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POWERFUL ADVOCATES FOR THE HOMELESS



The Padres' Peter Seidler (right) and Donovan's Dan Shea
in one of three temporary homeless shelters.

See more on **PAGE 10**

(Photo by Jamie Lytle Scott)

INSIDE: SAN DIEGO'S TOP ATTORNEYS

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COVER STORY



Court Stymies City of San Diego's

The Padres' Peter Seidler and Donovan's restaurants owner Dan Shea are using their considerable business skills and influence to assemble a working group to tackle San Diego's growing homeless problem. **See Page 10**

(Photo by Jamie Lytle Scott)



14

San Diego's Top Attorneys

San Diego's top attorneys are experts in a range of specialties ranging from complex and class action litigation, family law issues, IRS appeals, real estate law and personal injury, to name a few, plus pro bono work. Sandra Joan Morris (pictured left) is one of them.



19

State's Oil Watchdog in Reform Mode

Early in 2011, environmental lobbyist Bill Allayaud was so fed up with what he saw as dereliction of duty by California's oil and gas regulator that he began to catalog grievances. "They were essentially lap dogs for the oil industry," he says. But the California oil watchdog is undertaking a comprehensive reform.



22

A Passion for Real Estate

During her 2800-mile road trip from Long Island to San Diego, 21-year-old Michelle Muñiz had a lot of time to contemplate her future. She landed a job and saved up to purchase a condo in Mission Valley. That first real estate transaction became much more than a home. It ignited a passion that led her into a lifelong vocation.

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SAN DIEGO SCENE



Photo courtesy of Westfield UTC.

Westfield UTC's New Parking Plan Aims to Get Rid of Parking Spot 'Poachers'

Westfield UTC wants to get rid of parking spot “poachers” — individuals who take advantage of the free parking by leaving their vehicles on its parking lot for several hours at a time so they can go somewhere else in the vicinity.

Beginning this fall, the shopping center will implement a secured parking plan where the first two hours of parking will remain free of charge. Visitors will be charged \$3 per hour after the first two hours of free parking.

After the initial two hours of free parking, guest will be charged \$3 for visits lasting 2-3 hours, \$6 for visits lasting 3-4 hours and \$9 for visits lasting 4-5 hours. A \$15 daily maximum is reached for visits lasting longer than 5 hours.

About 85 percent of shopping center visitors complete their visits in under two hours, according to the center, meaning their parking would remain free.

“As UTC has emerged as one of the few remaining free parking

locations in the increasingly dense Golden Triangle business district, individuals not actually visiting the shopping center have been taking advantage of the neighborhood’s extremely limited parking,” the shopping center said in announcing the plan. “On a daily basis, hundreds of cars are parked on site for several hours – or even for the entire day – and UTC guests have reported being inconvenienced as a result.”

The issue is expected to increase even further with the planned addition of a new regional transit center and trolley station alongside the property —resulting in an influx of daily commuters who could use UTC as a place to park before proceeding elsewhere.

Patrons of UTC’s Arlight Cinemas, 24-Hour Fitness and others will be able to receive validations for additional hours of free parking, with the first \$3-per-hour charge only coming into effect upon expiration of the extended validation.

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Ronson J. Shamoun, Principal Attorney and CEO of RJS LAW, is an Adjunct Law Professor at the University of San Diego—School of Law where he teaches a Tax Practice and Penalties class. He was recently presented with the following awards:

- San Diego Metro Magazine- Best Attorney 2016
- San Diego Magazine- Top Attorney 2016
- San Diego Business Journal- Best of the Bar 2014, 2015 & 2016
- Martindale Hubbel's- AC Preeminent Rated 2014, 2015 & 2016
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Thought Leader Dr. Mary Walshok to Receive Herb Klein Civic Leadership Award

Dr. Mary Walshok, an author, educator, researcher, and associate vice chancellor for public programs and dean of Extension at the University of California San Diego, will receive the Herb Klein Civic Leadership Award on May 31 from the San Diego Regional EDC.

The award, which will be presented at the organization's annual dinner, recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in addressing challenges and making significant contributions to improving the region.

Walshok is a thought leader on the topic of workforce development and its role in fueling regional economic prosperity. She is the co-author of "Invention & Reinvention: The Evolution of San Diego's Innovation Economy," a book published by Stanford University Press that

analyzes San Diego's ever-changing sociological, political, and economic trends. She is the author of five other books and more than 100 articles and reports on regional innovation, the role of research institutions in regional economies and workforce development.

Walshok oversees a \$45 million, 200-employee division in San Diego that annually serves more than 80,000 enrollees through innovative local and online programs, as well as provides access to a vast array of intellectual resources through the award-winning UCSD-TV and nationwide through UCTV, which reaches more than 6 million households and millions more around the globe via web. The Division also serves more than 3,000 foreign students annually.



Dr. Mary Walshok

State Treasurer John Chiang Introduces Business Incentives Gateway Platform

California State Treasurer John Chiang introduced CBIG.ca.gov — the California Business Incentives Gateway — an online platform that connects business owners and entrepreneurs to incentives such as tax credits, loans and bond financing to help them grow and create jobs.

"Instead of connecting people with products or services, we will be connecting local mom-and-pops and multinational corporations to economic incentives, permitting assistance, and employee training that can help them grow and prosper," said Chiang.

The Treasurer provided his in-depth look at CBIG at the University Club atop Symphony Towers. The launch event is part of a multi-city tour across the state to engage with local businesses, demonstrate CBIG's easy-to-use interface and show local businesses that

they should make the platform an important part of their business planning.

"The majority of companies in San Diego, as is true of most of the state, are small businesses. For the first time, these businesses will have easy access to the



State Treasurer John Chiang, right, meets with Mark Cafferty, president and CEO of San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, at the introduction of the California Business Incentives Gateway. (Photo: John Wark, California State Treasurer's Office)

hundreds of incentives offered by counties, cities and municipalities in the San Diego region as well as state and federal incentives that, up until now, have been a challenge for small businesses to know about," Chiang said.

CBIG features such incentives as: sales tax exclusions; training grants; fee waivers; permit assistance; reduced utility rates; and employee recruitment.

Chiang said CBIG makes it simple for local, state and federal government agencies to post an incentive. Its user interface makes searching and applying for incentives akin to state-of-the-art online shopping experiences. Businesses can search by location or industry to find the most advantageous opportunities.



Professor Tony Hunter will receive the award on May 19 in Trento, Italy. (Credit: Salk Institute)

Salk Institute Professor Tony Hunter Receives Prestigious International Award for Cancer Research

Professor Tony Hunter, who holds an American Cancer Society Professorship at the Salk Institute, has received the 2018 Pezcoller–AACR International Award for Extraordinary Achievement in Cancer Research, one of the most prestigious honors in the field of cancer research. The prize recognizes a scientist of international renown who has made a major scientific discovery in basic cancer research or who has made significant contributions to translational cancer research.

The \$75,000 prize will be awarded at a ceremony to be held at the Teatro Sociale in Trento, Italy, on May 19. The prize lecture will be given at the AACR Annual Meeting in Chicago on April 15.

Hunter is known for his 1979 discovery of a mechanism called tyrosine phosphorylation, which is a molecular switch that turns normal cells cancerous. The breakthrough led to a new type of cancer pharmaceutical, the tyrosine kinase inhibitor. This class of drugs has revolutionized the treatment of chronic myeloid leukemia with the game-changing therapy Gleevec, and also is of great benefit in several other forms of cancer.

Hunter's work has led to a complete catalogue of the 90 human genes that encode tyrosine kinases, over half of which have become targets for the development of drugs to treat cancer and other human diseases. Currently, 31 tyrosine kinase inhibitors are FDA approved for human therapy, with many more in clinical trials.

Old House Fair Celebrates 20 Years in South Park

South Park's Annual Old House Fair, the community's historic home tour and exhibition, returns on Saturday, May 19, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., starting at The Rose Wine Bar, located at 2219 30th Street.

Produced by the South Park Business Group, the Old House Fair brings together vintage home specialists, historic preservation enthusiasts, home owners, history lovers and community members in celebration of the neighborhood's unique charm and character.

Marking the fair's 20th anniversary, six South Park properties will be featured, along with new activities, including a series of free 30-minute talks led by vintage home preservation and restoration specialists. One of the highlights of the fair will be the newly designated historic district, running from A to Elm Streets and 28th to 31st Streets.



Also new for 2018 is an architect-led bike tour of historic and modern homes built by notable architects, departing at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The Rose Wine Bar is the new starting point for the event where the ticket booth, trolley starting point, and exhibitor displays and talks will be held.

Each home tour ticket includes docent-led education and history, trolley access, and a special 20th anniversary program guide featuring South Park's history and

photos of homes on tour from the past two decades. "Deluxe" ticketholders will receive a complimentary mimosa, commemorative tote bag and bike tour ticket.

Home tour tickets are \$30, Deluxe tickets are \$50 and bike tour tickets are \$5. Online sales begin on April 1. Tickets can also be purchased at the event. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.oldhousefairsd.com.

Scripps Family Contributes \$4.6 Million to Two Scripps Oceanography Projects

The University of California San Diego announced charitable gifts from more than a dozen descendants of Edward W. Scripps that will make possible two crucial and high-profile projects at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The gifts

underscore the family's commitment to the advance the mission of Scripps Oceanography to find solutions to our greatest environmental challenges.

Included in the projects covered by the \$4.6 million in family gifts is the

replacement of the railing on the Ellen Browning Scripps Memorial Pier (\$2.6 million), and the reconstruction and modernization of the Center for Coastal Studies (\$2 million), which will be named after longtime supporters Charles and Lois "Beano" Scripps. The Miller Hull Partnership is the architect for the reconstruction and modernization of the Center for Coastal Studies.

"The scientific research completed at the Charles and Beano Scripps Center for Coastal Studies and on the Ellen Browning Scripps Memorial Pier is vital to further our understanding of coastal processes," said Margaret Leinen, vice chancellor of marine sciences at UC San Diego and director of Scripps Oceanography. "We're very fortunate to have the Scripps family's continued support of our mission to find solutions to our greatest environmental challenges."

Rendering courtesy of The Miller Hull Partnership architectural firm).



Scripps Encinitas Launches Robotic Surgery Services

Scripps Health has expanded its Minimally Invasive Robotic Surgery Program to Scripps Memorial Hospital Encinitas, bringing the advances of the da Vinci Surgical System to the North County campus.

The first surgery using the technology at Scripps Encinitas was performed recently on a patient who needed a gynecologic oncology procedure.

"This really is science fiction come to life," said Adam Fierer, M.D., who is the program's clinical leader at Scripps Encinitas. "This technology takes us into an entirely new realm of the future of surgery, and it has long-term potential to improve our already high level of surgical quality."

Robotic surgery offers a minimally invasive alternative to open surgery and improves the patient experience by reducing blood loss, lowering pain, accelerating recovery times and limiting complications. The system also can help to reduce many of the costs associated with open surgery procedures.



The da Vinci Si Surgical System is now available at Scripps Memorial Hospital Encinitas. (Photo courtesy of Scripps Health)

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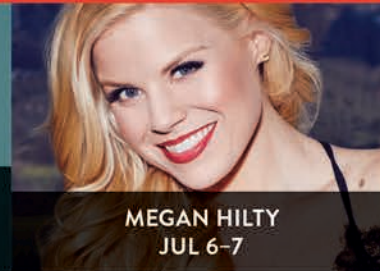
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Powerful Advocates for the Homeless



Two years ago, Peter Seidler, majority owner of the San Diego Padres (left), asked businessman Dan Shea, owner of Donovan's steakhouses, to join him to help solve the humanitarian plight of the homeless in San Diego. (Photo by Brennan Scott)

The Padres' Peter Seidler and Donovan's Dan Shea assemble a working group to tackle one of San Diego's pressing social problems

By the SD METRO Editorial Board

"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing," said Walt Disney. It was this mantra that drove a small group of local business leaders to act in a humanitarian effort to help fellow San Diegans off the dangers of the street and into temporary housing.

After decades of problems the city of San Diego faced: Political upheaval; a pension crisis; the Great Recession that affected cities across the country; the woes of whether or not to put measures on the ballot that would increase the Tourist Occupancy Tax (TOT) to expand the convention center; and the threat – and then follow-through of the San Diego Chargers, who had called our city home

since 1961, leaving San Diego. All political capital and public hand-wringing issues. While these civic issues were attention-grabbing problems that took a lion's share of our city's political leadership, one sad fact remained: No one seemed to give credence to the plight of our city's homeless citizens. No one, except perhaps the nonprofit service providers who, with minimal budgets, have done what they can with very little resources.

And then, out of nowhere — or not, San Diego became national news for the lack of care for its homeless population. In April 2017, it was widely reported that among the county's homeless population, 62 percent were in the City of San Diego. The city's total of 5,619 homeless represented a 10.3 percent increase from the prior year.

In December 2017, an annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said San Diego County had the fourth-largest homeless population in the United States. The San Diego region's total of 9,100 homeless people was behind only New York City, Los Angeles County, and King County, Wash., which includes Seattle. According to the report, San Diego ranked 10th nationally, with 1,589 homeless families with children; seventh in 1,160 unaccompanied homeless youth ages 18-24; and third for homeless veterans, approximately 1,067 military veterans in a city — which is designated as the second best military town in the country, contributing hundreds of millions of dollars to our local economy. It became



The three bridge shelters have brought the number of shelter beds in San Diego to 2,000, according to the mayor's office. (Photo by Brennan Scott)

evident that our community had failed to care for the men and women who have served our country.

In mid-2017, San Diego yet again made national news with the Hepatitis A outbreak that killed 20 people, and sickened hundreds of others — two-thirds of which were homeless, illicit drug-users, or both.

There's a little-known back story about private citizens and businessmen and women taking a deep-dive to help San Diego's homeless. It's a story that deserves attention. Since coming to San Diego six years ago, Peter Seidler, majority owner and managing partner of the San Diego Padres, and CEO of Seidler Equity Partners, has said in numerous public venues that the homeless crisis in San Diego can no longer be ignored, and "enough is enough." On daily walks throughout the East Village — sometimes during the darkest hours of the night, Seidler experienced first-hand the troublesome problem of homelessness in the city and decided that compassion for people living on the streets and cleaning up neighborhoods trumped any other problems San Diego faced. In an article published by the San Diego Union-Tribune on March 18, 2017, Seidler was quoted as saying: "When you talk about America's Finest City, they all brag about how this is better than L.A., and all the Major League executives last year

say this is the jewel of Major League cities." Further stating: "Then you have this obvious humane, social, economic shortcoming. We've got to address this."

However, it was well before spring of 2017 that Seidler had a plan. Two years ago, Seidler asked businessman Dan Shea, owner of Donovan's restaurants, to join him to help solve the humanitarian plight of the homeless in San Diego. Seidler made it clear that this was a personal issue; that he wanted to show compassion to people, while cleaning up neighborhoods.

When Seidler and Shea were asked about what their experience had been in gathering public opinion on the homeless issue, after meeting with dozens upon dozens of business leaders, non-profit charities, and local political operatives, it boiled down — they said, to generalized misconceptions regarding the homeless population. Specifically: that most homeless citizens suffer from chronic mental illness, which according to their fact-finding is untrue in that, while statistics vary, it is generally accepted that approximately 30% of homeless people are chronically mentally ill, certainly not a majority. Also, as supported by the statics above, San Diego's civic groupthink does not give enough credence to causes of homelessness amongst veterans with PTSD; and not even among the statistics — senior citizens who lost their homes in the recession



Volunteers serve food to some of the homeless at one of three bridge shelters opened in San Diego. (Photo by Brennan Scott)

and are now living in their cars. And, most unfortunately, foster children who have aged out of the system at 18 years, with a minimal support system. According to Shea, the general theme of most conversations regarding this issue was that people believe that all the homeless “want to be on the street”, which is not supported by facts. They understand that there is a small amount of people who chose to live on the street, but it is certainly not the majority. The group’s position is that they aim to help only the people who want help and who do not want to be living on the street.

For the past 20-plus months, Peter Seidler and Dan Shea have assembled a group of seven like-minded business and civic leaders who meet each Tuesday in Seidler’s office to discuss finding solutions for San Diego’s homeless problem. Business leaders, such as: Pat and Stephanie Kilkenny, CEO of K2 Insurance Services; Tom Mulvaney of the local Mulvaney legal family and board member at University of San Diego; Jeff Martin, CFO/Sempra Energy; Mitch Mitchell, VP of state government affairs for SDG&E; Keith Jones, managing principal and partner, ACE Parking; Dan Herbert, attorney with Higgs Fletcher & Mack; and county Supervisor Ron Roberts.

In an interview with SD METRO, Shea said that he and Seidler initially met for a discussion as to how, exactly, the homeless problem could be tackled. He said that they asked themselves: “What would we do in our own businesses?” They agreed that the issue should be approached “from the inside-out.” Over the course of several months, Shea said the group “consumed everything they could get their hands on” regarding the city’s efforts to combat the problem and concluded that it was not just a matter of money — as they had been told again and again. Rather, there were two primary issues that came into play: 1) leadership and/or the lack thereof; and 2) the proper organization of resources. The group also studied local and national “Housing First” models, which they agreed was a good model. However, lacking city land and other resources, the “Housing First” model would leave homeless, and even low-income citizens, without shelter — most likely sentencing them to life on the street for at least another five to 10 years. Seidler and Shea’s group did in fact believe that “Housing First” is a good



A high-rise and Downtown buildings form a backdrop to one of three bridge shelters for the homeless. (Photo by Brennan Scott)

model, but it should not be the “only model” because it needed a component that would get people off the street sooner and begin the process of helping the homeless immediately.

Seidler and Shea met with Mayor Kevin Faulconer in 2016 to discuss potential solutions to San Diego’s homeless crisis as a behind-the-scenes initiative. They made it clear that they did not care who got the credit, so long as positive action was being taken to relieve the plight of the homeless. The group also stressed that this was not a political issue for them. It was not about Republicans or Democrats, or about political ambitions. It was very simply a group who self-assembled to neither help nor hurt anyone’s political agenda; rather, they were politically agnostic. It was also stated that if the city remained immobilized on the issue, they would pivot and make it a robust public dialogue. Although they still work closely with the mayor, they took the conversation public after one year of little progress to help the homeless.

Late in 2016, Seidler and Shea’s group met with Dr. James Harris III, president of the University of San Diego, to discuss developing a “Best in Class” model based upon successful homeless solutions in other U.S. cities, specifically: Houston, Phoenix, and Salt Lake City. The team concluded that no practical endeavor concerning the homeless will work without an integrated approach to the issue. Chief among the integrated approach included 1) Full utilization of the Coordinated Entry System (CES); 2) a needs assessment component; 3) triage resources; and 4) full utilization of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

In June of 2017, in partnership with the University of San Diego, Seidler and Shea’s team held a press conference to announce plans for a new idea: a temporary homeless shelter idea where Sprung Structure industrial tents would house up to 250 San Diegans in each shelter by the end of 2017. During the press conference, the USD/Seidler/Shea team again acknowledged the merits of the “Housing First” model, which could take up to a decade to fully implement. Instead, they wanted to focus on the city’s lack of urgency to get people off the street, which with the shelter proposal could occur in a matter of months. The team also committed to provide funding for some of the tents to begin the process



In one of the homeless shelters, residents relax watching TV. (Photo by Brennan Scott)

immediately, if city and county government did their respective parts in contributing to daily shelter services, assessments, and mental health wrap-around services.

When Shea and Seidler began working on this issue, they were told time and again that “no one cares about the homeless,” Shea said in his interview with SD METRO. However, when they reached out to potential contributors and nonprofit organizations, what they found — according to Shea, was that, while philanthropists and service providers were ready, willing and able to help, the common theme of the discussions was there was no “organized effort” in which to participate.

Another common theme among service providers and potential contributors was that they stood ready to help, provided that the city and county took definitive action to address the homeless problem.

Testimony to that is that Feeding San Diego has stepped forward and guaranteed to cover all food needs in the shelters constructed by the group. Additionally, Family Healthcare Centers of San Diego announced they would provide medical, dental, and health care services to the shelter occupants, but only after government resources were utilized first. And then, recognizing the value that pets contribute to the lives of the homeless, Helen Woodward Animal Center stepped forward, citing research that shows that approximately 24 percent of the homeless population have pets, and that almost half of all their food goes to their pets. Equally disturbing is that many in the homeless population are unlikely to enter shelters because of their unwillingness to leave their pets — most likely the only family they have. Helen Woodward offered to provide on-site mobile veterinary services, including vaccines, spays and neutering, as well as food for the pets to not take nourishment from the homeless.

On Jan. 4, the last of three tent shelters opened in East Village, at 14th and Commercial streets. That shelter is operated by Father Joe’s Villages. The first shelter opened on Dec. 1, at 16th Street and Newton Avenue in Barrio Logan, which is operated by The Alpha Project, followed by a shelter located in the Midway District specifically designated to serve veterans and operated by

Veterans Villages of San Diego. According to the mayor’s office, the three bridge shelters have brought the number of shelter beds in San Diego to 2,000.

While it is premature to predict the impact that these shelters will have on relieving the burden of San Diego’s first responders and emergency rooms throughout the city, it is a fair assumption that city resources will be more equitably balanced by the fact that 700 people now have timely access to medical services, thus reducing the burden on emergency services. A large portion of the homeless population will be given on-site resources by service providers. Problem solving all the way around.

It is well known that this small group of business leaders are reticent to see their names publicized; rather in numerous discussions they have made it clear that they prefer to quietly participate in the effort to help the homeless get off the street, on their feet and start anew. In fact, they only agreed to talk to us if it served one purpose: to continue raising awareness of the plight of the homeless and coming together as a community to find solutions. We call upon the city and county of San Diego to continue to participate in this public/private initiative to help San Diego’s homeless. Our fellow citizens’ lives are at stake. We see progress, but far more is needed.



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SAN DIEGO'S BEST ATTORNEYS 2018



Gayle M. Blatt With a practice that focuses on complex and class action litigation, Gayle Blatt joined Casey/Gerry more than 30 years ago, and has since handled dozens of high profile multi-million-dollar cases. She played an instrumental role in a milestone class action lawsuit against the city of Chula Vista, helping achieve a multi-million dollar settlement enabling Chula Vista residents to claim refunds of Telephone User's Taxes. She currently serves as co-liaison counsel for Incretin Mimetic products liability cases. Additionally, she worked closely with managing partner David S Casey Jr. to help pursue litigation targeting Volkswagen over the diesel emissions scandal, the largest in consumer class action history. She serves on the board of trustees for California Western School of Law and is on the executive committee of the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center. She has received multiple awards throughout her career, is one of Super Lawyers' Top 50 San Diego Lawyers and a Top 25 San Diego Female Attorneys.

Alfred Atallah is the president and principal attorney of Atallah Law Group. He contributes a vast perspective to his client by leveraging his experience in business, real estate and generational family counseling to deliver practical solutions to each client's needs. He works closely with principals, entrepreneurs and families to provide advisory services and solutions to a wide variety of businesses, real estate and personal legal issues. He assists with mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, contract formation and general counsel services. His stellar reputation is beyond approach and with the firmly established credibility, his skills at analyzing any type of transaction makes him an extremely valuable asset to his firm and his clients. He received his bachelor's of business administration and his Juris Doctor from the University of San Diego.

Susan E. Basinger Over the course of a nearly 30-year career, Susan Basinger, attorney with Higgs Fletcher & Mack, has acquired extensive experience in litigating personal injury and wrongful death cases, medical and legal malpractice actions, product liability case and complex business disputes. Basinger has served as senior/trial counsel for several major corporations, including FedEx Ground Package Services Inc., Sharp HealthCare, Lloyds of London and Zurich North America. She also provides extensive legal services and counsel on contested matters to several San Diego County Indian tribes, including the Pala Band of Mission Indians and the Barona Band of Mission Indians.



Sandra Joan Morris is heralded as one of the foremost family attorneys in San Diego and throughout the U.S. She founded her own law firm in 1970, one of the first women in San Diego to do so, and ran the firm until joining Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek (SCMV) in 2014. She became head of SCMV's Family Law practice earlier this year. She was one of only five women to graduate from California Western School of Law in 1969, at a time when women were excluded from professional networking groups and law firms would not hire women. She rose above those restrictions to establish a practice which spanned years. She has extensive experience in a broad range of family law issues both as a counselor and litigator, making it her goal to help each client through the process with dignity and ease. She was one of the first women to have been a diplomat in the American College of Family Trial Lawyers, an invitation-only organization of the top 100 family trial lawyers in the U.S.



Michael B. Abramson is a business attorney with over 18 years experience and a partner at Solomon Ward Seidenwurm & Smith. His practice focuses primarily on corporate and business matters, providing legal services to entrepreneurs, families and businesses. He represents clients in virtually every industry, including some of our region's most extraordinary companies and individuals. His business acumen earned him a position on the firm's management committee and he was made a partner in 2008 and was appointed chair of the firm's transactional department in March, 2017. Abramson has also founded and co-founded several businesses including a leading online office ergonomics company and a direct mail specialty marketing company. He has served as a volunteer legal mentor (pro bono) to retired and transitioning entrepreneurial U.S. military members through The Jones Project, a program that offers support and resources to veterans in their quest to launch a business.

Sandra J. Brower, a real estate law attorney at Higgs Fletcher & Mack, has earned a reputation as a legal expert in real estate litigation. She has won several landmark cases which resulted in published appellate opinions. In 2010, San Diego Gas and Electric began acquiring land for the 117-mile Sunrise Powerlink Transmission project through East County and Imperial County. Representing property owners along the line, she was able to obtain favorable settlements for the property owners being affected by the eminent domain proceedings. One client in particular was initially offered \$2.1 million for his vacant land and through a last-minute settlement Brower obtained \$8.2 million for the same property.

Chad Shear is a leader in Fish & Richardson's life sciences and pharmaceutical litigation section, and co-chair of the firm's international post grant group. His client list is extensive, having handled litigation for such clients as GSK, Gilead, Allergan, iCeutica and Iroko regarding their life-saving drugs. His practice isn't limited to life-saving drugs. He also successfully defended Callaway Golf in a jury trial in the Eastern District of Texas. In February he was a member of the legal team that completely reversed a \$2.4 billion verdict against his client Gilead, the largest IP damages verdict ever recorded. He is a member of the Giles S. Rich American Inn of Court, an organization devoted to education and the highest levels of professionalism in the practice of law.

Paula C.P. de Sousa Mills is a partner at Best Best & Krieger LLP's Special Districts practice group. The legal services which she provides affect the most basic necessities communities throughout the state rely upon – water, wastewater and recycled water, to name a few. She has extensive expertise in public agency representation, including counseling special districts, mainly water and sewer providers throughout California. She is general counsel of the Fallbrook Public Utility District, Padre Dam Municipal Water District, Sweetwater Authority and Valley Center Municipal Water District. A two-time breast cancer survivor, she is a volunteer for Susan G Komen San Diego. She is a graduate of UC Santa Barbara, the University of the Pacific and the McGeorge of Law.



MICHAEL B. ABRAMSON | DANIEL E. GARDENSWARTZ | TANYA M. SCHIERLING

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BEST ATTORNEYS



Chandara Diep is an influential member of the RJS Law Firm who has been instrumental in the firm's growth over the past 12 years. She was the firm's first hire by Ronson Shamoun, the firm's founder. She began as a paralegal, then transitioned into an associate attorney, senior attorney and now is a partner. While working as a paralegal, she attended California Western School of Law where she obtained her Juris Doctorate. She also has earned a Master's of Law in Taxation from the University of San Diego School of Law. She has been recognized as the Best of the Bar and as a Woman Who Means Business. She devotes great portion of her time to pro bono work, volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, Cambodian Buddhist Society, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. She has assisted in the settlement of multiple taxpayer liabilities through the IRS Offer in Compromise program. Diep has been involved in several State Board of Equalization audits and has represented numerous clients in IRS, FTB, EDD and SBOE appeals.

Daniel A. Fulkerson launched the Batta Fulkerson Law Group to make a difference in the community. He gives a portion of all the attorney's fees he recovers back to the community and a variety of charitable organizations. During his time as lead attorney, Fulkerson successfully handled more than 7,500 vehicle accident cases and personally helped recover tens of millions of dollars for the victims of accidents. Fulkerson spends much of his free time doing volunteer work, including the Brunch Club, which helps the homeless. He holds a master's degree from San Diego State and a law degree from California Western School of Law.

Evelyn Heidelberg Evelyn Heidelberg is a partner with Crosbie Gliner, Schiffman Southard & Swanson LLP. A seasoned land use, environmental and general litigation attorney, her former career as a city planner laid a firm groundwork for her current profession. In 2016, Heidelberg left her longtime partnership with Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch and joined Crosbie Gliner, forming and heading up the firm's land use and environmental resources practice. Before joining Procopio, Heidelberg worked as a city planner and also worked for the California Counsel for Environmental and Economic Balance in San Francisco and Sacramento as an independent consultant on environmental and governmental relations.



Daniel E. Gardenswartz is the managing partner at Solomon Ward Seidenwurm & Smith, a firm which he joined as an associate in 1995. He worked his way up in the ranks, and after two decades, was named managing partner in July 2015. He regularly advises senior executives and in-house counsel on dispute prevention. He takes an aggressive, strategic, almost chess-like approach to his work, ensuring his clients receive the best outcome possible with little interference and incurred costs. He serves as a board member for Hillel of San Diego, an organization dedicated to engaging, encouraging and empowering university-age students of all backgrounds to form a lasting commitment to Jewish life. Gardenswartz is a sponsor of ImPact On Stage, a nonprofit organization that uses live, interactive performance to spark discussions about issues pertaining to bullying, inclusion, diversity and interpersonal violence in schools and universities. He is a former board member and chair of the Anti-Defamation League of San Diego. He earned his undergraduate degree in international affairs from George Washington University and his law degree from Emory University where he was editor of the Emory Law Review.

Wayne Rosenbaum is a partner with the Environmental Law Group, practicing in the areas of environmental law, land use and natural resources law, with an emphasis on water quality and land use laws affecting infrastructure and renewable energy projects. Before entering the legal field, Rosenbaum spent 18 years as an executive in the environmental services industry. His passion for the field developed while he was at Recontek, where he successfully lead a team of environmental professionals in obtaining Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Part B permits in seven states, ensuring the safe management of hazardous wastes.



Tanya M Schierling is a smart, strategic and efficient litigator with more than 20 years experience. She began her career as a military prosecutor serving in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps, where she advised tank and infantry commanders and tried felony cases to court-martials. After the Army, she started in private practice and joined Solomon Ward Seidenwurm & Smith in 2003. She became a partner in the firm in 2006. Her practice focuses on business litigation and employment matters as well as distribution and franchise matters. One of her greatest achievements was serving four years on active duty, including over two years as a prosecutor and one year in Korea with the most forward-deployed U.S. combat forces at the time. Her promotion to partner at Solomon and elevation to chair of the Litigation Department also ranks high on her list of achievements. She is currently the vice president of finance for the ARCS Foundation (Achievement Rewards for College Scientists), a nonprofit that provides scholarship grants to post-graduate students in engineering, science and medical research.

Jeremy Roth Since 2013, Jeremy Roth has been co-president and co-managing director of Littler, considered the world's largest employment and labor law practice representing management. He guides strategic direction and global strategy for the firm, and has overseen Littler's evolution from 900 attorneys mainly in the United States to more than 1,500 attorneys in 75 offices around the world. He has been instrumental in Littler's continued expansion in Central and Latin America and Europe. Additionally, Roth has furthered the firm's initiatives around diversity and inclusion, which are crucial cornerstones of Littler's identity, and programs to make Littler an ideal workplace for individuals with varied backgrounds.

Jeffrey Chine is a partner in the Land Use practice group in Allen Matkins' San Diego office and is highly regarded for his extensive experience in land use and redevelopment. For more than 20 year, he has represented clients on a wide variety of land use and environmental matters involving the permitting and development of residential, mixed-use, commercial, industrial energy and redevelopment projects throughout California. He also represents developers in state and federal courts against environmental groups and opponents of development in CEQA, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Subdivision Map Act, Coastal Act and other challenges to entitlements.

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Rodney J. Hatley is founder of Hatley Law Group APC. He began his career working in personal injury litigation and then for the U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps. His journey to becoming an estate planning attorney began with a devastating, drawn-out, seven-year probate. His father had been ill for awhile before he died. His father had not set up a trust and could not bear the thought of parting with legal title to the assets which he had spent his lifetime accumulating. It took Hatley and his sister seven years to resolve the probate in their hometown of Memphis, Tenn. He pursued a Master's of Laws at the University of San Diego's acclaimed graduate tax program and shifted into estate planning, trust and probate law. He has edited "For California Doctors: A Guide to Asset Protection, Tax and Estate Planning" and co-author of "Giving: Philanthropy for Everyone." He sponsors and serves as guest host on The Andrea Kaye Show" on KCBQ-AM 1170. Hatley is involved with the San Diego Community Leadership Council, Nice Guys San Diego and the North County Estate Planning Council.

Joseph Leventhal attorney with Dinsmore & Shohl, represents clients ranging from Fortune 250 companies across multiple industries in varying legal disputes. Leventhal is a past president of the San Diego chapter of the Federal Bar Association and was one of SD METRO's 40 Under 40 Award winners, class of 2017. He is a commissioner with the city of San Diego Ethics Commission, and a director and first vice president of Kids Included Together. Leventhal earned his law degree from Georgetown University Law Center and was a political science major at the University of California San Diego.

Steven J. Cologne assumed the managing partner position at Higgs Fletcher & Mack in 2017, practicing in the area of complex tort and business litigation. He focuses on complex contract and business matters, defending clients in employment litigation, breach of contract disputes and other business litigation cases. Cologne, an attorney for more than 30 years, also assists clients in resolving disputes before they escalate to litigation. He serves as the primary litigation counsel for the San Diego Unified School District on a variety of claims in state and federal courts. Cologne is a member of the State Bar of California Labor and Employment Law section.



William Eigner is a partner at Procopio, who has represented venture capitalists, angel capitalists and security firms. He has also represented a high-technology company in its sale to a well-known Silicon Valley firm. He has structured the formation of an energy services company, represented the majority shareholders of a retailer in forcing the buyout of a minority partner. He has advised distributors in a dispute with their suppliers, assisted a catering company in a brand licensing transaction and joint venture. Eigner is a director of EvoNexus, a board member of FHOOSH Inc., a former trustee of La Jolla Country Day School and a past member of the Headmaster's Advisory Council at The Bishop's School. He is a trustee emeritus of the San Diego Police Foundation and a director and corporate secretary of the San Diego Venture Group.

Micaela Banach Micaela Banach and her partners founded Noonan Lance Boyer & Banach last year, which arose from the highly regarded former law firm of Kirby Noonan Lance & Hoge, for which she also was a partner. Banach has amassed an impressive track record skillfully representing plaintiffs and defendants in real estate, employment, products liability, professional liability and business disputes. Banach is actively involved in The Lawyers Club of San Diego, promoting the advancement of women in the legal industry and society. She has served on the committee for The Lawyers Club golf tournament, an event benefiting the club's Fund for Justice, a charitable foundation that serves the San Diego community.

Timothy Hutter Timothy Hutter, senior counsel at Allen Matkins, has represented multifamily and commercial developers to successfully defend legal challenges to entitlements and permits issued by local municipalities. That includes a 2017 judgment in favor of client CityMark Development for a single-family housing project with an affordable component in the city of Encinitas. Outside of legal work, Hutter is a member of the Allen Matkins Community Outreach Committee and is a member of the board of Life Choices Crisis Pregnancy Center in Poway. He was appointed to the city of San Diego's Historical Resources Board by Mayor Kevin Faulconer in 2016 and was elected vice chair in March 2017.

Heather Riley, a partner at Allen Matkins, has worked on some of the most significant land use legal matters in San Diego in the past few years. She has shepherded controversial projects through the entitlement process and then defended those developments against litigation. She is at the forefront of the housing crisis dialogue, working with the Building Industry Association of San Diego and the city of San Diego to develop solutions that are practical and defensible. Riley also served as the 2016 president of the San Diego County Bar Association, spearheading an update of the association's public position policies and bylaws, which were in need of complete overhaul.

State's Oil Watchdog Undertaking Comprehensive Reform

By Julie Cart | CAL Matters

Agency was a shill for Big Oil

Early in 2011, Bill Allayaud was so fed up with what he saw as dereliction of duty by California's oil and gas regulator that he began to catalog grievances: unregulated fracking, allowing companies to inject oilfield wastewater into clean water aquifers, little or no oversight into critical practices affecting public health and safety.

"They were essentially lap dogs for the oil industry," Allayaud, a lobbyist with the Environmental Working Group said.

He attached the ever-expanding list to his office wall. With the way things had been running at the Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources, Allayaud had little confidence the list would ever grow smaller or come down.

"This was a backwater agency in charge of multi-billion dollar corporations," he said. "It was a wink and a nod, that's the way it went for decade after decade."

California's oil and gas regulator, known as DOGGR, has endured years of scolding from the Legislature for a lack of accountability, from environmentalists for allowing an industry to run roughshod over a state regulator and from the federal Environmental Protection Agency for failing to enforce clean water laws.

But the state's oil watchdog is undertaking a comprehensive reform, officials say, that will radically change the agency's culture and modernize a department with one foot in the last century.

"We are a dramatically different organization than we were three years ago," said David Bunn, director of the state Department of Conservation, which oversees the oil and gas agency. "We've made dramatic changes. There's still a lot to do."

Agency officials will make that case in coming weeks as they appear before a budget committee in the California Legislature, requesting more money and more people to complete the transformation.

Their requests will likely face some skepticism.

"It's a chicken and egg thing," said Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson, a Democrat from Santa Barbara. "We don't want to give them money unless they are going to produce; they say they can't produce unless we give them more money. The truth lies in between."

Few would dispute that the agency has been in crisis. Created more than 100 years ago, the Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources regulates energy extraction on state lands and in state waters. It has a staff of about 275 and a proposed budget of about \$85 million.

For decades, though, the agency served more to assist energy companies than regulate them. That emphasis has proven difficult to shake.

A litany of embarrassing lapses and mistakes in recent years brought a harsh spotlight to the agency's inner workings. Oil



companies were dumping oilfield waste fluids into thousands of unlined pits in the Central Valley and injecting that same waste into federally-protected drinking water aquifers.

The death of a worker at a Chevron facility near Bakersfield in 2011 drew attention to a dangerous well stimulation technique known as underground injection. Steve Bohlen, a former state oil and gas supervisor, admitted the agency did not have up-to-date guidelines to adequately oversee underground injections. He said his agency asked an oil industry group—the Conservation Committee of California Oil and Gas Producers—to write the outlines of the regulations. The group didn't produce a document.

“One of the big frustrations I've had with DOGGR is they have been more a shill for the industries they are supposed to be regulating than a real enforcer of the industries,” Jackson said.

“For many years, DOGGR has seen its mission to accommodate oil development. They've finally started to pivot.”

State Sen. Bob Wieckowski, the Fremont Democrat who chairs the subcommittee that will hear the upcoming funding proposals, agreed that the oil agency went through “dark days,” but he said he's hopeful that meaningful change has arrived.

“If ever there was an agency or department that needs to be more transparent, this is it,” he said. “I'd like to improve the trust that the community and the Legislature has with the department. We've got twin aims: transparency and accountability.”

The department has been a frequent supplicant before the budget committee, offering mea culpas along with requests for more funding to implement reforms called for by the Legislature.

After fitful attempts at reform, the agency is well into its renewal plan—a comprehensive, and expensive, blueprint to overhaul the state's oil and gas regulator.

In the last five years, the oil agency has received nearly \$25 million in ongoing funding, above and beyond its enacted budget, and tens of millions more in one-



‘They were essentially lap dogs for the oil industry,’ said Bill Allayaud, a lobbyist with the Environmental Working Group, of California's oil and gas regulator.



‘We are a dramatically different organization than we were three years ago,’ said David Bunn, director of the state Department of Conservation, which oversees the oil and gas agency.

time outlays to kick start projects, ranging from developing a statewide database of oil and gas operations to hiring a new generation of field inspectors.

On top of that, the Legislature has approved an additional 150 permanent positions in the last five years, according to information the non-partisan Legislative Analyst Office provided to legislators, effectively doubling the agency's employee base.

One of the biggest lifts has been converting an agency that until recently

operated almost entirely on paper. The IT bill for installing a modern data management system and converting handwritten well records that date back to the 19th century: nearly \$70 million.

Bunn said one of the budget requests will be to hire 21 additional inspectors. He said the current workload is untenable, with one inspector per 2,800 wells.

It's a critical point. The agency is lagging in performing inspections required by state law. An LAO analysis found that in California's three busiest oil-producing districts, state inspectors failed to oversee nearly a third of required operations last year.

Bunn acknowledged oversight failings, saying the problems went beyond missing inspections: “We were sending people out to do inspections who were not qualified,” he said.

Bunn said the agency has instituted an extensive training program and aggressively seeks employees with higher academic qualifications.

In recent years, he said, top-flight engineers and others with sophisticated training shunned the agency, which was viewed as not placing a high value on science.

“We've dramatically reformed our practices in the field,” he said. Now, “good people attract good people.”

The agency's former aversion to science has led to partnerships with the state's national research labs.

One project with Stanford University tackles one of the most fundamental and significant problems in oilfields: What causes so-called “surface expressions” when steam, oil, or drilling fluids bubble up or erupt to the surface, creating anything from fissures to oil-filled caverns.

“We never did that kind of thing before,” Bunn said. “We didn't have the capacity, the time or the people to do it.”

In the past, the state relied on the oil industry to take the lead on crafting regulations, deferring to its technical expertise.

“We've played a constructive, collaborative role in these many years,” said Bob Poole, a lobbyist with the Western States Petroleum Association. “We've



A camouflaged rig on Island Grissom, a man-made drilling island near Long Beach. (Photo by J. Jepsen, courtesy of the California Department of Conservation)

helped them find the best ways to address the legal mandates to implement regulations.”

That collaboration sometimes veered into potential conflict.

That, too, has changed, officials say. The agency said the draft regulations for underground injections were formulated by agency staff, in consultation with independent scientists. And it noted that it hopes to beef up enforcement staff.

The energy industry has its own complaints, mostly to do with what it views as the state’s snail’s-pace in signing off on permits and other paperwork requiring decision-making.

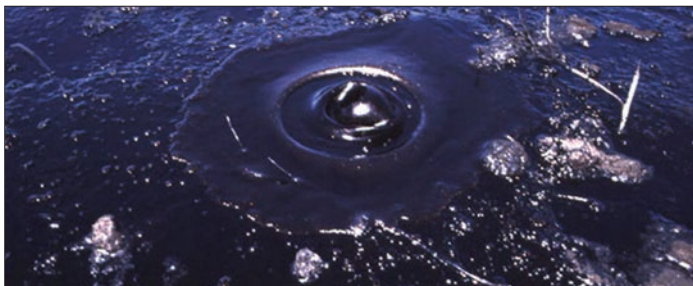
The addition of the state water board into oil and gas oversight has added a layer of bureaucracy that the industry says is causing the system to creak to a halt.

“DOGGR and the water board need to ensure that they review permit applications in a timely manner,” said Rock Zierman, chief executive officer of the California Independent Petroleum Association, in a statement.

Bunn said the agency is getting to all of the issues, ticking them off a long list.

As for Allayaud’s list?

“They are so antiquated, they are still playing catch up,” he said. “But I keep putting checkmarks next to things.”



Petroleum seep with oil and gas rising to the surface. The seep began after the 1994 Northridge earthquake in the North Sulphur Mountain Area of Ojai oil field, Ventura County. (Photo by S. Mulqueen, courtesy of the California Department of Conservation)

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Michelle Muñiz

A Passion For Real Estate

During her 2800-mile road trip from Long Island to San Diego, 21-year-old Michelle Muñiz had a lot of time to contemplate her future. “I didn’t know exactly where I was headed, but I felt strongly that when I found where I needed to be, I’d know it, and San Diego was that place,” she says. She landed a job and saved up to purchase a condo in Mission Valley. That first real estate transaction became much more than a home. It ignited a passion that led her into a lifelong vocation.

In San Diego, Muñiz was reunited with her high school sweetheart, married, and soon found herself moving all over the country as a military wife and busy mom of three young children. Through it all, she craved a professional challenge, and real estate was just the thing to satisfy that need. She attained her real estate license and began selling houses. Soon, she was buying them too. By the time her husband, Jorge, returned from his tour of duty in Iraq, Michelle had purchased eight properties. “I found my passion in investing,” she says.

With each Muñiz family move, Michelle purchased more homes — today she manages 20 properties across the country. So when her husband was assigned to return to San Diego, Muñiz saw an opportunity to take her career to the next level to build her future in real estate.

San Diego had changed since she last lived there. Muñiz observed an increase in homelessness and development of multi-family homes. She wanted to understand the causes and conditions behind those changes.

“I wanted to do something that would impact the community in a positive way,” she says. “I wanted to be a part of a solution that would make a difference here.”

Muñiz turned to the Master of Science in Real Estate (MSRE) program at the University of San Diego School of Business to find answers and bolster her career.



I found my passion in investing,' says Michelle Muñiz. (Photo: University of San Diego School of Business)

Rising to the challenge

Returning to school after almost 20 years was intimidating at first. But her instructors and the team at the Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate encouraged her to keep going. “Their passion, leadership and mentorship made me want to learn more so I could accomplish more,” says Muñiz.

Juggling her busy family schedule with a full academic load, Muñiz also assumed an assistantship under Professor Norm Miller, Hahn Chair of Real Estate Finance. She was an editor for Miller’s book on real estate sustainability. Muñiz was also a USD team blogger at the annual Marché International des Professionnels d’Immobilier (MIPIM) conference in Cannes, France, where a select number of University of San Diego School of Business MSRE students are chosen each year to serve as official bloggers given the quality of their writing.

Upon graduation in 2016, Muñiz was awarded the Daniel B. Woodruff Memorial scholarship. The \$2,500 award is presented each semester to the most outstanding student pursuing a career in real estate who best epitomizes Woodruff’s positive qualities of academic excellence, warmth, determination, intellectual curiosity and unabashed love for humankind.

Most students would be flattered, even grateful for the award, however Muñiz’s first thought was distinct. “I wanted to give the money away,” she says. “The scholarship wasn’t about the money — it was about the confidence that it gave me.”

She used the scholarship money to create the Khalid Mohammed Memorial Scholarship, an annual \$4,000 award named for her uncle who was an inspiration to her family. The award provides financial support for women in the MSRE program. “I want to encourage and inspire women,” she says. “I want women who enter this program to have the confidence and affirmation that they can accomplish great things.”

Working with purpose

Through her MSRE degree and industry connections she developed through the Burnham-Moore Center for Real Estate, Muñiz secured an internship with the San Diego Housing Commission. That role provided her the hands-on experience she needed to quickly catapult her career into a position where she could positively impact her community as real estate executive. Muñiz currently works in real estate development for the Affirmed Housing Group in San Diego.

Today, Muñiz applies her unique experience and business savvy to the acquisition and development of rehabilitation and new construction projects throughout California. Although she’s at a point in her life where she could consider slowing down, the 45-year-old executive feels her career is just taking off. And she’s exactly where she needs to be.

“When I think about my journey, it’s not about what I’ve accomplished, it’s about how others have impacted me and how I’ve impacted other people,” she says. “I’m ready to continue to take my career to the next level.”

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