

# **69th Annual Awards Dinner**



**April 20, 2024**

---

**Omni - Los Angeles**

**We invite you to connect with us on social media and share your experiences from tonight's awards ceremony.**

**Don't forget to tag the CCBA and use the hashtag #CCBA2024 to be part of the conversation.**

**Let's capture and celebrate the memories together!**



**CriminalCourts**



**LACCBA**

**#CCBA2024**

## Program

Registration & Cocktails  
Dinner and Awards Program

6:00pm – 7:30pm  
7:30pm – 9:15pm

## Student Scholarship Recipient

**Jordan Washington**  
*2024 Winner*

## Honorees

**Thomas Mesereau**  
*President's Award*  
Exceptional Contribution to the Criminal Justice System

**Hon. Kathryn Solorzano**  
*Hon. Robert Takasugi Award*  
Judicial Excellence

**Robert Sanger, Sarah Sanger & Victor Salerno**  
*Johnnie Cochran Jr. Memorial Award*  
Relentless Pursuit of Justice

## Intermission

**Christopher C. Chaney**  
*Joseph Rosen Award*  
Lifetime Achievement

**Amy Jacks**  
*Jerry Giesler Memorial Award*  
Trial Attorney of the Year

**Anthony Garcia**  
*Mort Herbert Service Award*  
Outstanding Community Service

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 CCBA PREFERRED SPONSORS



VICTORIA CARO ASSOCIATES, INC  
INTERPRETERS, TRANSLATORS & CONSULTANTS  
IN ALL LANGUAGES - BUSINESS, CINEMA & LEGAL

VICTORIA CARO  
PRESIDENT

TELEPHONE: (310) 270-6411 CARODAWSON@MSN.COM  
10067 REEVESBURY DRIVE  
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90210



# DIAMOND SPONSORS



# PLATINUM SPONSORS

LEVINE, FLIER AND FLIER, LLP

**Law Offices of Christopher C. CHANEY**

## RAFFLE SPONSORS



## PHOTOBOOTH SPONSOR







# Outgoing President

Lisa Z. Liu



Distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues, and members of the Criminal Courts Bar Association, it has been a great pleasure and a tremendous honor to serve as the CCBA President throughout 2023, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to reflect on our achievements together.

This past year has been marked by significant highlights, including engaging speakers for our monthly MCLE sessions, an unforgettable Annual Gala, and a fantastic Judges' Night. In particular, with our combined efforts, we had over 350 attendees

at our 2023 Gala, the largest attendance in over a decade. I am extremely proud of all we have accomplished together in 2023- none of it could have been possible without the dedication of our community members, the collaborative spirit of our board members, and the invaluable guidance provided by our active Past Presidents. Thank you all for your unwavering support and invaluable contributions that made 2023 a great success.

One of the most rewarding moments of my tenure was the establishment of the Criminal Courts Bar Association's Law Student Scholarship in 2023. Tonight, for the first time, we have the privilege of awarding \$2500 to one deserving law student who is dedicated to public service in the criminal field. Witnessing the caliber of applicants has been deeply inspiring, and I sincerely hope this scholarship will continue to support future generations of young and aspiring criminal lawyers.

As my Presidency draws to a close, I am filled with confidence and optimism as I pass the honor to Arash Hashemi, our incoming 2024 President. Congratulations, Arash—I am certain CCBA will flourish under your capable leadership.

Thank you all for your dedication and support. Last but not least, a special thank you to my husband for his care and support of our newborn (born also in 2023), which allowed me to devote so much time to this organization. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Lisa Zhao Liu  
2023 CCBA President





# Incoming President

## Arash Hashemi



Esteemed colleagues, honored guests, and distinguished members of the legal community, I welcome you to the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Dinner. As I step into the role of President of the Criminal Courts Bar Association for 2024, I am deeply honored and privileged to serve such a prestigious organization. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the board for their unwavering support and dedication in putting together this incredible awards dinner. Your hard work and commitment are truly appreciated.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to Mr. Chris Chaney for his guidance and mentorship. Mr. Chaney, your experience and insights have been invaluable in helping me navigate this new role and strive to be the best president I can be.

As I look ahead to my tenure as president, I am excited to share my vision with all of you. My goal is to elevate the profile of the Criminal Courts Bar Association and showcase its rich history and legacy to a wider audience. It's essential that we not only preserve the years of tradition but also ensure that our association receives the recognition and respect it deserves outside of the County. In the words of a wise individual, "I will strive in all ways to transmit the CCBA to those who may follow after, not only, not less, but greater than it was transmitted to me." This quote encapsulates my commitment to leaving the organization in a better state than when I began. I am dedicated to enhancing our programs, expanding our reach, and fostering a strong sense of community among our members.

Together, let's work towards a future where the Criminal Courts Bar Association continues to thrive and make a positive impact on our legal profession and the communities we serve.

Thank you for your support, and I look forward to a successful and fulfilling year ahead.



# 2024 CCBA Officers



**President**  
Arash Hashemi



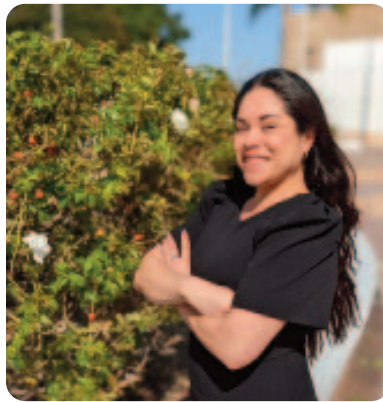
**President Elect**  
John D. Rogers



**1st Vice President**  
Nafise Nina Hodjat



**2nd Vice President**  
Juanita Kay



**Treasurer**  
Vanessa Rodriguez



**Executive Director**  
Christopher C. Chaney

# 2024 Board of Directors



Angela M. Berry



Austin Richard Dove



Michael A. Goldstein



Dillon Malar



Winston Kevin  
McKesson



Daniel A. Nardoni



David A.  
Russomanno



Danielle  
Hall



Michael K. Suzuki



Mauro  
Quintero



Matthew Marcus  
Vodnoy



# In Memoriam



**Bob Horner**  
**David Disco**  
**Diane Labrusciano**  
**Earl Evans**  
**Eddie Tolmas**  
**Ephraim Margolin**  
**James Michael Epstein**  
**James R. Dunn**  
**Jon Artz**  
**Judge Malcolm. H. Mackey**  
**Norman Kallen**  
**Judge Norman Shapiro**  
**Judge Richard Burdge**  
**Richard L. Everett**  
**Robert Philibosian**  
**Sandra Rodarte**  
**Steve Flanagan**  
**Vicki Sarmiento**



# Past Presidents

Jerry Giesler	1954 & 1955	Charles L. Lindner	1988
Morris Lavine	1956	David A. Elden	1989
Philip Erbsen	1957	Madelynn Kopple	1990
Richard E. Erwin	1958	John Yzurdiaga	1991
Albert C. Garber	1959	Donald M. Ré	1992
Al Matthews	1960	Robert Schwartz	1993
Harold J. Ackerman	1961	Carol Clem	1994
Earl C. Broady	1962	Rickard Santwier	1995
Joseph M. Rosen	1963	Mona C. Soo Hoo	1996
Dan O'Neill	1964	Joel S. Peck	1997
Charles Hollopeter	1965	Michael Shannon	1998
Warren L. Ettinger	1966	Donald R. Wager	1999
Paul Caruso	1967	Barry Levin	2000
William Drake	1968	David R. Evans	2001
Burton Marks	1969	Christopher C. Chaney	2002
David Cunningham	1970	Robert J. Wilson	2003
Richard Caballero	1970	Patrick W. Lake	2004
Maurice Harwick	1972	Stephen B. Sadowsky	2005
James E. Patterson	1973	Steven Escovar	2006
James G. Cooney	1974	Michael Artan	2007
Richard Walton	1975	Andrew Stein	2008
Howard L. Weitzman	1976	Alison Triessl	2009
Herbert G. Blitz	1977	Mark Rafferty	2010
Morton Herbert	1978	Sharon Beth Marshall	2011
Robert K. Robertson, Jr.	1979	John Tyre	2012
Nancy Cunningham	1979	Bruce Richland	2013
Richard G. Hirsch	1980	Michael A. Goldstein	2014
Robert C. Clark	1981	Christa M. Hohmann	2015
H. Ronald Hauptman	1982	Louis Sepe	2016
Larry Fidler	1983	Evan P. Freed	2017
Richard A. Hutton	1983	Richard M. Chacon	2018
Steve H. Hough	1984	Victor M. Salerno	2019
George V. Denny, III	1985	Mark K. Khalaf	2020
Ed Tolmas	1986	Carey Caruso	2021
Edward J. Horowitz	1987	Jesse A. Arana	2022

# President's Award

Exceptional Contribution to the Criminal Justice System

Thomas Mesereau, Jr.



Tom Mesereau praises the day he decided to become a criminal defense lawyer and activist. “It’s given me a life and career filled with compassion, kindness, purpose and meaningful impact. We criminal defense lawyers change society in positive ways,” he says. Previously a civil litigator, corporate lawyer, and a prosecutor, Tom devoted

years to volunteering at free legal clinics in South Los Angeles -- First African Methodist Episcopal Church, Crenshaw United Methodist Church (and its clinic “Save Our Sons”), West Angeles Church of God, Families to Amend California’s Three Strikes, the Women of Watts and Beyond, to name a few.

Eventually, Tom started the Mesereau Free Legal Clinic, which met at various churches in South Los Angeles. Many law students, lawyers, activists, law professors and judges participated.

Mr. Mesereau has spoken at public and charter schools throughout South Los Angeles for years about the importance of a college and law school education. He has received various awards for his dedication to children. For 20 years, he has marched annually with the Women of Watts and their children to combat gang violence.

For 25 years, Tom traveled each year to the State of Alabama to represent a pro bono client in a homicide case. Many involved capital murder. One client, a homeless black man facing the death penalty, was acquitted of all charges. Mesereau and his team faced death threats and enormous controversy. A second client – a woman facing the death penalty for allegedly murdering her child – was acquitted of capital murder and convicted of manslaughter.

Mesereau's third capital murder trial in Alabama involved Wesley Quick, who spent six years on death row before Tom acquitted him on all counts in a retrial. This acquittal is listed in the National Registry of Exonerations of the Northwestern and University of Michigan Law Schools. After repeated request for help, Mr. Mesereau represented a capital murder defendant pro bono in the State of Mississippi. The case was resolved pre-trial for life imprisonment with the possibility of parole and the necessary mental health treatment. No experienced, local lawyers would defend this case.

Tom is also known for high profile clients. To name a few -- he obtained bail for actor Robert Blake in a televised preliminary hearing after Mr. Blake was charged with murder with special circumstances. Mr. Mesereau was the first and only lawyer to obtain bail in such a case over prosecution objections. Mr. Mesereau is widely known for being lead trial counsel in the prosecution of popstar Michael Jackson. Charged with conspiracy and child molestation, Mr. Jackson was acquitted of all counts.

Less widely known, are Mr. Mesereau's accomplishments in white collar criminal defense. Years ago, he successfully defended famed newscaster Larry Carroll, after a lengthy jury trial in San Bernardino County. The trial judge dismissed the case "in the interest of justice." Mr. Mesereau won three mortgage fraud jury trials in a row in federal court – two in the Central District of California and one in the Southern District of New Jersey.

Mr. Mesereau was educated at Harvard University (B.A., cum laude); The London School of Economics (M.Sc.) and the University of California, San Francisco (J.D.).

# Hon. Robert Takasugi Award

## Judicial Excellence

### Hon. Kathryn Solorzano



Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Kathryn Solorzano is receiving the Robert Takasugi Judicial Excellence Award, in recognition of her independence, thoughtful legal analysis, exceptional work ethic, protection of the rights of defendant and victims, devotion to achieving just results, humility, and overall integrity. She is the first Latina bench officer to receive this award.

Born in East Los Angeles into a traditional Mexican-American family that emphasized the benefits of education, she graduated from Sacred Heart High School, as her family moved to Montebello. In high school she spent a month in Japan as an exchange student. Her interest in the law was influenced by her father who became an attorney after attending law school at night while holding down a full-time job. After graduating from

UCLA where she worked part-time in a medical clinic, she was accepted into

Loyola Law School. At first she hated law school, and nearly dropped out, but facing her parents' disapproval she persevered. A trial advocacy course at Loyola sparked her interest in working in a courtroom.

Her initial plan was to work in the entertainment industry reviewing and writing contracts, and was offered a lucrative position. The Judge then made a fateful decision, accepting an offer from the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. She thrived in that office, taking and excelling in a variety of assignments - the domestic violence and sex crimes units, the Hard Core Unit, the Justice System Integrity Division (JSID), and the habeas litigation unit, where she believes she notably sharpened her legal research and writing skills.

Judge Solorzano is greatly appreciated for her sense of empathy, which she attributes to personal setbacks earlier in her life and overcoming health issues. Appointed to the bench in 2007, she has served at the LAX Courthouse for the past 15 years, primarily handling preliminary hearings and a felony trial court. Judge Solorzano has served as the site (supervising) judge and assistant site judge while at the LAX Courthouse. As a trial judge she has handled several high profile cases, including what became known in the media as the "Boardwalk" case, where an Italian citizen was killed on her honeymoon while walking on the Venice Beach boardwalk.

One of her most fascinating experiences as a judge was the time she conducted orientation of new jurors in a jury pool that included actor Brad Pitt. Judge Solorzano's sister is also an attorney, practicing family law.



# Johnnie Cochran Jr. Memorial Award

Relentless Pursuit of Justice

## Robert Sanger



Mr. Sanger has been a litigator for over 50 years based in Santa Barbara, California, handling both criminal and civil cases, in state and federal jurisdictions within the State and around the country. He received recognition from the State Bar of California Board of Legal Specialization for his status as a Criminal Law Specialist for over 40 years. Mr. Sanger has published several law review articles and hundreds of articles and book reviews in legal publications. He has handled trials, direct appeals and petitions for writs of habeas corpus in numerous capital cases as well as the wide range of other matters, including some high-profile cases.

Mr. Sanger has been involved in numerous criminal defense organizations, including California Attorneys for Criminal Justice (CACJ), California Public Defender's Association (CPDA), the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL) and local criminal defense bar organizations. He joined the Los Angeles Criminal Courts Bar Association (LACCBA) in 1976. Mr. Sanger is a graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara and the UCLA School of Law. Mr. Sanger worked with Victor Salerno, Sarah Sanger, former partners Steve Dunkle and Catherine Swysen (now both Judges of the Superior Court), along with numerous investigators, mitigation specialists and other lawyers and support personnel to represent Mr. Cleamon Johnson over a period of 16 years. Mr. Sanger first was appointed by the California Supreme Court when Mr. Johnson was on Death Row and, after reversal, spent the last 11 plus years working with the team to represent Mr. Johnson in the Los Angeles Superior Court.



# Johnnie Cochran Jr. Memorial Award

Relentless Pursuit of Justice

## Sarah Sanger



Ms. Sanger has worked with the Office of the State Public Defender and the Los Angeles Public Defender’s Office before joining the Sanger Law Firm in 2018. Since that time she has focused her practice on appeals and writs having several successful results in the California Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal. She did the briefing on *People v. Espinoza* (2023) 14 Cal.5th 311 which has set the standard now referred to as the “Espinoza” factors relating to eligibility to move to set aside a conviction based on inadequate advisement of counsel regarding immigration consequences. She also prevailed in *People v. Angel Aguirre* (2024) (unpublished, Second District) relating to the requirements imposed on the trial court by a referral for reconsideration of sentence by the CDCR under Penal Code

section 1172.1. In a less heralded matter, on a petition for review, the California Supreme Court order informal briefing in *Pena v. Superior Court* and remanded the case for a further bail hearing under Part III of *Humphrey* – simultaneously issuing an interim order in *Humphrey* designating Part III to be binding until the opinion itself was issued. In addition, Ms. Sanger has worked on capital habeas petitions, including obtaining an OSC in one remanded to the trial court under Proposition 66. Following former partner Steven Dunkle’s appointment to the Bench, she has taken over his writs and appeals case load as well.

Sarah Sanger graduated Phi Beta Kappa with honors in philosophy from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and went on to study law and do some graduate work in philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley. Ms. Sanger is currently a Board of Governors Member and Officer of the California Attorneys for Criminal Justice (CACJ), she is the past Chair of the Board of Death Penalty Focus and has been active in the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

She is honored to be recognized as a member of the legal team in the case of Cleamon Johnson. She drafted motions and pursued pretrial writs. She was the principal author of the pleadings under the Racial Justice Act which finally resulted in the special circumstances being stricken by the court in all five capital counts against Mr. Johnson. After participating in trial, the matter settled for 25 to life with a stipulation that Mr. Johnson was eligible for consideration for early parole under the Youth Offender Parole Act.

# Johnnie Cochran Jr. Memorial Award

Relentless Pursuit of Justice

## Victor Salerno



Victor Salerno has been a criminal defense attorney since 1977. That year he graduated from U.S.D. School of Law and passed the bar. He obtained his B.A. at U.C.S.D., where he met his wife Laurie, a native San Diegan. The two were married at the Immaculata on the U.S.D. campus in 1975. After taking the bar Vic and Laurie moved to Los Angeles, where he began his career with the Office of the State Public Defender. In 1979 he joined the L.A. County Public Defender's Office, where he stayed until 1988. He left as a Grade 4 having handled numerous felony cases including murders with special circumstances.

Victor thereafter moved up the street from the CCB to the Promenade West at 880 West 1st St., where he has been in private practice ever since. He has tried nearly 300 cases to

verdict, and continues his criminal law practice albeit on a slower pace, in order to devote more time to traveling the world with Laurie. Victor joined the CCBA in 1988, and has been a participating member ever since, serving as President in 2019.

In 1990 Victor was lead counsel for Cleamon "Big Evil" Johnson in a double homicide case where death was sought. His client was acquitted of all charges by the jury. Mr. Johnson requested that Victor be appointed to represent him when he was again charged with a double homicide in 1995, but the court appointed different counsel from the rotational bar panel. Johnson and a codefendant were convicted and sentenced to death. After a dozen years in the California Supreme Court, the case was reversed in its entirety and remanded back to the L.A. Superior Court. Robert Sanger, who represented Mr. Johnson in habeas proceedings before the Supreme Court, was appointed by Judge Ohta in 2012, and Victor was appointed as Keenan counsel. They were joined by Mr. Sanger's daughter Sarah in 2020, and a favorable settlement of the case was obtained in 2023, following a successful motion under the Racial Justice Act.

Victor and Laurie reside in the San Gabriel Valley, as do their two sons and daughter-in-law.

# Joseph Rosen Award

Lifetime Achievement

Christopher C. Chaney



Christopher Chaney is the recipient of the Joseph Rosen Career Achievement Award. He is also only one of three attorneys in the 71 year history of the Criminal Courts Bar Association (CCBA) to receive the Jerry Geisler trial attorney of the year twice. In 2014, Chaney also received the criminal defense attorney of the year award from the Los Angeles County Bar Association, Criminal Justice Section. Tonight's award is just the culmination of a 44 year career characterized by selfless devotion to his clients and their cases, methodical

preparation, unassailable integrity, and a grace under pressure even in the often heated moments of a jury trial. He is respected and admired by his colleagues, prosecutors and judges.

In 2013, Chaney helped secure an unexpected life verdict for his client Heriberto Rodriquez against long odds. Chaney's client was charged with and eventually convicted of brutally killing an inmate in the Los Angeles County Jail while acting in concert with another inmate who was separately prosecuted for the murder. It wasn't just this killing that placed defendant Rodriquez at risk for receiving the death penalty, but a violent criminal history that predated the killing and also the commission of numerous acts of violence in the County Jail, including an attack on a Deputy Sheriff and series of vicious attacks against other inmates. Mr. Chaney's client was very difficult, even belligerent at the outset, firing Chaney at one point and electing to represent himself. Nonetheless, Chaney displayed remarkable patience with Mr. Rodriquez and eventually earned the trust of his client; in time the defendant began to change, rejecting the gang lifestyle and mind set and vowing to become a better person. Accordingly the prevailing theme of the defense mitigation in the penalty

phase was that Mr. Rodriguez had undergone a process of redemption and reformation. To succeed, Chaney defied conventional wisdom and presented his client's testimony in the penalty phase. Most capital case lawyers reject this strategy on many grounds, one of which is that it allows the prosecution to present anew all the gory details of the defendant's crimes and confront the often inarticulate defendant with the enormity and often cruel nature of the crimes. Nonetheless, Rodriguez took the witness stand and testified he had changed his ways, and proceeded to acknowledge guilt for the murder and all the other incidents alleged in aggravation, expressing remorse, disavowing gang life, and expressing love for the woman he married while behind bars and her children. The jury returned a unanimous life verdict. Rodriguez' co-defendant on the murder case, who was prosecuted separately, was convicted and received the death penalty. In 2019 Chaney secured an acquittal for his client on a gang murder case tried in the Burbank Courthouse, and has had numerous other successes in trial.

Chaney is the personification of the maxim that if you want something done, give the job to a busy person, as he has successfully juggled a multitude of responsibilities during his career. Chaney is past president of the CCBA, has been editor of the organization's monthly newsletter, and chairman of the Golf Committee, which raised funds for local charitable organizations by staging an annual golf tournament, and received the CCBA's Mort Herbert Award in 2004 for his contributions to the community. He organized clothing drives for the homeless. In addition, Chaney has served as resident of the Board of Governors of the statewide California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, is a past trustee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, is a past chairman of the Executive Committee of the Indigent Criminal Defense Appointments (ICDA) Program, is a member of the Pasadena Bar Association, and has served as President of the Board of Directors of the Grandview Foundation, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program. Throughout his career Chaney has been an anchor in easing the transition each year from the outgoing CCBA president to the incoming president. Chaney has also been a frequent lecturer in the field of law for many bar association groups and seminars, including the annual Capital Case seminar in Monterey.

A native of the San Gabriel Valley, Chaney was a star football player who played wide receiver on the 1972 USC National Championship football team, a team some experts have rated as the greatest college football team ever. Chaney was replaced as a starting wide receiver on the team by future All-American and Super Bowl champion Lynn Swan. Mr. Chaney lives in La Canada Flintridge with his wife Lindy.

# Jerry Geisler Memorial Award

## Trial Attorney of the Year

Amy E. Jacks



Amy E. Jacks is the recipient of the Jerry Giesler Memorial Award for being trial attorney of the year. The award is in recognition of Amy's 30-plus year career in criminal defense in Los Angeles County and in federal courts throughout the United States. Although small in stature, Amy is a fierce and tenacious litigator, who can spar with the most formidable judges and prosecutors without surrendering her genial, common-sense connection with jurors or her loyalty to her clients. Over the course of her career, Amy has impassionedly defended just about every type of criminal defendant imaginable: dads, soccer

moms, grandmothers, children, bookmakers, police, politicians, teachers, stock-traders, accused serial murderers and rapists, and alleged members of street and prison gangs. Her battles have taken her from Los Angeles, throughout California, to New Mexico, Nevada, Louisiana, and Puerto Rico, and into South America and Europe.

One of Amy's hallmark achievements was her relentless defense of the International President of the Vagos Motorcycle Club in United States District Court in Las Vegas, Nevada, who was charged along with 22 other members of the club with a racketeering conspiracy, murder, robbery, kidnapping, drug and weapons trafficking, and aggravated assault. The government initiated the prosecution after years of investigation with evidence that included a year of extensive wiretapping, an undercover operation that involved installing a sheriff's deputy into the Las Vegas chapter of the club, the cultivation of numerous former Vagos' members as informants, and hours



of videos leading up to and including a shoot-out in a Sparks, Nevada casino. Amy skillfully cross-examined the government's informants, chastened the undercover operative, and turned the government's wiretap evidence against it, adopting it as proof of her client's innocent mental state. Amy was the only defense lawyer in the case to argue that the government had failed to prove the charged racketeering conspiracy, a notoriously difficult count to win given its broad and insidious reach. After a seven-month trial of the first eight defendants, the jury returned Not Guilty verdicts on all the charges. Thereafter, the United States Department of Justice dismissed the cases against the remaining 14 defendants (one pled guilty and agreed to cooperate) before the scheduled second and third trials commenced.

Amy was born in Columbia, Missouri while her parents were attending the University of Missouri and spent her early years in a yellow and white trailer at 47 Rainbow Village. Amy's family moved to St. Louis in the early 1970's, where she grew to love go-go dancing, frozen custard, and listening to Cardinals' announcer, Jack Buck, on her am radio. In 1981, Amy escaped to the bucolic Stanford University campus for four self-indulgent years of fun and irreverence, becoming a member of a co-ed fraternity, learning to windsurf and shotgun beer, and majoring in applied math. Post-Stanford, Amy worked in investment banking and fixed income for Goldman Sachs & Co., first in New York City and then in Los Angeles. Determined to pursue a career that did not revolve around playing with money, and too risk-averse to become an actual criminal, Amy decided she wanted to work in criminal law and enrolled in UCLA School of Law in 1988. After blowing through her Wall Street nest egg in less than a year, Amy took a job as a law clerk with criminal defense practitioners White & Lasting and was immediately introduced to the grimy, fascinating underbelly of Los Angeles through work on what became known as the Laurel Canyon murder case. After brief summer internships in corporate law and the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Amy joined the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office in 1991, and the Alternate Public Defender's Office in 1994. In 2003, she opened her own criminal defense practice and expanded her horizons into the solemn tribunals of the United States District Courts.

Amy lives in Hollywood with her husband, Richard, and her crazy rescue German Shepherd, Sydney. When she is not defending people in the halls of justice, she can be found strutting the streets in the Bywater neighborhood of New Orleans, Louisiana. Yellow is still her favorite color.

# Mort Herbert Service Award

## Outstanding Community Service

### Anthony Garcia



Anthony Garcia was raised as one of eight kids whose parents came from even larger families in Mexico. From as far as he can remember his parent's embedded in him a responsibility to give back and help others as well as to work hard. Embedded was a responsibility to appreciate the efforts of others, whether here or departed, for pioneering and opening doors.

In law school doors were opened for minorities as the as result of the efforts Ricardo Cruz and others. Mr. Garcia was the co-chair of the La Raza Law Student Association. He was fortunate to be recognized for advocacy skills in the Juvenile Program with the William P. Hogoboom Award for excellence in the Juvenile Justice Clinical Program.

Mr. Garcia has been practicing law for 42 years. He started his own law firm in 1982 after his graduation from law school. He has had offices in Huntington Park and Bell. He has been at his current South El Monte address for 21 years. He is a sole practitioner, focusing on criminal defense.

In 1983, he began working in the Dependency Courts, and became president of the Juvenile Court Bar Association on two occasions. He had been appointed to executive committees by the Supervising Judges and has handled "heavy duty cases" involving parents and children.

Currently, he is focusing on trial matters as well as resentencing cases. He has handled over 100 re-sentencing matters. He is responsible for bringing more than 25 individuals home from custody and reuniting them with their families.

In addition to his significant criminal practice, he is involved with Impact Drug and Alcohol Treatment Center, an inpatient treatment facility in the city of Pasadena. They offer residential long-term treatment, long term rehab, and residential detoxification.

Mr. Garcia has been on the board of directors for over 40 years. He is currently vice-president of a 9-member board of directors and is deeply involved in the operation of the program. Christina Gonzalez is the Executive Director of Impact. She praises Mr. Garcia as being a great example for their clients and says he is very strict with the policies and programs, as well as the clients' strict adherence to the rules and regulations of Impact. She notes that he personally interacts with many of the clients and has been a great motivator and role model for those in recovery.

**Congratulations  
to all the  
2024 Honorees**

**Sheila Morim, DDS**  
**(310) 829-2224**

Your Smile, Our Passion



**Santa Monica**  
Tooth Doctor



# **Congratulations Award Winners**

**Christopher Chaney, Lindy Carll, and  
The Grandview Foundation**





# CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THIS YEAR'S AWARD WINNERS!

Tom Mesereau: Truly one of the "Best and the Brightest!"

Christopher Chaney: A Great Attorney and Special Friend!

The Honorable Kathryn Solorzano: Judicial Excellence at Work...Always!

With great respect and Admiration,  
Lenny Levine, Andrew Flier, and Jeremy Babich

## Levine, Flier & Flier



### Your Trusted Immigration Attorney

Paola I. Neri-Michel is the Founder and CEO of Neri Law Offices, Inc., a 100% virtual law firm. She is a graduate of Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, and has over 11 years of experience. Paola immigrated from Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico, and grew up in San Diego. She is the Immediate Past Chair for the AILA Southern California Chapter and a volunteer for AILA's Military Assistance Program where she takes pro bono cases to help military service members in need. In January 2020, Paola was voted by her colleagues as one of the best immigration lawyers, a "Top Attorney" in Pasadena, California for Pasadena Magazine. Additionally, she has earned Avvo's Client Choice Awards for five consecutive years 2019-2023 and was selected to the 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 Super Lawyers Southern California Rising Stars list. In 2023, the Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journal published her article titled, "Solo practice for the virtual immigration lawyer." Paola speaks Spanish and English and takes cases across the United States and abroad.



Congratulations to the Honorees!



### Legal Services

- Adjustment of Status & U.S. Citizenship
- Residency Abroad & Waivers
- Victims of Crime (U Visa, T Visa, VAWA)
- Business/Employment-Based Visas
- DACA, TPS, Freedom of Information Act Requests

### Connect With Me



### What My Clients Say



Paola & Richard  
La Palma, CA

"We highly recommend her work because she is a person you can count on 100%."



Griselda & Oscar  
Pico Rivera, CA

"I'm so grateful with Paola. Paola is an exceptional lawyer and better person. At first I was nervous to start my immigration process, but Ms. Neri made the process easy to understand."



Karina Hererra  
Dallas, TX

"She is kind, super reliable and very intelligent. I can recommend her with confidence."



Ariett & Chris  
Warner Robins, GA

"First of all, I've never met a more reliable, polite, punctual, and effective attorney like Paola [...] She is a true PROFESSIONAL in all aspects of the word. If you're looking for an outstanding immigration lawyer, please look no further."



Nachiketha & Pratisha  
Los Angeles, CA

"We heard about Paola through a relative in Australia [...] Not only is Paola well-versed in the area but also very efficient and thorough with her process [...] We would absolutely work with Paola again."



(619) 561-1118

www.nerilawoffices.com  
paola@nerilawoffices.com





Call us today!  
Competitive Rates!

562.964.8238

24/7 DRUG & ALCOHOL MONITORING  
SCRAM, SCRAMx, & GPS SERVICES  
PHARMCHEM DRUG PATCH  
MOBILE INSTALLATIONS  
GROUP & INDIVIDUAL THERAPY  
LA & DC COURT RELATED SERVICES - DUI



SUZZETTE CASILLAS, MBA, MHRM  
505 N TUSTIN AVE SUITE 104  
SANTA ANA, CA 92705

*Discreet & modern  
monitoring units!  
Privacy clients deserve!*



HABLAMOS ESPAÑOL  
714.403.0062



**ONE-THIRD REFERRAL FEE  
PAID TO ALL REFERRING  
LAWYERS IN PI CASES !**

**PRACTICE AREAS**

HANDLING YOUR LEGAL NEEDS

- Car crashes
- Bicycle crashes
- Burn injuries
- Dog bites
- Motorcycle crashes
- Semi-truck crashes
- Trip / Slip and Falls
- Wrongful death





We are a proud sponsor of  
CCBA's 69th Annual  
Awards Dinner

*Eric Barter*

BAD BOYS BAIL BONDS LIAISON  
VP ATTORNEY MARKETING

CELL: (213) 276-2172  
OFFICE: (213) 626-6226  
FAX: (213) 613-1761

TRUST US, WE'VE GOT THIS!™

BECAUSE YOUR MAMA  
WANTS YOU HOME!™



**5%  
RATE\***

\* BASED ON 7% RATE  
WITH 2% REBATE ON  
QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS

INDUSTRY EXPERTS IN  
1275 HOLD ARGUMENTS  
99.5% SUCCESS RATE

**Congrats to the  
2024 Award  
Winners**



**GRACE LEGAL GROUP  
INC**





AMY JACKS:

FROM YOUR DAYS AS A DEPUTY  
ALTERNATE PUBLIC DEFENDER, IT  
WAS OBVIOUS THAT YOU WERE  
AMONG THE VERY BEST!

IT'S ONLY APPROPRIATE THAT YOU  
ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THAT  
ACCOMPLISHMENT.

RICKARD SANTWIER




CCC:

FOR AT LEAST 40 YEARS, I HAVE  
WATCHED YOU BECOME THE  
VERY HEART AND SOUL OF OUR  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

THANKS!

RICKARD SANTWIER



*Through long hours, heavy  
caseloads, and continual  
advocacy, you uphold your  
unwavering commitment to  
safeguarding the rights of  
each and every individual,  
starting with the most  
vulnerable.*

*We see your efforts on a daily  
basis and honor your  
contribution.*





# Better

CallHash



# Hashing Out the Law

With Arash Hashemi

---

## New Episodes Coming In May

Listen on your favorite platform - Spotify, Audible, Apple Podcasts, and More!



# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CCBA AWARDS HONOREES!



*Gina Zapanta*

*Mike Alder*

EMPOWERED  
with Gina

**Z.A.** WORK INJURY  
LAWYERS

**ALDERLAW**  
INJURY & EMPLOYMENT TRIAL LAWYERS

*For more information about our law firms and our  
Attorney Referral Fee program, scan the QR code.*

