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CONSUMER ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES

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# CAALA Vegas returns with renewed spirit and energy

## SPEAKERS AND TOPICS REFLECT SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES FACING MEMBERS

As you read this, CAALA's annual convention, our association's signature event, is only a few weeks away. After a one-year hiatus, CAALA Vegas returns in a new location with renewed spirit and energy. The Convention will be in-person (only) at the Bellagio Resort in Las Vegas over Labor Day Weekend (Sept. 2-5). For information and registration go to CAALA's website at [www.caala.org](http://www.caala.org).

Those who have attended the Convention know that CAALA Vegas is many things, including networking and social events, education programs, a vibrant exhibit hall and an unsurpassed location. While all are important to the Convention's success, I consider the most important aspect of the Convention to be the programs and speakers. Don't get me wrong, I know the networking and social events are great and popular, but the topics and speakers set the tone for the whole event.

Reviewing our Convention history, it is apparent that the speakers and topics reflect the overall philosophies and practice areas that were important to our Association and the Trial Bar at that time. Truthfully, in past years there was little diversity in the topics or among the speakers, reflecting the state of the association and the Trial Bar only a few years ago.

In the past year, Social Justice, Racial and Gender Equity and Equality and Diversity & Inclusion have become paramount issues for CAALA members and members of the public as well as the judicial and legal community.

I am proud to report that this year the list of convention speakers is more diverse than ever before and topics and speakers regarding Social Justice and Civil Rights will be at the forefront of the Convention's education schedule.

The selection of session topics and speakers does not happen by accident. It is carefully planned and implemented by CAALA's Education Committee and Education Committee leadership.

I especially want to thank the Education Chairs Christina Coleman,

Diana Diskin and Shannon Ward and the Education Committee for thoughtfully developing a comprehensive schedule of relevant Social Justice and Civil Rights topics presented by knowledgeable and diverse speakers.

During the three days of education programs, a remarkable 18 separate sessions will be presented on the important issues of Social Justice, Civil Rights, Gender Equity and Diversity & Inclusion. The very first program of the Convention on Thursday at noon will be a powerful panel of speakers on the topic: "Civil Rights Warriors from the Battlegrounds of the 21st Century."

Moderated by CAALA 2nd Vice President Ibiere Seck, the two-hour program features individual presentations from renowned civil-rights trial attorneys Lonita Baker, Dale Galipo, and Genie Harrison, along with a presentation from Judge Glenda Hatchett and Charles Johnson.

Baker will open the program with a presentation on the "Breonna Taylor Case and the Fight Against Police Brutality." CAALA's current Trial Lawyer of the Year Dale Galipo will follow Lonita with a presentation on "New Law and Emerging Trends in California Civil Rights Cases." CAALA President Genie Harrison will then speak on "Taking the 'Me Too' Movement to the Courtroom." Judge Hatchett and her son Charles will speak about "Medical Bias, Maternity Mortality and the Law."

No CAALA Convention has ever begun with such a powerful lineup of speakers on such socially important issues. The program will be presented on its own, with no concurrent or competing programs so you can give it your undivided attention.

Following the opening program on Thursday, there will be five consecutive presentations on "Litigating Civil Rights." The panel will be moderated by Oscar Rene Gutierrez. Denisse Gastelum will open by speaking on "State and Federal Discovery Disputes." The next speaker

will be Julia Yoo on "Jail Death Cases," followed by Jamon Hicks on "MSC: Plaintiff Moving Party vs. Defense Moving Party." The final two speakers are Humberto Guizar and U.S. District Judge Fernando Olguin. Guizar will speak on "Experts: Shooting Reconstruction, Pathology, Toxicology and Police Practices," while Judge Olguin will offer a judicial overview.

On Saturday morning there will be six presentations on "Sex-Related Cases" moderated by Natalie Weatherford. Renuka Jain will speak on "Sexual Harassment and Assault in the Workplace" followed by Taylor Rayfield speaking on "Sexual Abuse Cases in School Districts." She will be followed by Micha Star Liberty speaking on "Sexual Abuse vs. Private Entities." Jim Lewis will present on "Child on Child Sex Abuse" and jury consultant Claire Plotkin will conclude with a presentation on "Voi Dire in Sexual Misconduct Cases."

Also on Saturday morning, three highly esteemed and nationally recognized speakers will deliver timely presentations on "Elimination of Bias" with Stuart Fraenkel serving as moderator.

Renowned civil rights attorney Mia Yamamoto will speak on "Gender and Gender Identity," followed by Lisa Holder speaking on "Racial Bias in the Practice of Law." The final presentation will be from L.A. Superior Court Judge Kimberley Guillemet who will provide a judicial perspective on "Bias in the Courtroom."

It is clear to me, and hopefully it will be clear to all attendees, that the 2021 CAALA convention will reflect the social justice issues facing all people, not just trial lawyers. Unfortunately, change is difficult, and, in a way, is a "lagging indicator." There is still much that needs to be done to ensure there is racial and gender equity and equality among all CAALA members. This year's lineup of CAALA Vegas speakers and topics will prove to be a "leading indicator" that looks forward to what is coming.