

VALLEY LAWYER

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VCLF ANNUAL GALA

Two hundred supporters of the Valley Community Legal Foundation of the SFVBA gathered on November 14 at Braemar Country Club for the VCLF's Annual Gala. All in attendance had fun and raised funds for scholarships and law related charitable initiatives. The event honored Los Angeles Sheriff **Jim McDonnell**, attorney and radio personality **Bill Handel**, and businessman and civic leader **Bert Boeckmann**.

Photos by Michael Kaplan



VCLF Finds Fun in Fundraising

LAURENCE N. KALDOR
VCLF President



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MINDFUL THAT FUN AND fundraising don't have to be mutually exclusive, the Valley Community Legal Foundation (VCLF) held its annual Gala event on Saturday, November 14 at Braemar Country Club. The VCLF, which acts as the charitable arm of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, adopted the theme "Raising the Bar" this year so as to highlight the value and importance of community service in realizing its own mission of assisting law related charitable initiatives in the local area.

As part of the festivities, both silent and live auctions were held to raise funds for VCLF projects. Former Los Angeles City Councilman Dennis Zine and San Fernando Valley businessman Mark Sterling were brilliantly entertaining as our estimable MCs for the event. Zine particularly shined (as he always does) as our auctioneer.

I pledge to build upon the work of past presidents in creating even more visibility for the Foundation. It is an exciting time to be working with the VCLF. The next eighteen months promises to be a transformative period of growth and prosperity for the charitable needs of the San Fernando Valley Community.

Highlighting the work of the VCLF, and its many projects, has become a top priority. Most practicing lawyers know that the Van Nuys and San Fernando courthouses have waiting rooms for children but fewer know that the VCLF was instrumental in their creation. The VCLF similarly has a long history of helping children with scholarship programs, including the

Wendy Sue Friedenthal Memorial Scholarship Fund, which assists students in the community who may have legal ambitions but not necessarily the means.

Especially noteworthy is the Blanket the Homeless program dedicated to making others aware that homelessness need not be permanent. Through the simple act of providing blankets to those in need, this program literally saves lives by giving to various shelters throughout the San Fernando Valley. On the days the blankets are distributed, legal clinics are also held to address the needs of individuals who have little or limited access to the justice system.

One of the most touching messages of the Gala was delivered by Jennifer Espalin. Formerly homeless and chemical dependent, Espalin has struggled each day but now meets her challenges head on. And, with the skills she learned from The Drug Court, a project the VCLF supports through grants, she will be seeking her qualification to become a certified drug counselor.

More, but perhaps less vocal, evidence of the VCLF's impact on the community was the participation of almost a dozen members of Teen Court in the event, a program close to past president Seymour Amster. Giving these young adults exposure to the beneficial efforts of lawyers and those in the legal community will surely emphasize values that the VCLF wants to engender in young people.

To demonstrate that, in serving the community, one can play many roles, the VCLF chose its honorees

from three different sectors: law enforcement, media, and business. Los Angeles Sheriff Jim McDonnell was selected for the Heroes in Law Enforcement and Firefighters' Award. A graduate of the Los Angeles Police Academy, Sheriff McDonnell served as second in Command to Chief William Bratton after holding every rank in the LAPD except Chief. Sheriff McDonnell has been a strong advocate for community-based policing, including co-authoring a foundational plan that created many changes in how the LAPD interacts with local neighborhoods.

A graduate of Whittier Law School, KFI talk radio's William Wolf "Bill" Handel was honored with the Armand Arabian Law and Media Award. Handel hosts one of the leading local morning radio shows, providing news commentary on a variety of subjects of interest to Angelenos. His longest running show is the syndicated *Handel on the Law*, which is heard on over 150 stations around the country. The descendant of Polish Jews who lived first in Brazil before immigrating to the United States, Handel has been both active and vocal in his attempts to alleviate racism and anti-Semitism in the community.

A beneficent fixture of the San Fernando Valley business community for decades, Herbert F. Boeckmann II was chosen for the Pearl F. Vogel President's Award. Boeckmann is perhaps currently best known as the Chairman and CEO of Galpin Motors, but has also served several Los Angeles mayors on blue-ribbon commissions, been active with his

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wife in promoting the arts in the San Fernando Valley, and has been a generous donor to his alma mater USC. Considered in the business community as a true "Horatio Alger story," he is a recipient of the 1995 Horatio Alger Award given by the association of the same name.


Key to the VCLF's work is the generosity of its sponsors. Among those who truly stepped up this year were: Gold Sponsor Nadel CPAs; Silver Sponsors Lewitt Hackman, Krofina Investigative Services, Inc., and Synergy Professional Insurance Brokers; Bronze Sponsors BMA USA, Kraft Miles & Miller, Law Offices of Etan Lorant, Lyden Law Corporation, Fazio Cleaners, Law Offices of Alice A. Salvo, Law Offices of Tamila C. Jensen, and Leavitt Group; and Gavel Sponsors Jodi Berman Levine and Dr. Joel Levine, Stan and Lisa Agay Getz, Laurence N. Kaldor, Anne C. Adams and Patricia L. McCabe, Lee Rosenblum, Robert Philibosian, Michael G. Kaplan CPA CVA MAFF, and Mark Shipow. Emphasizing the importance of these contributions, director and professional fundraiser Lee Rosenblum says, "The VCLF does important work on behalf of marginal and at-risk communities. Our work is vital to the legal community and all those who benefit from it."

Impressively, several directors of the VCLF took on the dual role of fundraiser and donor. Most notably, David Nadel, who serves as the board's treasurer, bought a gold level sponsorship and in doing so made an even greater contribution than he already does with his time and skills. Past president Etan Z. Lorant, Judge Susan Speer, Capt. Bill Speer and Jeffrey Vallens generously acted as the wine sponsors for the event, offsetting a significant cost and allowing more of the money raised from tickets to be used for the VCLF's mission.

To make the event a success, the directors of the VCLF find themselves playing many roles and none as important as those who serve on the

Gala Committee. Special recognition should go to Anne Adams, Lisa Agay Getz, Seymour Amster, Hon. Mitchell Block, Debbie Brand, Stan Getz, Laurence Kaldor, Hon. Virginia Keeny, Etan Lorant, Patricia McCabe, Lee Rosenblum, Terri Peckinpaugh, Hon. Susan Speer, Bill Speer, and Hon. Dennis P. Zine, Ret. for their selfless efforts. Also very worthy of mention is VCLF Director Jodi Berman, who in her role as head of the planning committee took on the daunting task of liaising regularly with the venue to make sure that everything was just right.

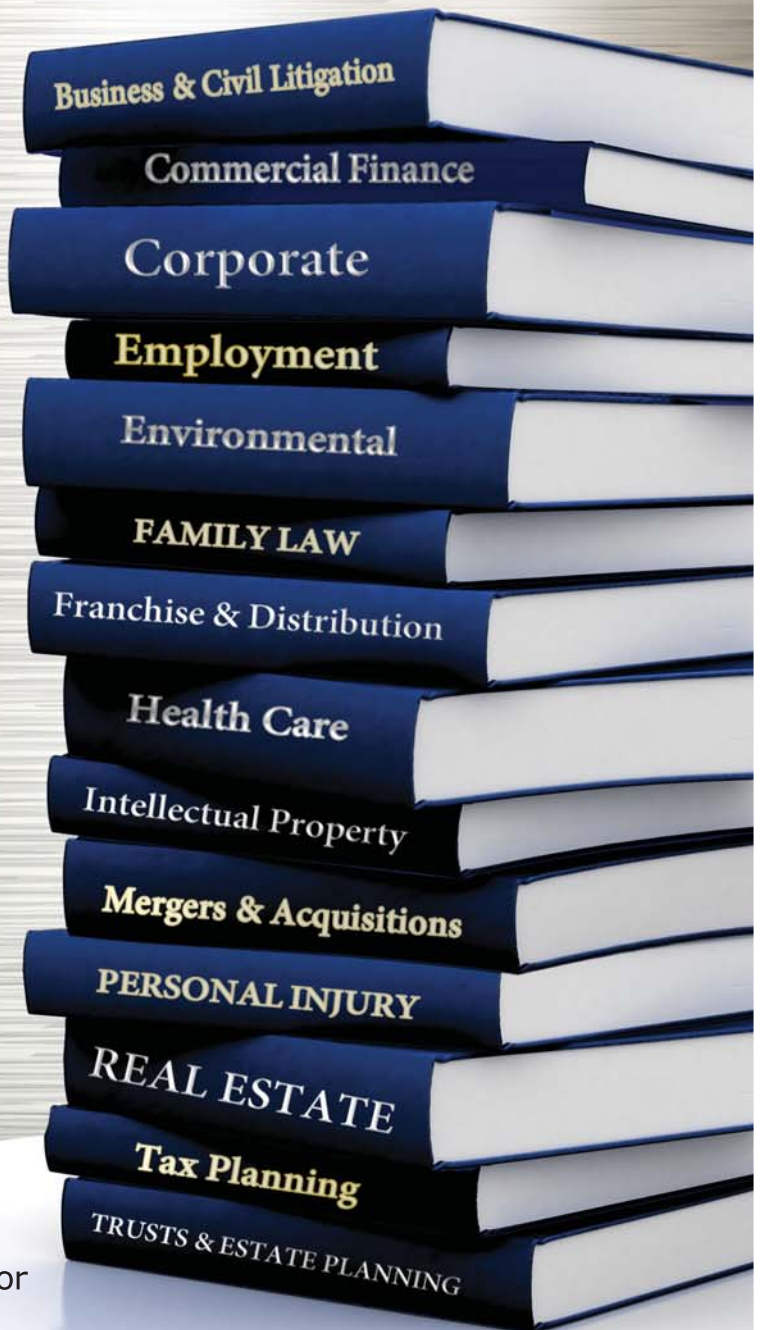
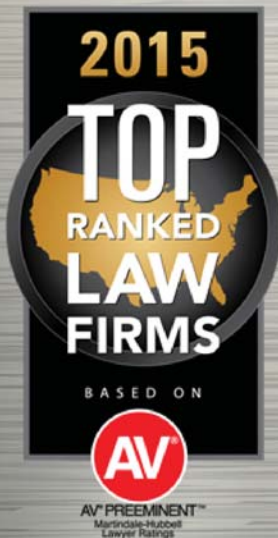
The silent and live auctions were central to fundraising efforts. Director Patricia McCabe and Advisory Board member Anne Adams deserve special credit for bringing sponsors in and ensuring that the winners and their prizes found each other. Commenting on the variety of offerings, Adams remarked that, "Our supporters had the opportunity to bid on a variety of live auction items. Donations from the community included lunch and a ride along with LAPD Valley Bureau Deputy Chief Bob Green, a LAPD driving range pursuit tour, and dinner with a tour for six people at a local LAFD station. We also had many silent auction items, including Disneyland park hopper passes, restaurant gift certificates, a variety of gift baskets, and a bicycle. We appreciate the generosity from the community members that provided our auction items."

As a new year commences, the VCLF is looking forward to a new program of even more charitable initiatives and events. An important part of achieving these goals is including the membership of the entire San Fernando Valley Bar Association. So, please consider making a tax deductible donation to the VCLF's general fund at <http://www.thevclf.org/donate-to-vclf-general-fund/> or participating in this year's events. You just might discover that fundraising is a lot more fun than you think. 



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