



Speaker Biographies



ELIZABETH TOM ARCE

Liz, a partner at Liebert Cassidy Whitmore's Los Angeles office, is an accomplished litigator and advocate with experience in a wide array of labor and employment cases in state and federal trial and appellate courts. Liz has represented employers in matters ranging from single plaintiff lawsuits to wage and hour class and collective actions. Her litigation experience includes numerous successful summary judgment motions, defeating class certification, and decertifying collective actions.

When Liz is not defending litigation matters, she advises and trains employers on a wide range of diverse employment matters such as wage and hour (Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), disability accommodations, public safety, employee discipline, disability retirements, and anti-discrimination, harassment and retaliation laws.

Liz serves on the Executive Committee of the firm's Litigation, and Wage and Hour Practice Groups.

STEVEN M. BERLINER

Steve, partner at LCW, serves as the Chair of Liebert Cassidy Whitmore's (LCW) Retirement, Benefit and Disability Practice Group and works to ensure that the firm stays on the cutting edge of the law related to these important areas. He has extensive labor relations practice and unparalleled retirement law expertise.

Steve has acted as chief negotiator for public agencies in labor negotiations with their employee groups, helping them reduce payroll and other costs. He also advises on contract interpretation issues and represents clients in grievance matters and is frequently called on to assist in times of fiscal crisis.

Of particular importance to many agencies is reducing pension and retiree medical costs. Steve has successfully negotiated changes to agencies' arrangements with public employees that resulted in employees paying a greater share of the cost for these benefits. Steve is a prolific speaker and presents at conferences throughout the state on public retirement issues.

CELESTE STAHL BRADY

Celeste Brady is an equity shareholder at Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth and an AV-rated attorney. She helps California public and private entities revitalize, plan for, and develop affordable housing, commercial spaces, and infrastructure projects to spur economic growth and achieve community goals. Celeste has dedicated her entire career to public law, first in-house with San Diego in 1980, then Costa Mesa in 1983, and since 1986 with Stradling. If you know her, Celeste and Bob are most proud of their two sons and one daughter (all attorneys in other specialties), and, as she would say, their perfectly precious grandsons.



EMILIO CAMACHO

Mr. Camacho is a Senior Deputy City Attorney for the City of Sacramento responsible for Advising the Sacramento Police Department. He also advises various departments on Homeless-related issues. He has extensive legal experience including advisory, administrative prosecution, civil prosecution, criminal prosecution, civil litigation, and appeals. Prior to serving at the City of Sacramento, Mr. Camacho was a Deputy Legislative Counsel, advising the members of the Legislature and the Governor in matters of legislation impacting the State of California. Thereafter, Mr. Camacho served under Governor Brown's administration as Chief of Staff and Advisor on California-Mexico Issues to Commissioner David Hochschild at the California Energy Commission.

MICHAEL COLANTUONO

Michael has specialized in municipal law since 1989. He is certified by the California State Bar as a Specialist in Appellate Law and is a Past President of the California Academy of Appellate Lawyers, an association of a bit more than 100 of the most distinguished appellate lawyers in California. He is an Elected Member of the American Law Institute, the leading independent organization in the United States producing scholarly work to clarify, modernize, and otherwise improve the law. He has argued 14 cases in the California Supreme Court, appeared in all six of the California District Courts of Appeal, as well as trial courts around the State. He serves on the California Judicial Council's Appellate Advisory Committee and served on its Appellate Caseflow Working Group.

Michael has expertise in a broad range of areas of concern to local governments in California, including constitutional law, land use regulation, open meetings, elections, municipal litigation, conflicts of interest, public utilities, LAFCO issues, inverse condemnation, cannabis regulation, and a wide range of public finance issues involving taxes, assessments, fees and charges. Michael is perhaps California's leading expert on the law of local government revenues, briefing 18 cases on that subject in the California Supreme Court since 2004. The Daily Journal named him a California Lawyer of the Year in inverse condemnation law for his win in *City of Oroville v. Superior Court* (2019) 7 Cal.5th 1091, government's first win in that court in this subject area in decades. California Chief Justice Ronald M. George presented him with the 2010 Public Lawyer of the Year Award on behalf of the California State Bar. Two successive Speakers of the California Assembly appointed him to the Board of Trustees of the California Bar, the state agency which regulates the practice of law in California. His fellow Trustees elected him Treasurer and President of the Bar and the California Supreme Court appointed him as Chair of its Board of Trustees.

Michael currently serves as City Attorney for the City of Grass Valley and General Counsel for the Grass Valley Redevelopment Agency Successor Agency, the Calaveras County LAFCO, the Oak Tree Park and Recreation District, the Peardale-Chicago Park, Higgins, Ophir Hill, and Penn Valley Fire Districts and the Eden Township Healthcare District. He previously served as City Attorney of Auburn (2005–2019), Barstow (1997–2004), Calabasas (2003–2012), Cudahy (1994–1999), La Habra Heights (1994–2004), Monrovia (1999–2002), and Sierra Madre (2004–2006), as General Counsel to the Auburn (2005–2019), Barstow (1997–2004) and Sierra Madre



(2004–2006) Redevelopment Agencies, and as General Counsel of the Big Bear City Community Services District (1994–2001) and the Camarillo Healthcare District.

Michael assisted the Legislative Analyst's Office in the impartial analysis of Proposition 218 and co-chaired the committee which drafted what became the Proposition 218 Omnibus Implementation Act of 1997. He also chaired the committees which drafted the League of California Cities' Prop. 26 and 218 Implementation Guide.

Michael was elected by his peers to serve as President of the City Attorneys' Department of the League of California Cities in 2003–2004. He now represents the Department on Cal Cities' Board of Directors.

Michael was appointed by the Rules Committee of the California State Assembly to the Commission on Local Governance in the 21st Century. The Commission was formed to study the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act and the bulk of its recommendations became law. Michael was deeply involved in drafting both the committee report and the statute.

Michael graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard University (BA 1983) and received his law degree from University of California, Berkeley School of Law (JD 1988), graduating first in his class. While in law school, he was an Articles Editor of the **California Law Review** and became a member of the Order of the Coif upon graduation. Michael was law clerk to the Honorable James R. Browning, Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in 1988–1989.

He taught Administrative Law as an adjunct Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law in 1995 and is a frequent speaker and trainer on a wide range of public law topics.

Michael comments on local government and municipal finance topics on Threads (colantuonomichael) and LinkedIn (Michael Colantuono).

Practice Areas:

- Appellate Advocacy
- Complex Litigation
- Conflicts of Interest
- Constitutional Law
- Election Law
- Inverse Condemnation
- Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Law
- Land Use, Planning and CEQA
- Municipal Revenues (Taxes, Assessments, Fees and Charges)
- Public Law
- Public Safety Defense Litigation
- Public Utilities



ERIC DANLY

Eric Danly has served as the Petaluma City Attorney since December 5, 2005, and since July 1, 2013 in an in-house capacity. Eric reports directly to the City Council and oversees the City Attorney's Office consisting of, in addition to the City Attorney, two assistant city attorneys and a legal assistant. Prior to joining Petaluma in-house Eric was a partner in the Meyers Nave law firm and managing partner of its Santa Rosa office. Eric also served as Cloverdale City Attorney, General Counsel to the Monterey County Housing Authority Development Corporation, Clearlake City Attorney and Assistant City Attorney for Pinole. Eric has delivered numerous presentations on open meetings and records law, and ethical and other laws applicable to public agency officials. He served on the League of California Cities committee that authored the organization's first published guide to the California Public Records Act, entitled "The People's Business – A Guide to the California Public Records Act." He was appointed to serve on the City Attorney's Department's standing committee on the Public Records Act when the committee was formed in September, 2009 and served on the committee through April, 2016. Along with his colleagues on the Public Records Act Committee, Eric helped author updates to The People's Business: A Guide to the Public Records Act, which were published 2010, 2011, 2014, and the Second Edition to The People's Business, which was published in 2017. While serving on the Public Records Act Committee Eric and his colleagues provided annual updates on the Public Records Act for the Municipal Law Handbook, in addition to providing support to Cal Cities lobbyists on Public Records Act issues and recommendations to the Legal Advocacy Committee on requests for amicus support in public records cases. Currently Eric serves as the President of the City Attorneys' Department of Cal Cities. His President duties include serving as liaison to the Legal Advocacy Committee. Eric has also previously served as Chair of the Attorney Development and Succession Committee, and on the Legal Advocacy, Municipal Law Handbook, and Nominating Committees within the City Attorneys Department of Cal Cities. Eric received a BA in Interdisciplinary English from Stanford University in 1990, and his JD from University of California, Hastings College of the Law with a public law concentration in 1998. He has been practicing law representing public agencies since 1999.

JON R. DI CRISTINA

Jon di Cristina is senior counsel in Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley's litigation and public finance groups, and he leads the firm's practice related to *Pitchess* discovery of law enforcement records. He has advised and represented local governments in a range of public law issues, including municipal finance, cannabis regulation, elections, land use, public utilities, and the intersection of restraining orders with First Amendment protections for the individual being restrained. As a litigator, Jon has assisted local governments from the levels of administrative code enforcement to the California Supreme Court.

Jon received his law degree from UC Davis, and he received his bachelor's in history from Princeton University. Prior to finishing college, he served on active duty as a Spanish translator in the Air Force.



ROBERT FABELA

Rob Fabela is the City Attorney for Anaheim, where he has served for the last 5 ½ years. He started his career at the Palo Alto law firm of Wilson Sonsini, where he litigated intellectual property and securities fraud class actions. He then made the career change to municipal law, serving for 15 years with the City of San Jose, where he litigated several high profile cases, and argued before the California Supreme Court and Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal. Before coming to Anaheim, he served as General Counsel for the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority for six years, advising its appointed Board on, among many other things, the application of the Levine Act.

DAVE FLEISHMAN

Dave Fleishman has practiced extensively in the area of public law and in the area of labor and employment law for both public and private employers. His practice has focused on the representation of public agencies in an advisory role as city attorney or general counsel, as well as in public entity defense litigation, including writs and appeals, civil rights, Fair Labor Standards Act, wrongful termination, employment investigations, public contracting, tort claims and code enforcement. He has also represented private employers throughout California in wrongful termination, wage and hour, and other employment matters. He currently serves as city attorney for Pismo Beach and Solvang."

AMANDA B. FREEMAN

Amanda is a Senior Deputy City Attorney with the City of Fresno, advising officials on ethics and open meeting laws. She provides AB 1234 and Brown Act trainings for elected officials and appointed boards and commissions. Amanda previously advised the city regarding complex water matters, property-related fees, public contracting, procurement, and airport law. Amanda currently lives in Humboldt County and had a career in river restoration prior to attending law school, which influences her love of technical matters and those involving natural resources. Amanda recently joined the FPPC Committee in 2023.

PAMELA K. GRAHAM

Pamela Graham is Senior Counsel and a member of Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley's litigation practice group. Pamela's practice covers a wide range of public law litigation, including municipal finance and public revenues, labor and employment law, land use and CEQA, cannabis regulation and enforcement, and police liability defense work. Pamela has broad litigation experience in both state and federal courts, handling all phases of litigation from case assessment through appeal. She has served on Cal Cities' Editorial Board for the Municipal Law Handbook for three terms, serves on the Cal Cities Municipal Finance Committee, and also serves on the Los Angeles Bar Association's Editorial Board for its L.A. Lawyer publication. Throughout her 20-year legal career, Pamela has advocated pro bono for children's rights, working on countless adoption and education rights matters.



AARON M. ISRAEL

Aaron M. Israel serves in a general counsel capacity to the Sacramento Police Department. Among a breadth of legal services, Aaron prepares advisements regarding decisional and statutory law, contracts for goods and/or services as well as grant awards and intergovernmental agreements, formal and informal legal opinions, and proposed ordinances; he reviews and advises upon Department policies and procedures, requests for public records, and staff reports to the City Council, its commissions and committees; and he represents the Department in connection with non-party discovery disputes.

Along with other bodies of law, Aaron has developed subject matter expertise regarding the Fourth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendment implications of government operations involving persons experiencing homelessness. Indeed, he has been invited to present on this topic by several organizations including the International Municipal Lawyers Association and the Sacramento County Bar Association. Additionally, he is regularly called upon by public entities throughout the State of California to dialogue operative or proposed ordinances, policies and procedures that affect persons experiencing homelessness.

Aaron earned his Juris Doctor with a certificate in public service law from the University of California, Davis, School of Law, and was admitted to The Order of Barristers. During law school, Aaron served as a law clerk in the Office of the City Attorney for the City of Sacramento, and as judicial extern to the Honorable Troy L. Nunley, United States District Court for the Eastern District of California. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of California, Los Angeles, where he was awarded the Chancellor's Service Award. Aaron presently serves on the board of the Public Law Section of the Sacramento County Bar Association.

JEREMIAH JOHNSON

Jeremiah Johnson is a partner in the Southern California office of Cole Huber LLP. He is a litigator, focusing his practice as a trial attorney and representing cities by providing advisory services to their police departments on a variety of matters, including police civil rights defense and government tort defense. Prior to joining Cole Huber LLP, Jeremiah was a Deputy District Attorney with the Riverside County District Attorney's Office and a Deputy City Attorney at the City of Riverside.

PETER LEE

Peter Lee teaches and writes in the field of intellectual property law, particularly focusing on patent law, innovation, and technology transfer. His current scholarship explores the institutional context of innovation and the intersection of intellectual property law and the structure of innovative and creative industries. His scholarship has appeared in *The Yale Law Journal*, *Stanford Law Review*, *California Law Review*, *Duke Law Journal*, *Michigan Law Review*, and other leading journals. Professor Lee is an elected member of the American Law Institute, and he has received numerous awards for his scholarly work, including the UC Davis Chancellor's Fellowship, the Samsung-Stanford Patent Prize, and inclusion in West/Thomson's



annual Intellectual Property Law Review. Professor Lee has held visiting or invited positions at the University of Oxford, Seoul National University, and Melbourne Law School, and he speaks widely on intellectual property matters in the United States and abroad. He is the founding director of the [Center for Innovation, Law, and Society](#).

Professor Lee received his undergraduate degree from Harvard University, where he studied the history and philosophy of science. He received his J.D. from Yale Law School, where he was a member of *The Yale Law Journal*. Professor Lee joined the UC Davis faculty after clerking for Judge Barry G. Silverman of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

At UC Davis, he teaches Intellectual Property, Patent Law, Copyright, Trademark and Unfair Competition Law, International Intellectual Property and Development, Innovation and Technology Transfer, and Property. Professor Lee received the Distinguished Teaching Award in 2016.

JOHN LUEBBERKE

Law Degree from Western State College of Law, 1992.

John has devoted the majority of his practice to representing cities and other public agencies concerning challenging litigation and transactional matters. Most recently, Mr. Luebberke served as City Attorney for the City of Stockton for twelve years, before retiring in 2022 to return to private practice.

Over nearly thirty years representing public agencies, public employees and elected leaders Mr. Luebberke has cultivated many strong and enduring relationships with clients and has developed a wide range of expertise that includes land use and development law, environmental law, water law and all aspects of the law governing the operation of public agencies and public utilities.

John's current practice focuses on representing both private and public clients in real estate, water law, environmental law, complex transactional matters and associated litigation.

VALERIE SILVERMAN MASSEY

Valerie Silverman Massey is a Chief Deputy City Attorney at the Office of the San Diego City Attorney, where she serves as the Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer. She is a member of the San Diego County Bar Association's Legal Ethics Committee, and serves as a board member or chair to a number of other community and volunteer organizations. Ms. Silverman Massey is presenting here today as a member of the League of California Cities Ad Hoc Practicing Ethics Committee, who completed the most recent revisions to the League's Practicing Ethics Handbook.

She began her practice as a civil litigator representing both private and municipal clients. Her practice shifted its focus to legal, and later governmental, ethics, as she became a resource for conflict-of-interest analysis. As part of her current practice, Ms. Silverman Massey



assists the 350 personnel in the Office of the San Diego City Attorney and the approximately 12,000 City officials and employees who have questions regarding governmental ethics laws, including the Political Reform Act, Government Code section 1090, and incompatible activities. Outside of the office, Ms. Silverman Massey can be found outdoors at the beach or the mountains, but is most often found in her car playing Uber driver for her four children.

JOSEPH MONTES

Joseph Montes is the City Attorney for the cities of Alhambra, San Marino and Santa Clarita. He is a partner with Burke, Williams & Sorensen LLP and has been there for almost thirty years. He is the First Vice President for the City Attorneys Department of Cal Cities.

REBECCA L. MOON

"Rebecca Moon is a Senior Assistant City Attorney in the City of Sunnyvale. During her 20 plus years with the City, she has been involved in most areas of municipal law including litigation and risk management, HR, planning and land use, and the Brown Act, public records, and conflicts of interest. She is currently serves as chair of the League's FPPC committee."

NEIL OKAZAKI

Neil serves as Senior Deputy City Attorney/Constitutional Policing Advisor for the City of Corona. In this position, he provides legal opinions, training, counsel, and litigation defense for police and fire management in constitutional law, civil liability, and employment law. He previously worked in the Riverside City Attorney's Office for 16 years and supervised the office's Public Safety Division. Neil has completed 18 jury trials in his career. His litigation experience includes cases involving detentions, arrest, handcuffing, disability, termination, use of force (including deadly force, less lethal munitions, batons, physical strikes, etc.), search warrants, failure to provide medical care, and failure to act. Neil is a Past President of the Riverside County Bar Association and serves as Board Secretary of the Civil Rights Institute of Inland Southern California. He is also an Attorney Settlement Officer for the United States District Court for the Central District of California and a Wish Granter for the Make-A-Wish Foundation Orange County & the Inland Empire.

BEAU PARKHURST

Beau Parkhurst is a Senior Deputy City Attorney for the Sacramento City Attorney's Office and has over 10 years of municipal law experience with focus on public safety and civil litigation. Beau currently serves as general counsel to the City's Department of Community Response, which offers an alternative to calls for service that do not require the presence of law enforcement and oversees numerous programs that assist individuals experiencing homelessness. He is a graduate of University of California, Davis and the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.



RYAN RICHARDSON

Ryan Richardson serves as Chief Assistant City Attorney in the Oakland City Attorney's Office. As the head of the office's Advisory Division, he manages all of the office's advisory and transactional teams, serves as the primary parliamentarian to the City Council, and serves as a member of the office's Executive Management Team.

Ryan's legal career began at Jones Day, where he worked on major transactional and litigation matters. He subsequently founded his own law firm and also taught legal writing as an adjunct professor at USC Law School. In his private practice, Ryan represented employees against Fortune 500 employers in harassment, discrimination, wrongful termination, retaliation and wage/hour litigation.

Ryan has been working for the City of Oakland since 2013. Prior to his current role, he supervised the team that advises City management on employment matters, represents the City in related hearings, advises the City during labor negotiations, and supports the City's police-accountability efforts. In this role, Ryan helped finalize Measures LL and S1 to create and strengthen the Police Commission, Community Police Review Agency, and Office of the Inspector General.

Ryan is a graduate of Howard University and the University of Southern California Law School.

GEOFFREY S. SHELDON

Geoff, partner at LCW, is the Chair of the firm's Public Safety Practice Group, and he is also one of the firm's seasoned litigators. Geoff regularly provides advice and counsel and representation to firm clients on a wide array of matters, including matters involving the Fair Labor Standards Act, the California Labor Code, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Geoff is an expert in defending firm clients in traditional employment litigation as well as class and collective action lawsuits involving thousands of employees. He has successfully represented firm clients in FLSA collective actions through trial and appeal, and he has successfully defeated class certification in many of these lawsuits.

Geoff has also successfully handled class actions alleging violations of the FEHA brought by the DFEH and individual employees. Geoff's litigation practice extends to handling federal and state writs, injunctions and appeals. He has successfully argued cases in front of the California Court of Appeal, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the California Supreme Court. As a member of Litigation Practice Group Executive Committee, Geoff helps establish the firm's litigation policies and best practices.



MATTHEW SLENTZ

Matthew is Senior Counsel with Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley's litigation practice group. Matthew litigates a range of disputes for public agency clients in both trial and appellate courts, including suits involving land use, inverse condemnation, public utilities, and Public Records Act requests. He is part of the working group developing his firm's response to generative AI. Prior to joining Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, Matthew served as Chief Deputy Public Defender for Stanislaus County.

YOLANDA M. SUMMERHILL

Yolanda Summerhill is the Assistant City Attorney to the City of Newport Beach. She focuses her practice primarily on land use. Prior to joining Newport Beach, she worked as contract city attorney and assistant city attorney representing cities throughout Southern California including Costa Mesa, Fullerton, Placentia, Upland, Santa Fe Springs, and Westminster in virtually all areas of municipal law. She too is most proud mother of her two sons, one off to college and the other not far behind.

MEGHAN WHARTON

Meghan is Senior Counsel in Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley's litigation practice group. Meghan has been a litigator since 2001 and has focused on public law since 2013. Meghan has broad public entity litigation experience. While in-house with the San Diego City Attorney's Office, Meghan litigated cases involving Proposition 218 and 26, election law, municipal finance, contract disputes, the Brown Act, insurance coverage, conflicts of interest, COVID-19 vaccination disputes, and employment disputes. Meghan was primary counsel to the Public Utilities Department and Mayor's Office regarding Proposition 218 and Proposition 26 issues.

Meghan has argued before the California Supreme Court, California Court of Appeal, and the 9th Circuit. She is admitted to practice before the 9th Circuit, the District Courts for the Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Central Districts of California and the District of Arizona. Meghan successfully defended San Diego in the California Supreme Court in *San Diegans for Open Gov't v. Pub. Facilities Financing Auth. of the City of San Diego* (2019) 8 Cal.5th 733 (limiting standing to bring a conflict of interest claim under Gov. Code § 1092). Her published California Court of Appeal decisions include *Mahon v. City of San Diego* (2020) 57 Cal.App.5th 681 (franchise fee not an illegal tax if there is evidence of good faith negotiations resulting in a fee that is reasonably related to the value of the franchise); *Sviridov v. City of San Diego* (2017) 14 Cal.App.5th 514 (affirming cost award after plaintiff's failure to do better than § 998 offer); and *San Diegans for Open Gov't v. City of San Diego* (2015) 242 Cal.App.4th 416 (upholding revenue financing lease to fund infrastructure). Before the 9th Circuit, Meghan successfully defended the City's practice of chalking tires to enforce parking limits. *Verdun v. City of San Diego*, 51 F.4th 1033 (9th Cir. 2022). Meghan also represented the League of California Cities as amicus in *Jacks v. Santa Barbara*.



Meghan served as the San Diego's Chief Deputy City Attorney for the Special Litigation Division. Additionally, she co-chaired the office's writing committee and frequently conducted trainings on legal writing topics.

Meghan previously served on the San Diego County Bar Association's Legislative Committee (2020-2022). In 2023, Meghan was appointed to the League of California Cities' City Attorneys Department Municipal Finance Committee.

Meghan was admitted to the Arizona Bar (now inactive) in 2001 and the California Bar in 2007. Meghan graduated *cum laude* from Georgetown University Law Center. Meghan holds a B.A. in History from the University of Texas, Austin.

Meghan and her wife relocated to Nevada City, CA in 2023 and joined our Grass Valley office. In her free time, Meghan enjoys painting and hiking.

Practice Areas:

- Public Law
- Appellate Representation
- Administrative and Traditional Writs
- Constitutional Issues
- Complex Litigation
- Contract Disputes
- Public Finance Law
- Conflicts of Interest Law
- Post-Redevelopment
- Election Law

SUSANA ALCALA WOOD

Susana Alcala Wood was appointed by the Sacramento City Council to serve as City Attorney on March 19, 2018. An attorney specializing in Municipal law, Susana has worked for multiple cities throughout California. Just before her appointment, Susana was serving as the Assistant City Attorney for the City of Stockton from November 2013 to March 2018 where her responsibilities included advising several Council Committees and Citizen advisory commissions. She was also the principal Legal Advisor to the Stockton Police Department. Prior to her work at the City of Stockton, Susana served as the City Attorney for Modesto for 8 years, where she was the primary legal advisor to the City Council and City Manager. While at Modesto, Susana guided the City Council and staff through their historic Charter amendment shift from an at large council election system to a by-district election system. Susana also oversaw and directed hundreds of investigations involving allegations of harassment, discrimination, and related complaints involving city staff, department heads, and city management.



Susana actually worked for the City of Sacramento before as a Supervising Deputy City Attorney from April 2001 to June 2006 where she supervised the Code Enforcement and the Advisory Sections. As the Code Enforcement Supervisor, Susana directed a team of lawyers and support staff and spearheaded all code enforcement, criminal prosecutions, blight and nuisance abatement activities for the Office and advised and trained all city enforcement staff on strategies, code compliance and administrative abatement procedures. During her tenure, the City brought its first gang abatement civil suit. Susana also supervised the Advisory Section where she oversaw and directed the work of the advisory lawyers as they provided general governmental advice to all City Departments.

Susana worked as a Deputy City Attorney for the cities of Stockton and El Monte. As a deputy she was responsible for advising multiple departments on addressing blight, deteriorated and dangerous housing, nuisance conditions, drug, red-light, and gang activity. Susana began her career with the City of El Monte in 1988 while still in law school when she was hired as a law clerk. Upon passing the California Bar exam in 1991, she was appointed as a Deputy City Attorney.

Professional Affiliations

Ms. Alcalá Wood is on the Board of Directors for the International Municipal Lawyers Association, which enables her to learn from and work collaboratively with her counterparts across the Country, and as City Attorney to one of the 50 largest cities in the nation, she participates in the Top 50 group that meets regularly to discuss serving the legal needs of large metropolitan cities. She was also just elected to serve on the Board of the CalCities City Attorney's Department where her primary focus will be on advancing the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts of the organization. Throughout her career she has worked on many committees serving to advance the profession of municipal lawyers and has provided various training and speaking capacities to organizations and public agencies throughout the state on the topics of Local Government Law.

Education

Ms. Wood received her Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy-Ethics and Public Policy in 1987 from the University of California at Santa Barbara and received her Juris Doctorate from Whittier College, School of Law at Los Angeles in May 1991.



MICHAEL D. YOURIL

A partner at Liebert Cassidy Whitmore's Fresno office, Michael Youril provides representation and legal counsel to clients in matters pertaining to employment and labor law at state and federal courts. Michael has extensive experience in retirement and health benefit law and assists agencies in complying with post-retirement work restrictions, independent contractor status, disability retirement, PEPRRA compliance, PEMHCA (i.e. CalPERS medical), and determining whether compensation is included or excluded from reporting for the purposes of determining pension benefits.

Michael also provides advice and counsel to employers regarding employee leave rights, engaging in the interactive process with disabled employees, and providing reasonable accommodations to disabled employees. He regularly litigates cases involving discrimination, harassment, retaliation, due process, free speech retaliation, and FMLA/CFRA.