

# VALLEY LAWYER

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A Publication of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association

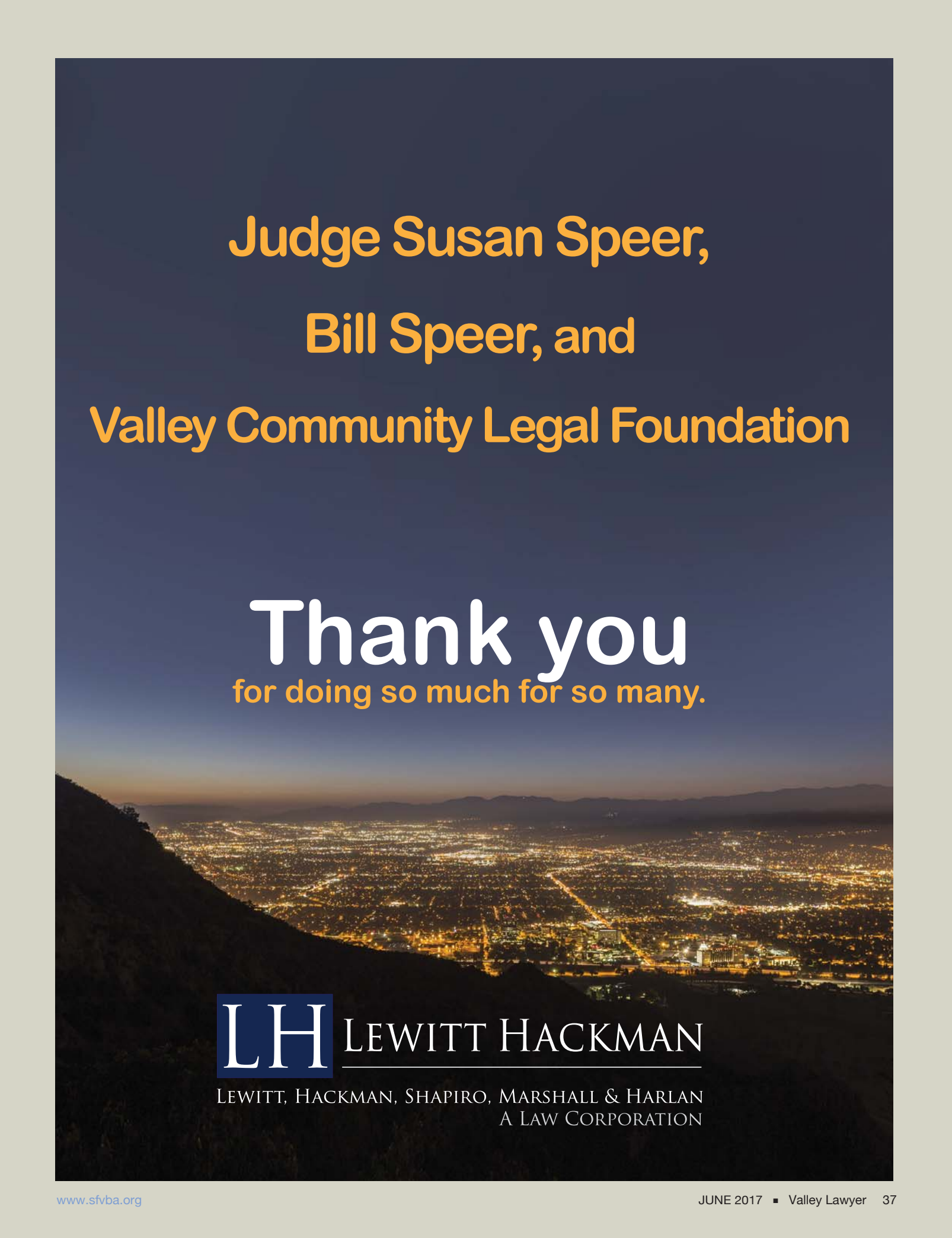
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A nighttime photograph of a city, likely San Francisco, viewed from a hillside. The city lights are visible in the valley, and the sky is a deep blue. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

Judge Susan Speer,  
Bill Speer, and  
Valley Community Legal Foundation

Thank you  
for doing so much for so many.

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# Welcome to the 2017 Valley Community Legal Foundation *Virtual Gala*

**T**HE VALLEY COMMUNITY LEGAL FOUNDATION (VCLF) CONTINUED ITS VIRTUAL GALA FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE this year by honoring three individuals who have made immeasurable contributions to the Foundation's work. Judge Susan Speer, Detective Bill Speer (ret.) and the late attorney Barry T. Harlan represent a spirit of service to which every member of the legal community can and should aspire.

This year's honoring ceremony was held on March 21 at Monty's Steakhouse. An impressive showing by members of the Valley's judicial, political and legal community served as a testament to their commitment to the causes that the VCLF supports, as well as the esteem in which this year's honorees are held.

## HON. SUSAN SPEER Los Angeles Superior Court

The VCLF takes no small amount of pride in acknowledging Judge Susan Speer for her years of service on the Superior Court bench and the VCLF Board, as well as her unflinching dedication to the Foundation and its work in the community. On behalf of the entire organization, long-time friend and past VCLF Board member, the Hon. Michelle Rosenblatt (Ret.), writes:

*It is admirable that the Valley Community Legal Foundation has chosen to honor Judge Susan M. Speer for her many years of service to the Foundation and its work, and I am honored that Laurence Kaldor asked me to write a few words about my friend and colleague given our time together on the VCLF.*

*The Honorable Susan M. Speer was appointed to the bench by Governor Pete Wilson in 1998 and has presided primarily in the Van Nuys courthouse since that time. Judge Speer currently presides over a felony criminal calendar, having been previously assigned to family law for four years. She spent 17 years of her legal career serving as a Deputy District Attorney, for the County of Los Angeles.*

*While a Deputy District Attorney, she prosecuted many serious crimes, served as the deputy-in-charge of the Crimes Against Peace Officers Unit, deputy-in-charge of the Eastlake Juvenile, and as Head Deputy of the Central District and of the Van Nuys Branch Office.*

*Before Judge Speer began her legal career, she worked as a neonatal ICU nurse, and even as she prosecuted serious crimes by day, she regularly cared for infants at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles by night.*

*Judge Speer has been honored by the San Fernando Bar Association as Judge of the Year and is known for her wisdom, her legal reasoning, her poise, and her professionalism, both in and out of her courtroom.*

*Among Judge Speer's other activities, she has served as a member of the California Judges Association Ethics Committee, faculty member for the Center for Judiciary Education and Research and the Los Angeles Superior Court, and is an active member of the LASC's Outreach Committee. She presides over the Teen Court at Canoga Park High School and is co-sponsor of the annual Power Lunch high school education program in Van Nuys.*

*In honoring Judge Speer for her years of dedication to the Valley Community Legal Foundation, the Board recognizes her valuable service in working with attorneys, bench officers and members of the community to achieve the Foundation's worthy goals. In the years that Judge Speer has served on the VCLF Board, she has served as a voice of reason and calm in occasional times of disagreement.*

*Judge Speer defines the reason why we volunteer to work together to help our community. She has worked on many projects each year, always investigating new ways for VCLF to raise donations for scholarships and grants, working tirelessly with her husband Bill and others on the golf tournaments and Gala auctions, introducing honorees, working day and night on the program for the CBS New York Street Gala, and so much more. Between her volunteer work for VCLF and for her court committee work, Judge Speer spends a great deal of her non-judicial time giving back to the San Fernando Valley community.*

*It has been a pleasure and a genuine honor for me and the entire Board of the VCLF to work with Judge Speer for these many years. She has made a great contribution to the VCLF, the legal community and the San Fernando Valley community at large. Please join me in honoring her for her service.*

# 2017 Honorees



## DET. BILL SPEER Los Angeles Police Department (Ret.)

The Valley Community Legal Foundation is proud to add its voice to the chorus of accolades that former Detective, and VCLF Board member, Bill Speer has deservedly received. It would be virtually impossible to summarize in any one place all he has done for the San Fernando Valley community.

When being commended officially by the City of Los Angeles, it was noted that he had to date received commendations from the Los Angeles Police Department, the Mayor's Office, the City Council, the California State Assembly and Senate, and the U.S. Congress; raised over \$5 million to help underprivileged children stay off the street and encourage their involvement in youth sports programs; and "exhibited outstanding professional conduct in law enforcement in a plethora of assignments with the West Valley Patrol Division, the Communications Division, the Wilshire Patrol Division and the Wilshire Detective Division...."

Still, Bill somehow found the time to devote time to the Valley Community Legal Foundation, including attending countless Board meetings and tirelessly planning and running of several Golf Tournaments for the benefit of veterans. Not to be overlooked, Bill, along with his wife, Judge Susan Speer, regularly act as sponsors for VCLF events, generously supplying cases of, aptly named, "Law and Order" wines from their own private vineyard.

Perhaps as impressive as Bill's accomplishments is his remarkable humility. When presented with his award for outstanding service to the VCLF, his first instinct was to credit his wife, Susan, for always standing by his side. We congratulate him and thank him for all that he has done and continues to do for us.

## ATTORNEY BARRY T. HARLAN Lewitt Hackman

It's a sad, but uplifting, honor to posthumously award our first annual Barry T. Harlan Community Service Award to its namesake, attorney Barry T. Harlan.

The VCLF and the San Fernando Valley legal community was heartbroken by the sudden passing earlier this year of its long-time supporter and Board member. Graciously accepting the award for the Harlan family were close friends and colleagues from Barry's law firm, Lewitt Hackman, attorneys Stephen Holzer and SFVBA President Kira Masteller.

With the blessing of the Harlan Family, the VCLF has instituted the Barry T. Harlan Fund to provide financial support to grants and scholarships that were near to Barry's heart. To date, the fund has received over \$7,000 in generous contributions.

Barry's achievements are well-known to the VCLF family. Admitted to the California Bar in 1968, he rose to become a name partner and serve as Chair of the Family Law Practice Group at the esteemed firm of Lewitt, Hackman, Schapiro, Marshall and Harlan, and play a pivotal role in California's leading published case on post-nuptial agreements, *In re Marriage of Burkle*.


A State Bar Certified Family Law Specialist, Barry was designated a Southern California Super Lawyer beginning in 2004, as well as being named one of the top 100 attorneys in Southern California every year since 2013. Throughout his professional career, he was recognized for his legal prowess, being named one of the top 25 lawyers in the San Fernando Valley by the *San Fernando Valley Business Journal* and one of the Best Lawyers in Los Angeles, as published in *Southern California's Best*



Lawyers editions of the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Barry was also honored for his civic efforts, including recognition from the Van Nuys court for his work in organizing and scheduling attorneys to preside as family law mediators and receiving the Stanley Lintz Award for outstanding professional and community service from the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. He was also

instrumental in spearheading the creation of the children's waiting rooms in the San Fernando and Van Nuys courthouses.

Barry's sense of duty and generosity has left an indelible mark on the Valley Community Legal Foundation and the community at large. A dear friend and devoted citizen, he will be sorely missed. 

# The VCLF Thanks

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WE JOIN THE VCLF IN HONORING  
OUR FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE  
**JUDGE SUSAN SPEER**  
FOR HER EXEMPLARY SERVICE TO  
OUR COMMUNITY AS A VCLF BOARD  
MEMBER, DEDICATED VOLUNTEER  
AND PUBLIC SERVANT



- |                         |                            |
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| Judge Michael Convey    | Judge Huey Cotton          |
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Det. Bill Speer and Barry Harlan

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**Michael G. Kaplan**  
*(The VCLF thanks Mr. Kaplan for  
all the wonderful photos)*

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