

The LITIGATOR

VOLUME V *Official Publication of the Capitol City Trial Lawyers Association* ISSUE 1

President's Message

BY: ERIC RATINOFF, PRESIDENT 2006

2006 will be a year of opportunity for all of us who represent people in their fight for fairness in politics, courtrooms, and in our communities. For far too many years now, we have witnessed a right-wing, Republican agenda focused on misrepresentation of worker rights, consumer rights, basic freedoms guaranteed by the constitution, and justice in our courtrooms through the right to trial by jury. Whether we are talking about Arnold or W, the truth behind their anti-consumer, anti-lawyer, anti-jury, anti-worker, anti-anyone-and-anything-not-corporate has been exposed. I believe that 2006 can be a year of reckoning for those in power that have done their level best to destroy so much of what so many of us hold sacred.

Arnold recently went down in flames in his Initiative war that he waged through a wasteful, costly, and (so he thought - and so did everyone else) self-serving special election, aimed at trying to wrest power from the Democrats in state government. Nationally, Bush, Cheney, and their cronies in the Republican Party have been caught with their pants down, spying on United States citizens, without any warrant, in defiance of federal legislation and the U.S. Constitution, and with the audacity to admit that they knew they were doing it, they knew they were violating federal law, they intended to do it, and they would continue to do it. Even Sen. Arlen Specter, a true Bush Republican, came out and described the conduct at "inexcusable".

"So," you ask, "what does all of this have to do with the Capitol City Trial Lawyers Association?" Well, it has a lot to do with us. As Board Members, Officers, and as regular dues members, we all have chance to do our part to make certain that the transgressions of our political leaders are accounted for locally, on a state-wide level, and nationally. When the call comes to give of ourselves in time or money, we need to step up and do both. Support candidates that stand for integrity, workers rights, civil rights, consumer rights,

freedom, tolerance, and the basic liberties that make our country so great. Work to defeat candidates who are really nothing more than corporate lobbyists who happen to have been elected. Give your time and money to help not just defeat - but resoundingly defeat - measures put to the voters to limit or destroy freedoms and consumer rights. While the current bright light is shining on the dirty underbelly of our current political elite, we should all work to seize the opportunity to make positive change. In short, 2006 will be a year that we are called upon to give, give early, give generously, and give often.

The Capitol City Trial Lawyers Association is a dedicated, hard-working and talented group of individuals, that fights to secure the rights of the hard-working men and women who live in our communities. We work hand-in-hand with the Consumer Attorneys of California, to educate our members to help them become better lawyers on behalf of consumers, to secure access to justice and the right to trial by jury, and to get money justice for our clients. This year's Board includes the following people: Bob Bale, Cliff Carter, Omar Gonzalez, Michelle Jenni, Joe Marman, Curt Namba, Dan O'Donnell, Allan Owen, Jack Vetter, Kerrie Webb, Chris Whelan, Dan Wilcoxon, and Wendy York. This year's officers are as follows: President: Eric Ratinoff, President-Elect: John Demas, Vice-Presidents: Jill Telfer and Glenn Ehlers, Secretary: Kyle Tambornini, Treasurer: David Lee, and, Parliamentarian: Mike Jones.

This year we already have the following program scheduled: "What's New In Tort & Trial: 2005 in Review" (Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2006 from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn at 300 J Street).

Significantly, CCTLA will once again be co-hosting the Tahoe Seminar from Friday, March 24, 2006 to Saturday, March 25, 2006. The focus on this year's seminar will be on maximizing the profitability and management of your law firm,

and a full day of trial skills workshops. We expect that this will be the most successful Tahoe Seminar yet, and I hope that you will all come.

I am proud to serve as your President this year. I hope to meet all of you through the course of the year, and I hope that you will make a point of getting to know all of the members of this year's Board. Please come to as many events, fundraisers, seminars, get together, and other events that CCTLA will be hosting this year. Make a point of bringing other consumer attorneys who are not yet members of CCTLA to some of our events, and introduce them to all of the benefits of membership. I would like to meet every member of CCTLA this year personally. Please make a point of introducing yourself to me, if I don't beat you to it. Also, if there is anything that you think CCTLA should be doing, but is not, please let me know.



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<http://www.cctla.com>

Capitol City Trail Lawyers Association

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CAPITOL CITY TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

announce a seminar on

“WHAT’S NEW IN TORT & TRIAL: 2005 IN REVIEW”

SPEAKERS:

Patrick J. Becherer, Esq. • Becherer, Kannett & Schweitzer

Craig Needham, Esq. • Needham, Davis, Kirwan & Young

EARN 3 MCLE CREDITS

(2 = general civil litigation & 1 = ethics)

All seminar attendees will receive written material regarding the seminar topic.

Date & Time: Tuesday, January 24, 2006 • 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

(Registration: 5:30 p.m.)

Location: Capitol Plaza Holiday Inn, • 300 J Street, Sacramento

~Appetizers will be provided~

PROGRAM

6:00 p.m. Welcome & Introduction - Eric Ratinoff, CCTLA President

6:10 p.m. Judicial Decisions & Statutes Affecting Tort Liability - Duty, Negligence, Intentional Misconduct, Liability for Acts of Others, Premises Liability, Causation, Damages, Government Liability, Product Liability, Wrongful Termination, Medical Malpractice, Attorney Malpractice, Attorney Fees, Insurance Bad Faith/Third Party Excess Liability, Insurance Coverage, Workers' Compensation, Indemnity, Settlements & Setoffs, Fraud, Defamation, Privacy, Malicious Prosecution & Abuse of Process, Commercial Torts, Statutes of Limitations. (Cases include those list in the attached.)

Judicial Decisions & Statutes Affecting Civil Procedure - Jurisdiction, Parties, Venue, Process & Pleading, Discovery & Privileges, Dismissal for Delay in Prosecution, Summary Judgment, Trial, Judgment, Appeals & Writs, Sanctions, Arbitration, Statutes & Rules of Court. (Cases include those list in the attached.)

Cases Pending in the California Supreme Court - (Cases include those list in the attached.)

• • • • • • • • •

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM • “What’s New In Tort & Trial” • January 24, 2006

Registration Fees:

ALL ATTORNEYS WELCOME!

___ \$125.00 CCTLA attorney member

___ \$ 62.50 CCTLA member law clerk/paralegal

___ \$175.00 Non-Member

___ \$ 87.50 Non-Member law clerk/paralegal

Mail this form to: CCTLA, PO Box 541, Sacto, CA 95812-0541.

(CCTLA reserves the right to substitute speakers.)

State Bar No. _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

TEL _____ FAX _____ EMAIL: _____

(FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL CCTLA 916/451-2366 or FAX 916/451-2206)



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA
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 CAPITOL CITY TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION



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CCTLA Continues Support of the Mustard Seed School

The 2005 CCTLA Annual Meeting and Holiday Reception proved to be very successful in efforts to raise money to support the Mustard Seed School in Sacramento. CCTLA members and guests raised \$1000 for the school and the money was presented to Mustard Seed School Director Sue Supple on December 20, 2005 by CCTLA President Eric Ratinoff and Vice President Jill Telfer.

Established in 1989, the Mustard Seed school provides educational needs of homeless children. This free private school serves homeless children ages 3-15 years old. Within a structured academic program, children can laugh, relax and be children - escaping the stressful world of homelessness in a positive environment.

A major goal of the Mustard Seed program is to prepare and enroll homeless children into public schools when the family has found some housing stability. The school works closely with the Loaves and Fishes programs to provide the children and their families with a nutritious breakfast, lunch, showers laundry facility, housing referrals and other support services.

The CCTLA is honored to be a supportive arm in the Mustard Seed School and its programs.

Heartfelt thanks to all the CCTLA members for their support in this worthwhile cause.



CCTLA President Eric Ratinoff presents Mustard Seed School Director Sue Supple \$1000 collected during the CCTLA Annual Meeting and Holiday Reception in December.

More On Continuing Education

BY DAVID LEE, CCTLA PROBLEM SOLVING CLINIC CHAIR

This year our continuing education programs will emphasize trial practice. Again this spring we are co-sponsoring the Tahoe Seminar with CAOC on March 24-25. The programs offered will appeal to trial lawyers of all experience levels. The preliminary program topics are outstanding.

On the more local level we intend to offer programs in the basic nuts and bolts series. The idea behind these programs is to provide the practitioner with the basic skills necessary to try a case. These programs typically appeal to our newer members and those that have been away from it for a while. Modernly, with a two year statute of limitations and more cases resolved after arbitration there are fewer opportunities to go to trial.

Fundamentally, the purpose behind these programs is to help all of us in our common fight. In the words of former CCTLA Presi-

dent David Smith, "A rising tide raises all boats." If each of us improves our skills then as a group we are stronger and can better represent our clients. In order to get the best results it is necessary to try cases. Our expectation is that our programs will provide practical, helpful information so that participants can feel more confident in their next trial.

And again, we want your suggestions and feedback. Our belief is that we can go toe to toe with the commercial vendors such as Lorman and NBI. To borrow a sports metaphor we have a very deep bench within our membership. We can put on quality programs for a fraction of what the commercial vendors charge. So let us know what you are interested in. Simply e-mail Debbie directly at Debbie@cctla.com.



CCTLA Annual Meeting & Holiday Reception

The CCTLA Annual Meeting & Holiday Reception was held on December 8, 2005 beginning at 5:30 p.m. at Sofia Restaurant. Attendance for this year's event was 126. Award winners were:

Judge of the Year - JUDGE LOREN McMASTER
 Clerk of the Year - TERRI WEST
 Advocate of the Year - JOHN DEMAS
 Presidential Award - JUDGE LLOYD PHILLIPS



Judge of the Year Award presented to Honorable Loren McMaster pictured w/ Craig Sheffer



Clerk of the Year Award presented to Terri West pictured w/ Craig Sheffer



Incoming President Eric Ratniff w/ Craig Sheffer



Craig Sheffer w/ wife Cynthia



Advocate of the Year Award presented to Vice-President John Demas pictured w/ Craig Sheffer



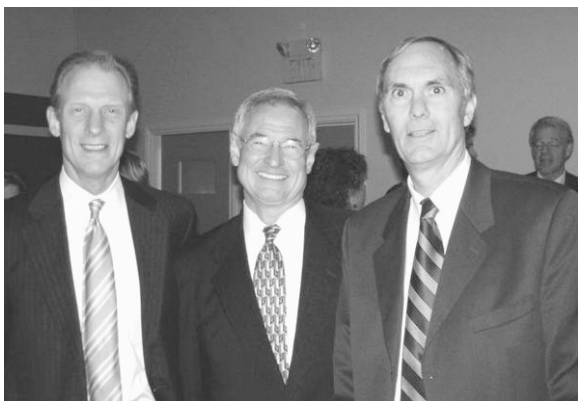
*Presidential Award presented to Honorable Lloyd Phillips
pictured w/ Clay Arnold & Craig Sheffer*



Glenn Ehlers, Debbie Keller and Assembly Member Dave Jones



Craig Sheffer, Supervisor Roger Dickinson, and Jack Vetter



New Cases May Protect Wrongful Death Recoveries From Medi-Cal and Medicare Reimbursement Claims

BY ELISA R. ZITANO, CCTLA MEMBER

ISSUE: Can Medicare and/or Medi-Cal successfully assert liens for costs incurred in treating a decedent's final illness against a recovery in a wrongful death action that does not include a claim for those medical expenses?

The California Supreme Court recently provided the answer to this important question in a wrongful death case involving a Medi-Cal lien, Fitch v. Select Products Company (August 1, 2005) 36 Cal.4th 812, 31 Cal. Rptr. 3rd 591, 115 P. 3rd 1233. This unanimous decision may have far-reaching effects as practitioners attempt to apply its narrow, but well-reasoned logic, to defeat Medicare lien claims in similar wrongful death cases.

The California Supreme Court in Fitch did not play "hide the ball," stating the issue and its answer in the first words of the decision:

"May a Medi-Cal lien for costs incurred in treating a decedent's final illness be asserted against a recovery in a wrongful death action when that recovery does not and could not include those medical expenses?"

The answer is 'no.'"

FACTS:

Fitch, a diesel mechanic, contracted cancer while working for Southland Corporation. He filed a workers' compensation claim in which Medi-Cal, through the Department of Health Services (DHS), filed a lien in the amount of \$106,700.40 for medical treatment expenses. Fitch died of the cancer in 1993, survived by his wife and three minor children.

In 1995, while the workers' compensation case was still pending, the widow brought a tort action against Select Products Company, the manufacturer of a coating product alleged to have caused Fitch's cancer and death. The widow filed the action as an individual, as the representative of her husband's estate, and on behalf of the three minor children. In 1996, the trial court ruled that the statute of limitations barred the action by the widow as an individual and as the representative of the estate. The case then proceeded as a wrongful

death action by the widow as guardian ad litem for the three minor children.

The workers' compensation case was settled in 1998. Southland settled the Medi-Cal/DHS lien for \$40,000.00, with DHS reserving "all rights to pursue reimbursement/recovery in any third party claim." DHS then filed a Medi-Cal lien for the balance (\$66,795.98) in the pending wrongful death action.

The wrongful death action proceeded to trial. During trial, the court granted a defense motion to preclude plaintiffs from introducing evidence of the DHS/Medi-Cal lien. The court also ruled that defendant could not be held liable in a wrongful death action for decedent's medical expenses as those expenses could only be recovered in an action by the widow as representative of the estate, and the court had already ruled that such an action was barred by the statute of limitations. The trial resulted in a judgment for plaintiffs in the amount of \$682,598.50.

After trial, plaintiffs renewed their motion to strike the DHS lien. The court granted the motion, ruling that because the damages recoverable in the wrongful death action did not and could not include decedent's medical expenses, DHS could not recover such expenses by asserting a lien in the wrongful death action. DHS appealed.

The Court of Appeal reversed, holding that California law imposes a right and an obligation on DHS to assert the lien in the wrongful death action. The California Supreme Court granted review and reversed the Court of Appeal.

RATIONALE:

In reaching their conclusion, the California Supreme Court examined the cases defining wrongful death actions in California and analyzed sections of the Welfare & Institutions Code (Section 14124.70 et. seq.) pertaining to Medi-Cal liens.

In California, a wrongful death action is "a new cause of action in favor of the heirs as beneficiaries, based upon their own independent pecuniary injury suffered by loss

of a relative, and distinct from any the deceased might have maintained had he survived." Horwich v. Superior Court (1999) 21 Cal.4th 272, 283, quoting 6 Witkin, Summary of Cal. Law (9th ed. 1988) Torts, Section 1197, pp. 632-633.) Writing for the Court in Fitch, Justice Kennard states, "Because the damages awarded in a wrongful death action are for harm done to the survivors, not to the deceased, medical expenses for treating the final illness or injury are not recoverable."

[citations] [emphasis added]

Citing Olszewski v. Scripps Health (2003) 30 Cal.4th 798, 820-822, the Court notes that allowing DHS to recover the decedent's medical expenses from the wrongful death damages would reduce those damages below the amount needed to fully compensate the survivors for the harm done to them. "Such a recovery would not be from the third party tortfeasor, but from the decedent's innocent survivors, and therefore it is not statutorily authorized."

Examining the pertinent rights and obligations of DHS, the court reviewed W&I Code Section 14124.71 which permits DHS to recover benefits from a third party tortfeasor, and authorizes the Attorney General to bring a direct action against the third party on behalf of DHS. This same section, however, seeks to protect the interests of the injured beneficiary or the heirs of the deceased in a wrongful death action, by allowing compromise or waiver of the DHS claim to prevent "undue hardship." An example would be when the third party's assets or insurance coverage would be insufficient to compensate both the wrongful death plaintiffs and reimburse Medi-Cal benefits.

Section 14124.71(c) specifically states that "[n]o action taken in behalf of the director [of DHS] pursuant to this section . . . shall operate to deny to the beneficiary the recovery for that portion of any damages not covered hereunder." The Court concluded that this

Continued on page 9

statutory scheme does not authorize DHS to assert a Medi-Cal lien against a wrongful death recovery that does not include compensation for the beneficiary's medical expenses covered by Medi-Cal. Concerning the present case, the court states, "Because none of the survivors' wrongful death damages are attributable to the costs of the decedent's medical treatment, the DHS may not assert the Medi-Cal lien against those damages."

FITCH AND OTHER STATE & U.S. CASES:

The California Supreme Court has taken a bold step forward by issuing this much-needed defining decision. Unfortunately, plaintiffs' attorneys in many other states can only wish for a similar well-reasoned analysis of the issue. Recently in Florida, for example, the Court of Appeals for the Second District ruled that the state Medicaid agency is entitled to reimbursement from the settlement of a wrongful death claim *before* the apportionment of the settlement between the estate of the deceased beneficiary and her surviving parents. This allows the state to recover from the entire third-party settlement, rather than limiting it to recovery from that portion representing compensation to the estate for past medical expenses. (Strafford, et al. v. Agency for Health Care Administration, Case No. 2D04-5502, Fl. App. 10/07/2005)

In reaching its decision, the Florida court failed to address an important federal case that is now pending before the U.S. Supreme Court, Ahlborn v. Arkansas Dept. of Human Services (8th Cir., Feb. 9, 2005) 397 F. 3rd 620, cert. granted, Order List, No. 04-1581 (U.S. 09/27/2005). The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit relies on the federal "anti-lien statute" to find that the Arkansas Medicaid reimbursement scheme conflicts with federal law. The "anti-lien statute" (U.S.C. Sec. 1396p(a)(1)) generally prevents a state from attaching property of a recipient to reimburse the state for benefits paid under a state Medicaid plan. The 8th Circuit Court concludes that a straightforward interpretation of the pertinent state and federal statutes permits the state to recover payments from third parties "to the extent of their legal liability to compensate the beneficiary for *medical care and services* incurred by the beneficiary." [emphasis by the Court]

Presently, Ahlborn represents strong federal precedent on this issue. If the U.S. Supreme Court affirms Ahlborn, it will constitute

precedent binding on all federal and state courts.

USING FITCH AND AHLBORN IN PRACTICE:

1. In California death cases with potential **Medi-Cal liens**, Fitch gives attorneys important pleading options to consider, including whether or not to pursue the claim as a "survival action" made by the administrator of the estate or by the "successor in interest" of the deceased for economic losses and punitive damages. In cases of high value and deep resources (insurance or otherwise), this may be the option to pursue, as the available funds will allow for reasonable recovery to the estate as well as to Medi-Cal. However, in cases of limited value or low policy limits, the better choice may be to file the wrongful death claim on behalf of the surviving heirs for damages unique to the heirs — for the loss of the comfort, companionship, and support of the deceased — not for medical bills, pain and suffering of the deceased, or economic loss to the estate.

2. In wrongful death cases with potential **Medicare liens**, Fitch also provides attorneys with powerful judicial support that the same arguments should be applied to limit or defeat Medicare lien recovery. The issue is not clearly addressed in the federal rules and regulations and the status of the law is unclear, even to Medicare contractors. For example, the website for United Government Services, the Lead Medicare Contractor in California and many other states, cites a Wisconsin wrongful death statute to support the broad general proposition that Medicare is permitted to obtain unlimited recovery of medical expenses "from a claim, settlement, or judgment based on a survivor's recovery for wrongful death." (www.ugsmedicare.com) Conversely, the Alabama Codes note that settlement recovery in wrongful death cases will pass "outside" the estate and will not be subject to any debt or liabilities of the estate. (Ala. Code Section 6-5-410) United Government Services does not bother to address the discrepancy.

3. When drafting settlement documents in wrongful death cases, be acutely aware of the need to delineate the injuries to which the damages have been assigned (survivor's losses), and to clearly state that none of the recovery is based

on the medical expenses incurred in the final illness.

4. At the time of settlement, attorneys should consider the best way to notify Medi-Cal/Medicare of the settlement and the argument that they have no right to recovery based on Fitch and/or Ahlborn. While some might argue that no notice is necessary, the better practice is to address the issue in a letter advising of the fact of the settlement and explaining the plaintiff's position. Remember that Medi-Cal/Medicare take the position that they are entitled to full reimbursement in all cases, so failure to notify them will only delay confronting the issue at a later time.

5. Regardless of notice to Medi-Cal/Medicare, the client must be fully advised of the lien issue and its potential to result ultimately in reimbursement plus additional interest. The client may request that an effort be made to negotiate a final settlement of the lien through the waiver or compromise procedures (Medicare) or the statutory 25% or 50% reductions (Medi-Cal). If reimbursement will work severe financial hardship on the beneficiary, the Medicare waiver procedure may be the best route to follow. Otherwise, the Medicare compromise procedure may be the most effective way to negotiate reduction, especially in view of the Fitch and Ahlborn decisions. Note that the full text of Ahlborn describes a formula for lien reduction based on the full value of the case compared to the actual settlement amount.

6. In cases of low insurance policy limits and a high Medicare lien, the attorney can argue that any reimbursement to Medicare/Medi-Cal would work a hardship on the plaintiffs because the recovery is insufficient to compensate them for the wrongful death of their loved one. (See Fitch)

The best advice, as always, is to be aware of potential Medicare or Medi-Cal claims, and to deal with them early in every case. In wrongful death cases, consideration of these potential claims can influence everything from the initial pleading to the wording of the final settlement document.

Elisa R. Zitano, a Sacramento solo practitioner, provides consultation regarding Medicare lien issues. She can be reached at (916)443-5711 or by email at elisa@ezitanolaw.com.

Governor Schwarzenegger Appoints Michael Sweet to Sacramento Superior Court

BY CURTIS R. NAMBA, CCTLA PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS CHAIR

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recently announced the appointment of Judge Michael W. Sweet to a judgeship in the Sacramento County Superior Court.

Sweet, 53, of Gold River, has served as a judge in the Yolo County Superior Court since 1998. He previously served as deputy legislative secretary in the Office of the Governor from 1996 to 1998. Sweet was deputy secretary for legislation and legal counsel to the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency from 1995 to 1996 and executive officer for the Youthful Offender Parole Board from 1994 to 1995. Prior to that, he was executive di-

rector of the California District Attorneys Association and chief of the Fair Political Practices Commission Enforcement Division. Sweet also served as a deputy district attorney for the Counties of Sacramento, Placer, Stanislaus and Lake.

Sweet earned his Juris Doctorate degree from Lincoln Law School of Sacramento and Bachelor of Arts degree from California State University, San Jose. He fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Kenneth L. Hake. Sweet is a Republican.

The compensation for this position is \$149,160.



Calendar of Events ...

(Capitol City Trial Lawyers Association's Upcoming Activities)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2006

CCTLA Seminar

Topic: "What's New In Tort & Trial: 2005 in Review"

Speaker: *Patrick Becherer, Esq. & Craig Needham, Esq.*

Time: 6 to 9:30 p.m. • Location: Holiday Inn

Cost: \$125 CCTLA Members • \$175 Non-Members

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2006

CCTLA Problem Solving Clinic

Topic: TBA • Speaker: TBA

Time: 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. • Sacto Courthouse, Dept. 2

CCTLA Members Only – \$25

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2006

CCTLA Luncheon

Topic: TBA • Speaker: TBA

Time: 12 Noon • Firehouse Restaurant

CCTLA Members Only – \$25

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2006

Q&A Luncheon • Time: 12 Noon

Location: Vallejo's (1900 4th Street) • CCTLA Members Only

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2006

CCTLA Problem Solving Clinic

Topic: TBA • Speaker: TBA

Time: 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. • Sacto Courthouse, Dept. 2

CCTLA Members Only – \$25

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2006

CCTLA Luncheon

Topic: TBA • Speaker: TBA

Time: 12 Noon • Firehouse Restaurant

CCTLA Members Only – \$25

TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2006

Q&A Luncheon • Time: 12 Noon

Location: Vallejo's (1900 4th Street) • CCTLA Members Only

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2006

CCTLA Problem Solving Clinic

Topic: TBA • Speaker: TBA

Time: 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. • Sacto Courthouse, Dept. 2

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FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2006

CCTLA Luncheon

Topic: TBA • Speaker: TBA

Time: 12 Noon • Firehouse Restaurant

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TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2006

Q&A Luncheon • Time: 12 Noon

Location: Vallejo's (1900 4th Street) • CCTLA Members Only

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2006

CCTLA Problem Solving Clinic

Topic: TBA • Speaker: TBA

Time: 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. • Sacto Courthouse, Dept. 2

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FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2006

CCTLA Luncheon

Topic: TBA • Speaker: TBA

Time: 12 Noon • Firehouse Restaurant

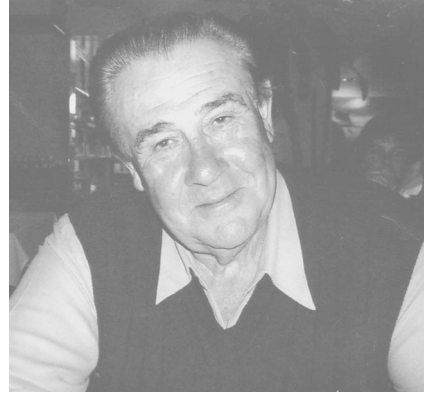
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Contact Debbie Keller at CCTLA at 916/451-2366 for reservations or additional information with regard to any of the above seminars.

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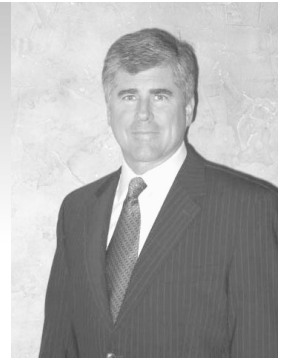
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Craig Sheffer Wins Local Trial Lawyer Association President of the Year Award



Craig Sheffer, 2005 President of the Capitol City Trial Lawyers Association, was awarded the "Local Trial Lawyer Association President of the Year Award" by unanimous vote of the Consumer Attorneys of California (CAOC) executive committee.

CAOC president, Sharon Arkin, said: "Craig is a true leader. He always shows up and he always works hard. He gets others to contribute both time and money and he does it all out of a sincere desire to help protect our members, their clients, and the public."

Congratulations to Craig and CCTLA!

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