



CAALA President  
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## Welcome to the 41st CAALA Vegas

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION IS FOLLOWED BY NOMINATIONS FOR THE TRIAL LAWYER OF THE YEAR AND RISING STAR AWARDS

It's that time of year again; CAALA Vegas! Did you know that the annual convention started in 1983 as just a seminar? That's right, a seminar in a desert almost 300 miles away from Los Angeles has transformed into the largest convention of trial attorneys in the nation. This transformation certainly was not achieved overnight nor was it possible by our mere attendance. (Though, we're proud that we do have record-breaking attendance year after year.)

CAALA Vegas is made possible by these dedicated and hard-working individuals who collaborate, plan, and execute all year long: The CAALA Staff: Kwedi Moore, Executive Director; Bill Smith, Director of Finance and Operations; Fatima Jones, Education and Events Manager; Araceli Murillo, Membership Manager; Martha Ruiz, Office Administrator; and Margie Ruiz, Events and Member Services Coordinator.

This year is extra special because it is Bill Smith's 25th Anniversary with CAALA! It is no secret that Bill's commitment and dedication have been integral in CAALA's success. Bill's service has provided us with a wealth of knowledge that is simply priceless. It has been an honor and privilege to work alongside him. Bill, thank you for 25 years of service; CAALA would not be what it is without you.

Additionally, thank you to all our speakers and guests, especially those from the bench and other side of the bar. Civility lies at the heart of our legal profession, playing a crucial role in upholding the principles of justice, fairness, and professionalism. To learn from them and see their points of view makes CAALA Vegas that much more dynamic of a conference. Last but not least, thank you to all our exhibitors. Their services and products help us run our practices more efficiently, better present our evidence to a jury, and help us obtain justice for our clients. Their sponsorship of our events are what make it the most fun-filled weekend. Without all of you, CAALA Vegas would still be that little seminar in the desert with just 300

attendees, 31 speakers, and eight exhibitors.

As we have been gearing up for CAALA Vegas, we also recently inducted four exceptional lawyers into our CAALA Hall of Fame: Gary Dordick, Carl Douglas, Gretchen Nelson, and Brian Panish. We are so grateful for their friendship, leadership, and their exemplification of civility and excellence.

### Trial Lawyer of the Year nominations

We are now accepting nominations for the 2023 Annual Trial Lawyer of the Year and Rising Star Awards. For the Trial Lawyer of the Year Award, the Board of Governors shall consider the following factors: the number of cases tried, the nature and complexity of each case, the dollar amount obtained in each case, and the significance of each verdict. Other factors to be considered are contributions and involvement in CAALA, significant appellate decisions, standing and reputation in the community, and the social and legal significance of the member's contributions to the legal profession.

As to the Rising Star Award, the award shall recognize the significant achievements of a CAALA member who has practiced law for fewer than 10 years. The Rising Star award is principally based on accomplishments for the period of August 1, 2022 through July 21, 2023, and is not limited to the results in a single case. Among the factors that may be taken into consideration are hard-fought victories that overcame challenging obstacles, a result that achieves justice (regardless of the amount) for a client who would not otherwise have a voice or an advocate to stand for them, whether the individual represents the best ideals of CAALA, service to CAALA and the organized trial bar, and the individual's standing and reputation in the community.

The award committees will be reviewing the nominations soon and the Board of Governors typically vote on the winners at the November Board meeting. The winners last year were J. Bernard

Alexander (2022 Trial Lawyer of the Year) and Shannon H.P. Ward (2022 Rising Star). It is my favorite Board meeting of the year along with the Secretary Election in October. They are inspirational evenings where we come together to honor our organization's finest lawyers and elect our future leader. If you are a CAALA member, we hope to see you there.

### Plaintiff Trial Academy

This year is The CAALA Plaintiff Trial Academy's 10 Year Anniversary. The Plaintiff Trial Academy is a series of intensive training sessions designed to teach and demonstrate basic and advanced trial techniques through preparation and practice. Seasoned trial lawyers train and share their knowledge with the next generation of lawyers. CAALA members can apply for admission, and space is limited. The Plaintiff Trial Academy has proudly graduated hundreds of trial lawyers who are ready to go try cases and fight for justice.

It is my honor to recognize and thank The Plaintiff Trial Academy's Inaugural Committee members, Mike Arias, Chair (CAALA's 2018 Past President), and my fellow Co-Chairs: Michael Cohen, Christa Ramey (CAALA's 2023 Treasurer) and Douglas Silverstein (CAALA's Immediate Past President). I would also like to recognize the current committee: Mike Arias, Lourdes DeArmas, David deRubertis, Maryann Gallagher, Dan Kramer and Twila White. And a big "thank you" to all of our instructors who graciously volunteered their time to substantively review and teach trial techniques, drawing from methods such as the Gerry Spence Method, Rules of the Road, Improv for Trial, Trial Lawyers College, Trial School, and many more. As they say, "A rising tide lifts all ships."

Cheers to another successful CAALA Vegas and year! Have a great time learning, networking, relaxing, and having fun.