

# Celebrate our diversity

By Vincent Howard, Diversity Committee Co-Chair



Vincent Howard



Micha Liberty

It's fitting that during February as our nation celebrated Black History month, CAOC finalized the formation of its Diversity Committee. CAOC's leadership, under the guidance of Past President John Montevideo, realizes the importance of diversity to this organization. Based on this recognition, our newly formed diversity committee, headed by Micha Star Liberty and myself, is on a mission to ensure that diverse groups, whether based on disability, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, are included at all levels of our beloved organization – including the top – to change the dynamic, reshape the conversation, and to make sure that the voices of our diverse membership are heard and heeded, not overlooked or ignored. In a state as culturally rich and diverse as California, it is important for CAOC to

encourage and foster cultural diversity, as this allows our members to learn from one another. If all of our members were identical in every respect, we would have little to teach and share with one another.

Our organization's Diversity Committee (or the "DC" as it is affectionately known amongst the members of the group) will serve as the collective consciousness of CAOC's diverse membership and will ensure that each member has an equal opportunity to fully participate in all that this great organization has to offer.

The ultimate goal of the DC is to provide strong advocacy for our diverse members and to ensure that each member participates and advances in all aspects of CAOC, including leadership, education, membership and all other activities. We also seek to identify and implement strategies that will result in significant and measurable

progress toward increasing and acknowledging diversity among the plaintiff's bar in general, and CAOC in particular.

We can achieve our goals by working together to foster a multicultural setting at our events and meetings, increase communication between CAOC and other minority or specialty bar groups, and raise awareness within our own membership of minority issues. Select members of the DC have already been hard at work trying to reach out to various minority bar groups to form lasting relationships that will ultimately benefit their group as well as CAOC.

Micha and I are excited about the work ahead and we hope that you are excited about it too. We look forward to working with all interested members in achieving these goals. Here is to a prosperous and diverse 2012! ■

## RETAIL INDUSTRY EXPERT WITNESS

EVALUATE ALL ISSUES OF INDUSTRY STANDARDS OF CARE IN:

- \* SUPERMARKETS
- \* RESTAURANTS
- \* SPECIALTY STORES

- \* GENERAL MERCHANDISE STORES
- \* FAST FOOD OPERATIONS
- \* CONVENIENCE STORES

- \* HOME IMPROVEMENT CENTERS
- \* WAREHOUSE STORES
- \* SMALL BUSINESS OPERATIONS

INDUSTRY STANDARDS ISSUES INCLUDE:

- \* Slip/Trip and Fall
- \* ADA Compliance
- \* Food Handling Procedures

- \* Floor Care & Maintenance Procedures
- \* Merchandising Procedures
- \* Internal Operation Procedures

- \* Store Security
- \* Loss Prevention
- \* Wrongful Termination

**Alex J. Balian, MBA**

**www.balian-and-associates.com (818) 702-0025 Plaintiff's Expert - Ortega vs. K-Mart**