



CAALA President

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Consumer Attorneys
ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES

Journal of Consumer Attorneys Associations for Southern California
ADVOCATE
January 2022

Adjusting to the new normal

CAALA RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF RETURNING TO IN-PERSON GATHERINGS

We are in an unprecedented time for the courts, the practice of law, and society as a whole. At the same time that we are all adjusting to the new normal of largely virtual interactions from the global pandemic, there is a movement that has been “woke” in this country to finally address systemic injustices. As leaders of the plaintiff’s bar, we are in a truly unique position to ensure that the fundamental principle of access to justice for our clients continues to be exactly that – accessible.

CAALA’s dedicated Officers, Board of Governors and amazing staff have spent many Zoom calls and meetings over the past several months charting a course for CAALA amid this historic change. We have worked very hard to assemble a most diverse and incredibly capable group to tackle the challenges ahead. As we went through that process, it became clear to us the importance of returning to in-person gatherings and the community that results from those gatherings. That community really is the secret sauce of CAALA. With that in mind, I want to share with you a vision for CAALA that will help guide us for the next year and beyond.

The CAALA agenda for 2022

Education – CAALA will offer cutting-edge education and trial advocacy programs exclusively for plaintiff trial attorneys, taught by the best trial lawyers – not only in Los Angeles and California – but in the nation. Educational member-only webinars and in-person seminars will be presented throughout the year. Our Education Committee is already hard at work on 2022 programming. Education is the core of CAALA.

CAALA Vegas – Our annual convention will continue to feature educational opportunities, from some of the top attorneys in the country, that are directly relevant to your practice, tons of MCLE credits, direct access to vendors providing services that improve your practice, and networking with thousands of attorneys. With your membership, you will continue to receive a discounted registration rate.

Document bank and video library – Access to work product will continue to be a hallmark of CAALA. We will add to our online Document Bank that already gives you access to over 3,000 forms and samples contributed by your fellow members, and includes pleadings, discovery, motions, oppositions, demand letters, closing argument transcripts and much more. We will

continue to build out our new online Video Library, which includes tutorials on topics from how to have a paperless office to arguing punitive damages.

List serves – We will continue to offer and protect our List Serves to seek and share information on a vast array of topics including judges, mediators, discreet legal issues, and law practice management. If you need advice, or don’t want to reinvent the wheel, a quick email to the List Serve gives you access to the CAALA community of member attorneys who look forward to helping you.

Political action – CAALA is committed to protecting your practice. In conjunction with the Consumer Attorneys Association of California (CAOC), CAALA will continue to be a leader in opposing attempted (and misnamed) “tort reform” designed to make it harder for us to prosecute cases on behalf of our clients. From the current attorney’s fee initiatives seeking to limit your contingency fees to 20%, to efforts by the California State Bar to allow companies like Google and Amazon to own law firms, to allowing non-lawyer paraprofessionals to practice law, CAALA is mobilizing its resources to protect your practice. We will not allow big business or insurance companies to get away with their goal of preventing everyday working people from seeking justice. On a positive note, the Fairness for Injured Patients Act (FIPA) Initiative seeks to adjust for inflation MICRA’s 1975 cap on quality of life and wrong death survivor damages for victims of medical negligence.

Diversity, equity and inclusion – It is truly my honor to be President of CAALA at a time when CAALA’s Officers, Board of Governors and membership is the most diverse in its history. We should not only be diverse and inclusive because it’s the right thing to do, but also because it makes sense. Having a group with diverse backgrounds, differing views and perspectives, and reaching a broader audience benefits and makes us all stronger. Diversity and inclusion in the courts and the practice of law will help restore confidence to those who have been historically disenfranchised.

Civility – Civility has always been important to our profession. It is now essential with Covid backlogs in court and the reduced ability to move matters to trial. Courts simply aren’t available to resolve disputes that counsel are fully capable of resolving themselves. Practicing civility is perhaps the single most

important thing we can do to assist the courts right now. As leaders of the plaintiff bar, civility should be our calling card.

Adequate court funding – CAALA will continue to advocate for adequate court funding. As a co-equal branch of government, the courts cannot deliver their essential services without adequate funding. Stemming further cuts and finding additional funding for operations and physical improvements will be our mandate. CAALA has been and will continue to be the courts’ number one justice partner.

Independence of the judiciary – Our courts as an institution are more important now than ever given the political discourse we see today. It is our institutions that have allowed this democracy to succeed where so many others have failed. CAALA reaffirms the bedrock principle of an independent and impartial judiciary that is free from political influence and intimidation.

New Executive Director

Just as we adjust to the new reality of the practice of law, so too must we adjust to the retirement of our long-time and beloved Executive Director, Stuart Zanville. Stuart became CAALA’s Executive Director in 2004 – the first year I became involved with CAALA. I have never known a CAALA without him. His legacy will be felt in this association for years to come. While we are sad to see Stuart retire and wish him well, the future looks very bright with Kwedi Moore as our new Executive Director. CAALA conducted a national search for an Executive Director. It turned out, the best person for the job was already employed by CAALA running our incredibly successful Affiliate program for vendors and sponsors. Kwedi embodies the change CAALA needs as it moves forward to tackle its many bold initiatives to be the indispensable resource to your plaintiff practice.

The pandemic has given us an opportunity to reimagine our member benefits, resources and connections to meet you where you are. An open dialogue is more vital than ever. I invite you to contact me at any time (dsilverstein@californialaborlawattorney.com) with questions or ideas on how CAALA can better serve you. I look forward to being of service as your 2022 President.

