

Criminal Courts Bar Association Awards Dinner & Gala



Celebrating and Protecting the Constitution





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PROGRAM In the Biltmore Bowl: Registration & Cocktails 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

> Dinner, Dancing, Awards Program 7:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

HONOREES ROBERT TAKASUGI JUDICIAL EXCELLENCE AWARD Honorable James Bianco

MORTON HERBERT OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD Honorable Craig Mitchell • Philip Peng, Deputy A.P.D.

JOURNALISM AWARD

Harry Litman

JERRY GIESLER AWARD, TRIAL ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR

Louis Sepe

JOSEPH ROSEN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Bradley Brunon

PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM **Robert M. Sanger**

MUSIC DJ Que

РНОТО ВООТН ЕҮРНОТОВООТН



outgoing 2018 president **Richard Chacon**



My outgoing message is one of gratitude; gratitude for this life, gratitude for being included in the criminal law community and gratitude for the opportunity to be the President of the Criminal Courts Bar Association.

Being President of the Criminal Courts Bar Association was memorable and meaningful and, oh yeah, a lot of fun.

Being part of the criminal law community is a genuine honor. This community is filled with wonderful people who show-up for one another, care for one another and treat each other with dignity and respect.

Lastly, allow me to express my gratitude for this life. As I said in my incoming message last year, our journey through life is brief and it is imperative to cherish every day. If this concept was not apparent enough, I was reminded when my beautiful 48-year-old wife had a stroke in February and remains in the hospital as I write this. However, together we are grateful to continue living.

Because what also happened last February is that my dear friend Felipe Plascencia lost his life. As most of you know, he died in a plane crash just four days before my wife's stroke. Felipe was a wonderful person who showed-up for me last year buying a table for this very dinner.

So, in honor of Felipe and all the others we lost in the past year - and those we still cherish - let's enjoy one another, enjoy our community and let's be sure to remember to be grateful for every day of this beautiful life.

Richard Chacon



Criminal Courts Bar Association 66th Annual Awards Dinner | Celebrating and Protecting the Constitution

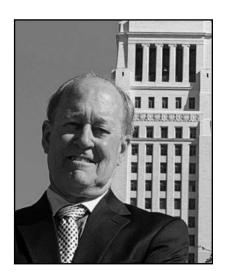
INCOMING 2019 PRESIDENT Victor Salerno

I am very happy, honored, and excited to welcome all of you to the 66th annual Criminal Courts Bar Association Awards Dinner and Gala. This is a very special occasion where we honor those in our profession who have distinguished themselves by their dedicated service, commitment to upholding the Constitution, and contribution to the criminal justice system. As judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, courtroom assistants, journalists, law enforcement and probation officers, we all play important roles in making the justice system operate as smoothly and fairly as possible. It is no easy task! Often we hear about shortcomings, criticisms, and failures. In my view however there is a very deserved sense of pride, satisfaction, and esteem, which everyone of us share in our mutual commitment to do the best we can to serve the People of the County of Los Angeles and State of California. Justice is served every day in our courthouses and celebrate, and honor our awardees for their outstanding performances and service in the legal arena and community.

I served with the Los Angeles County Public Defender from 1979 through 1988, when I left as a Deputy IV to enter private practice. I moved up the street from the 19th floor of the CCB (Now the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center) to the Promenade West Building on First Street, where I have "officed" ever since. I am lucky and blessed to still enjoy my occupation as a trial lawyer, and to be in good health and of (arguably) sound mind such that I am able to effectively represent clients in the courtroom! But my greatest pleasure is the daily exposure to all of you and those who I see in the courtrooms and courthouses across the county; the comradery, companionship, exchange of pleasantries, and mutual respect with which we perform our different services and make it through the day. I believe in zealous, passionate representation of my clients, but seek to do so with grace, understanding of the opposing viewpoint, and respect for the Court and all its officers who serve like me. Our outstanding awardees tonight share this perspective, and have risen to the height of their careers with dignity and profound professionalism.

The Criminal Courts Bar Association is comprised of many defense practitioners, but is open to judges, prosecutors, investigators, and anyone who works in the justice system. Our monthly Tuesday night meetings at the Taix Restaurant in Silver Lake provide an informative and entertaining MCLE program, as well as great food and a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. There are six remaining meetings, on the second Tuesday of each month, culminating with our annual judge's night in December. July and August are "dark" for summer vacations.

Thank you all for attending this evening and I hope you have a wonderful time at our "66th!"



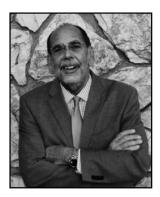
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Jerry Giesler	1954 & 1955	Ed Tolmas	1986
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David Cunningham	1970	David R. Evans	2001
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Herbert G. Blitz	1977	Andrew Stein	2008
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Nancy Cunningham	1979	Sharon Beth	2011
Richard G. Hirsch	1980	Morris John Tyre	2012
Robert C. Clark	1981	Bruce Richland	2013
H. Ronald Hauptman	1982	Michael A. Goldstein	2014
Larry Fidler	1983	Christa M. Hohmann	2015
Richard A. Hutton	1983	Louis Sepe	2016
Steve H. Hough	1984	Evan P. Freed	2017
George V. Denny, III	1985	Richard Chacon	2018



ROBERT TAKASUGI JUDICIAL EXCELLENCE AWARD Honorable James Bianco

Judge James Bianco is a Los Angeles Superior Court Judge who is assigned to the Mental Health Courthouse, Department 95. Judge Bianco served as the Site Judge of Department 95, supervising operations of four mental health courtrooms, from 2013-2018, during which time the court saw a dramatic rise in the number of competency cases, from 1,000 per year to over 6,000 cases filed in 2018. Judge Bianco is credited with many systemic improvements that enabled the court to handle the increased caseload.

During the same time period, Judge Bianco has been active in local efforts to improve treatment of people with mental illness who are involved in the criminal justice system. Since 2014, Judge Bianco has been a member of Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey's Mental Health Advisory Board, including serving as the Chair of the Community Based Restoration Working Group beginning in 2015. Under Judge Bianco's guidance, the Working Group established a community treatment program for defendants with mental illnesses who had been found incompetent to stand trial in misdemeanor cases. The only treatment option previously available for these defendants was to remain in the County Jail. Four years later, more than 1,000 defendants have been released from jail into community treatment. The program expanded to include felony defendants in 2018. Judge Bianco's leadership in the Community Based Restoration program was recognized by the California Forensic Mental Health Association, which awarded him the Judicial Champion Paradigm Award in November 2018.

Judge Bianco has also been active in mental-health related issues on a statewide level. He is the Chair of the Mental Health Committee of the California Judges Association. He is a member of the Judicial Council of California's Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee, where he serves as the Vice Chair of the Mental Health Subcommittee, as well as Liaison to the Judicial Council's Criminal Law Advisory Committee. Judge Bianco is a member of the California Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Code of Judicial Ethics.

Judge Bianco has been extensively involved in education of both judges and law students for many years. He frequently teaches mental health-related courses to judges, both locally and around California. He has been faculty since 2007 in



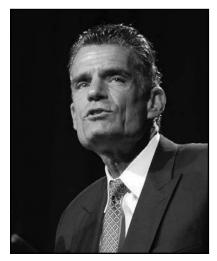
California's New Judges Orientation, a week-long course on ethics, fairness, and courtroom management for new judges, and has taught a continuing education ethics course for experienced judges since 2010. Judge Bianco has taught criminal procedure at USC Gould School of Law, and a criminal externship seminar at UCLA School of Law.

In 2009, Judge Bianco founded the Gardena High School Teen Court, and presided over the court until 2013. The Los Angeles Superior Court Teen Court program gives high school students the opportunity to adjudicate and recommend sentences for minors charged with misdemeanor offenses – a true jury of their peers. Judge Bianco also served as the Chair of the Los Angeles Superior Court Bail Committee from 2007-2013, during which time many significant improvements were made to the court's Bail Schedule.

Judge Bianco first took the bench as a Los Angeles Superior Court Commissioner in 2005, and was elected judge in 2008. He graduated from USC School of Law in 1987, after receiving his undergraduate degree from Stony Brook University in 1984. Prior to taking the bench, he spent seventeen years in practice, primarily working as a criminal defense attorney. He also practiced for several years as a criminal prosecutor and as a civil litigator. He received the Byran Y. Appleton Pro Bono Award from the Santa Monica Bar Association in March 2001.



MORTON HERBERT OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD Honorable Craig Mitchell & Philip Peng, Deputy A.P.D.



Hon. Craig Mitchell



Philip Peng

Judge Craig Mitchell and deputy Alternate Public Defender Philip Peng are this year's co winners for the Morton Herbert Outstanding Community Service Award. Judge Mitchell, who has sat on the Los Angeles Superior Court bench since 2005, is the founder and current President of the Skid Row Running Club. Since its inception in 2012, the club has provided a running program for the Skid Row Community of Los Angeles, and aimed to involve the larger community in supporting members in overcoming alcohol and drug abuse, and in achieving positive life goals.

The Running Club empowers individuals through a dedicated running program focusing on health and well-being; provides mentor-ship for individuals; schedules charity, fundraising and volunteer events in the larger community; and participates in local, national, and international running events. International marathon-running events for the Club have taken place in Ghana, Rome, Da Nang, and Jerusalem. The next event, in which all members complete a full 26.2 mile marathon run, will be later this year in Ecuador. Locally, Judge Mitchell and deputy A.P.D. Peng run with Skid Row Club members three times a week in the early morning, usually starting at 5:30 a.m.

Philip Peng has been with the Alternate Public Defender's Office since 2005. He was a deputy in the Public Defender's Office for seven years before working with the APD. He joined the Running Club in 2014, and now serves as Vice President, next in succession to Judge Mitchell for President. A long time running enthusiast, Mr. Peng, became a running partner with Judge Mitchell in 2009. The two have given generously of their time and energy in working with under-privileged Angelenos and providing a path for not just sobriety and clean living, but for fulfillment of broader life goals and accomplishments through the rigors of running and teamwork-all of which greatly benefits the City and County of Los Angeles.



journalism award Harry Litman

Harry Litman, the author of profound commentaries in the news media on the Robert Mueller investigaticm into the Russian meddling into the 2016 presidential election, is the recipient of the Journalism Award. Litman's opinion pieces in the Los Angeles Times and Washington Post and his on the air analyses on MSNBC have brought great clarity and enlightenment to the public and insights into understanding the Mueller investigation in a legal, historical and political context.

In addition to being a regular contributor on MSNBC, Litman has been a contributing columnist for the Washington Post and Los Angeles Times since 2016. He is also the creator and executive producer of the just-launched podcast, "Talking Feds", a roundtable format with prominent former prosecutors discussing issues from the current investigation of the Trump administration as well as other federal criminal cases around the country. Litman is the former United States Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania and before that he served as a Deputy Assistant Attorney General at the Department of Justice focusing on federal prosecutorial policy among other issues.

Litman received a bachelor of arts degree from Harvard University and his law degree from the University of California - Berkeley where he was Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review and graduated Order of the Coif. He thereafter served as a law clerk to Judge Abner Mikva of the U.S. Court at Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, and to Justices Thurgood Marshall and Anthony Kennedy of the United States Supreme Court. Litman currently teaches constitutional law at UCLA and UC-San Diego and practices law at the firm of Constantine Cannon, where he specializes in litigating cases under the False Claim Act.

Litman is only one of a handful of recipients in the 66 year history of the Criminal Courts Bar Association to receive the Journalism Award though not a full time member of the news media, as his commentaries were deemed so significant as to merit special recognition.





JERRY GIESLER AWARD, TRIAL ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR LOUIS Sepe



Louis Sepe, a past president of the Criminal Courts Bar Association, is the recipient of the Jerry Giesler Memorial Award for being trial attorney of the year. The award is the culmination of a 40 year career as a defense attorney characterized by devotion to his clients passionate advocacy, unassailable integrity, and an infectious sense of humor.

One of Sepe's signature achievements was an acquittal in a three defendant conspiracy to commit murder and attempted/murder trial that took place last fall in the Compton Courthouse. Coupled with personal use of a firearm and gang allegations, Sepe's client Jamahl Thomas faced multiple life sentences if convicted. The prosecution alleged that Sepe's client, wearing a ski mask, another alleged underground Crip gang member, and a female companion ventured into the territory of a rival gang to retaliate for a shooting attack earlier in the day against the females and two family members. Mr. Thomas fired five shots from the passenger seat while sticking his arm out of the window of the vehicle he rode in toward the direction of an elderly couple who were seated in a parked car. Sepe made the claim at trial that once his client noticed that the older couple were not gangbangers he shot into the ground, a version confirmed by the victims at preliminary hearing and trial. Although the front tire of the victim's car was flat after the shooting and there was a strike mark on the reardoor handle, Sepe and his co-counsel contended that these were caused by bullet ricochet, and the police never examined the tire or strike mark. Sepe called a police procedure expert who testified that both items should have been examined. The jury deliberated for three hours before finding Sepe's client not guilty on all charges.

Born in New York City, Sepe's family moved to Los Angeles, where he attended Hollywood High School. After law school and passing the bar examination, Sepe worked for a firm that represented American soldiers in West Germany in court martial proceedings. He has since conducted over 150 jury trials, 51 of which were murder cases and nine death penalty trials through penalty phase. He is also the host of one of the social events of the year - his annual Kentucky Derby party, which last year featured the appearance of a live Shetland Pony.



JOSEPH ROSEN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD Bradley Brunon

Brad Brunon, who has created a remarkable body of work and track record of success in his 50 years as a criminal defense attorney, is the recipient of the Joseph Rosen Career Achievement Award. By any objective standard Brunon is one of the great defense attorneys of this era, renowned for his methodical preparation, eloquent oratory, brilliant legal analysis, fearlessness, and ability to connect with jurors. Many members of this organization are indebted to Brunon for his selfless guidance and advice he has provided to younger colleagues.

Brunon has tried over 300 criminal jury trials including 40 murder trials and numerous state and federal conspiracy trials. Most of his murder trials resulted in acquittals. Among his high profile clients have been Phil Spector, Virginia McMartin and nightclub operator Eddie Nash.

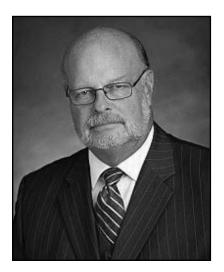


A 1968 graduate of UCLA Law School, Brunon worked as a Los Angeles County Public Defender from 1969-1978, including two years in the special trials unit. He has been in private practice since 1978, when he was first certified by the California State Bar as a specialist in the field of criminal law. Since that year he has also been rated AV Pre-eminent by Martindale Hubbell, the highest possible rating.

Brunon has always been generous sharing his knowledge and expertise, lecturing on various criminal law topics such as conducting effective voir dire, effective cross-examination and other trial tactics to a myriad.of bar associations, including the California Public Defenders Association, the California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, and the Criminal Courts Bar Association. Many of his former clients enjoy their freedom because of Brunon's dedication, brilliance and hard work.



president's award for exceptional contributions to the criminal justice system **Robert M. Sanger**



The President's Award for 2019 is being presented to Robert M. Sanger, senior partner in the firm, Sanger Swysen & Dunkle. Mr. Sanger has practiced law out of his Santa Barbara office since 1973, after graduating from U.C.L.A. Law School, and before that from the University of California Santa Barbara. He has tried a number of high profile cases in state and federal courts throughout California, and in other federal districts including Chicago and Washington D.C. He successfully defended Michael Jackson in both his criminal case, and later in a civil case, each of which went to trial by jury.

Mr. Sanger regularly defends individuals and companies who face prosecutions in state and federal courts. He is currently counsel with Victor Salerno in the notorious case of People v. Johnson and Allen, which is scheduled to be tried this year at the Foltz Justice Center. This very complex capital case has been around a long time-the defendants were convicted and sentenced to death in 1997 for a double homicide, but the convictions were overturned by the California Supreme Court in 2011. In 2014 the District Attorney, over vigorous defense objections, re-filed the case with three additional murders and one attempted murder, as to their client Mr. Johnson, all from the early 90's.

As co-chair of the Capital Case Defense Seminar (C.C.D.S.) he helps put on the annual death penalty conference in February of each year. He regularly presents at this conference, as well as numerous others around the country. Mr. Sanger also finds time to contribute numerous articles and book reviews which are published in journals such as the American Bar Association Journal, the Federal Lawyer, The Champion, and the C.A.C.J. Forum. His more recent writings have addressed not only complex constitutional issues in capital litigation, but evidentiary issues presented by scientific evidence. In both areas he is consistently on the cutting edge of case law development, theoretical insight, and mind-challenging inspiration for all practitioners who face these complex challenges in the courtroom.

Finally, Mr. Sanger remains a very friendly, cordial, and easy-going fellow who is a pleasure to know and very easy to get along with. He is also very adept with a golf club (on the golf course), likes sporty cars, and is a delightful participant in most any conversation or discussion which may be had in the courthouse, any social gathering, or at the cocktail lounge!



CRIMINAL COURTS BAR ASSOCIATION

In Memoriam

The Criminal Courts Bar Association pays tribute to those colleagues who left us in the past year.

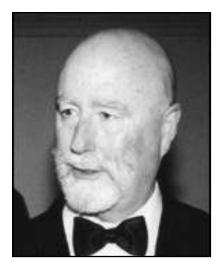


Felipe Plascencia

Marina Villavicencio 1981 - 2019



Jeff Adachi 1959 - 2019



Michael Judge 1944 - 2018





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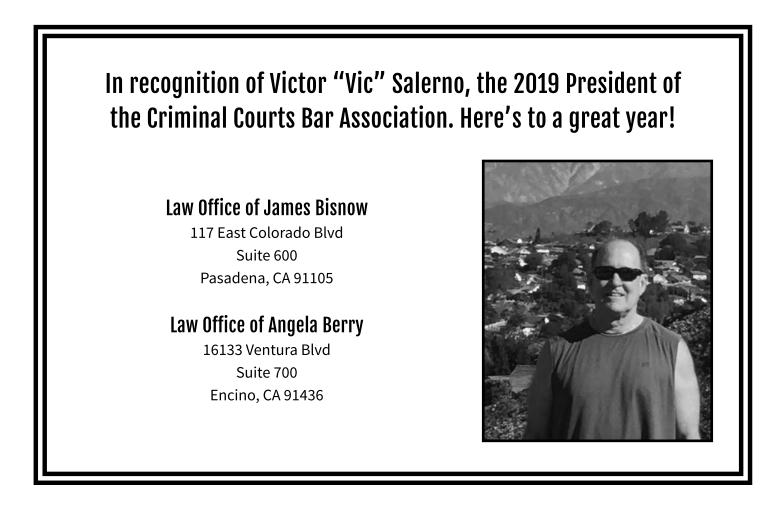
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Hashing Out the Law Congratulates the 2019 Awardees of the Criminal Courts Bar Association



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Congratulations to our Awardees!

It is a great pleasure and honor to thank and present scrolls to each of you as the 2019 President of the C.C.B.A.

* * * * * * * * *

On behalf of Joey Hernandez Insurance Solutions, we would like to congratulate all of the 2019 Criminal Courts Bar Association awards honorees

Honorable James Bianco Honorable Craig Mitchell & Philip Peng, Deputy A.P.D. Harry Litman Louis Sepe

Bradley Brunon

Robert M. Sanger

Joey J. Hernandez-SR-22, DMV & Auto Insurance Specialist

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