
Nomination Packet for Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom (BALIF)

California State Bar 2012 Diversity Award for Bar Association



*2011-2012 Board Members for BALIF,
the nation's oldest and largest bar association of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals,
and transgender (LGBT) persons working in the field of law*

- **Membership Committee**

Chair, On Lu, Mount, Spelman & Fingerman, P.C.



Over the past two years, the Membership Committee has increased BALIF membership by a whopping 60% (from 400 to nearly 700). We've done this through a three-pronged strategy of proving value and relevance to current members, aggressively recruiting new members, and reaching-out to former members. We strive to be innovative and cutting-edge, while making sure the needs of our members are met. Here are some of the hallmarks of our year...

- BALIF's monumental **"It Gets Better" Series** honored our legacy while instilling hope in today's youth. Twenty-five of BALIF's best and brightest -- all ages, all races, all genders -- showed how being bullied inspired them to fight back using the law. Many of our contributors are heroes in our community -- including attorneys that argued against Prop 8 in court; the first

lesbian judge in the country; and the first transgender judge in the country. We affirmed not only that “it gets better” but also reinforced what BALIF members are doing to MAKE IT BETTER.

- We paired-up with SF’s gay doctors to host the **Mid-Autumn Salon** for an evening of dynamic dialogue and intellectual discourse. We took our inspiration from Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas’ home in Paris circa 1934 – an elegant space populated by distinguished ladies and gentlemen discussing the issues of the day.



- In the spirit of the daring and uncharted, we introduced our “**Laughter**” -- **The Other L Word: A Women of BALIF Comedy Extravaganza**. It’s a laugh-out-loud event for the fabulous femme fatale of BALIF. We’ve got the Punch Line Comedy Club all to ourselves, and we’re featuring a trio of lesbian, transgender, and gay comedians, a welcome reception, and a Q&A session with the comedians.
- The legal job market is still rough. We extended the **BALIF Stimulus Package** to provide free membership to our non-working attorneys. We also created an internal job site to post hundreds of insider job opportunities for our members. And to help BALIF members attract more business, we created the online **BALIF Referral Directory** that enables the public to search for LGBT lawyers.



Over the course of BALIF’s 32-year history, our distinguished membership has numbered in the thousands, and has included nearly every LGBT attorney, judge, in-house counsel, and law student in the San Francisco Bay Area. BALIF is proud to be the nation’s oldest, largest, and most influential LGBT bar association.

Annual Gala Committee

Co-Chair, Jamie Dupree, Futterman Dupree Dodd Croley Maier LLP

Co-Chair, Laura Maechtlen, Seyfarth Shaw

Co-Chair, John Robert Unruh, Swords to Plowshares

One of BALIF’s major undertakings each year is its annual gala, which is an annual celebration for our



members and a coming together of LGBT legal professionals and our allies. It is a time to reflect on the accomplishments of our community during the past year and an opportunity for us to look forward to the challenges ahead. We also encourage members of other minority bar associations to attend by offering complimentary tickets to foster our shared interest in promoting diversity within our profession and advancing equality for all within society.

On March 9, 2012, BALIF held its 32nd Annual Gala at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, which was attended by 700 attorneys, law students, legal professionals, judges and community leaders. The theme this year was “Celebrating San Francisco Values,” where, BALIF celebrated the many tenants of how our community defines “values” both in our city, and in our profession. We celebrated diversity, community, leadership, inclusion, equality, professionalism, pride, courage, mentorship, and many others.



Every year at our Gala, BALIF hands out multiple awards to deserving lawyers, law students, and other community leaders to raise awareness on certain issues and to give thanks to those individuals who have made great strides towards promoting the interests of our community. This year BALIF honored the Transgender Law Center with the BALIF Community Service Award for the organization’s tremendous work representing

Ashley Yang in a discrimination lawsuit against the United States Transportation Security Administration, which resulted in transgender sensitivity training for TSA agents. BALIF also celebrated Morrison & Foerster LLP and Lambda Legal, counsel for Karen Golinski, who challenged the so-called Defense Of Marriage Act when it was used to deny spousal health benefits by her employer, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. Berkeley Law’s Queer Caucus won the Law Student Association of the Year award for its ongoing efforts to support LGBT students, staff and issues at the law school.



Judiciary Committee

Chair, Susan Bluer, Bluer & Bluer, LLP

When BALIF was founded over 30-years ago, its primary goal was to add LGBT judges to the bench. BALIF has proven effect at doing just this, especially in San Francisco. Two recently retired judges, Mary

Morgan and Donna Hitchens were founding members of BALIF, and BALIF has over the years helped to recruit and elect several other judges -- including Victoria Kolakowski, Kevin McCarthy and Linda Colfax. Each year, the Judiciary Committee reviews the applications of potential judicial nominees to all courts in the Bay Area and manages BALIF's Plebiscite process for the endorsement of judicial candidates and applicants, as well as candidates for District Attorney, Public Defender, and City Attorney. Together with the California LGBT Judicial Alliance, BALIF plays an important role in monitoring the Governor's appointment process to make sure that qualified LGBT attorneys and judges are considered for judicial openings. BALIF also advocates on related issues such as judicial appointments, secretary appointments, and key legislation, such as Senate Bill 182 (which added sexual orientation and gender identity to the listed items for judicial applicants and judges to self-disclose). In the 2011-2012 year, the Judiciary Committee conducted a Plebiscite for each of the key judicial races in San Francisco and Alameda Counties (including, most notably, San Francisco District Attorney). In addition, BALIF has lobbied Governor Brown to support not only more appointments of LGBTs in his administration, but also to craft legislation that includes sexual orientation as a recognized category for tracking "diversity" on the bench.



Law Student Committee

Co-Chair, Paloma Wu, University of San Francisco School of Law

Co-Chair, Stan Sarkisov, University of San Francisco School of Law



The BALIF Law Student Committee began the term this past year fundraising for scholarships to support student attendees of Lavender Law 2011, the National LGBT Bar's Annual Conference and Career Fair. Through generous donations from individual BALIF members and corporate law firms, BALIF provided partial scholarships (covering registration and travel costs) to ten law students representing six Bay Area law schools. The Committee organized a well-attended meeting for all Bay Area law students interested in attending the conference, at which BALIF board members presented networking and conference etiquette advice. To further support scholarship recipients, the Committee worked with BALIF board members to provide written materials to recipients regarding conference networking skills. BALIF board members also met with scholarship recipients at the conference to provide feedback and support. In the fall, the Committee worked with the BALIF Young Lawyer's Committee to present a career and resume

workshop. This winter, the Committee organized a general law student mixer at Rebel that was attended by over 70 students. The Committee helped to recruit law student volunteers for the Annual Gala, and we look forward to organizing another spring mixer event. The Committee is thrilled to have worked with the LGBTQ student groups of the Bay Area's eight law schools and with the BALIF Membership Committee to meet our goal of significantly increasing BALIF's overall law student membership base and law student member participation.



MCLE and California Conference of California Bar Associations Committees

Chair, Cara Sherman, Ongaro Burt & Louderback



The MCLE Committee brings BALIF members free MCLEs on topics directly relevant to both LGBT issues and the practice of law generally. For example, in the last year, BALIF sponsored an MCLE on prenuptial agreements that was informative for members of the community and particularly useful for family law practitioners who have same-sex couples as clients. Just in time for the January MCLE deadline, BALIF co-sponsored an ethics MCLE on the ethical and practical implications of outsourcing legal work, which offered BALIF members an opportunity to mingle with several local in-house counsels. To kick off 2012, the MCLE Committee is putting on a women-focused panel about career transitions in an effort to connect the Women of BALIF and allow that slice of its membership the opportunity to network and learn how to take charge of their careers.

BALIF's contingency at the California Conference of Bar Associations is an important one because we ensure visibility of the LGBT legal community at the statewide level, and consistently bring LGBT issues before the Conference. In 2011, all of BALIF's resolutions were passed by the Conference, and we co-hosted a reception for Assemblyman Tom Ammiano with LGLA, Lesbian & Gay Lawyers Association of Los Angeles. For the 2012 Conference, BALIF sponsored four resolutions, including two resolutions to ensure that transgender people in jails and prisons receive appropriate medical treatment, and by so doing, ensure that rights of transgender prisoners remain part of the statewide legal dialogue.



Outreach/Current Events Committee

Co-Chair, Spencer Jones, O'Melveny & Myers LLP

Co-Chair, Michael Wolchansky, Swords to Plowshares



The Outreach Committee plans events, hosts volunteer activities, publicizes and responds as necessary to current events related to LGBT legal issues, coordinates and liaises with the many other LGBT organizations and minority bar groups in the Bay Area, and otherwise works to keep BALIF present and connected with the community. This past year, for example, Outreach organized BALIF's participation in the

San Francisco Pride Parade (for the first time in recent memory), along with Grand Marshall Judge Victoria Kolakowski of the Alameda County Superior Court — the first openly transgender trial court judge in the country. More recently, Outreach facilitated BALIF members' participation in several "Day of Decision" rallies and events coinciding with the Ninth Circuit releasing its exciting and historic decision relating to the unconstitutionality of Prop 8. The Committee also facilitated BALIF's recent new efforts to co-sponsor and fund law student fellowships with ally organizations. Specifically these scholarships included the following this past year:



- ***BASF / BALIF Diverse Voices Scholarship (\$2500)***
 - Recipient: Sterling Johnson, UC Hastings '12
 - Description: The Diverse Voices Scholarship is awarded to a diverse law student with financial need who has demonstrated a commitment to public service. Sterling used the scholarship to spend a summer working as a legal clerk at the San Francisco AIDS Housing Alliance, where he was involved with drafting proposed legislation for the Board of Supervisors that would create expanded job opportunities for people with disabilities.
- ***BALIF / APABA-SV Law Student Achievement Scholarship (\$1500/each)***
 - Recipients: Chris Chou, Stanford '12, and Tuan Ngo, UC-Hastings '13
 - Description: These two scholarships recognize law students who have demonstrated leadership and service to the Asian Pacific American and LGBT communities, overcome personal hardships or challenges, and have shown excellence and achievement in law school. Chris had worked on housing equity issues at Public Advocates and used his scholarship to work with the Land Use

team at the San Francisco Office of the City Attorney. Tuan used his scholarship to help fund a summer at the Greenlining Institute, where he authored a report titled "Corporate American Untaxed" looking at tax reforms.

- **VABANC / BALIF Summer Fellowship (\$3000)**

- Recipient: Darrick Ing, GGU School of Law '12

- Description: Darrick was awarded the VABANC / BALIF Summer Fellowship to work as a legal clerk for API Legal Outreach in San Francisco. Darrick's work focused on providing direct services and advocacy to victims of domestic abuse, with a focus on the Vietnamese and LGBT communities.

- **BALIF / La Raza Public Interest Law Fellowship (\$4000)**

- Recipient: Esmeralda Santos, UC-Hastings '13

- Description: This fellowship will support Esmeralda's work at the Legal Aid Society Employment Law Center during the summer of 2012, where she will focus her work on the Gender Equality and LBGT Rights Program, a program whose objective is the eradication of gender and LBGT discrimination, and to protect Latinas from domestic violence and sexual assault.

Pride Law Fund Committee

Chair, Michael Wolchansky, Swords to Plowshares

BALIF maintains a strong and active relationship with the Pride Law Fund (PLF), which



promotes the legal rights of the LGBT community, and people living with HIV and AIDS, by funding legal services and projects and by sponsoring education and outreach. PLF has assisted innovative academic programs, supported the development and distribution of legal and educational materials, and financed independent and documentary film projects to educate the public. Now in its thirty-second year, PLF is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit,

charitable organization. New this year, BALIF is sponsoring a \$2,000 "matching grant" for Pride Law Fund to fund a designated summer BALIF/PLF Summer Fellowship.

Social Committee

Chair, Lilah Stuphen

During the past year, BALIF's Social Committee has continued to foster connections within the LGBT legal community by way of our monthly Happy Hour and various other social events. The ubiquitous Happy Hour is hosted in various



locations to provide ease of access to all BALIF members and guests, including law students, judges, attorneys, and other legal professionals. In the past few months, the Social Committee hosted a Giants game for BALIF members and the annual Holiday Party at the beautiful Carnelian by the Bay. We also co-hosted our annual breakfast with Jones Day prior to the Pride Parade and BALIF's march with Grand Marshall Judge Victoria Kolakowski. The Social Committee has some exciting, new events in the pipeline to look forward to, including an ice cream social at Fenton's Ice Cream in Oakland.



In 2012–13, Social plans to orchestrate some added events designed to attract BALIF's female members and guests. These may include women's college basketball games, a woman-focused Happy Hour, or a night with an inspirational female speaker. Next year's gatherings will follow the lead of all BALIF events with our overarching focus to build membership as we strengthen the ties between

current BALIF members and our shared views of equality.

Young Lawyers & Students Committee

Chair, Dennis Raglin, Sedgwick LLP

BALIF's "Connections" mentoring program began in 2009 with the simple goal of helping young LGBT lawyers and law students find more senior lawyers in our community who could lend an ear or give some advice. We are a talented and vibrant community and we should help those who come after us. The program has grown in its two years to include 51 students or lawyers expressing interest in finding mentors this year. The program currently has 35 active pairings of mentors and mentees and has proven so popular that BALIF has had to establish a "waitlist".



BALIF's mentoring program is unique for two reasons. First, the program is not just a "first-come-first-served" process of assigning people at random. This means that, at the beginning of the year, solicitations are made to the membership for both mentors and mentees, and unique, specific questionnaires are completed by those interested based on whether the member wishes to mentor or be a mentee. Then, the "pairing" process occurs. Although not an exact science, the mentoring pair process takes into account a mentee's ultimate goal, i.e., the type of work he or she wants to do (private practice or government or in-house counsel or non-profit work.) The process also looks at the personal nature of the candidate, i.e., what are his or her interests and geographic location in the Bay Area? From these markers, we try to pair a mentor

that is a closer fit than just a random assignment, and with the hopes that there might be something in common between mentee and mentor which always helps a relationship along.



The second difference in “Connections” is the active involvement of the coordinator. The program is run by BALIF’s Young Lawyer and Students Committee chairperson. He takes it upon himself, after pairings are made, to do regular “check ins” with both the mentees and the mentors. These check ins serve a couple of purposes. First, it allows the coordinator to trouble shoot and make sure pairs are working or, if necessary, make new matches or remove those uninterested or not

participating. Second, and more importantly, it allows the sharing of information, particularly from mentors on how to address challenges in mentoring and be more effective at helping the mentees. Examples include how to maximize mentoring when the mentor and mentee are not in the same county, or how to provide general career advice when a mentee is unsure of what he or she wishes to do long-term. The coordinator collects information from these check ins and then shares it with all mentors or poses specific questions for the mentors in dealing with their mentees. The goal at the end of a one-year pairing in “Connections” is “Can you (the mentor) point to something concrete that you’ve helped your mentee accomplish this year?”

In addition to the check ins, “Connections” suggests that mentors and mentees meet at least one a month in person if possible, but at least frequent e-mail contact as a fall back. Frequent communication is the key to success in a mentoring situation. In addition, BALIF hosts two events – one in the fall and one in the winter where the mentors and mentees are invited to meet in person and discuss certain topics. The last event, held in February 2012, brought close to 40 people – some who were not in mentoring but wanted to learn more. The topic that evening was a plan



for 2012. Mentors and mentees were asked to discuss the mentees goals and objectives for the coming year and the mentor was to provide some ideas and strategies to assist meeting those goals.



“Connections” works. The feedback from both past and current members has been very positive. From this mentoring program, BALIF is pleased to say we have numerous examples of mentees secured externships and interviews, creating

superb resumes, polished interview skills, developing more confidence in work environments and making professional and personal friends. And, not to toot our own horn, but the Bay Area LGBT doctor organization reached out to BALIF earlier this year and requested information on “Connections” because it heard rave reviews and seeks to replicate a similar program between doctors and medical students.

Amicus Committee

Chair, Ellise Nicholson, Attorney at Law

The BALIF Amicus Committee provides amicus assistance on the federal and state level in cases that present issues of critical importance to the LGBT community and our allies. This past year, BALIF coordinated the submission of two amicus briefs in *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, the lawsuit challenging the constitutional validity of Proposition 8 in federal court. Both briefs were joined by dozens of other minority bar associations located throughout California and various other national and local non-profit organizations. One set of amici were represented by Perkins Coie LLP attorneys Joren Bass, Allison Zamani, and BALIF Co-Chair David Tsai, and the other set was represented by Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP attorneys Jerome Rother, Michelle Friedland, Mark Conrad, and Miriam Seifter. BALIF is very grateful for the hard work of these extremely dedicated and capable attorneys to assure that the voice of BALIF and its sister minority groups was heard in this fight.



Communications and Technology Committee

Chair, Ted Garey, Robert Half Legal

BALIF’s Communications and Technology Committee is tasked with keeping BALIF members and the community informed of BALIF events and accomplishments. The Committee sends out a weekly electronic newsletter that details BALIF events and relevant information useful to the LGBT legal community, including case updates, CLE announcements, happy hours, and networking events. The Committee also rolled out a new interactive website this past year that allows users to customize their profiles and to be searchable in an online directory. The website also features updated information on BALIF events and allows members to renew their membership online.