

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Looking Forward to 2010

by Ameer A. Mikacich

Welcome to a new Queen's Bench year and a new decade! I am privileged to be your 2010 Queen's Bench President for the upcoming year. It is both exciting and inspiring to assume the presidency of an organization that has been in existence since 1921. Many presidents have gone before me, and as I look forward to the coming year, I am influenced by the wonderfully talented, intelligent and accomplished women who have proudly served on the Board of this organization. For nearly 90 years, we have devoted our spare time—those few and far between hours in the day when we are not managing cases, clients, offices and families—to community involvement. It is a daunting task to balance the many demands of daily living, and yet the dedicated members of the Board of Directors of the Queen's Bench demonstrate that where there is a will, there is a way.

This year, we are fortunate to be working with Sarah King as the First Vice President. Sarah practices with Tufts, Stephenson & Kasper LLP and has already enthusiastically jumped into the planning stage of many great events for 2010. In the position of Second Vice President, we have another returning veteran of the Board of Directors, Rebecca Hooley, of the Contra Costa County Counsel's Office. Rebecca is busy working on the annual Induction Ceremony and tracking our membership activities. As our 2010 Treasurer, we are pleased to have Lisa Freitas of Freitas Family

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Meet the 2010 Queen's Bench Board Of Directors!

Ameer A. Mikacich, President

Ameer is a partner with the firm of Filice Brown Eassa & McLeod, LLP with offices in Oakland and Los Angeles. Her civil practice emphasizes general product liability, premises liability, labor and employment matters, breach of contract, toxic torts and personal injury. Ameer has an active litigation practice and has tried many complex civil cases to verdict in the courts of the San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California. Ameer has served on the national faculties of HB Litigation Conferences and the Association of Defense Counsel. In addition to Queen's Bench, Ameer is a member of the Alameda County Bar Association, the San Francisco Bar Association, the Los Angeles Bar Association, Defense Research Institute and California Women Lawyers.



Sarah M. King, First Vice President

Sarah is a partner with Tufts, Stephenson & Kasper, LLP. She specializes in estate and tax planning, probate, charitable giving and non-profit representation. Prior to joining Tufts, Stephenson & Kasper, Sarah was a partner at Howard Rice Nemerovski Canady Falk & Rabkin, an associate at the



New York office of Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison, and a law clerk to the Honorable Warren Ferguson, of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Prior to law school, Sarah worked for a human rights organization in Lima, Peru and taught English in Japan. Sarah received her J.D. from Stanford Law School in 1996 and expects to receive her LLM in Taxation from Golden Gate University in May. Sarah and her husband have four children.

Rebecca Hooley, Second Vice President

Rebecca is a Deputy County Counsel for Contra Costa County. She handles matters related to taxation, property assessment and estate administration. Prior to joining the County Counsel's Office, she was a litigation associate at the firm of Bingham McCutchen. Rebecca received a J.D. from Columbia Law School in 2000.



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2010 Board of Directors

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Lisa A. Freitas, Treasurer

Lisa is a solo practitioner who started her own practice, Freitas Family Law, last Fall. She is a divorce mediator as well as a custody mediator and a Special Master. Lisa also prepares pre-nuptial agreements and offers consulting services for individuals going through mediation and other family law related matters. Prior to starting her own practice, Lisa was a family law associate at Hanson Crawford Family Law Group and a litigation associate at Morgan Lewis & Bockius and Fenwick & West. Lisa earned her J.D. from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law and her B.A. in psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is currently attending Golden Gate University to earn a Masters in Psychology, with a Marriage and Family Therapy concentration. She plans to incorporate therapeutic services into her practice when she becomes a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Lisa is proficient in Spanish and Portuguese.



Vanessa Hierbaum, Secretary

Vanessa has been a partner with KAYE•MOSE•HIERBAUM LLP since 2007. Prior to joining KAYE•MOSE as an associate in 2000, she was an associate with the Law Offices of Iris F. Mitgang, a prominent family law firm in the East Bay. Vanessa's practice includes all aspects of family law including marital dissolutions, support, complex asset characterization and division and high conflict custody disputes. Vanessa's practice also includes probate and trust litigation and estate planning. Vanessa obtained her J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of Law in 1996.



Annie O'Donnell, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Annie is an associate at the firm Hedani, Choy, Spalding & Salvagione, LLP in San Francisco. Annie has been with Hedani Choy since she graduated from law school, and is now in her 7th year, working part-time, balancing career and motherhood. Her practice focuses on general civil litigation, lien negotiations, and plaintiff's personal injury. She obtained her J.D. from McGeorge School of Law, and her B.A. from the University of California, Davis. Annie joined Queen's Bench in 2003, and has been involved in the Business Development Committee, which she co-chaired for the past 3 years. She was an at-large director on the Board last year. Annie enjoys



Irish Dancing and spending time with her husband, RM, and their nineteen-month old toddler, Lucy.

Pauline Farmer-Koppenol, Director

Pauline is a patent attorney in the San Francisco office of Fenwick & West. Her practice focuses on serving technology and life sciences clients in prosecuting patent applications, providing intellectual property strategy and counseling, and negotiating joint research agreements and patent licenses. Additionally, she analyzes patent portfolios for life science clients and investors. She earned an M.S. in Chemistry and J.D. from the University of Michigan and a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Florida.



Mia Ottilia Hernandez, Director

Mia's practice focuses primarily on products liability and tort litigation. She represents automotive and other product manufacturers in personal injury, property damage, and wrongful death cases. In addition, Mia regularly handles pro bono work as a volunteer attorney for VLSP's Housing Negotiations Project (eviction defense). In 2008, Mia received the Eviction Defense Collaborative's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Tenants' Rights and, in 2007, Mia was awarded the Volunteer Legal Services Program of Bar Association of San Francisco's Outstanding Volunteer in Public Service Award. Mia is a member of the American Bar Association, Bar Association of San Francisco, Queen's Bench, and Defense Research Institute. She received her J.D. in 2006 from the University of Michigan and a B.A. in Psychology in 2002 from Cornell University.



Lisa K. Rauch, Director

Lisa is a Past President of Queen's Bench (2002) and Co-Chair of the Awards Committee. She practices product liability litigation with Howard Rome Martin & Ridley. She received her undergraduate degree from U.C. Berkeley and her J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of Law. She enjoys cooking, hiking, swimming and reading historical novels. Lisa lives in San Francisco with her husband and two daughters.



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2010 Board of Directors

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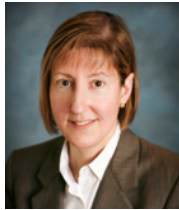
Holly Schaitberger, Director

In addition to serving on the Board, Holly serves as Co-Chair of the Queen's Bench Education Committee, the committee devoted to developing and organizing MCLE programs for the benefit of Queen's Bench members. Holly currently practices with the family law firm Maple, DeLacey & Mussallem LLP. With offices in San Francisco and Marin, Maple, DeLacey & Mussallem assists clients in all manner of family law matters throughout the Bay Area. Holly obtained her law degree cum laude from the University of San Francisco School of Law in 2005. As a law student, Holly served as a full-time extern law clerk to the Honorable Carlos T. Bea on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and interned as an investigator with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the San Francisco Public Defender.



Mary Catherine Wiederhold, Director

Mary Catherine is currently Chair of the Legislative Issues and Reproductive Rights Committee. She has been a member of Queen's Bench since 2007. She is a San Francisco based sole practitioner litigator with expertise in real estate and business litigation, representing businesses and individuals in state court. Mary Catherine's pro bono representations from the Bar Association of San Francisco, Aids Legal Referral Panel, California Lawyers for the Arts and the San Francisco Housing Rights Committee span a wide variety of real estate law issues. Mary Catherine grew up in Portland, Oregon. She acquired her J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of Law and her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to entering law school, Mary Catherine worked as a commercial real estate appraiser with a specialty in the valuation of complex senior housing projects located around the country. Mary Catherine enjoys debating legal issues with her husband Jonathan, a criminal defense appellate attorney.



Barbara Harris Chiang, Immediate Past President

Barb is a litigator whose practice focuses on employment cases including sex, age, race, disability discrimination, sexual harassment and wrongful discharge, and commercial litigation. She is a partner at the law firm of Dillingham & Murphy, LLP. Barb graduated from Missouri State University (f.k.a. Southwest Missouri State University) and obtained her J.D. from



the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law in 1997. She practiced law in Missouri for two years before moving to California. Prior to law school, Barb worked as an investigator for the Missouri Attorney General's Office in the Consumer Protection Division. In her spare time, Barb spends time with her husband Bill, daughter Mia (7) and son Carson (4). Barb has served on the Queen's Bench Board of Directors since 2004 and is currently the President of the Queen's Bench Foundation

President's Message

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Law minding our financial matters. Vanessa Hierbaum of the law firm of Kaye Moser Hierbaum LLP is serving as our 2010 Secretary. And finally, in the important position of Assistant Secretary/Treasurer and Newsletter Editor, we are privileged to have the dedication of Annie O'Donnell. Annie practices with Hedani, Choy, Spalding & Salvagione, LLP.

Rounding out the Board are Directors Lisa Rauch of Howard Rome Martin & Ridley; Pauline Farmer-Koppenol of Fenwick & West, LLP; Mia Hernandez of Shook Hardy & Bacon, LLP; Holly Schaitenburger of Maple, DeLacey & Mussallem, LLP; and Mary Catherine Wiederhold of the Law Offices of Mary Catherine Wiederhold. And last but certainly not least, Barbara Harris Chiang of Dillingham & Murphy, LLP is our Immediate Past President. In addition to her outstanding service as our 2009 President, Barbara is now providing us with her invaluable experience and guidance as we begin our new Board.

I look forward to working with each and every one of these amazing women and thank them in advance for giving of themselves and their precious "free" time to assist Queen's Bench as we launch a new year. And to our members, who have faithfully paid the membership fees and attended our events year after year, even in the face of a rough economy, we owe you our gratitude. Queen's Bench would not have survived for nearly nine decades without you. Thank you all, and we look forward to seeing you at our many exciting events throughout the new year!



ANNOUNCEMENTS ...

Conference Invitation: "Breaking the Barriers: Pathways to Power"

By Tammy Dawson,
Co-chair, Work-Life Balance Committee

The Bar Association of San Francisco's No Glass Ceiling Initiative Taskforce, in its efforts to cultivate women attorneys for meaningful leadership and economic positions in the legal profession, will be sponsoring a conference series, "Breaking the Barriers: Pathways to Power" in 2010. The first conference will take place on March 25 and is directed at more senior attorneys. As a member of the working group, I want to make sure Queen's Bench members are included in the invitation list. If you are within 2-3 years of partnership, were elected to partnership within the last 5 years, or are in-house counsel with some supervisory responsibilities, please email me at tammy.dawson@comcast.net so I can make sure you get an invitation. Please also email me if you are a mid-level associate or an entry-level associate (within your first 3 years of practice), and I will add you to the invitation list for our June or October conferences. Contact me with any questions.

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Sarah M. King

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

816 E. Fourth Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94401-3317
Telephone: 415-249-9280
Facsimile: 650-344-1588

E-mail: QueensBench@astound.net
Internet: www.queensbench.org

ADMINISTRATOR: Maurine Killough

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Crime After Crime: A Film by Yoav Potash

Thursday, February 4, 6:00 p.m. Film screening of the 66-minute, work-in-progress documentary *Crime After Crime*, about the legal battle to free Debbie Peagler. At the Delancey Street Screening Room, 600 The Embarcadero, San Francisco. SPECIAL GUESTS: Ms. Peagler, her attorneys, and the filmmaker plan to attend and participate in a Q&A after the film. Refreshments provided, no admission fee; donations will be requested after the film. See [flyer](#) for directions and parking.

Queen's Bench New Members

Please welcome the following new members who joined between December 15, 2009 and January 26, 2010:

- Kate Colendich
O'Melveny & Myers
- Farheena Habib
Bassi Martini Edlin & Blum, LLP
- Kimberly A. Madigan
Seeley P. Madigan, LLP
- Kimberly Millington
- Carolyn Zabrycki
Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP



CRIME AFTER CRIME

by Anne Beytin Torkington

Bringing light to an issue — that is a documentary filmmaker's job. Yoav Potash is just such a filmmaker, and he is making a film about an issue of major importance to Queen's Bench: How to help victims of domestic violence. Many volunteer women lawyers help such victims obtain restraining orders, but they don't usually expect to



defend them against the murder of their abusers. In the case of Deborah Peagler, recently released on parole after spending 26 years in prison, *pro bono* lawyers righted an injustice. Debbie, as she is known to her friends, went to prison before there was a battered woman's defense. After being forced into prostitution, beaten with a bullwhip, and repeatedly raped and tortured, she allegedly lured him to a park, where two other men killed him. The D.A. moved to impose the death penalty, but offered her a life sentence in exchange for her guilty plea. Fearing for her life, she took her public defender's advice and accepted the deal.

In 2002, a new California law permitted battered women prosecuted for alleged crimes against their abusers to re-open their case and produce exonerating evidence. The California Habeas Project took Debbie's case and recruited volunteer attorneys, who will appear at the Queen's Bench screening of the film on February 4th, to begin working to establish the extensive record of the abuse Debbie had endured.

In 2005, Debbie's attorneys met with Los Angeles County D.A. Steve Cooley and Chief Deputy D.A. Curt Livesay. Livesay was the D.A. who had approved the death penalty against Debbie 23 years earlier. Based on the new evidence presented by Debbie's attorneys, and a thorough review of the D.A.'s files, the District Attorney concluded that voluntary manslaughter — not first-degree murder — most accurately represented Debbie's level of culpability. At that time, voluntary manslaughter carried a sentence of 2-6 years. This means that at the very latest, Debbie should have been freed in 1989. District Attorney Cooley entered into a written deal to obtain Debbie's immediate release from prison.

An April 2006 Los Angeles Times article recounts what happened next: "Then Cooley changed his mind. His offer had set off a political battle in his office, according to court filings, with top level deputy prosecutors saying they should have been consulted." The D.A.'s broken promise resulted in the Los Angeles

Superior Court denying Debbie's petition for release.

The legal battle dragged on for another three years, and time became all the more precious when Debbie was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer in February of 2009. By this time the efforts of the *pro bono* legal team and the filmmaker had attracted media attention and a grassroots movement that lobbied numerous state agencies on Debbie's behalf. Finally, Debbie was released on parole in August of 2009. While she is battling lung cancer, she savors every moment she has with her family, and has made it her mission to speak out for other victims of abuse.

**YOU ARE INVITED TO A SCREENING ON
FEBRUARY 4, 2010
at 6:00 P.M. of**

CRIME AFTER CRIME

**The story of Debbie Peagler's struggle.
*Debbie is planning to attend!***

**At the Delancey Street Screening Room
600 The Embarcadero, San Francisco**

See flyer for details.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

- 2** **Board of Directors Meeting**
6:00 p.m.
Dillingham & Murphy, LLP
- 3** **Juvenile Hall Project**
7:00 p.m.
Youth Guidance Center
- 4** **Film "Crime After Crime"**
6:00 p.m. Screening
The Delancey Street Screening Room
600 The Embarcadero, San Francisco
See flyer.
- 17** **Juvenile Hall Project**
7:00 p.m.
Youth Guidance Center



March

- 2** **Board of Directors Meeting**
6:00 p.m.
Dillingham & Murphy, LLP
- 3** **Juvenile Hall Project**
7:00 p.m.
Youth Guidance Center
- 17** **Juvenile Hall Project**
7:00 p.m.
Youth Guidance Center
- 25** **Annual Induction Ceremony**
Time and location TBD



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816 E. Fourth Avenue

San Mateo, CA 94401-3317

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