

## Minority Bar Coalition Member Organizations:

Alameda-Contra Costa Trial Lawyers' Association  
Alameda County Bar Association  
Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area  
Asian American Criminal Trial Lawyers' Association  
Asian American Prosecutors Association  
Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Silicon Valley  
Association of Latino Marin Attorneys  
Association of Lawyers with Disabilities  
Bay Area Black Prosecutors Association  
Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom  
Bar Association of San Francisco  
Black Women Lawyers of Northern California  
Boalt Hall Women's Association  
California Association of Black Lawyers  
California Minority Counsel Program  
California Women Lawyers  
Charles Houston Bar Association  
Consumer Attorneys of California  
Contra Costa County Bar Association  
East Bay Diversity Bar Coalition  
East Bay La Raza Lawyers Association  
Filipino Bar Association, Northern California  
Iranian American Bar Association  
Jewish Bar Association of San Francisco  
Korean American Bar Association of Northern California  
La Raza Lawyers Association of Santa Clara County  
Marin County Bar Association  
Marin County Women Lawyers  
National Asian Pacific Islander Prosecutors Association  
National Native American Bar Association  
Queen's Bench Bar Association  
San Francisco La Raza Lawyers Association  
San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association  
San Mateo County Bar Association  
Santa Clara County Bar Association  
Santa Clara County Black Lawyers Association  
South Asian Bar Association of Northern California  
State Bar of California  
Thai American Attorneys of Northern California  
UC Hastings Legal Education Opportunity Program  
Vietnamese American Bar Association of Northern California  
Women Lawyers of Alameda County

[www.minoritybarcoalition.com](http://www.minoritybarcoalition.com)

# MBC

Presented with  
UC Hastings Legal Education Opportunity Program:

## 2016 Minority Bar Coalition Unity Awards

Wednesday, November 16th



*Keynote Speaker:*

The Honorable Sunil Kulkarni  
Judge, Superior Court of Santa Clara County

*Master of Ceremonies:*

Cometria C. Cooper, Esq.



## ABOUT MBC AND THE ANNUAL UNITY AWARDS

The Minority Bar Coalition is a coalition of minority bar organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area dedicated to the issues facing minority lawyers. Through unified action, the MBC empowers, encourages, and promotes the interests of minority lawyers and the legal community at large.

The annual Unity Awards recognize attorneys in our community who have been exemplary in promoting the cause of diversity in our community.

### **2016 MBC Co-Chairs:**

Sigrid Irias

Lauren Young Epstein

David Wei

### **BASF Board Members:**

Danielle Ochs

Maulik Shah

### **Barristers Counsel Liaison:**

Erin Morgan

*A special thank you to all of our sponsors.*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

MBC is looking for one or more individuals to join us as a co-chair and/or sit on the Bar Association of San Francisco's Board for 2016-2017 (2-year term). If you or a specific member of your organization would be a fit, please let them know about this opportunity or nominate them to us!

As part of the MBC leadership, you will meet and interact with leaders, including Presidents and Co-chairs of the 20+ diversity based bar associations in the Greater Bay Area and their thousands of active members. If selected as the MBC BASF Board Member or Liaison, you will sit on the BASF Board/Barristers' Council and shape bar initiatives, policy decision making, as well as meet with and interact with city, state, regional, and national decision-makers.

We encourage attorneys from diverse background, varying practices, experience levels (very junior to very experienced) and employment sectors to apply. To do so, please fill out a short application at <http://bit.ly/2fyQfGs>.

The application deadline is Friday, **November 18, 2016 at 5:00pm PT**. Interested applicants with questions may contact [dwei@ax-law.com](mailto:dwei@ax-law.com) and [maulikshah@gmail.com](mailto:maulikshah@gmail.com).

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
The Honorable Sunil R. Kulkarni



**Adante Pointer**

**UC Hastings Legal Education Opportunity Program**

Adante Pointer is a tireless fighter for the victims of police abuse. During the past ten years, he has shepherded grieving families through the legal system to obtain justice after they'd been denied it. In 2007, he and his associate, Mr. Ben Nisenbaum, won a six-million-dollar jury verdict against the City of Oakland in a federal civil rights suit against two decorated police officers for falsely arresting their clients. Later, he filed lawsuits on behalf of the parents of Alex Nieto, who was shot to death by police in his neighborhood and Mario Woods, who was shot to death by police officers in San Francisco. He currently represents the families of Luis Pat Gonora, a homeless immigrant, and Anthony Nunez, a suicidal teenager in San Jose, who were both killed by police earlier this year.

His actions, demeanor, and record exemplify a consistent and relentless commitment to justice. A man of his word, he lives by his creed—"If you're going to abuse your authority and no one's going to hold you responsible, I will."

**Brenda Aguilar-Guerrero**

**Women Lawyers of Alameda County**

Brenda Aguilar-Guerrero served as president of the Women Lawyers of Alameda County for two years. Under her leadership we remained a dynamic and unified board. We awarded stipends to women law students studying for the bar, hosted MCLE trainings and networking mixers, and put on our annual Judge's Dinner

Ms. Aguilar-Guerrero heads Meyers Nave's statewide Eminent Domain and Inverse Condemnation Practice Group. Prior to joining Meyers Nave, she was the managing partner of Erickson, Beasley and Hewitt. Aside from being the immediate past president of WLAC, she is also a member of East Bay La Raza Association and has served as the UC Berkeley Alumni Delegate to the California State Legislature. She received her J.D. from UCLA law school and her undergraduate degree from UC Berkeley.

Appointed by Governor Jerry Brown in 2013, Judge Kulkarni was the first South Asian American state judge appointed in Northern California.

Previously, he practiced civil litigation involving copyright law, patents, and labor issues with the General Counsel's Office at the University of California. Prior to that position, Judge Kulkarni was a partner at Morrison and Foerster LLP.

Judge Kulkarni was born in Los Angeles, and grew up in King City, California, in southern Monterey County. He received a B.S. from U.C. Berkeley and a law degree from the University of California Hastings College of the Law.

An emeritus member of SABA-NC, Judge Kulkarni served as endorsements co-chair and vice president of that organization. He was on the board and Treasurer of Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto from 2009-2013, served as volunteer mediator for the Northern District of California from 2011-2013, and was a temporary judge for Santa Clara County traffic court from 2012-2013.

We are honored to have Judge Kulkarni with us this evening.

## 2016 UNITY AWARDEES

---

### **Shawn D. Tillis**

#### **Alameda Contra Costa Trial Lawyers Association**

Shawn Tillis' strong voice and call for action for "bravery needed to bring about change, to be honest, to be vulnerable, and to be active" so that we can achieve diversity in the California Bar has energized Alameda Contra Costa Trial Lawyers' Association board and members to re-assess our efforts to diversify the plaintiff bar, the criminal defense bar and family law bar. Bravo to ACCTLA's 2016 Editor of The Verdict Magazine!

Shawn Tillis rejoined Winer, McKenna & Burritt, LLP in August 2009. He had previously worked for the firm as an associate from 2003 to 2006. Prior to returning to Winer, McKenna & Burritt, LLP, he worked as a Barrister in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. In Canada, his focus was personal injury and criminal defense. Shawn's practice at Winer, McKenna & Burritt, LLP focuses on personal injury, employment and organization harassment and discrimination, and therapist malpractice. He specializes in cases involving sexual abuse and catastrophic mental and emotional damages. His unique background and experiences enable him to communicate complicated emotional damages in simple language. Shawn received his undergraduate degree in Economics from U.C. Santa Cruz in 1993 and his Juris Doctorate degree from Golden Gate University Law School in 2001. While at Golden Gate, he focused on the area of judicial opinion writing. He worked as an extern for U.S. District Court Judge Sandra Brown Armstrong and as a Legal Research Analyst at the California Continuing Education of the Bar. He received the California Jurisprudence Award in Constitutional Law and the CALI Award in Judicial Decisions Making- a course in judicial deliberation and opinion writing taught by U.S District Court Judge James Ware and U.S. Magistrate Judge Maria Elena-James. He was the recipient of the Just the Beginning Foundation Conference Award in honor of the late Judge Cecil F. Poole. He is also a Diana Richmond Scholar. Shawn's hobbies include reading moral philosophy and political-jurisprudence articles.

### **Eumi Kim Lee**

#### **Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area**

Eumi Kim Lee has been active in AABA since 2005, and a member of its Board of Directors since 2009. "Eumi was the first female Korean American president of AABA. Under her presidency, AABA refocused on promoting diversity both in terms of racial diversity and gender diversity. For example, under her direction, AABA hosted a discussion on race and police where we invited local activists, district attorneys, public defenders, and Richmond Police Chief to provide insight on how race and police should intersect. AABA also hosted another sold-out event on gender diversity in tech industry, in light of the Ellen Pao trial.

Throughout her career, Eumi has engaged in extensive amounts of pro bono litigation involving immigration and civil rights issues, including an amicus brief on behalf of Fred Korematsu, the Bar Association of San Francisco, and various civil rights organizations, in the enemy combatant case *Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426 (2004).

### **Sue Ra**

#### **Asian American Criminal Trial Lawyers Association**

Sue Ra is a tireless advocate for her clients in her capacity as a public defender. She is also a wonderful leader in the Asian American legal community with her commitment to diversity, legal access for low-income communities and raising the awareness of criminal justice issues to Asian American communities.

Sue has been a deputy public defender at the Alameda County Public Defender's Office since 2008. She has litigated cases at all levels—from misdemeanor DUIs to life felony cases.

Earlier this year, she co-chaired her first death penalty case. The death-eligible allegation was defeated after an extensive evidentiary hearing, setting the stage for a favorable resolution that Sue was able to negotiate for her client.

In her current assignment, she juggles a high-volume parole revocation practice and appears in the innovative parole

Government and East Asian Studies, from Wesleyan University. Suhi has lived in Korea, Japan, and Canada and is fluent in Korean and conversant in Japanese.

Suhi served with distinction as KABANC's president from 2015-2016. She inaugurated the women's committee and helped organize events that focused on women's careers and leadership training. She has also been active as a liaison with the Korean Consulate General in San Francisco, helping to bridge the gap between first generation immigrants and their American cousins. Finally, as a practitioner of immigration law, Suhi has worked tirelessly to help individuals from various corners of the globe share in the American dream.

### **Sharon Alkire**

#### **Queen's Bench Bar Association**

Sharon Alkire is a family law practitioner handling marriage and domestic partnership matters. Ms. Alkire began her legal career as a Fellow at the Alameda County Family Justice Center, studying intimate partner violence (IPV) in LGBTQ communities. There she developed a deep respect and compassion for people struggling to leave abusive relationships. Ms. Alkire continued this work as a pro bono attorney at Bay Area Legal Aid and has recently opened her own family law practice.

Ms. Alkire has strong roots in the Bay Area and works to promote the initiative, creativity, and diversity of her communities by proudly sitting on the WLAC Board of Directors and establishing the first Queen's Bench Bar Association Diversity Committee. "Equality is the ability to fulfill one's own potential without the oppressive yoke of becoming 'alike,' rather than being seen as equal only when one mirrors the dominant culture," she says. This ideal forms the basis of Ms. Alkire's work as an attorney and a person.

Ms. Alkire is the founding and longtime chair of the Queen's Bench Diversity Committee, an active member of BALIF and the LGBTQ community, and a strong advocate for marriage equality.

### **Xochitl Carrion**

#### **San Francisco La Raza Lawyers Association:**

Xochitl Carrion is an "out-and-proud" Queer Latina of Mexican/Puerto-Rican descent that works as an Assistant District Attorney in San Francisco. Prior to being a DA, she worked as a real estate attorney representing non-profit affordable housing developers, government agencies, and private parties throughout the state of California. Carrion has held leadership positions in more than thirty non-profit and civic organizations at the local, state, and national level. For example, in 2011, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Carrion to the California Law Revision Commission, where she served as the 2012-2013 chair. She was the youngest person to serve as a member, chair, and vice-chair, and the only Latina/o that was Senate-confirmed to sit as a commissioner. The latest of many recognitions Carrion has received for her work is UC Hastings College of Law naming Carrion the 2015 Rising Alumna of the Year.

### **Vidhya Prabhakaran**

#### **South Asian Bar Association of Northern California**

Vid has been heavily involved in SABA-NC for many years. During his two-year tenure term as Co-President, he led many efforts, including revamping the endorsements committee to create an adequate judicial pipeline for South Asian attorneys, and driving our civil rights efforts. Under his watch, the organization collaborated more closely with other bar associations and continued to run a highly successful pro bono clinic.

Vid is a partner with Davis Wright Tremaine, where he is a California energy attorney focused on matters related to greenhouse gas reduction, ratemaking, safety, and procurement. He represents a wide range of clients including investor-owned utilities, municipal utilities, community choice aggregators, energy service providers, independent power producers, large-scale renewable companies, energy storage companies, distributed energy resource companies, large energy consumers, and energy technology companies. Vid has substantial experience before the California Public Utilities Commission, the California Energy Commission, the California Air Resources Board, the California Independent System Operator, and the California Legislature.

Before joining the California Appellate Law Group, Ben served as of counsel to the San Francisco appellate boutique Eisenberg & Hancock, and practiced with top litigators at the national firms Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan and Williams & Connolly. He also served as a law clerk to Judge Carlos Bea of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, where he analyzed dozens of appeals and en banc petitions on all topics of federal law.

Ben is the founder and longtime chair of the Appellate Section of the Bar Association of San Francisco's Barristers Club, and in that role has moderated dozens of panels with appellate judges, practitioners, and professors on topics related to appellate law and practice. In 2013, the Bar Association of San Francisco presented Ben with its "Outstanding Barrister" award, in honor of his "extraordinary contribution to" the Bar Association and his "commitment to the ideals of legal justice and professional excellence." Ben is a member of the Board of Directors of the Barristers Club, and also served on the advisory board to OneJustice, an organization that supports California legal nonprofit groups.

Ben has been selected as a Northern California Superlawyer "Rising Star" for the field of appellate law every year since 2011. He's appeared in the Los Angeles Times and the National Law Journal, and frequently authors articles relating to appellate practice and constitutional law for The Recorder, The Daily Journal, and Corporate Counsel.

Ben graduated in the top of his class from the Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago, where he was an editor of the Law Review, argued for the national moot court team, and published an article in the Northwestern Law Review on free speech and election law. He has a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Trinity College in Connecticut.

Ben Feuer founded the Jewish Bar Association of San Francisco two years ago, and became its first president. Since then, the group has grown to more than 300 individuals on its mailing list, and has several prominent law firm and legal support sponsors. Ben has actively sought to promote positive relationships in the community, including by coordinating the JBASF's first joint happy hour co-sponsor to be the Iranian-American Bar Association.

#### **Suhi Koizumi**

##### **Korean American Bar Association of Northern California**

Suhi Koizumi is a Senior Associate with Minami Tamaki LLP in our Immigration Practice Group. Suhi partners with executives and legal and human resources personnel to address a wide spectrum of immigration issues of corporate clients.

Suhi advises clients on all aspects of immigration matters including nonimmigrant and immigrant business visa, investor visa, labor certification application, I-9, corporate immigration program management, and compliance. She has extensive experience in working with startups, emerging companies, mid-sized and Fortune 500 corporations in a variety of industries including technology, computer, electronics, software, biotechnology, media/publishing, banking/financial services, semiconductor, medical devices, fashion/apparel, food services, retail, manufacturing, educational institutes, and nonprofit organizations.

Suhi serves as President (2015-2016) of the Korean American Bar Association of Northern California. For three decades, KABANC has served the Korean American community and encouraged the professional growth of Korean American lawyers and law students in Northern California.

Suhi has been recognized by Super Lawyers in the Rising Star category from 2010 through 2016. She has served as General Counsel for the Asian Business League of San Francisco and as a board member of the Korean American Chamber of Commerce. She is also active in civic organizations. She regularly volunteers at immigration clinics where she advises indigent clients and has promoted the rights of women fleeing from persecution at the Center for Gender and Refugee studies.

Prior to joining Minami Tamaki LLP, Suhi practiced immigration law at several firms in San Francisco including boutique immigration law firms, a large multi-practice firm, and a global full service immigration firm. She received her law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, and her Bachelor of Arts degree with Honors,

reentry court, where she helps connect parolees with much-needed services designed to assist their reentry into society.

Sue majored in political science and minored in Asian American studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to going to law school, she became committed to the idea of indigent defense while assisting attorneys in the dependency division of the Public Defender's Office (now the East Bay Children's Law Office). She attended the University of San Francisco School of Law, where she served on the boards for APALSA and ASUC, as well as the editorial board for the Journal of Law and Social Challenges. She received the Pursuit of Justice Award at commencement.

She currently serves on the Judiciary Committees for the Korean American Bar Association of Northern California and the Alameda County Bar Association. She is committed to the idea that a bench should be reflective and representative of the diversity of the community it serves.

#### **Brian Wong**

##### **Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Silicon Valley**

Brian has a long history of leadership in APABA Silicon Valley, having served as a President in 2014, a Board Member for a number of years, and co-chair of various committees, including our Diversity & Inclusion Committee. Brian's dedication to APABA Silicon Valley remains strong even after his tenure as President, and we are stronger due to his continued investment in furthering our mission. Brian has also mentored many students and attorneys, as well as becoming increasingly involved with diversity initiatives at the national level through his position as co-chair of the Diversity & Inclusion committee for the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association.

Brian Wong is Corporate Counsel for Gap Inc.'s Global Employment Law team. Prior to joining Gap Inc., Brian worked at Seyfarth Shaw LLP as a member of the firm's Complex Discrimination Litigation team. He also previously worked at Baker McKenzie in Palo Alto, where he advised global companies on a full spectrum of domestic and international employment issues. A Silicon Valley native, Brian attended UC Berkeley and received his law degree from Boston College.

#### **Brandon Marquis Lawrence**

##### **Bar Association of San Francisco**

Brandon Lawrence deserves a Unity Award due to his sincere commitment to increasing diversity in the legal profession. He has been a tireless supporter of BASF's Destination Law School Program and its Open Doors 1L Job Shadow Program. Brandon has served as a speaker on many Destination Law School panels which are targeted to educate and provide resources to diverse undergraduate students who aspire to attend law school. In addition, Brandon helped to facilitate the Aids Legal Referral Panel's participation in the Open Doors 1L Job Shadow Program, a program for first year law students from diverse backgrounds with limited exposure to the legal profession. He is also a consistent supporter of a wide variety of BASF diversity events.

Brandon received his B.A. in Philosophy from the Johns Hopkins University and his J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of Law. During law school, Brandon interned at ALRP for two years, and also interned at the Eviction Defense Collaborative and at Cooper, White & Cooper in their Professional Liability department. Additionally, while in law school, Brandon served on the executive board of both the Black Law Students Association and Pride Law, and was a member of the Public Interest Law Foundation. Before becoming a Staff Attorney at ALRP, Brandon worked at the Eviction Defense Collaborative defending tenants in unlawful detainer cases. Brandon brings a passion and dedication to working with underrepresented populations and works hard to bring awareness and sensitivity to those who do not have access to legal representation.

#### **Lindsey M. Rosellini**

##### **Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom**

Lindsey Rosellini is BALIF's Community Ambassador Chair. In that role, Lindsey coordinates with all other MBC organizations. Lindsey is responsible for swapping tickets with other MBC organization galas and attends many other MBC organization's Galas. Lindsey also promotes other MBC events through BALIF.

Lindsey works in the Health Consumer Center of Bay Area Legal Aid providing representation on health care access cases for low-income individuals.

Lindsey received her B.A. in Communications from Saint Mary's College of California where they were also President of the campus Gay-Straight Alliance. They received their J.D. from the University of La Verne College of Law where they also served as President of the Pride Law Alliance. While attending law school in Southern California, Lindsey was a member of the Lesbian & Gay Lawyers Association of Los Angeles.

This is Lindsey's second year with the BALIF Board. Lindsey had served as a member of the CAC since mid-2013 prior to election onto the Board. Lindsey is excited to build stronger ties within the MBC to promote diversity and inclusiveness within the legal profession and within the LGBTQ Community.

**Megan M. Lawson**

**Black Women Lawyers of Northern California**

Megan Lawson is a fierce advocate for diversity in the profession. She has demonstrated that advocacy and has been a leader in diversity organizations since law school and continues to remain committed to diversity organizations and initiatives even as an extremely busy associate.

Megan is one of the most dependable members of BWLNC. As a board member, she has stepped up to take on additional roles, specifically being a primary contact with our law school liaisons and working to engage the next generation of lawyers. Megan demonstrates her commitment to diversity by exhibiting great leadership, challenging the status quo and being a role model for her fellow BWLNC members and those coming behind us.

Megan Lawson is an employment law attorney at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP. At Orrick, she is a member of the diversity committee, the summer associate committee and the committee for Orrick's Diversity & Inclusion Day in Silicon Valley. Megan attended Northwestern University School of Law, where she was the Executive Editor of the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, President of the Black Law Students Association, Co-chair of the Class of 2013 Graduation Committee and a student associate for the MacArthur Justice Center and the Investor Protection Complex Civil Litigation Centers at Bluhm Legal Clinic.

**Eric Casher**

**Charles Houston Bar Association**

Eric Casher is an active member of various groups such as the Charles Houston Bar Association (CHBA), California Association of Black Lawyers, the California Bar Foundation and the California Fair Political Practices Commission. He has been assisting public and private clients with legal and regulatory matters throughout California for nearly 10 years. His comprehensive experience ranges from public law and public contracting to construction litigation, workplace investigations and public-private partnerships.

Eric has a particular focus on the broad range of challenges that government agencies, cities, counties and special districts face as they implement their mandates and missions. Eric currently serves as General Counsel of the East Bay Dischargers Authority. In addition to providing general and special counsel services to public entities, Eric is an experienced litigator with a published California Court of Appeals opinion following his successful representation of a municipality in a bid protest litigation case.

**Alberto T. Rosas**

**East Bay La Raza Lawyers Association**

Alberto T. Rosas is an attorney with the California Franchise Tax Board – Legal Division. Specifically, he is assigned to the Business Entities Tax Bureau. Prior to joining the California FTB, Mr. Rosas was an associate attorney with the law firm of Watson, Hoffe & Hass in Contra Costa County, where his law practice was equally divided between transactional matters and litigation. Additionally, Mr. Rosas was an associate attorney with the law firm of Sundeen Salinas & Pyle in Alameda County. In 2012, Mr. Rosas served as the legal counsel of Latino Connection PAC, a political action committee in Alameda County, and he was dedicated to making sure the PAC endorsed and supported diverse candidates running in judicial elections.

He attended San Francisco State University, obtained a Bachelor of Arts in English, and a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice. He graduated with honors: summa cum laude. He attended the University of San Francisco School of Law, where he was awarded the following awards: C.A.L.I. Award for Excellence in Employment Discrimination Law; C.A.L.I. Award for Excellence in Federal Income Tax Law; C.A.L.I. Award for Excellence in Immigration Law; and the John L. Brennan Award for Innovation and Creativity in Advocacy.

Mr. Rosas is a board member of the East Bay La Raza Lawyers Association (2010-present). He is a former Co-Director of the Minority Bar Coalition (2012-2014), and he previously served on the Executive Committee of the Barristers Section, Alameda County Bar Association (2012-2014). Website: [www.AlbertRosas.com](http://www.AlbertRosas.com)

**Vanessa Candelaria**

**Filipino Bar Association of Northern California**

Throughout her legal career, Vanessa Candelaria has practiced exclusively in the area of family law. With her legal training and knowledge, she provides compassion and advocacy for her clients. Vanessa's experience working on a broad spectrum of family law matters include divorce, pre-divorce counseling and planning, premarital agreements, complex marital property issues, high conflict child custody disputes, child and spousal support issues and domestic violence prevention. Vanessa protects her clients' assets and the best interests of her clients and their children. She represents clients in public court and before private judicial officers. In addition, she serves as a consulting attorney for clients who are preparing for divorce, going through the divorce process, are in mediation and who are seeking a second opinion on his or her family law matter.

Prior to earning her Juris Doctorate degree from Golden Gate University School of Law, Vanessa earned dual degrees in English and Psychology and Social Behavior and a minor in Political Science from the University of California – Irvine. While at the University of California – Irvine, Vanessa was the first recipient of the "Most Inspirational Student" Scholarship Award. At Golden Gate University, Vanessa was accepted into the Honors Lawyering Program and she was a judicial extern for retired family law Commissioner, Hon. Marjorie Slabach, of the San Francisco Unified Family Court.

Vanessa received excellent training and experience from the well-known and highly respected Bay Area law firms, Fox & Bank LLP and Viola Law Firm, P.C. In 2012, Vanessa completed an intense, weeklong trial training course through the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA). She participated in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML) Mentoring Group from 2010 to 2012.

Vanessa is also an active member of the legal community. She is the immediate past President of the Filipino Bar Association of Northern California (FBANC), a District Representative for the American Bar Association Young Lawyer's Division and was a former Co-Chair of the Family Law Section of the San Mateo County Bar Association. She is a member of the Contra Costa County Bar Association and the Alameda County Bar Association. Since becoming an attorney, Vanessa has regularly volunteered at local legal clinics throughout the Bay Area.

**Babak Yousefzadeh**

**Iranian American Bar Association**

Despite his endless responsibilities as a partner at Sheppard Mullin, Babak Yousefzadeh still finds the time to promote legal diversity and elevate the discourse around legal issues involving the Iranian-American community in his second year as the President of the Iranian American Bar Association.

**Benjamin Feuer**

**Jewish Bar Association of San Francisco**

Ben Feuer is the chairman of the California Appellate Law Group. He has devoted his entire career to appellate law, and serves as lead appellate counsel in all types of federal and California appeals and writs, including appeals from judgments arising in business and commercial disputes, high-value personal injury actions, environmental and natural resource litigation, real estate controversies, trade secret and fraud claims, anti-SLAPP motions, and First Amendment matters. He also consults on appeals and complex motions, and acts as amicus counsel.