



CAALA President
Jeffrey Rudman
THE RUDMAN LAW FIRM

Making CAALA the very best that it can be

LOOKING BACK AT MY PATH THROUGH AN ASSOCIATION THAT HAS DONE SO MUCH FOR SO MANY, AND FORWARD TO WHERE WE WANT CAALA TO BE TOMORROW

It is with great enthusiasm that I begin my year as CAALA President. I have had a love affair with this organization since I was first introduced to it a little more than 20 years ago. I had just passed the bar and was working as an associate attorney at my father's personal-injury law firm. The event was a CAALA Mediators Evaluation held at the Olympic Collection, which was led (I later learned, annually) by Bob Fink (CAALA President, 2001) and Paul Kiesel (CAALA Emeritus Board Member).

I saw these two clearly seasoned attorneys relay their experiences and opinions regarding a list of mediators and invite the attendees to do the same. There was a strong feeling of unity about the whole endeavor and a common sense of purpose. Each of us in the room wanted to give our clients the best possible outcome on their cases. Here we were, after hours spent one evening in a banquet hall, learning as much as we could so that we could make informed choices when selecting a neutral. There was something about the comradery of it all that I really enjoyed, and it was the type of practical advice that I greatly yearned for after leaving law school.

That fall, October 1999, my father, Barry Rudman, and his law partner, planned a trip for the three of us to attend CAALA's 17th Annual Las Vegas Convention. I was excited about seeing this organization, for which I had a budding fondness, in grander scale; (not to mention the free trip to Vegas – thanks, Dad!). But never did I expect that the weekend would be so inspiring and change the course of my career.

There were so many incredibly polished speakers sharing their knowledge and inside tips in various areas of the law that I was handling at the time. There was access to vendors of services that could really help me in my practice, and big parties where I was able to meet and socialize with a great group of people

that had so much in common with me. I was hooked on CAALA!

I brought home the Convention's 3-ring binder/syllabus (before the days of thumb drives and online downloads) and read every article, joined the List Serve, read Advocate each month, and regularly attended CAALA events.

By 2006, CAALA had done so much for me and my career, that I decided it was time to give back. I began with a position on the Membership Committee, and by attending CAALA's monthly Board of Governors Meetings as a guest. I was absolutely inspired by my introduction to the inner workings of CAALA and its leadership, comprised of so many great attorneys all volunteering their time to help the organization provide quality education, access to resources and information, battle against tort reform, and produce a comradery amongst thousands of plaintiff's lawyers all pouring their hearts and souls into obtaining justice for their clients. I fell in love with CAALA all over again and truly dedicated myself to it.

In 2008, I was appointed to the Board of Governors and named Chair of the Membership Committee. I served as Chair of the Membership Committee through 2013, was Co-Chair of the Las Vegas Convention in 2012 and 2013 and was Vice Chair of CAALA's Education Committee in 2014. During that year I was elected to the Executive Committee as Secretary, starting my journey on the ladder to my position this year as CAALA President. Along the way, I found a few passion projects, and created a Closing Argument Transcript Bank, as well as CAALA's current Document Bank which now boasts over 3,000 forms, samples and templates, available for free to all CAALA members.

As I look back and reflect upon my first 20 years with CAALA, I can't help but be thankful for what the organization has meant to me. The comradery that first attracted me to the organization still

exists today. CAALA has enhanced my practice on a daily basis, and in many ways has served as my second family. I still have that 1999 Las Vegas Convention binder and now marvel at how most of the presenters at that Convention later became my mentors, fellow board members, and very good friends. Today we work together to improve CAALA year in and year out. We uphold the 71-year tradition of consistently supporting and improving the careers of CAALA members through top-notch education, the List Serve forums, mentorship opportunities and social and networking events. CAALA helps us maintain a working relationship with the judiciary and collaborate with our state organization, the Consumer Attorneys of California (CAOC), whose efforts to fight tort reform keep our profession and practices alive.

As I plan for the year ahead, my goals are the following:

- 1) To have our leadership take a hard look at what CAALA has done so well for so many years, and strive to freshen up our Education events, Las Vegas Convention, Member Mixers, Website, Advocate magazine, and more. My goal is to expand on what we do well and bring it up to date with the times, the technological advancements and needs of today's membership.
- 2) To encourage participation by the membership in interacting with, and even joining CAALA Leadership so that we draw on the diversity of our members and their experience in planning for our future.
- 3) To continue working closely with both the Judiciary and CAOC, to help ensure our client's rights and access to justice.

To that end, I sincerely invite CAALA members to reach out to me with ideas, feedback or an interest in joining the body of volunteers that helps to ensure that CAALA is the very best that it can be. I can be reached at jeff@rudmanlawfirm.com.