



**PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO LA-ABOTA CHAPTER MEMBERS**  
**July 3, 2024**

Hello Fellow Members of LA-ABOTA.

This is my third report to update and inform the Chapter membership of news, recent accomplishments and several popular future events in July and beyond.

We've had an unusually busy quarter. On April 11, our second annual **LAUSD High School Mock Trial** went splendidly. Six buses of high school students from the surrounding urban area arrived at the Mosk Courthouse early that morning and were treated to a mock trial re-enactment of a loose adaptation of the Brian Stowe v. L.A. Dodgers case by a cast of first-class ABOTA trial attorneys in different roles. Our Mock Trial committee of Chris Aumais, Linda Starr, Rahul Ravipudi, and chaired by Dan Kramer, did a magnificent job. The highlights of the day's events were preserved on video which will be available soon on our chapter's website ([www.la-abota.org](http://www.la-abota.org)). Fun fact: this year's mock jury delivered a defense verdict. Last year's verdict on the same facts was for plaintiff, which only goes to show that what we do is more an art than a science.

On April 25, our chapter's **social mixer** with the Mexican American Bar Association ("MABA") at Loyola Law School went off without a hitch. The event was relatively well attended and was catered with a hosted beer/wine bar. MABA has many members with ABOTA qualifications, who haven't yet been recruited or encouraged to apply. We did distribute a few applications and there is talk of reprising the event next year.

LA-ABOTA held a regular Executive Committee and second Chapter meeting of 2024 on June 18, at the new West Hollywood EDITION Hotel on the Sunset Strip, another new venue for us. The members I spoke with appreciated the change of scenery and were glad to see the new Sunset Strip after its recent redevelopment. Sincere thanks go out to our supportive sponsors, **Judicate West, Steno Court Reporters, Signature Resolution and Executive Presentations.**

Again, our first order of business was to induct two new members. Congratulations to **Harry Nalbandian** and **Jay Spillane**, welcome to ABOTA!

We were also honored to host and introduce two of our more prominent LA Superior Court Judges, **Hon. Sergio Tapia** and **Hon. Ricardo Ocampo**. Judge Tapia is currently Assistant Presiding Judge of LASC and will become the Presiding Judge in January 2025. He spoke

briefly about his vision for the near-future of the Court and the challenges we'll all face with the upcoming budget cuts. Judge Ocampo currently supervises the LASC's Criminal Division, comprised of 250 courts. He is a candidate to become the next Assistant Presiding Judge of LASC. Judge Ocampo invited us to pursue an open dialogue with him (especially if he is elected APJ) because he has scant contact with civil lawyers in his current role.

Finally, we were entertained by **stand-up comedian Ivan Decker**, a local favorite both here and in his native Vancouver and a regular at The Comedy Store and other clubs. His bit about his "interrupter family" struck a chord with many of us. All in all, it was a very good meeting. Please [click here](#) to view the photo gallery from the meeting; thank you to Rick Kraemer for taking the photos!

Last, but probably first in many members' hearts, is our annual **ABOTA Masters Golf Tournament**, jointly sponsored by the L.A. and San Bernardino/Riverside chapters. This year's tournament played out at Candlewood Country Club on July 1 and featured 120 duffers! Co-chairs Chris Faenza and Mike Arias did a terrific job of organizing the event and attracted two dozen sponsors! The team from the Simon Law Group took home the Tournament Championship and bragging rights for the next year.

Our next event is an important one and a crowd favorite. On **July 24**, we'll hold our annual **Judicial Reception** on the rooftop Great Lawn at the downtown Jonathan Club. This year we will celebrate the very deserving **Hon. Rupert Byrdson** as LA-ABOTA's Judge of the Year. We'll also honor Michelle Knipprath (Judge Kaddo's clerk) as our Judicial Assistant of the Year. Admission for judges is free and members and guests are \$95 each. Register early, by [clicking here](#), and don't miss out.

And the hits just keep on coming. This year's **Jack Daniels Trial School** is set for **July 30-August 1** at Loyola Law School. We're looking to enroll approximately 40 eager litigators to learn and polish their trial skills and half as many LA-ABOTA members to serve as faculty. Mike Schonbuch has rebranded his firm as Schonbuch Hallissy and always puts together a top-notch program. Ship your young associates off to Mike and watch them come back with Perry Mason's skills and a winning smile. \$500 each. Don't delay. Details can be found [here](#).

Please lock in **September 11** for our next Chapter meeting (details to follow), **November 4-9** for the annual CAL-ABOTA Conference in Waimea on the Big Island and **December 12** as our annual Holiday Party. Help us fill the auction with special items we'll all want. Contact the lovely Nathalie Rosen ([nrosen@rosensaba.com](mailto:nrosen@rosensaba.com)) with your quality items or services to donate to the cause.

**Big News from National ABOTA:** There were some very special highlights at the last National Board meeting in Seattle June 28-29.

First, our very own **Denise Taylor** was recognized by National ABOTA with the "Champion of Justice" Award. Denise has given decades of leadership and service to ABOTA at every level of the organization. If ever there was a worthy recipient of this

coveted award it is Denise. Please extend your congratulations to her for this wonderful milestone.

Second, National ABOTA named its **Chapter of the Year Awards** for large (100 or more members) and small (less than 100) chapters. The Small Chapter of the Year Award went to the Rio Hondo Texas Chapter. The Large Chapter of the Year Award went to our brethren to the north, the Sacramento Valley Chapter. In fact, all three finalists for this award were CAL-ABOTA chapters (SF & OC).

Finally (I mean it), in a fairly lopsided vote, the assembled National Board Representatives recommended to the National Executive Committee that the minimum threshold to qualify for ABOTA be lowered to **seven civil jury trials**. This wasn't a surprise, since the initiative has been bandied about for several years since COVID. The change is intended to attract more diverse and younger trial lawyers as courts cut back and trials have become scarce. A final vote on the initiative is expected at the next National Board meeting in **Nashville, October 26**.

I'll report again soon. Enjoy the summer and don't miss our July 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial Reception. Thanks again for your continuing commitment and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Rosen', with a large, stylized initial 'J' and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James Rosen  
Los Angeles ABOTA 2024 President