

Los Angeles County Bar Association Announces Recipients of Prestigious 2025 Annual Awards

The Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA) is proud to announce the distinguished recipients of its three highly coveted 2025 annual awards.

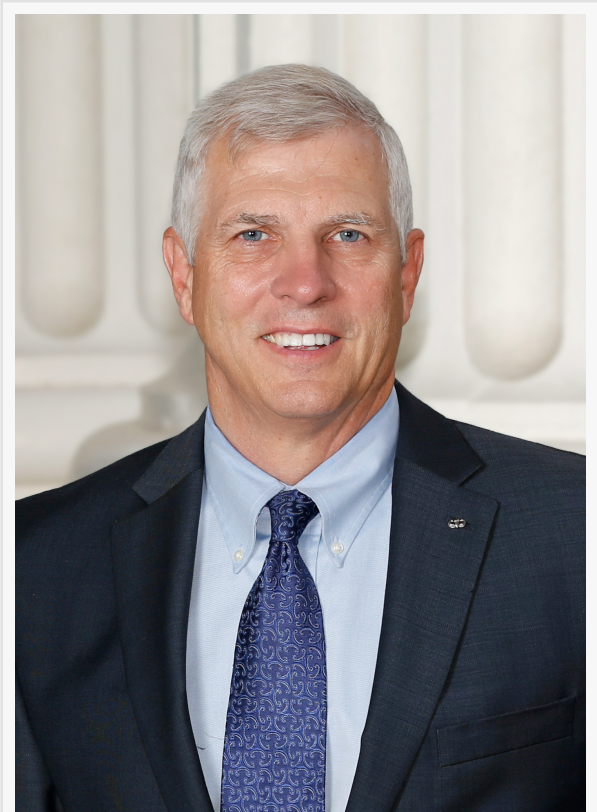
LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, January 23, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA) is proud to announce the distinguished recipients of its highly coveted 2025 annual awards. LACBA will celebrate the following three exceptional individuals for their outstanding achievements and remarkable contributions to the legal community at its Installation and Awards Dinner on Friday, June 20, 2025, at the Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

California State Senator Thomas J. Umberg (SD-34) will be presented with this year's [Shattuck-Price Outstanding Lawyer Award](#) for his exceptional dedication to public service, the courts, and the legal community.

Since 2021, Senator Umberg has chaired California Senate's Judiciary Committee and has authored several bills impacting civil litigation and the courts. He has been a steadfast champion in the legislature for the legal profession, legal system, and access to justice.

Over the course of his career, Senator Umberg has served his country, our state, and our legal community in various capacities. He is a retired U.S. Army Colonel, former war crimes and federal criminal prosecutor, small business owner, private practitioner, and Deputy Drug Czar for President Clinton.

Umberg began his military service at the Korean DMZ and was deployed overseas for five years where he was assigned as a paratrooper with the Army Special Operations Command and the XVIII Airborne Corps. As a federal and military prosecutor, Senator Umberg prosecuted



Senator Thomas J. Umberg, 2025's Shattuck-Price Outstanding Lawyer Award winner.

numerous white collar, civil rights, murder, and sexual assault crimes. He successfully tried over 100 cases to verdict or judgment.

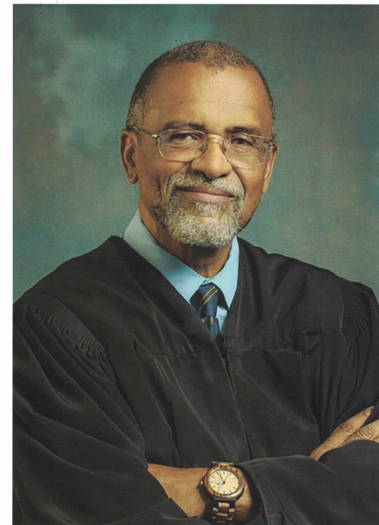
Senator Umberg has served three terms in the State Assembly representing central Orange County. He founded and built a successful veteran-owned law firm in Orange County, recognized as one of California's preeminent boutique law firms by Best Lawyers and The Daily Journal.

Senator Umberg obtained his B.A. degree from UCLA in 1977, and his J.D. degree from UC Hastings School of Law (renamed UC College of the Law, San Francisco) in 1980.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Kelvin D. Filer, Supervising Judge of the Compton Courthouse, will be presented with this year's [Outstanding Jurist Award](#) for his distinguished career on the bench and contributions to the community and practice of law.

Judge Filer has dedicated his life to public service. After spending two years with the State Public Defenders office, he has spent over three decades on the bench. Born and raised in Compton, Judge Filer is universally praised for his judicial independence, intellect, judicial temperament and integrity as well as his continued support for the youth in his community through school programs and organizations such as the Southern California Junior Cricket Academy. He has made extraordinary efforts to inspire and open doors for underprivileged and at-risk youth.

In July 1993, Judge Filer was selected to the judicial bench as a commissioner for the Compton Municipal Court. He later served as a Superior Court Commissioner after the courts' unification in 2000. On August 8, 2002, Governor Gray Davis appointed him as a judge of the Superior Court in Los Angeles.



Honorable Judge Kelvin D. Filer, 2025 Outstanding Jurist Award.



Honorable Helen Zukin, 2025 Philip H. Lam Diversity Impact Award winner.

During his time as a public defender, Judge Filer argued and won a landmark case before the California Supreme Court, *People v. Taylor* (1982) 31 Cal.3d 488. In 1982, he opened a private law practice in his hometown and maintained a general criminal/civil practice emphasizing criminal defense work.

After graduating from Compton High School in 1973, he attended the University of California at Santa Cruz and graduated with honors with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1977. He subsequently received his Juris Doctorate from the University of California Berkeley (Boalt Hall) in 1980. That same year, Judge Filer started practicing law as a Deputy State Public Defender.

Associate Justice Helen Zukin will be presented with this year's [Philip H. Lam Diversity Impact Award](#) winner for her long-term commitment and significant contributions to increasing inclusion and diversity in the practice of law.

Justice Zukin is known for motivating and mobilizing others with passion, whether mentoring individuals, creating opportunities for women and the traditionally underrepresented to lead in the courtroom and in the community, or effectuating institutional change, which has significantly reduced implicit bias in the judicial evaluation process and helped to transform our judiciary. Her tireless and selfless efforts have left and continue to leave an indelible mark on the fabric of the legal landscape in Los Angeles County and indeed across the State of California and beyond.

In 2023, Justice Zukin was appointed to the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division Four by Governor Gavin Newsom. She had served five years at the Los Angeles Superior Court where she presided over family law, general jurisdiction civil trials, and an unlimited independent civil calendar court.

Justice Zukin was an architect of the Judicial Mentor Program and involved in the development of the Los Angeles and California Judicial Mentor Programs. Currently she serves as co-chair of the Appellate Court Judicial Mentor Program. This mentorship program is now a template for similar programs throughout the country. At the Los Angeles Superior Court, she served as an active member of the Diversity & Inclusion, Access and Fairness, and Community Outreach Committees, as well as the Equity and Inclusion and Civil Engagement Initiative Working Groups, and the New Judicial Officers Judicial Education Seminar Subcommittee. She has lectured on a broad range of legal subjects to judges, attorneys, and law students.

Justice Zukin was born and raised in Los Angeles. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree with high academic honors from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and her law degree from Loyola Law School. She has served as Chair of the JNE Commission, the Central District Merit Selection Panel for Magistrate Judges, the LACBA Judicial Appointments Committee and currently is Chair of the Los Angeles Judicial Selection Advisory Committee. She is a former president of the Los Angeles Ethics Commission and former chair of the of the LACBA Litigation Section Executive Committee.

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