

Bench-Bar Coalition
Quarterly Membership Meeting

Monday, April 28, 2025

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

Agenda

MONDAY, APRIL 28

4:00 – 4:05 p.m.

Welcome

Hon. Audra Ibarra, Cochair

Hon. Terry Truong, Member at Large

4:05 – 4:50 p.m.

Presentation: Innovative Pathways to the Law: Capturing Students' Attention from Elementary to College

Judge Barbara Kronlund, San Joaquin Superior Court

Judge Julia Alloggiamento, Santa Clara Superior Court

Kerry Guido, Diversity Pipeline Director, Bar Association of San Francisco

Judge Shelly Torrealba, Los Angeles Superior Court

Ruthe Ashley, Chair, California Legal Pathways Collaborative

Cristina Gapasin Tortal, Asst. Dean of Admissions, UC Irvine School of Law

Judge Sonny Sandhu, Stanislaus Superior Court

Terrance Evans, President, California Lawyer's Association

Judge Terry Truong, Los Angeles Superior Court

Catherin Ongiri, State Bar of California

For Legal Community Updates please see attached materials

Calendar Review

- Monday, July 28, 2025: Quarterly Membership Meeting
- Friday, September 12, 2025: Fall Meeting In-Person, Pasadena
- Monday, October 27, 2025: Quarterly Membership Meeting

BIOGRAPHIES

JUDGE SHELLY BARON TORREALBA



Judge Shelly Baron Torrealba grew up in rural Michigan and spent her summers milking cows and driving tractors on her family's small dairy farm. She graduated from Central Michigan University and later Southwestern School of Law. She's the first in her family to graduate from college and based on her grandmother's genealogy research, she is the only lawyer, now judge, in her entire family history. Before being appointed to the bench in December 2010, she was a Deputy District Attorney for 17 years with assignments in the Sex Crimes Division, Justice System Integrity Division and Community Prosecution. Judge Torrealba is a former Assistant Supervising Judge of Criminal Limited Jurisdiction and currently assigned to the Foltz Criminal Justice Center presiding over felony trials. Judge Torrealba is certified Judicial Education Seminars [JES] teacher and adjunct professor at her alma mater. Judge Torrealba is dedicated to community outreach which is exemplified by her involvement in a variety of mentoring programs. Judge Torrealba serves as the Los Angeles Superior Court [LASC] Internship Program Supervisor, a Co-Chair of the LASC Diversity and Inclusion Committee, a Co-Chair of the Mexican American Bar Foundation Scholarship Committee, and volunteer for the Mexican American Bar Association and the Altadena Guild of Huntington Memorial Hospital. The entire Torrealba family is dedicated to many forms of public service and Judge Torrealba is very grateful and proud to be a member of Team Torrealba.

JUDGE SONNY SANDHU



The Honorable Sonny S. Sandhu was appointed to a judgeship to the Stanislaus Superior Court on October 11, 2018, by Governor Jerry Brown. Judge Sandhu is the first Asian-Pacific American judge appointed to the Stanislaus County Bench. During his tenure with the Stanislaus Superior Court, Judge Sandhu has presided in the Criminal Arraignment court and is currently assigned to a Civil courtroom. Judge Sandhu was elected to serve as Assistant Presiding Judge of the Stanislaus Superior Court and began his term in January 2023. In January 2025 Judge Sandhu began serving his term as the Presiding Judge of the Stanislaus Superior Court. Prior to his appointment, Judge Sandhu served as the Public Defender of Stanislaus County. He served in several positions at the Stanislaus County Public Defender's Office from 2003 to 2017, including Chief Deputy Public Defender and Deputy Public Defender. He earned a Juris Doctor degree from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. During his time there, Judge Sandhu was President of the Asian-Pacific American Law Students Association. He received his Bachelor of Arts degrees in Asian American Studies and Psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara. While on the bench, Judge Sandhu has served on numerous local and statewide committees. He serves on the executive committee for the California Judicial Mentorship Program, is a member of

the California Judicial Council's Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee Member and a co-chair of the South Asian Bar Association Northern America Judges Section. In addition, Judge Sandhu serves as chair of the Stanislaus County Court Observer Program in conjunction with California State University, Stanislaus, serves as the chair of the Judges in the Classroom for Stanislaus County and serves as the chair of the First Impressions Program in conjunction with the Stanislaus County Office of Education and is a co-founder of the Stanislaus Unity Bar.

Judge Sandhu currently is a co-chair of the Strategic Planning Committee for California Asian Pacific American Judges Association (CAPAJA). He previously served on the executive board as Past-President, President, President-Elect and a District Representative. He has previously served as a member of the California Affinity Judges Association Coalition (CAJAC), on the Judicial Diversity Summit Advisory Committee, and the California Judges Association Midyear and Annual Planning Committees.

Judge Sandhu has been a presenter on numerous local and statewide presentations. Some of these include presentations with the Stanislaus County Bar Association, the Wray Ladine Inn of Court, the California Judges Associations Diversity and Inclusivity Conversation series, the California Asian Pacific American Judges Association (CAPAJA) and the California Judges Association.

JUDGE JULIA ALLOGGIAMENTO



Beyond her judicial duties, Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Julia Alloggiamento is committed to civic education and community outreach. Since January 2012, she has chaired the Court Community Outreach Committee, organizing programs like Color of Justice, Young Women's Power Lunch, Educators' Day, Read Across America, and Law Day. She was appointed to vice-lead Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero's Power of Democracy Civic Learning Initiative, which aims to promote civic learning across California's public schools, particularly those in historically under resourced communities. In recognition of these efforts, Judge Alloggiamento received the California Judges Association's Judicial Outreach Award in 2024, an honor bestowed only once every three years to acknowledge outstanding community engagement by a judicial officer.

RUTHE ASHLEY



Ruthe Catolico Ashley is a retired lawyer and Chair of California Legal Pathways Collaborative (CLPC), which focuses on supporting the high school law academies diversity pipeline program started by Ashley in 2010. Working with 24 high school law academies, CLPC introduces students to law and law-related careers through a 3-year law-focused curriculum. Originally housed at the State Bar of California, CLPC is now housed with the California Lawyers Foundation ensuring the high school academies have its roots in a legal organization. Several young diverse lawyers are proud to receive their start in our law academy family.

Ashley is considered the Diversity Pipeline Guru for the legal profession in California. As a member of the State Bar of California's Board of Governors, she chaired the Diversity Pipeline Task Force in 2007, which jump-started the diversity pipeline work in this state. This Task

Force held the first Judicial Diversity Summit starting the work for judicial diversity in California. Ashley founded and created the Council on Access and Fairness with the State Bar of California – now a leader in legal diversity across the nation. She was also the first President/CEO of California ALL, and the Founder/Executive Director of California LAW, two non-profit organizations with a mission to diversify the legal profession through the educational pipeline.

Ashley's first career was as a nurse and nursing professor. A 1988 graduate of Pacific McGeorge School of Law, she became a lawyer at the age of 41 and was a litigator for 15 years before returning to her alma mater as the Assistant Dean for Career Services. She created the role of Chief Diversity Officer for CalPERS to help build a pipeline into law and financial services. Ashley has had numerous leadership roles including being past president of the 1) Asian Pacific Bar of Sacramento, 2) National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, and 3) Legal Services of Northern California. She was a member of the American Bar Association's Board of Governors and chaired the Public Service and Diversity Committee of the BOG. She led the restructuring of the Goal III Diversity entities. She also chaired the Women of Color Committee for the Commission on Women and chaired the Council on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Educational Pipeline. She chaired the ABA's Public Education Committee with programs including the National Civics and Law Academy, Law Day, Silver Gavel Awards and other projects for teachers and students. Currently, she is a member of the ABA's Fund for Justice and Education, Retirement Fund Board. She chairs the Standing Committee on the Law Library of Congress leading the 2026 - 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence projects.

Ashley worked with the California Legislature in inserting diversity and inclusion language in the State Bar's 2018 Fee Bill. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the ABA's prestigious Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement award in 2020. A NAPABA Trailblazer recipient, she received the inaugural Excellence in Civics Engagement Award from the California Lawyers Association. She was humbled and proud to receive, as the first recipient, the inaugural Ruthe C Ashley Impact Award created in 2022 by the Asian Bar Association of Solano County. Now retired, she devotes her time to diversity in the legal profession and world travel. Three grandchildren make life rich and active.

KERRY D. GUIDO



Kerry D. Guido is the Diversity Pipeline Programs Director at the Justice and Diversity Center at the Bar Association of San Francisco. She oversees programs that support K-12 students, college students, law students, and attorneys. To learn more go to <https://www.sfbar.org/jdc/diversity/>. Kerry has 15+ years of experience in tech, healthcare, education, and finance. Author of *Inclusive Leadership: Opening Doors for Marginalized Groups*, available on Amazon. Named among the 146 Inspiring Women Leaders in 2021 by Diverse IN. Former elected official, who served as a School Board Trustee and advocated for equitable education for all students. She is a proud mother of two boys with autism and neurodiversity advocate. Holds a Certificate in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace, a Bachelors in Computer Science, and pursuing her Master in Leadership and Management.

She has worked at top tech companies such as Microsoft and Amazon to advocate for diversity and inclusion. She is a former board member for People Acting in Community Together (PACT),

where she empowered the community to solve social issues related to housing, immigration, education, restorative justice, and led community rallies. She has also mentored youth through Google CS First and Microsoft TEALS, and even led and won hackathons at Women Who Code Silicon Valley.

CRISTINA GAPASIN TORTAL



Cristina Gapasin Tortal is the Assistant Dean of Admissions and Student Financial Services at UCI Law. Her 20+ years in the law school admissions industry covers both private and public law schools committed to innovation and inclusive excellence. She started her career at her law school alma mater before heading up north to UC Davis and then to Northwestern Pritzker in Chicago. In 2019, she returned to Southern California where much of her family lives and took the helm of the UCI Law Admissions Office. Cristina earned dual bachelor's degrees in sociology and political science from the University of Iowa and a JD from Chapman University School of Law. She holds inactive status with the State Bar of California. Dean Gapasin has a demonstrated commitment of volunteerism. She is a frequent speaker and presenter at various LSAC events and other pre-law or diversity conferences. Her passion lies in empowering prospective applicants to successfully navigate through the law school admissions process. She hopes you do not hold it against her that she is a die-hard Chicago Cubs fan.

TERRANCE J. EVANS



Terrance J. Evans is a Partner in the San Francisco and Los Angeles offices of Duane Morris LLP, where he serves as the Co-Leader of the firm's [Banking and Financial Services](#) Practice. Mr. Evans is also the Co-Chair of the Duane Morris San Francisco Diversity and Inclusion Committee. His practice is focused on representing clients in federal and state trial and appellate courts across the United States including the United States Supreme Court.

Mr. Evans is the Chair of the California Lawyers Association ("CLA"), the largest voluntary state bar association in the United States representing the interests of more than 260,000 California lawyers. Mr. Evans is the first person of color and the first Black person in California history elected to this high-profile position. Mr. Evans is also the Director of Region IX of the National Bar Association, the largest Black Bar Association in the world. Mr. Evans is also Vice President North of the California Association of Black Lawyers.

In 2022, 2023, and 2024 Mr. Evans was honored by the Los Angeles Times as being one of the foremost leaders on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues in California. In 2024, Mr. Evans received the Cunningham Award from the California Association of Black Lawyers for his efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and civil rights. In 2025, Mr. Evans was named the Loren Miller Lawyer of the Year by the California Association of Black

Lawyers. Mr. Evans has raised more than \$650,000 for scholarships for underprivileged students.

JUDGE BARBARA KRONLUND



Superior Court Judge, San Joaquin County, Appointed 4/05; presiding judge of Juvenile Court 1/08-2010. Assigned to a direct Civil assignment 2011-present. Supervising judge of Civil, 1/14-1/15. Appointed Court Commissioner 10/95-4/05. Previously employed as a Deputy District Attorney, and as Supervising Deputy District Attorney of the Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Unit in San Joaquin County.

Winner of Judicial Council's Kleps Award for *In the Interest of Justice* video project; San Joaquin County annual Law Day award recipient 2010; 2011 Bernard S. Jefferson Award for Distinguished Service in Judicial Education; 2015 Sacramento Valley Chapter of American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) "Judge of the Year"; 2022 Cal-ABOTA William Bedsworth Judicial Civility Award; 2022, 2023, 2023- Unity Bar Awards; 2024 National ABOTA Champion of Justice; 2024 Alumna of Honor, McGeorge School of Law.

California Judges Association (CJA) Board member, 2011-2014 and vice-president; Member, Chair, & Vice-Chair of the CJA Judicial Ethics Committee, 2007-2018; Mandatory Judicial Ethics Instructor, past Member of the Governing Committee for the Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER), 2006-2012; past Member CJER's Fairness Education Committee, Judicial Council's Access & Fairness Advisory Committee, Judicial Council's Civil & Small Claims Advisory Committee; Member & Co-Chair Judicial Fairness Coalition, 2018-2023.

Resurrected Women Lawyers Section of the County Bar Association; Founded Judge Consuelo M. Callahan Inn of Court and served as first president, 2006-2008; Started Homeless Court for San Joaquin County, 2006; Founded Homeless Veteran Stand Down for San Joaquin County, 2007; Started Veterans Court for San Joaquin County, 2015.



Innovative Pathways to the Law: Capturing Students' Attention from Elementary to College

Resource List

This resource list includes key programs and initiatives mentioned during the discussion, as well as additional resources that were not previewed during the program but are available for those interested in supporting legal pipeline efforts. These resources can help you engage with pipeline initiatives, replicate successful programs, or connect students to legal career opportunities.




Elementary & Middle School Engagement

Programs introducing young students to the law, courts, and legal careers.

- **Judges in the Classroom (Statewide)**
 - Judicial Council program connecting judges with classrooms to educate students about the legal system.
 -  [Judges in the Classroom](#)
- **Just the Kids (Central Valley)**
 - Focuses on exposing elementary and middle school students to legal concepts and professionals.
- **The Justice and Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco Pathway Programs (San Francisco)**
 - Provides mentorship, classroom visits, and educational resources for students.
 -  [JDC Pipeline Programs](#)

High School & Pre-Law Preparation

Programs focused on career exposure, foundational skills, and mentorship.






- **Young Men's/Women's Leadership Conference (Los Angeles Superior Court)**
 - Annual event providing students with mentorship and exposure to legal careers.
 -  [LASC Youth Programs](#)
- **California LAW Pathways (Statewide)**
 - Connects high school and college students with structured pre-law education.
 -  [California LAW Pathways](#)
- **UCI Law Saturday Academy of Law (SAL) – For 9th Graders (Orange County)**
 - Prepares students for law-related careers through academic and leadership development.
 -  [UCI Law Outreach](#)

- **Outreach Video** – *(Highlighting pipeline initiatives)*

-  [Watch Here](#)

College Pipeline Programs

Programs supporting undergraduate students on the path to law school.

- **UCLA School of Law Academic Outreach Resource Center (Los Angeles and Central Valley)**
 - Provides resources, mentorship, and academic support to students from underrepresented backgrounds pursuing legal education.
 -  [UCLA School of Law Academic Outreach](#)
- **UCI Pre-Law Outreach Program (POP) – For Undergraduates (Orange County)**
 - LSAT prep, law school admissions support, and networking opportunities.
 -  [UCI Pre-Law Outreach Program](#)
- **King Hall Outreach Program (KHOP) – UC Davis School of Law (Yolo County)**
 - Prepares first-generation and underrepresented students for law school success.
(Considered for deletion)
 -  [KHOP at UC Davis](#)
- **CSU Stanislaus Court Observer Program (Stanislaus County)**
 - Provides college students with direct court experience and mentorship.
 -  [CSU Stanislaus Court Observer Program](#)
- **California Lawyers Association Pipeline Programs**
 - A variety of initiatives to support diverse law school applicants and young professionals.
 -  [CLA Pipeline Programs](#)

Get Involved

Ways to support legal pipeline initiatives:

- ✓ **Volunteer** – Participate in classroom visits, mock trials, and mentoring.
- ✓ **Mentor a Student** – Sign up for mentorship through programs like **California LAW Pathways** or **CLA Pipeline Programs**.
- ✓ **Host a Courthouse Visit** – Engage students by coordinating field trips or shadowing opportunities.
- ✓ **Share Resources** – Encourage students and educators to explore these programs.

Bench-Bar Coalition

Legal Community Partners Updates

April 28, 2025 Quarterly Meeting

1. Organization Name

**ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN AMERICA CALIFORNIA JUDICIAL OFFICERS
(AAACJO)**

2. What has your organization accomplished since the last BBC meeting?

We have presented educational programs on the Racial Justice Act, family law, and criminal law. In May we will present a program on juvenile justice and juvenile dependency. In February we organized the second annual AAACJO Black History Month Challenge and sent judges to over 50 elementary and middle schools statewide with curriculum celebrating California African American judges. We also joined the California Judges Association and presented a program for Black History Month analyzing the race discrimination case of *Green v. McDonnell Douglas*.

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Legal Community Partners Updates

April 28, 2025 Quarterly Meeting

1. Organization Name

CALIFORNIA ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION

2. What has your organization accomplished since the last BBC meeting?

Access to Courts: CalATJ released a report about the challenges California litigants face because of a large gap between demand for official transcripts and the supply of court reporters. Current law says only certified court reporters (CSRs) can make an official transcript in important case categories, and trial courts have too few court reporters for those cases. (available at <https://calatj.org/publications/a2r>). The report discusses policy options, including continuing measures to hire additional court reporters and, when necessary to close the gap, allowing electronic recording, conducted according to best practices, in some additional case categories. In the case before the California Supreme Court on this subject, the Amicus Curiae Committee of CalATJ has filed an amicus brief (available at <https://calatj.egnyte.com/dl/hrKRQVZfZF>) recognizing that due process requires closing the gap, and suggesting that, until and unless the Legislature chooses to act, a Special Master could hear from stakeholders to frame a long-term remedy.

Access to Legal Help: Working with other access to justice and legal aid advocates, CalATJ secured an additional \$25 million in funding through the Legislative Special session for legal aid programs to protect the constitutional and legal rights of vulnerable populations. CalATJ was authorized to provide \$5 million in grant funding for legal aid programs to protect the constitutional and legal rights of immigrant and LGBTQ+ communities.

Enhancing Lawyer Referral Services: With the State Bar, CalATJ successfully advocated to amend Professions Code §6155, enabling nonprofits to partner with certified Lawyer Referral Services (LRS) to connect clients with affordable legal representation. CalATJ is now collaborating with the State Bar to report on the views of stakeholders-including LRS operators, legal aid organizations, and low-income Californians on new regulations and on other ways for partnerships between nonprofits and LRSs to enhance access to justice for Californians.

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Legal Community Partners Updates

April 28, 2025 Quarterly Meeting

1. Organization Name

CALIFORNIA LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

2. What has your organization accomplished since the last BBC meeting?

CLA filed an amicus brief with the California Supreme Court in support of the Petition challenging the constitutionality of the current statutory limitations on the use of electronic court reporting. In April, CLA issued a statement in support of the rule of law. We are pursuing five bills sponsored by CLA Sections and introduced in 2025. We continue to support the activities of CLA's charitable arm, California Lawyers Foundation (CLF), and California Legal Pathways Collaborative (CLPC), a unit of CLF. In February, CLF and CLPC jointly sponsored their Legislative Day, where more than 250 high school students and their teachers met with political leaders, judges, attorneys, and others in the legal profession. In April, CLA held its own annual Legislative Day and Legislative Day Reception. In April, CLF hosted the first CLF Classic Charity Golf Tournament, with the proceeds directly supporting CLF's programs. We have held several successful conferences focused on specific practice areas, including the 48th Annual IP Institute, California International Arbitration Week, New Employment Practitioner Conference, and Annual Privacy Summit.

3. Is there something new you are working on that would be of interest to the BBC membership?

CLA has joined with other organizations that are sponsoring National Law Day of Action on May 1, and is planning other activities for Law Day. Our Litigation and Appellate Summit will take place on April 24 – April 25. Our Public Sector Conference, a full-day conference designed for those interested in the latest developments in California public sector labor and employment law, will take place on May 2. Our Solo and Small Firm Summit will take place on June 12 – June 13. Leveling Up Your Practice, a conference designed to help legal professionals, with a focus on marketing, business development, and practical strategies, will take place on July 17 – July 18. The CLA Annual Meeting and CLA & CJA Sneaker Ball will take place on September 11 – September 13 at the Sheraton Universal Hotel in Universal City.

Bench-Bar Coalition

Legal Community Partners Updates

April 28, 2025 Quarterly Meeting

1. Organization Name

Middle Eastern North African Judicial Officers of CS (MENA JOC)

2. What has your organization accomplished since the last BBC meeting?

Hosted a panel on Pathways to the Bench with Affinity bar associations featuring Deputy Appointment Secretary Adam Hoffman; started our judicial endorsement program.

3. Is there something new you are working on that would be of interest to the BBC membership?

Started our judicial endorsement process. Interested candidates may obtain further information on the MENA JOC website.