justice William J. Murray Jr. Unity Bar

Trusts & Estates

WOMEN LAWYER'S SECTION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DINNER

By Melissa Dougherty

On June 29, the Women Lawyer's Executive Committee got together for dinner at Dave Wong's, the first time we've seen each other in person since Spring of 2020. As happens to us too often, Catrina Griffin's day went sideways on her, and she wasn't able to join us.

We all know each other already, so we shared some random facts about ourselves:

Katie Lucchesi, Interim Lodi City Attorney, was heading off to a 65th annual family reunion to a ranch in Mendocino County, with a very sassy three-year-old in tow.

Esmeralda Zendejas, Superior Court Judge, was also leaving town, taking a super quick trip to Washington on Friday afternoon to go hiking for a friend's birthday, before coming back just in time to take the bench Monday morning.

Kibbe Day spent a year clerking in Alaska after law school. She got licensed in Alaska, which gave her the ability to be admitted in any state in the Country.

Monica Sousa and Anna Maples went to law school together. While in school, Monica had an eight-year-old son. Now, he's 22, and she has another son who is currently 8 years old.

Due to the pandemic and then international politics, Anna Maples and her family took a trip to Egypt, so they could see her mom, who also traveled to Egypt for the visit. While she was there, the Government of Egypt was so worried about losing an American



Above L-R: Judge Esmeralda Zendejas, Denise Pereira, Kibbe Day, Melissa Dougherty, Katie Lucchesi, Monica Sousa, Lucero De La Rosa, and Anna Maples.

citizen, that their every passage through the many checkpoints was recorded, and the hotel would call and check on them frequently.

I like spend time on "from scratch" skills, everything from baking and knitting, to soaping and amateur winemaking.

Denise Periera made the switch from public defender to solo practitioner, as a way to create flexibility in her family's life when her husband had to go back to the classroom to teach, even though the kids were still learning remotely.

Lucero de la Rosa would have been a doctor right now, if it weren't for her taking International Law as an elective in undergrad. She fell in love with the subject, and a professor strongly encouraged her to pursue law school instead.

While we love the convenience of Zoom meetings, we have really missed seeing everyone in person.

Do you have updates to share about your SJCBA Section? Email Section news and photos to ATB@sjcbar.org or einong@sjcbar.org to be included in the next issue of Across the Bar.

Introducing Women Lawyer's Section Member:

San Joaquin County Superior Court Judge Esmeralda Zendejas

BY MELISSA DOUGHERTY
Attorney
Villapudua & Somera



*Photo courtesy of Superior Court of California,
County of San Joaquin.*

She gives herself homework. A self-described former workaholic, Judge Zendejas enjoys the challenge of learning new things, and puts in the effort to be fully prepared for each matter before her. Friday evenings are for relaxing, Saturdays are for chores and spending time with friends and family. But any given Sunday, all day, and evenings Monday through Thursday, her time is dedicated to homework and you'll find her reading briefs and researching the law, preparing for an upcoming calendar.

Judge Zendejas has prioritized a better work-life balance by effectively using her time when she is most productive on work, so that she can set aside time to spend with friends and family, watching cooking shows and even some non-legal reading. Her current book is: *Caste, The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson.

Judge Zendejas comes from humble beginnings, which instilled a strong commitment to community and helping others within her. She was born and raised in Stockton, and attended Edison High School before moving on to UC Davis for her bachelor's in Political Science and Spanish (which she speaks fluently), both with Honors. Having admired attorneys on the T.V. show *Matlock* from a very young age, Judge Zendejas decided she wanted to be a lawyer and she went on to earn her Juris Doctorate from UC Davis School of Law.

Judge Zendejas' law school extracurricular activities were targeted to give back to her community, and help others. Literally. She did everything from volunteering in the day-care, caring for her classmates' infants while they attended class, tutoring, assisting people of color with admission and preparation for law school, helping pro per litigants in the family law clinic, book and toy drives, speaking with indigenous peoples in Mexico regarding human rights, and aiding people applying for naturalization.

As if law school and volunteering weren't enough, Judge Zendejas began an internship with California Rural Legal Assistance ("CRLA") because of the type of work they do, and the good it provides to the community. Once she graduated from UC Davis Law and passed the bar, she began her legal career with CRLA, where she spent 12 years focusing on the Migrant Worker Program, first as a staff attorney, then regional director, then as the program director.

Looking for a new challenge, Judge Zendejas then transitioned to a position as a Deputy Attorney General with the California Department of Justice ("DOJ"). There, she acted as a neutral investigator of workplace violation complaints on behalf of state agencies. She then made her application for the bench, having no idea if, or when, she might hear back.

After some time with the DOJ, Judge Zendejas decided to go back to advocating on behalf of employees and she took a position as an attorney with the California Department of Industrial Relations ("DIR") before she was appointed to the bench.

Throughout her legal practice, she was involved in the San Joaquin County and Cruz Reynoso Bar Associations, and sat on the Executive Committee of the Labor and Employment Law Section, California Lawyers Association and the Executive Committee of the Women Lawyer's Section of the San Joaquin County Bar Association. She was an attorney scorer for the San Joaquin County Dept. of Education Mock Trial, participated in Just the Kids, and outreach program for kids and young adults at the migrant farm workers' camp in French Camp, and the First Impressions program, coaching a mock trial teaching civic engagement to fifth graders.

These extracurricular activities and volunteer service are a testament to her life goal to give back to the community and help others in any way she can, and her appointment as a San Joaquin Superior Court Judge does just furthers her intent. She wants the community to feel like they have representation on the bench, that is actually listening to their issues and concerns, and that they are getting a fair decision. If her commitment and dedication to community service and self-imposed homework show anything, the San Joaquin County residents before Judge Zendejas are getting just that.

When asked what is her next goal, Judge Zendejas stated that the appointment in March is still so new that she has not yet set her next goal, but we will not be surprised if we see her on the Third District Court of Appeal in the future.

Judge Zendejas will be moderating the Women Lawyers Section's upcoming roundtable on September 21st where they can learn more about her transition to becoming a judge, alongside the transition of other esteemed female practitioners from our community who have made noteworthy changes in their careers.

San Joaquin County Bar Association
Young Lawyers Section

SUMMER *Mixer*

JULY 20, 2023 | CAST IRON TRADING CO.

The Young Lawyers Section Summer Mixer was a success with 40 members and guests attending. Everyone enjoyed networking, socializing, and building professional connections in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. We hope to see you at the next event!





San Joaquin County Bar Association
Criminal Law Section

Bowling *and* Beer

**AUGUST 9, 2023
WEST LANE BOWL**

The SJCBA Criminal Law Section hosted "Bowling and Beer" in celebration of the life of SJCBA & Criminal Law Section Member Isaac Choy. Twenty people attended the event with prizes going to the top three scorers.

Thank you for joining us!

**1st Place: Jerry Lim
2nd Place: Sean Geddes
3rd Place: Miguel Duron**



ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPDATES



Welcome new SJC Court Judge, Tameem Mardini!

On June 27, 2023, Governor Newsom announced the appointment of Tameem Mardini as a Judge in the San Joaquin County Superior Court. The appointment fills the void created by the

retirement of Judge Elizabeth Humphreys.

In a press release from the San Joaquin County Superior Court on June 30, 2023, Presiding Judge Michael D. Coughlan said, "On behalf of the Court, I thank the Governor for yet another tremendous appointment to our court. Tameem Mardini has done an outstanding job as Court Commissioner and I am confident that he will continue to well serve the citizens of our county as a judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court."

Prior to his judicial appointment, Mr. Mardini served as a Court Commissioner at the San Joaquin County Superior Court, handling a wide range of cases, including criminal, juvenile delinquency, traffic, civil, and family law matters. Mr. Mardini also served as Judge Pro Tem, where he presided over Juvenile Traffic cases from 2014 until his appointment as Court Commissioner in 2021. His legal career includes roles as a Sole Practitioner in 2020-2021 and Attorney at the Law Office of Joel Carash from 2008 to 2019. During this time, his legal practice encompassed various areas, such as Family Law, Personal Injury, Criminal Law, and Juvenile Delinquency.

"I am deeply honored to accept the appointment as Judge of the Superior Court of California. I look forward to working alongside my esteemed colleagues in upholding the principals of justice and serving the wonderful community of San Joaquin County with integrity and dedication to the law," said Mr. Mardini.

Mr. Mardini became a member of the California State Bar in December 2008. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from University of California, Davis, and a Juris Doctor degree from Golden Gate University School of Law.



Please welcome the new Court Executive Officer, Stephanie Bohrer!

On May 26, 2023, the Judges of the San Joaquin County Superior Court announced the appointment of Stephanie Bohrer to the position of Court Executive Officer (CEO). Ms.

Bohrer previously served as the Interim Court Executive

Officer after the departure of prior CEO Brandon E. Riley, who is now CEO of the San Francisco County Superior Court.

Presiding Judge Michael D. Coughlan said in the official press release, "Stephanie's wealth of knowledge and experience in court administration and operations will be invaluable as she takes on her new position at the Court. I am confident she will do an excellent job."

Prior to her appointment as CEO, Ms. Bohrer served as Assistant Court Executive Officer (ACEO) overseeing a wide spectrum of court functions, including the management of clerk's offices, courtroom operations, interpreter and jury services, and self-help services. As the Assistant Court Executive Officer, Ms. Bohrer also served as the Court's lead labor negotiator and Public Information Officer.

Ms. Bohrer's previous responsibilities at the Court include Human Resources Manager, Court Management Analyst, Public Information Officer, supervising jury operations, overseeing the civil mediation program, and case coordinator for the Unified Family Court.

Mrs. Bohrer holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in Psychology and Sociology from University of California, Davis. She also earned a certificate in Judicial Administration from California State University, Sacramento.

"I am truly honored and excited for the opportunity to serve the Court in this new role, and continue to work closely with judges, court staff, and our justice partners to provide access to justice for all citizens of San Joaquin County," said Ms. Bohrer.



Please welcome the new Assistant Court Executive Officer, Erica Ochoa!

On August 7, 2023, Stephanie Bohrer, Court Executive Officer, announced in a press release, the appointment of Erica A. Ochoa as the Assistant Court Executive

Officer/Deputy Jury Commissioner. She fills the role previously held by Stephanie Bohrer, who was appointed CEO in May.

In her new capacity, Ms. Ochoa will oversee court operations, including clerk's offices, courtroom operations, interpreter and jury services. Additionally, she will assume the role of the Court's Public Information Officer.

Ms. Ochoa brings a remarkable 26-years of service with

the San Joaquin County Superior Court. Most recently, she served as the Court Records Manager, where her responsibilities encompassed a wide range of records management activities. Ms. Ochoa previously held several roles, including file clerk and deputy clerk in the Municipal Court prior to trial court consolidation. She also served as a Legal Process Clerk and Courtroom Clerk, where she worked in Traffic, Criminal, Family Law, Family Support, Civil, and Small Claims departments.

Ms. Ochoa is a graduate of the University of the Pacific and holds Bachelor of Arts degree in Modern Language and Literature, with a minor in Business Management. She also holds a certificate in Judicial Administration from California State University, Sacramento.

Ms. Ochoa said in a Court press release, "I am honored and grateful to be selected as the next Assistant Court Executive Officer. We have great judges and court staff, and I look forward to working with all of them in this new capacity. Together we will continue to improve our court for the benefit of the community we serve."

"With Ms. Ochoa's extensive court experience and demonstrated leadership, I am confident she will excel in her new role and contribute significantly to the Court's efforts to deliver improved services to the public," said Court Executive Officer, Stephanie Bohrer.

(Photos courtesy of Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin)

UPCOMING COURT HOLIDAYS & OFFICE CLOSURES

- Native American Day
Friday, September 22
- Veterans Day
Friday, November 10
- Thanksgiving Day
Thursday, November 23
- Day After Thanksgiving
Friday, November 24
- Christmas Day
Monday, December 25

MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



SJCBA Members, Catrina and Darrell Griffin attended the 2023 Inns of Distinction Gala in Washington, D.C. at the Supreme Court of the United States of America.

The Inns of Distinction Gala recognizes high performing American Inns of Court from across the nation that have achieved excellence in Inn management and programming. The Consuelo M. Callahan American Inn of Court was one of 87 Inns

represented which took place on July 29, 2023. Stockton has been a Platinum Inn for 10 years, placing second in the nation twice for skits put on by the Inn - the second time being this year with Catrina part of the team.

Do you have SJCBA Member Highlights to share in Across the Bar? Send your news and photos to ATB@sjcbar.org.

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