

Contra Costa Lawyer Online

The screenshot shows the website's header with the title "CONTRA COSTA LAWYER" and a navigation menu including "Current Issue", "Features", "Spotlight", "Pro Bono", "Self-Study MCLE", "About", and "MarketPlace". Below the menu is a secondary navigation bar with links like "Inside", "President's Message", "News & Updates", "Bar Soap", "Lifestyle", "LRIS", "Ethics Corner", "Coffee Talk", and "Magazine Arch".

Peter Mankin Outstanding Volunteer

[Outstanding Voluteer: Peter Mankin](#)
Under Judge James Marciano's leadership, Mankin and others created the "Early Assistance to Settle Early" (EASE) program

Below the main article are several small image thumbnails, some with text overlays like "Peter Mankin Outstanding Vol" and "Sharon Rae Outstanding Vol".

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Thank you for your membership in the Contra Costa County Bar Association. We appreciate you,
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Thank you 2018 Section Leaders for taking time out

The Contra Costa Lawyer is the official publication of the Contra Costa County Bar Association (CCCBA) published 12 times a year - in six printed and 12 online issues.

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Outstanding Voluteer: Peter Mankin

Saturday, December 01, 2018



The Contra Costa County Superior Court would like to nominate Peter Mankin for his outstanding volunteer work in furtherance of the civil Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program.

Mankin recalls the 1970s, when lawyers usually had to come to court three or four times before they were assigned a judge and could begin trial. At that time, it was not uncommon for cases to be bumping against the five year statute to bring a matter to trial. The court would call the case, one witness would testify, and the matter was sent for another date. The advent of ADR, with Mankin donating many many hours of this time, changed all of that.

In the early 1980s, Mankin was part of the “Bench Bar Settlement Program” which did only settlement conferences. Under Judge James Marciano’s leadership, Mankin and others created the “Early Assistance to Settle Early” (EASE) program. Mankin and others volunteered to help get matters resolved. Over time, this program became our current mediation program and Mankin continues to volunteer his time as a mediator. Mankin also volunteered for the “SMART” program which is now the court’s day of trial Settlement Mentor program.

In 2013, in the wake of losing several commissioners, including the court’s full-time discovery commissioner, the judges were swamped with limited civil jurisdiction cases as well as discovery disputes. In an attempt to alleviate the burden on the courts, Mankin and other attorneys from the Contra Costa County Bar Association met with the civil judges to create and launch the Discovery Facilitator Program. Mankin was part of the first group of volunteers that ensured the success of this program. He continues in this role, now that the program is an essential component of the court’s ADR program.

Mankin also volunteers his time as a leader within the structures that support ADR in our county. He served for many years as a member of the CCCBA’s ADR Section, facilitating communication between the local bar, judges and the court. In addition to his work with the CCCBA, Mankin is also an active member of the court’s ADR Committee, meeting

regularly with judges, plaintiff and defense attorneys and mediators to ensure that the court's program meets the needs of the public.



Magda Lopez recently retired from the Contra Costa County Superior Court as the Director of Family Law Programs and Professional Services. Her responsibilities included supervision of all aspects of family law, the legal research attorneys, alternative dispute resolution programs and interpreters.

Sharon Raab, Outstanding Volunteer Attorney - Family Law Department

Saturday, December 01, 2018

Sharon Raab has been volunteering in support of Contra Costa County Court's family law department since the early 2000's. As the court's self-help services have evolved, Raab's volunteer work has reflected these changes, moving from "start your divorce" to "finish your divorce workshops," to motions preparation and now to boosting the settlement rate at the Double Pro Per Settlement Conferences (DPPSC) - all the while still finding time to represent minors in family law cases.

DPPSC was developed as an attempt to help the family bench handle a caseload consisting of at least 80% self-represented parties. Many of these self-represented parties were struggling to understand the complexities of the legal system while simultaneously remaining clear-headed when confronted with the possibility that they might lose all or a portion of the most important things in their life: relationships, children, prized possessions and income.

In the beginning of the DPPSC program, parties arrived at their DPPSC with no understanding of why they were there. In the age of "Judge Judy," they expected to come to the courthouse, explain their situation to the judge, and get a ruling from the bench. Not surprisingly, the settlement rate at these early DPPSCs was very low.

Former Commissioner Josanna Berkow came up with the idea of having parties attend a workshop to prepare for their DPPSC and persuaded John F. Kennedy University to make their facility available for this purpose. Today, as noted by Supervising Family Law Judge Terri Mockler, Raab pretty much single-handedly runs the JFK Double Pro Per clinic. She ensures that there are attorney volunteers available so that all the necessary paperwork is completed prior to the DPPSC and that disclosures of assets and income are supported by documentation and not just a party's "best guess." Litigants also get an understanding of what they can expect to happen at the DPPSC and what will be expected of them.

These days, as noted by Hon. Brian Haynes, "approximately 90% of the DPPSC with the volunteer attorneys are successful. The program saves the family law bench literally hundreds of courtroom hours per year. It is, in my opinion, the most worthwhile cooperative program our court has with the local bar. Sharon's efforts, and the efforts of the volunteer attorneys, are very very much appreciated."

Raab is also one of the very experienced members of the CCCBA who, for more than 20 years, has been serving as minor's counsel in family law cases. Raab greatly enjoys this work and, as she describes it: "I've had a lot of blessings in my life and so I have a sense of needing to give back and help others who haven't had the opportunities that I've had."

The Contra Costa County Superior Court Family Law bench would like to express its appreciation for Raab's indefatigable efforts to assist the Court and the community we all serve.

Magda Lopez recently retired from the Contra Costa County Superior Court as the Director of Family Law Programs and Professional Services. Her responsibilities included



supervision of all aspects of family law, the legal research attorneys, alternative dispute resolution programs and the interpreters.

A Rewarding Endeavor

Saturday, December 01, 2018



For almost 20 years, local Contra Costa County attorney, David A. Arietta has volunteered his time at the Walnut Creek Senior Center in conjunction with Contra Costa Senior Legal Services. Each month, he holds a Will Clinic at the Senior Center. The program's goal is to provide simple wills to eligible seniors. To be eligible, one must be age 60 or over and be a current resident of Contra Costa County.

The program, which is by appointment, starts at 1:30 pm on the first Monday of the month and ends at approximately 4:00 pm. In addition to Arietta, other volunteers at the Senior Center graciously assist with intake

calls and scheduling appointments. On average the Will Clinic schedules approximately five appointments per month with an ever-persistent waiting list. Arietta has prepared hundreds of wills, finding much gratification in helping his senior friends.

Although the program only provides free simple wills, Arietta finds that he discusses a wide range of estate planning, trust and probate issues during his volunteer time to clarify confusion and provide guidance. As we are all aware, many seniors are facing end-of-life decisions, having a trustworthy friend such as David to assist with their wishes is invaluable.

The feedback over the years has been very positive, though the feeling is mutual. Seniors are very thankful for having someone just take the time and help them out. Volunteering just a few hours each month has been extremely rewarding for David Arietta.

There is Much To Give and Many Ways To Do It

Saturday, December 01, 2018



Beth Wolf Mora, Esq. of Mora Employment Law lives by the concept that humanity must play an active role in the world; though the world may be imperfect, we have an opportunity and an obligation to help make it a better place. To this end, Beth spends a considerable amount of time volunteering within her legal community.

Legal Aid At Work, formally known as Employment Law Center – Legal Aid Society of San Francisco is a special place for Beth as she interned there in law school 1998, volunteering nearly every year since. The Worker’s Rights Clinics, including in-person and phone-in options, provides low-

income and unemployed people confidential information about their legal rights related to work. Mora volunteers as a supervising attorney for the East Bay Worker’s Rights Clinic and engages student volunteers in relevant subject matter lessons.

One of the many clinics provided by Legal Aid at Work, the Low Wage Pregnant Workers Clinic, was featured in the July 2017 Contra Costa Lawyer. In addition to providing aid to low-wage pregnant workers, it also highlights the organization's Work & Family Helpline.

Transgender Law Center (TLC), changes law, policy, and attitudes so that all people can live safely, authentically, and free from discrimination regardless of their gender identity or expression. The TLC has a wide range of legal resources across the country for the trans community. Mora is currently working pro bono with a dedicated team of attorneys representing the Plaintiff in, *Tanesh Nutall v. City and County of San Francisco et al.*, Case No.: 3:18-cv-01258-SK, who is courageously challenging the City of San Francisco for its treatment of Black trans women. <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/archives/14204>

Mora notes, "there is considerable beauty in the joyful gratitude of a thankful client. That bit of effort is just one of the many ways we as attorneys have the ability to make this world a better place."

People Who Care... Gratitude from Recipients of Pro Bono Services

Saturday, December 01, 2018



Peter J. is an 85-year-old man who has lived in the same home for nearly 40 years. Though he lives on less than \$1,000 a month, he is a generous person and has always been willing to help out his family and friends. This generosity, however, one day led to a situation that overwhelmed him. He invited some “friends” to stay with him when they lost their housing, and after several months, they became combative and abusive. Peter couldn’t afford an attorney and tried to solve the problem on his own, but eventually realized that he needed help. Fortunately, the Senior Self-Help Clinic, a collaborative project of the Contra Costa Superior Court and Contra Costa Senior Legal Services, was his starting point. Staffed by experienced pro bono attorneys, the Clinic helps seniors 60 years and over with everything from evictions to elder abuse restraining orders. After assessing his case, staff at the clinic realized that Peter needed an advocate and referred him to CCSLS. A staff attorney took on Peter’s elder abuse case and represented him at a contested hearing. Peter was granted a restraining order and an order directing the people to move out. He finally felt safe again in his home. Peter also had other legal issues that were outside the scope of the services that are provided at CCSLS. However, CCSLS referred him to a wonderful Contra Costa pro bono attorney who was able to assist him. Thanks to the generosity of so many of our local attorneys, Peter was able to restore peace to his life. He said that the help he received “gave me confidence that there are people who care.”

This is just one example of the impact pro bono attorneys can have on the lives of individuals in our community. But there are many others, including ensuring that older residents of the county complete Advance Health Care Directives. While these documents can be vital to the ability of a person to appoint an agent and express their end-of-life wishes, many people find the task of creating an AHCD daunting and simply don’t do it. CCSLS administers several AHCD clinics throughout the county using legal staff from corporate partners and individual pro bono attorneys. We regularly ask participants in these clinics to tell us how they feel about the help they received, and their responses are overwhelmingly positive. “Thank you for taking the time to help us. Great to have people who care about helping others.” One said “this program is wonderful. I

would have kept putting off [completing the AHCD]" without the program. Another senior commented, "Because of the kindness and expertise of the personnel, I was able to do something very important for my family I hadn't previously been able to do."

Scores of pro bono volunteers are making a difference in the lives of residents in Contra Costa County every month. Join the ranks of the "people who care" for the sake of our community. The thanks and gratitude of those you help will more than reward you for your efforts.

Verna Haas is the Executive Director of Contra Costa Senior Legal Services, a nonprofit that uses staff and pro bono attorneys to address the needs of older residents of our County. Through this partnership, last year CCSLS assisted nearly 1,200 individuals.

Contact Verna at (925) 609-7900 or verna.haas@ccsls.org.

Lawyer Referral & Information Service – Connecting the Comm...

Saturday, December 01, 2018



The Lawyer Referral Information Service, LRIS, is a service that the Contra Costa County Bar Association provides to the public to facilitate connecting clients with attorneys who work in the specific area of law that is needed.

While in the middle of my curriculum at John F. Kennedy University's College of Law, I spent a year with the team at the bar association. My day-to-day duties were to answer LRIS calls in assistance to the other staff. I'm bilingual, so a large portion of my morning was spent handling Spanish voicemails and incoming calls. Regardless of the language spoken, handling LRIS calls was truly a joy; it is fun to come to work and you never knew what was going to come at you.

LRIS calls can bring joy, heartbreak, and a flood of everything in between. A fascinating aspect of working the LRIS line is the variety of topics that come across your desk. As a law student, I had taken classes on topics like wills & trusts or probate issues, real estate and tenancy issues, criminal defense, mediations, contracts, and more. For both the law student and a long-practicing attorney, the variety presents a wonderful opportunity to be lightly versed in subjects you may not otherwise touch regularly, if ever. You would certainly see interesting trends among callers, their timing, and the topics discussed. The most memorable calls were at tax time, the holidays, and on full moons. Ask the staff who work the LRIS calls, they'll tell you. I smile and laugh at some of the memories and encourage anyone to volunteer their time and experience.

The process is to take the call, learn a little about the person and the situation, ask a few questions to refine your understanding (so you can effectively communicate it to an attorney you want to refer them to), take the referral payment, and set about calling your fellow CCCBA attorneys until you place the referral. Placing the referral typically goes one of two ways, super easy OR like finding a needle in a haystack. Finding a Spanish-speaking attorney was often a challenge in otherwise easy-to-place situations. Either way, you learn a little something new on each call.

Among the greatest benefits to working the LRIS line was getting to know many of you! Working with the LRIS exposes you to members in the legal community whom you might otherwise never get to know. While working the LRIS, I was amazed at all the hard work the staff at the CCCBA invests to provide a wonderful resource to attorneys and the public. You too will find a great satisfaction in being a part of that. Lastly, it was a wonderful experience to work with the CCCBA staff directly; Theresa, Anne, Carole, and on the LRIS lines, Barbara, Emily and Jennifer. I have wonderful memories of working with them. Yes, it was work, but it was fun.

Note: Attorneys interested in joining the Lawyer Referral and Information Service should contact Barbara Arsedo, **Lawyer Referral & Information Service & Moderate Means Director** at (925) 370-2544, or barsedo@cccba.org. There is a particular need for Landlord Tenant, Juvenile 300 and Spanish speakers in all areas. Further information on the program can be found online at <http://www.cccbba.org/attorney/lawyer-referral-network/index.php>

Richard M. Rose is in his final year of J.D. studies at John F. Kennedy University College of Law in Pleasant Hill. After working for the CCCBA's LRIS for a year, he now works as a clerk at the Law Office of Ariel Brownell where he focuses exclusively on Family Law.

Homeless Court

Saturday, December 01, 2018

This is an updated version of an article that was originally published in the November 2015 issue of the Contra Costa Lawyer.



For the last 11 years, on the second Thursday of each month I pack up my robe and nameplate. Then my clerk Annie Young, my bailiff Paul Welge and I all head over to the Homeless Shelter on Arnold Industrial Way in Concord to conduct the Contra Costa Community Homeless Court. If you've never been to the shelter before, you might miss it in an area of light industrial buildings on the north side of Highway 4. But it is one of two large emergency shelter sites in our county (the other one is on Brookside in Richmond) that each have the capacity to serve over 160 men and women. It is a busy place that provides shelter and services for all too many residents of our county.

As I walk through the parking lot, I'm almost always warmly greeted by residents. Often somebody breaks into an imitation of Sammy Davis Jr., "Here comes the judge, here comes the judge!" Once we get into the building, it's a short walk to the courtroom past some donated couches where people sleep. This courtroom looks a little different from the one I usually sit in. Most of the time it serves as the shelter cafeteria. My bench is a little folding table at one end of the room next to the Formica counter in front of the open kitchen.

By the time we get there the room is packed with anxious court participants. Each of them has been individually recommended for the court by a counselor, case manager or social worker who has witnessed that person's efforts to break out of homelessness. Just about all of them have spent hundreds of hours doing whatever it takes to get back on their feet. They have completed lengthy drug or alcohol treatment programs, job training classes, anger management courses and mental health counseling. As a result of their hard work, they have made it to a point where they can once again live a normal life with a home, a job and a family.

One big barrier stands in the way, however. During their life on the street, people who are homeless often are cited for minor infractions for things like panhandling, jay walking and

drinking in public. If they have a car, they get tickets for driving without a license or failure to maintain insurance. When they don't appear in court to address these tickets, penalty fines and civil assessments are added to the initial bail amount. Very quickly a few of these tickets can result in thousands of dollars of debt. When the debt isn't paid their driver's license gets suspended. These outstanding tickets can result in denials of housing and other benefits as well.

Because Homeless Court participants have all spent significant time in programs, I'm able to give people credit for that time towards paying down the outstanding debt. In most cases they have spent so much time in programs that all of a person's outstanding ticket debt can be satisfied. Since the fines are no longer due, participants often can get their driver's license renewed and get on track for a new job and a new home.

Recently, we have a new face at Homeless Court, Jaime Luna from the Department of Child Support Services for Contra Costa County (DCSS). Ms. Luna carefully pre-screens all of the participants and identifies people that either owe child support or are owed child support. I call out the names at the beginning of the court session and encourage the people identified to go to the DCSS table at the back of the room to talk with Jaime. If somebody is owed child support, DCSS starts the process with the individual to attempt to secure payment. For the Homeless Court participants that owe child support, DCSS works with them to lift driver's license holds put in place for non-payment. They also provide waivers or generous terms for payment so that the people can afford to pay once they get a job. This service is extremely helpful in getting people get back on their feet. It's really a win/win situation since once they do get a job, they can start making their child support payments again.

People are so thankful for having the weight of this debt lifted and for the freedom to get on with their lives. Most of the time, they have lived with this burden for years. Frequently they don't believe it really happened. Sometimes they shed a few tears. Sometimes the judge does too.

***Judge Steve Austin** has served as a trial judge at the Contra Costa County Superior Court in California since 1998. He has served as presiding judge, branch court supervising judge, supervising judge of the civil departments and as a member of the court's executive committee. He currently has a civil assignment in Martinez.*

Stand Down! Helping Our Veterans

Saturday, December 01, 2018

On Saturday, September 22, 2018, Contra Costa Superior Court once again participated in the annual East Bay Stand Down at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton. Stand Down is an event coordinated by a consortium of public agencies and community organizations for homeless and at-risk military veterans living in the San Francisco Bay Area.



Among the myriad of services available, participants were able to receive:

- Court hearings on specific case types;
- Medical and dental care;
- Mental health services;
- Referrals for emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing;
- Help resolving issues with California identification cards and driver's licenses;
- Access to legal aide attorneys; and
- Personal services including free meals, clothing, showers and haircuts.



Dominique Yancey from the Contra Costa County's District Attorney's Office coordinated the courtroom aspect where judges and staff from three counties – Alameda, Contra Costa and San Francisco – were present to conduct hearings in criminal and traffic cases for qualified defendants. For Contra Costa, Manager Shelly Hasson prepped the calendars as well as attended the event and Courtroom Clerk Manager, Diana Ghirardo assisted the Honorable Laurel Brady as she

presided over criminal and traffic matters for qualified defendants.

Contra Costa Superior Court has participated in this event for a number of years and is proud to continue supporting a very rewarding day helping our community and our well deserving veterans.

Kate Bieker serves as Court Executive Officer of the Supreme Court of Contra Costa County. Prior to her appointment to CEO she had oversight of a number of units at the Court including Jury, Court Operations and Finance.



Inns of Court from a Law Student's Perspective

Saturday, December 01, 2018



In the words of Jon B. Streeter, Associate Justice of the California Court of Appeal, “law school is tough, you have to find things that make it interesting and enjoyable.” I heard these words in my first year in law school, on a field trip to the Court of Appeal. As law students, we all know or quickly come to realize that the study of law can become overwhelming at times. Long study sessions, lectures (some very interesting; others not so much) and the never-ending reading that we “have” to do. That is the typical life of a law student.

However, what if I told you that being a law student can at times be interesting and enjoyable. Imagine a learning environment where you get to dress up, have a cocktail, a decent meal and learn the law in a comedic type environment, among some very talented judges and attorneys, where no homework is due and yes, you guessed it, where you don't have to read an excess of 100 pages of text every week. This place I talk about is not imaginary. It is actually a thing.

I am talking about the Robert G. McGrath American Inn of Court. I joined the Inn late into my second year of law school after hearing one of my classmates Alex, talking about it. It quickly became one of my more exciting undertakings as a law student. Not only was I able to land my first job as a law clerk, but the experience as a whole enabled me to break out of my shy shell, figure out what I really wanted to do as a lawyer all while adding to my knowledge of the law. Additionally, I also found out that some judges can actually drop some rap bars, some lawyers can double as actors and that if underdog needed a double, I would do just fine in that role.

All in all, I think the Inn is a great character builder for students aspiring to be lawyers. If I was to get a do-over, I would join over and over again. I have made some great friends and acquaintances who I know I will be able to rely on in the future and through my career as a lawyer. Further, many lessons I have learned at the Inn have become applicable and beneficial in practice. As a student and a future lawyer, I highly recommend becoming a member.

***Nathan Dondi** was born in Nairobi Kenya and migrated to the United States in 2002 at the age of 15. He is a JD candidate 2019, attending John F. Kennedy University College of Law. He is a Certified Law Clerk for the Solano County Public Defender. His future area of practice is criminal defense.*

Volunteerism - Good for the Soul and the Pocketbook

Saturday, December 01, 2018

How often during one's legal career can one point to service, not compensation or compulsion, as the principal motivation for one's legal work? This is what Pro Bono legal work offers. You may perhaps represent a particular person. You may possibly advocate on behalf of a particular cause. But above all, you serve: you serve the public interest; you serve the judicial system.

*Hon. John H. Sugiyama
Judge of the Superior Court
Probate Division*



In this last issue of 2018, we celebrate and recognize those who give of their time and talent to help those in need in our community. There are not enough pages in any magazine to do justice to the work of all of our local lawyers, judges, law students and public employees who give freely of their precious free time to help those in need through the organizations who provide these services. Indeed, the sizeable Pro Bono effort in Contra Costa County has many faces but we wanted to show you some of those faces in this season of giving and Thanksgiving.

Our issue features four lawyers who give their time and their talent to organizations dedicated to providing access to justice to those who cannot afford a lawyer. They do this through those organizations but also through their work for the court's volunteer programs to help bridge the ever-widening gap between waning court funding and the needs of a growing population. We also recognize one judge of our court and his staff (although we could have chosen many more) whose tireless commitment to providing justice, tempered with a measure of forgiveness and understanding, to the homeless in our community. One law student shares his experience as a volunteering for CCCBA's Lawyer Referral Service while pursuing his legal education at JFK University. We recognize the public employees in the District Attorney's office for their work to help those who served our country get the help they need to integrate back into the community for whom they fought. Finally, we bring you a glimpse of the view from the side of some of the people in need of help and what that help meant to them.

The people whose names appear in the articles that follow do not seek recognition; often, they avoid it. Their names come to us from others who author the articles on their behalf and in recognition of their service. If you are one of the subjects of the articles in this issue, you have the author and the organization that they serve to thank for that. If you already give of your time and talent as part of the Pro Bono effort, we thank you. If you do not, perhaps the stories of service, commitment and dedication that follow will inspire you

to make a New Year's Resolution to become one of the many faces of Pro Bono in 2019 and beyond.

Steven Derby is a civil trial attorney in Walnut Creek. His firm specializes in cases in state and federal court involving violations of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), FHA (Fair Housing Act) and various related state laws. Mr. Derby is a past-president of the Alameda-Contra Costa Trial Lawyers Association and a current member of the Board of Directors of CCCBA.

Should there be a pro bono requirement for bar admission?

Saturday, December 01, 2018

Coffee Talk is a regular feature of the Contra Costa Lawyer magazine. We ask a short question related to an upcoming theme and responses are then published in the Contra Costa Lawyer magazine.

There should not be a requirement of Pro Bono work. The concept of forced “charitable” work is contrary to the concept of volunteering to do a charitable act.

Additionally, who would get to decide what is qualifying pro bono work? The bar? The government? This decision would be driven by politics, which would just create more problems.

I am not aware of any other profession where volunteer work is required in order to be licensed, why should lawyers be treated differently? This has been an issue pushed by the State Bar where it sees tens of thousands of lawyers it can force to do work for causes it deems worthy. Would lawyers licenses to practice law be held up until they performed pro bono work for the “right” types of clients? Or in other words would lawyers be held to a form of servitude to the State in exchange for the right to practice law?

Should doctors be required to provide free medical services? Should grocery stores be required to provide free food? Should auto dealers be required to provide free cars or Uber drivers free rides? Should landlords be required to provide reduced rent to “deserving” tenants? Unless you answer all of these questions in the affirmative and are proposing to change our entire economic system in the process, the clear answer is lawyers should not be treated any differently, and required to work pro bono.

Many of us donate significant hours of our time to clients and causes we deem worthy. We do this because we want to, not because we are forced to, and isn't that the essence of being a volunteer?

Thank you,
Daniel S. Harkins
Attorney at Law

It depends on if the new lawyer is going to receive training in the volunteer pro bono experience. Adults with financial stress who become attorneys may not be able to afford a lot of pro bono donation time. If the purpose is to train an attorney to have sufficient skills and the pro bono opportunity gives them some experience, then yes a requirement would be helpful. Usually people volunteer anyway if they can.

Karen Crosby

What the CCCBA Accomplished in 2018

Saturday, December 01, 2018



As 2018 winds down and we reflect on a year that zoomed by, the Contra Costa County Bar Association has much to be proud of and thankful for. We started 2018 off with the most well attended Installation Lunch in recent history. That was due in large part because we also presented our first ever Diversity Awards to several well-deserving law firms and solo practitioners. We also recognized Robin Pearson, a champion of the CCCBA and the Diversity Committee for over 14 years. Fittingly, Robin Pearson was also recognized in November 2018 as well by the Minority Bar Coalition). And, those who tell me to “toot my horn more” want me to point out that I

am the first Asian American male to be installed to lead the CCCBA.

The CCCBA and our profession have made strong strides in promoting women. In fact, our Women’s Section had another very vibrant year raising scholarships for deserving recipients, honoring our first Asian American President, Audrey Gee, with the first ever “Outstanding Woman Lawyer” award, and helping to mentor and promote women attorneys in the county.

Furthermore, our Diversity Committee planned and held its first Lunar New Year celebration, spearheaded by Judge Ben Reyes and Judge Joni Hiramoto. The interest and attendance at that event exceeded expectations and the restaurant’s capacity! Our next one is already being planned for February 13, 2019 – so save the date! In 2018, the Diversity Committee also held the first Networking Mixer in Contra Costa with the Minority Bar Coalition. That event too exceeded expectations and capacity.

As I expressed in January 2018, one of my goals for the year was to focus on our “senior attorneys” as well as diversity. I am excited to report that our senior attorneys appear to have appreciated and welcomed this focus. Our Senior Lawyers Task Force held several very successful events, roundtables, happy hours and planning meetings. With some additional work from dedicated leaders, I hope that we will create a Senior Lawyers Section of the CCCBA in 2019.

But there’s more. A lot more!

- Between January and October 2018, we had over 2,600 attendees at over 93 MCLE events. Importantly, these numbers do NOT include the additional 300+ attendees at the 24 th Annual MCLE Spectacular.
 - Some of the new events the CCCBA put on this year include:
 - District Attorney Candidates Forum
 - Lunar New Year Celebration
 - Family Law Training Series (6 events)

- New Rules of Professional Conduct (3 presentations)
- Senior Lawyers roundtables and happy hours
- Judges Night
- Diversity Networking with the Minority Bar Coalition
- LiveScan Fingerprinting (offered at numerous events, dates and times throughout the County)
- Brown bag lunches with West County Judges
- Some of our traditionally popular events grew in attendance and participation in 2018, including our All Section Mixer/Pro Bono Expo, Comedy Night, A's Game and tailgate party, and our annual Bar Fund Benefit (raised over \$53,000.00 for the Arnason Scholarship and the Public Law Library)
- In addition, the CCCBA Editorial Board put out the nationally award-winning Contra Costa Lawyer Magazine each and every month
- All of our sections put out educational and/or social events throughout the year, including the 25 th Annual Estate Planning Symposium
- We put on a total of 42 legal workshops for the public in January – October 2018 in areas including Bankruptcy, Civil Pro Per, Family Law, Immigration, Employment, and Conservatorship
- Also from January – September 2018, we had over 8,153 inquiries to the CCCBA's Lawyer Referral and Information Service, and 3,058 attorney referrals were made – an increase over 2017. Currently, we have 115 LRIS panels and 179 LRIS panel attorneys
- We also assigned 66 Moderate Means cases to attorneys from January – September 2018, and we currently have 31 Moderate Means attorneys
- Finally, Virginia George and Leonard Marquez were poised to have leadership roles in their sections in 2018, however, Governor Brown appointed both to the bench in Contra Costa County. We are proud of both of them.

Quite a bit happened in 2018 that cannot be summarized here. We don't just strive to have impressive numbers. Instead, most all of our members and leaders are dedicated to making the CCCBA stronger, and helping each other, the public, and the bench. Our incredible staff, lead by Theresa Hurley, rose to the challenge this year with all the new events we put on, and the CCCBA simply could not function without their dedication and hard work. We are in good hands going forward with a strong Board, Section Leaders and staff. Teaser for 2019: look for a refreshed CCCBA logo and revamped website!

There is no good way to say thank you to everyone involved in the CCCBA, other than to simply say: THANK YOU, and cheers to a great 2018, and a wonderful start to 2019!

James Wu was honored to serve as CCCBA President in 2018. For over 22 years, Wu has practiced employment law. He is a defense litigator for employers, and he also provides advice and counsel to reduce the risks of employment-related claims and lawsuits. To find out more, see www.linkedin.com/in/jamesywu

Mock Trial

Saturday, December 01, 2018



The 38 th Annual Mock Trial Program takes place in Martinez on Tuesdays and Thursdays from January 29 through February 19, 2019. The Mock Trial Program is sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) and administered by the Contra Costa County Office of Education. Each year CRF creates a mock trial that addresses serious matters facing young people today. The case this year involves a false report of an emergency and criminal threat.

Teams from 17 high schools in Contra Costa County work with teacher and attorney coaches to prepare their version of

the criminal case, both from the prosecution and defense perspective. Students assume the roles of trial attorneys, pretrial motion attorneys, witnesses, clerks, and bailiffs. Contra Costa County judges preside over the mock trials and local attorneys score the teams in the competition. The winner of the competition goes on the State Mock Trial March 22-24 in Sacramento.

The mock trial program relies on over 100 judges and attorneys to volunteer their time each year to help make this program a success. If you are interested in being an attorney scorer for this event, please contact Jonathan Lance at (925) 942-3429 or Jlance@cccocoe.k12.ca.us.

Senior Legal Services Salutes its Volunteers

Saturday, December 01, 2018

Contra Costa Senior Legal Services salutes its volunteers who have donated their time and expertise to help older residents of the County. Thank you!



Individual Volunteers

- David Aiello, Esq.
- Robert Burns, Esq.
- Dana Benedetto, Esq.
- Maria Benson, Notary Public
- Maureen Callaghan, Esq.
- Catherine Cutler, Esq.
- Kathleen Day-Selzer, Esq.
- Konstantine Demiris, Esq.
- Steven Dorby, Esq.
- Natalia Di Cortoso, Esq.
- Matthew Mori, Esq.
- Peter Hess
- Stephanie Hayes
- Bruce Last, Esq.
- Helen Lee, Esq. (Mass./NY)
- Peter Lowenstein, Esq.
- Julia Miller, Esq.
- Chris Moore, Esq.
- Olivia Nebres, Notary Public
- Catherine Odell, Esq.
- Sara O'Doherty, Esq.
- Geoffrey Robinson, Esq.
- Judith Sanders, Esq.
- Ivette Santisteban, Esq.
- Mary Weber, Paralegal
- Lisa Zaragoza, Esq.

Corporate/Institutional Volunteers

AIG Legal Department
Members of the Chevron Law Department
JFKU College of Law, Elder Law Clinic
Members of CSA Insurance Group's Legal Division



**CONTRA COSTA
SENIOR LEGAL SERVICES**

2702 Clayton Road, Suite 202, Concord, CA 94519
925-609-7900 legalhelp@ccsls.org

Happy Holidays from the CCCBA

Saturday, December 01, 2018

Thank you for your membership in the Contra Costa County Bar Association. We appreciate you, your time and your participation in CCCBA events. We wish you and yours a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!





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Peter Mankin

Outstanding Volunteer

[Outstanding Volunteer: Peter Mankin](#)
Under Judge James Marciano's leadership, Mankin and others created the "Early Assistance to Settle Early" (EASE) program.

[Peter Mankin Outstanding Volunteer](#) | [Sharon Ras Outstanding Volunteer](#)

Spotlight

[Homeless Court](#)
Because Homeless Court participants have all spent significant time in programs, I'm able to give

[What the CCCBA Accomplished in 2018](#)
As 2018 winds down and we reflect on a year that zoomed by, the Contra

[Much Change in 2018 – More to Come in 2019](#)

News & Updates

[Senior Legal Services Salutes its Volunteers](#)

[Happy Holidays from the CCCBA](#)
Thank you for your membership in the Contra Costa County Bar Association. We appreciate you.

[Thank You Section Leaders](#)
Thank you 2018 Section Leaders for taking time out

