



Breaking the Glass Bar: Trailblazing Women of the Northern District

Oct 5, 2023 | 5-6:30 pm

Location

Thelton E. Henderson Ceremonial Courtroom (U.S. District Court)
450 Golden Gate Avenue, 19th FL
San Francisco, CA 94102
And Zoom

Description

A conversation with current and future female leaders in the Northern District.

Presenters



Hon. Susan Illston: Senior Judge, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California

Honorable Susan Y. Illston was appointed to the United States District Court for the Northern District of California in May 1995. Her chambers are located in San Francisco, California. Judge Illston has presided over numerous notable cases, including the Balco steroids cases; the trial of Barry Bonds; the multidistrict litigation involving allegations of price-fixing among LCD flat-screen manufacturers, *In re TFT-LCD Flat Panel Antitrust Litigation*; and the patent trial of *Verinata Health, Inc. & Illumina, Inc. v. Ariosa Diagnostics, Inc.*

Before joining the bench, Judge Illston was a partner in the law firm of Cotchett, Illston & Pitre, in Burlingame, California, specializing in civil litigation practice with emphasis on commercial litigation. Judge Illston is a member of various professional organizations, including the American College of Trial Lawyers, the American Board of Trial Advocates, and the International Society of Barristers. She has also lectured and authored numerous articles. She received her B.A. at Duke University in 1970 and her J.D. at Stanford in 1973.



Jodi Linker: Federal Public Defender, Northern District of California

Jodi Linker was appointed as the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of California on March 4, 2022, after having served as an Assistant Federal Public Defender since 2007. She graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, and then served as a legislative assistant to U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer for over four years. Ms. Linker graduated Order of the Coif from Stanford Law School. She served as a law clerk to the Hon. Charles R. Breyer, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, and as an extern for the Hon. Susan Illston, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. Before joining the Federal Defender's office, Ms. Linker worked as a trial and appellate lawyer at Clarence & Dyer, where she represented individuals, public officials, and corporations in criminal and civil matters in state and federal courts. Ms. Linker has taught nationally on numerous topics, including defending immigration cases, litigating 4th Amendment motions, and effective advocacy at sentencing.



Louise Renne: Renne Public Law Group; San Francisco City Attorney 1986-2001

Louise Renne is a founding partner of Renne Public Law Group, and was previously a founding partner of Renne Sloan Holtzman Sakai Public Law Group. She leads the firm's public interest litigation. Ms. Renne pioneered the model of public interest plaintiff coalitions comprised of government agencies, individuals, and non-profit organizations during her 16-year tenure as San Francisco City Attorney. She is known for transforming the traditionally defense-oriented practice of municipal law by creating an affirmative litigation program that won significant victories for cities and counties in California. As a nationally recognized and respected leader in municipal law, she often testifies before federal, state, and other governmental bodies. She is also frequently requested to conduct impartial investigations for local public agencies in high-profile cases.



Quyen Ta: Partner, King & Spalding

Named a Top 100 Lawyer in California, a Top Woman Lawyer, a California Trailblazer, and a Leading 500 Lawyer in America, Quyen Ta is a sought-after trial lawyer and lead counsel who focuses on high-stakes business disputes, including: consumer class action defense, intellectual property, international arbitrations, trade secrets misappropriation, and other business disputes. She has handled a significant number of civil matters in state and federal courts across the country. Quyen's representative clients include public and venture-backed companies across industries, and located in the United States and across the globe. Her clients include: Chevron, Walmart, Rakuten, Applied Materials, VNG Corporation, Netgear, Honda, Flowers Foods, Varian Medical Systems, Sutter Health, Molina Healthcare, McDonald's, Public Storage, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, and NRG Energy. Quyen has been a DEI leader in the bench and bar for two decades and is co-chair of her law firm's First Generation Professionals Affinity Group. She lives in Berkeley with her husband and twin sons.



Catherine L. Fisk: Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong Distinguished Professor of Law, UC Berkeley School of Law

Catherine Fisk teaches Employment Law, Labor Law, Civil Procedure, and Understanding the U.S. Legal Profession. She is a Faculty Director of the Berkeley Center for Law and Work and the Berkeley Center for Law & Technology.

Professor Fisk is the author of several books. Her first, *Working Knowledge: Employee Innovation and the Rise of Corporate Intellectual Property, 1800-1930* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 2014), won prizes from the American Society for Legal History and the American Historical Association. In her next book, *Writing for Hire: Unions, Hollywood, and Madison Avenue* (Harvard University Press, 2016), Fisk explored the law and norms of credit and compensation for writing, contrasting the writer-protective rules negotiated by unionized writers in film and TV with far less protective norms developed in non-union advertising. Fisk is the co-author of four books for use in law school and legal studies classes: *Labor Law in the Contemporary Workplace* (3d ed. 2019), *The Legal Profession: Ethics in Contemporary Practice* (2d ed. 2019), *What Lawyers Do: Understanding the Many American Legal Practices* (2020), and *Labor Law Stories* (2005). Her next book will examine the professional identities of lawyers who represented activist, multi-racial, and politically progressive unions in the mid-twentieth century. Fisk has published over 100 articles and essays in leading publications including, most recently, *California Law Review*, *Berkeley Journal of Employment and Labor Law*, *Harvard Law Review Forum*, *Yale Law Journal Forum*, *Law and History Review*, *Ohio State Law Journal*, and *Indiana Law Journal*. Her recent articles address the intersection of antitrust, labor, and copyright law in structuring labor relations in American theatre, the crafting of New Deal-era labor and social welfare legislation, social movement lawyering, free speech rights of worker organizations and in the workplace, new forms of labor organizing, and police unions.

Professor Fisk's current public service and pro bono legal work includes filing amicus briefs on various labor and employment law issues, service on the Advisory Board of the Berkeley Labor Center, the board of directors of the American Society for Legal History and the boards of directors of two Bay Area workers' rights nonprofits, and occasional service as an arbitrator under collectively bargained labor contracts. Before joining the Berkeley faculty in 2017, she was on the law faculties at UC Irvine, Duke University, the University of Southern California, and Loyola Law School of Los Angeles. Prior to entering academia, Fisk practiced civil appellate litigation and union-side labor law in Washington, D.C., and clerked on the Ninth Circuit. Fisk received an AB summa cum laude from Princeton University and a JD from the University of California, Berkeley, where she was elected to Order of the Coif.

Education

AB, Princeton University (1983)

JD, University of California, Berkeley (1986)

LLM, University of Wisconsin (1995)



Rose Carmen Goldberg: Moderator

Rose is a Deputy Attorney General in the Office of the California Attorney General's Public Rights Division (moderating in her personal capacity). She litigates complex affirmative cases and engages in policy advocacy that affect millions of people, focusing on gun violence prevention and veterans rights. She also teaches veterans law at UC Berkeley School of Law. Previously, Rose served as a Skadden Fellow and founded a Medical-Legal Partnership for unhoused and low-income veterans in Oakland. She clerked for the Honorable Theodore A. McKee of the U.S. Court of

Appeals for the Third Circuit. Her federal service also includes working for Senator Blumenthal on his Senate Judiciary Committee portfolio and at the White House on Native American Affairs. Rose is the recipient of the California Women Lawyers Fay Stender Award, Berkeley Law Kathi Pugh Award, and California Young Lawyers Association Jack Berman Award of Achievement. She received her J.D. at Yale Law School.

MCLE Materials

General timeline of Women's Rights in the U.S.: <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/womens-history-us-timeline>

2020 Article by Janet Yellen on women in the workforce generally: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-history-of-womens-work-and-wages-and-how-it-has-created-success-for-us-all/>

Women in the Civil Rights Movement: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/women-in-the-civil-rights-movement/>

Civil Rights Act of 1964 and specifically Title 7/employment discrimination based on sex and other factors outlawed: <https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/title-vii-civil-rights-act-1964>

No sex discrimination in higher education: Higher Education Act (1965): <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html>

Higher Education Opportunity Act: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-110publ315/pdf/PLAW-110publ315.pdf>

"Women in the Federal Judiciary: Still A Long Way to Go," National Women's Law Center, October 13, 2016, <https://nwlc.org/resource/women-federal-judiciary-still-long-way-go/>

<https://www.enjuris.com/students/law-school-women-enrollment-2022/>

interesting paragraph: “In 1960, women comprised only 3.5 percent of enrollees in ABA-approved law schools. Toward the end of the 1960s, women’s enrollment began to increase due in large part to the Vietnam War and the Higher Education Act, which prohibited sex discrimination in federally funded educational programs.

From 1968 to 1981, the percentage of women in law schools grew from 4 to 35 percent. Growth slowed in the 1980s and 1990s before picking up again in 2000 and then dipping briefly in 2008. In 2016, women outnumbered men in law school classrooms for the first time. [That trend has continued.]”

Childcare challenges generally: https://www.axios.com/2023/09/20/child-care-cliff?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axiospm&stream=top

Women leaving the law (including because of pay disparity; lack of diversity in leadership, sexism; ends with Recommendations pages 40-52):

<https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/intheirownwords-f-4-19-21-final.pdf>

The challenges of being a female trial lawyer specifically (written by a professor in N.D. Cal. to boot): <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/09/female-lawyers-sexism-courtroom/565778/>

Content on intersectionality--how being a female lawyer can intersect with other diversity factors (race, sexual orientation, etc.). Here’s a short article that calls for attention to this: <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/life-as-a-4l-lesbian-latina-lady-lawyer-and-the-complexity-of-identity-perspective>

Efforts to improve diversity at law firms and in legal departments via the “Mansfield Rule”:

<https://www.diversitylab.com/pilot-projects/mansfield-overview/>