

Superior Court of California,  
County of Los Angeles  
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Los Angeles, CA 90012

# NOTICE TO ATTORNEYS

Diversity Inclusion Working Group

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
November 29, 2022

## REGISTER NOW FOR THE DECEMBER 5 CIVIL TRIAL ADVOCACY CLOSING ARGUMENTS PROGRAM AND EARN MCLE CREDIT

***This is the Final Session of the Popular Virtual Trial Litigation Skills Series***

Join Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor and attorney experts at **noon on Monday, December 5** as they share insight into successful administration of closing arguments and receive two hours of MCLE credit. (*The Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles is a State Bar of California approved MCLE provider.*) The program includes a "Nuts and Bolts" lecture on closing arguments with perspective from plaintiff and defense counsel, a mock closing argument demonstration and a roundtable session with feedback and tips from the presenters.

Attorneys of all levels of experience are encouraged to attend.

**\*\*[REGISTER NOW](#)\*\***

(*Registration closes at 5 p.m. Dec. 2.* The link to the virtual program will be sent the morning of Dec. 5)

**WHEN:** 12 – 2 p.m., December 5, 2022

**PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS:**  
(*Bios attached*)

Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor  
Carl E. Douglas  
Edith R. Matthai  
Ibiere Seck

Judge Ruth Ann Kwan  
Ninos "Nino" Saroukhanioff  
Ricardo Echeverria

This is the final program in the Civil Trial Advocacy series, sponsored by the Court's Diversity Inclusion Working Group and co-sponsored by the American Board of Trial Advocates, the Association of Business Trial Lawyers, the Association of Southern California Defense Counsel, the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Bar Association.

American Board  
of Trial Advocates



abtl

ASCD



Consumer Attorneys  
ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES



Please email questions about this program to Marlow Gory at [MGory@lacourt.org](mailto:MGory@lacourt.org).

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# P R E S E N T E R S

# LASC CIVIL TRIAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM

## CLOSING ARGUMENTS



**Carl E. Douglas**  
*Founding Partner, Douglas / Hicks Law*  
Closing Arguments Nuts & Bolts

Carl E. Douglas is in private practice at Douglas / Hicks Law in Los Angeles. Mr. Douglas is one of the “Top 100 Attorneys” in California for 2021 according to the staff at the Los Angeles/ San Francisco Daily Journal newspaper, the leading legal periodical in the state. In addition, the Daily Journal named his firm Douglas/Hicks Law as one of the winners of their prestigious 25th Annual “California Lawyer Attorneys of the Year” (CLAY).

Prior to opening his own firm more than 25 years ago, Mr. Douglas was the former managing attorney at the Law Offices of Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr, and is best known while there for his work as the coordinator of O.J. Simpson’s criminal defense “Dream Team.” His work as a member of that Dream Team is prominently featured in ESPN’s 30 for 30, 2018 Academy Award winning documentary, *O.J.: Made In America*. While at Mr. Cochran’s firm, Mr. Douglas tried dozens of cases to verdict, in a wide array of personal injury, civil rights and criminal law matters.

After going out on his own, he has only broadened his list of accomplishments. Mr. Douglas was the attorney for the lead plaintiff in Patricia Anderson v. General Motors Corporation, a product liability trial where the jury returned a \$4.9 billion dollar verdict for Ms. Anderson and her family, which was then the largest personal injury verdict ever awarded in the United States.

As lead counsel in a seven-week trial against the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department concerning the police in-custody death of an unarmed African-American man, Mr. Douglas helped the victim’s family obtain a verdict of \$8 million.

Mr. Douglas was named the Trial Lawyer of the Year in 2006 by the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles, the largest local association of plaintiffs’ attorneys in the United States. In 1994, and again in 1999, Mr. Douglas was honored as the “Loren Miller Lawyer of the Year” by the John M. Langston Bar Association, the largest local association of African-American attorneys in California. He became only the second attorney in the more than 85-year history of the association to be awarded that coveted honor more than once.



**Ninos “Nino” Saroukhanioff**  
*Partner, Morgenstern Law Group*  
Closing Arguments Nuts & Bolts

Ninos “Nino” Saroukhanioff is a partner at Morgenstern Law Group. His practice areas at the firm consist of representing major trucking companies, public entities, insurance companies, businesses and individuals throughout the country in cases involving motor vehicle accidents, premises liability, intentional torts and products liability. Ninos has extensive trial experience, having taken over 25 superior court jury trials to verdict in California. Ninos has obtained defense verdicts in cases involving wrongful death, intentional torts, premises liability, trucking and auto accidents. Ninos is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), holding a rank of associate. Ninos is also a board member of the Association of Southern California Defense Counsel (ASCDC), is its current secretary-treasurer and is slated to be the president of ASCDC in 2023. Ninos is also on the Board of Directors of California Defense Counsel (CDC). The CDC is the political arm of the Association of Defense Counsel of Southern California and the Association of Defense Counsel of Northern California and Nevada. Ninos is also a current member of the Defense Research Institute (DRI), a national organization of civil defense attorneys and in-house counsel. Between 2016 and 2019, he served as the Pacific Region Director for DRI. In 2019, Ninos was selected to become a member a member of the Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel (FDCC), a highly selective professional trade association of peer-reviewed, premier defense and corporate counsel and industry executives.



**Ricardo Echeverria**  
*Trial Attorney, Shernoff Bidart  
Echeverria LLP*  
Closing Arguments Demo

Ricardo Echeverria is a trial attorney with Shernoff Bidart Echeverria LLP, handling insurance bad faith and catastrophic personal injury cases. Mr. Echeverria is a past-president of the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles (CAALA), the nation's largest local association of plaintiffs' attorneys. He was recognized as one of the Top 30 Plaintiff Lawyers in California in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, and was named one of the Top 100 Attorneys in California in 2017 and 2018 by the Los Angeles Daily Journal. He was honored by the Orange County Trial Lawyers Association as the 2021 Top Gun Trial Lawyer of the Year. In 2019, he was honored with the Lifetime Legal Achievement Award from Consumer Watchdog.

Mr. Echeverria was named 2019 Trial Lawyer of the Year by Consumer Attorneys of Inland Empire and was also named the 2010 Trial Lawyer of the Year by CAALA after having been nominated for the award from 2006 through 2009. He has also been a finalist for the Consumer Attorneys of California's Consumer Attorney of the Year in 2007, 2009, 2018 and 2020. He was also a finalist for the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association 2019 Trial Lawyer of the Year. Mr. Echeverria was presented the 2011 – 2012 Jennifer Brooks Lawyer of the Year Award by the Western San Bernardino County Bar Association. In 2012, he received an Outstanding Trial Lawyer Award from the Consumer Attorneys of San Diego. He has been named a Super Lawyer by Super Lawyers Magazine every year since 2005. He has been named a "Best Lawyer" by the Best Lawyers in America publication every year since 2014.



**Edith R. Matthai**  
*Trial Attorney, Robie & Matthai,  
APC*  
Closing Arguments Demo

Edith Matthai is a trial lawyer who has specialized in the representation of attorneys in malpractice actions for over 30 years. She has handled matters arising from nearly every field of practice including complex business transactions and litigation, probate and complex family law proceedings, securities litigation, intellectual property litigation, entertainment related disputes and bankruptcy proceedings.

Because of her breadth of experience and creativity, she has also been asked to defend a wide variety of cases that are complex and unique. Edith represents judges and commissioners in disciplinary matters pending before the California Commission on Judicial Performance; she has represented over 250 judicial officers over the last 15 years.

She is repeatedly recognized for her trial skills and also has significant appellate experience, having handled many cases that have formed the legal principles, setting the standards for attorney liability. Since 2013, she has served on the Board of Directors of American Business Bank, which was founded in 1997 and has grown to be a \$2 billion institution by providing personalized service to its middle market customers.

#### HONORS

- Association of Southern California Defense Counsel - Hall of Fame Award, 2015
- LACBA Shattuck-Price Outstanding Lawyer Award, 2014
- CAL-ABOTA Trial Lawyer of the Year, 2013
- Recipient: Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles Ernestine Stahlhut Award, 2010
- Loyola Law School Champion of Justice Award, 2008
- California State Bar Litigation Section Trial Lawyer Hall of Fame, 2008
- Los Angeles County Bar Association Outstanding Committee Service Award, 2008
- Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles Distinguished Service Award, 2005
- Daily Journal Top 100 Lawyers in California, 2006, 2007
- Daily Journal Top Women Lawyers, 2002-2010
- Super Lawyer, inception of the listing to present
- Super Lawyers Top 100 in Southern California, 2007-2018



**Ibiere Seck**  
*Founder and Principal Trial  
Lawyer, Seck Law, P.C.  
Moderator*

Ibiere Seck is the founder of Seck Law, P.C. and its principal trial lawyer where her trial practice focuses on cases involving complex catastrophic injury, wrongful death, traumatic brain injury, civil rights and sexual abuse of minors. Ibiere exclusively represents plaintiffs and prides herself in being a zealous advocate on an endless pursuit for justice on behalf of people who have been wronged, harmed or injured. Ibiere has been recognized as a Southern California Super Lawyers Rising Stars and Super Lawyers since 2010 and was featured as one of the Daily Journals Top 40 Under 40. Ibiere has been recognized by her peers as a champion of the voiceless, underserved and underrepresented. She is a recipient of Consumer Attorneys of California's (CAOC) Street Fighter of the Year award, CAALA's Rising Star award and the National Bar Association's Nation's Best Advocates award.

Ibiere has obtained multiple seven- and eight-figure verdicts, but her biggest wins are her husband and children. When not spending time with her family or trying cases, Ibiere travels the country teaching on trial techniques. She is a frequent speaker/facilitator at trial conferences both in the U.S. and abroad, and mentors aspiring attorneys throughout Southern California. Ibiere serves on the board of numerous professional and non-profit organizations including American Association for Justice, Los Angeles County Bar Association, Los Angeles Trial Lawyer's Charities, Inner City Law Center and Allies for Every Child. Ibiere is a CAALA officer and will lead the organization as president in 2024.



**Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor**  
*Los Angeles Superior Court  
Co-Chair, Diversity Inclusion  
Working Group  
Trial Judge, Introduction  
and Closings*

On January 1, 2021, Judge Eric C. Taylor became the 71st Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court, having been elected on September 9, 2020, serving for 2021 and 2022. Judge Taylor was previously elected Assistant Presiding Judge serving for 2019 and 2020. To date, he has led the nation's largest trial court through the COVID-19 pandemic and its most severe surge, lobbied to overcome dire budget challenges, developed the court's remote platform to expand access to 10 million court users, and laid the foundation for LA's new court construction plan and funding. Meanwhile, Judge Taylor has developed a lasting legacy of fairness and inclusion on the bench and in the practice of law. He co-created LA's Judicial Mentoring Program to cultivate diverse judicial candidates. That program has been replicated throughout California, and is spreading nationally. He also created the Court's Diversity and Inclusion Working Group which has amended the court's local rules to allow less experienced and historically underrepresented groups greater opportunities to gain experience. Co-chaired by Judge Taylor, the Working Group has also sponsored educational programs and informational series with prominent bar group that seek to cultivate the best and brightest legal talent by providing opportunities to "all."

Judge Taylor was appointed to the Inglewood Municipal Court in 1998, serving as Presiding Judge prior to trial court unification. He was subsequently appointed Superior Court Site Managing Judge for the Inglewood Courthouse. In 2001, he was appointed Assistant District Supervising Judge of the Southwest District. From 2002-3, he served as Supervising Judge of the Southwest District. In his 23 years on the bench, Judge Taylor has worked on numerous LA Court committees – including Legislative, Family, Security, Civil Grand Jury, and Bench-Bar Outreach. In 2011, he was elected to the Superior Court Executive Committee, serving from 2011-13; and is currently serving as the Chair of the Court's Executive Committee.

In 2003, Judge Taylor was elected President of the California Judges Association ("CJA") after serving on its board for 2 years. While president, Chief Justice Ronald George appointed him as an advisory member to the California Judicial Council. In 2015, he became the first judge to be elected for a second time as President of CJA, and to again serve on the Judicial Council under Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye. Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye reappointed him to serve a one-year term as a voting member of the Judicial Council in 2019-20.

Judge Taylor holds a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law, and a B.A. from Dartmouth College. At Dartmouth, Judge Taylor was a Gould Foundation Scholar and sang for four years with the Dartmouth Aires. At Virginia, he chaired the Migrant Farmworkers Legal Project and co-chaired the Law Public Services Program. Judge Taylor recently finished a 12-year term as a trustee of the Cate Preparatory School where he served as Vice President, and has taught as an adjunct professor at Loyola Marymount University since 2013.



A Special Thanks to:



**Judge Ruth Ann Kwan**  
*Los Angeles Superior Court*  
Co-Chair, Diversity Inclusion  
Working Group

Sponsored by LASC's Diversity Inclusion Working Group, co-sponsored by ABOTA, ABTL, ASCDC, CAALA and LACBA

American Board  
of Trial Advocates



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Consumer Attorneys  
ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES



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**MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2022**  
**12 - 2 P.M.**