

WE ARE BARRISTERS

John Hamasaki

It can be hard to read about the state of the law today and not conclude that lawyers are some of the most miserable creatures walking the earth. It is true that, as a profession, we need to do better with confronting the challenges to attorney health, wellness, and lifestyle. And yet, being a lawyer is still arguably the greatest profession on earth.



Each and every day lawyers fight injustice, protect our rights, and defend their clients vigorously in court. As lawyers, we each have the opportunity to change the lives of our clients, whether our client is a family facing eviction, a small business struggling to survive, or a startup trying to navigate funding. We get to make a difference and potentially shape our client's future. There is no other profession with the diversity of opportunities to really help change a life.

The Barristers Club of the Bar Association of San Francisco has been developing the next generation of lawyers in Northern California for over ninety years. As president of the Barristers, it is my goal this year to build the organization into a community of lawyers, working alongside each other, advancing in their profession, and finding success and happiness in the law.



Impressions from recent Barristers events—clockwise, from top left: Barristers Urban Hike, Annual Diversity Reception, Annual Judges Reception, Bay Area Boat Cruise with In-House Counsel, and the Barristers Open House. Visit www.sfbar.org/calendar to see upcoming events.

The leadership of the Barristers, from our board to the chairs of our sections and committees, is dedicated to creating an inclusive culture of support, predicated on mutual respect and admiration for one another. We are in this together. We are Barristers.

In my time as a lawyer, I have watched my colleagues join the bench, start their own firms, become partner, win huge cases at trial, and grow their families in the process. I’ve also seen friends and colleagues struggle with the stress and anxiety of being lawyers, of billable hours, demanding clients, and unsympathetic courts. There is nothing better during these difficult times than having a support network of like-minded professionals undergoing the same challenges. None of us should have to go through this alone. To meet our full potential, to enjoy the intellectual challenges of our profession, we need a network of support. The colleague you call from the hallway of court during a hearing for last-minute advice, the friend who will meet you after that tough day and say, “I’ve been there.” We can only achieve our full potential together.

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One of the things that I want to do this year is celebrate the success of Barristers friends and colleagues I’ve come to know over the years who have found happiness and accomplishment in the law. And perhaps, in doing so, inspire others to join our ranks, to become our colleagues and friends in the Barristers.

LIVING OUT CHILDHOOD DREAMS IN THE LAW



Barristers board member Matthew Valdez grew up in the shadow of Candlestick Park, a San Francisco Giants mega-fan, dreaming of one day taking the field alongside his childhood heroes in the orange and black. Today, Matthew still wears the

orange and black, but it's as associate general counsel for the baseball team, dealing with everything from contracts to facility operations to immigration, including the recent rechristening of the stadium as Oracle Park.

YOU CAN STILL BE A ROCK STAR (OR AT LEAST WORK WITH THEM)



As a father to twin five-year-olds, former Barristers President Adam Kaplan, Munger, Tolles & Olson, like most parents of young children, was very familiar with the song "Let it Go" from the Disney smash-hit Frozen. When his firm asked

him to join the team defending a copyright infringement suit against the song, Adam had a chance to delve into copyright law and learn about the creation of the song and movie, having fun and thoroughly impressing his daughters in the process.

FOLLOWING YOUR PASSION TO SUCCESS



Jessica Ryland knew from the time she was thirteen years old that she wanted to be an attorney. After putting in six years working at a large firm, she realized that she wanted to move to an in-house counsel role and work with an emerging technology company. Now,

Jessica goes to work at what she calls her "dream job" overseeing outside litigation at Lyft and working alongside her colleagues as they shape the future of transportation.

BECOMING AN EXPERT IN YOUR FIELD



In his third year of practice, Barristers board member Phong-Chau Nguyen, Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, joined the leadership team in the Volkswagen "Clean Diesel" multi-district litigation. In

record time, the team secured \$14+ billion in settlements, including vehicle buybacks and vehicle emissions modifications, on behalf of owners and lessees of over 500,000 Volkswagen, Audi, and Porsche diesel vehicles. For Phong, the most enjoyable part of the litigation was learning about the complexities of vehicle diesel emissions, and he continues to advocate for plaintiffs in vehicle class actions nationwide.

HANDLING HIGH PROFILE CASES

Roey Rahmil, Shartsis Friese, was a little over a year into his career when his firm placed him on a high-profile case involving allegedly counterfeit antique wine, which culminated in a three-week jury trial in New York federal court. The witnesses included a forensic scientist, a nuclear physicist, and preeminent wine experts, and the issues have been featured in articles, books, and movies. Roey seized the opportunity to take a major role in drafting significant briefs, preparing for depositions and witness examinations, and arguing motions at trial.



In short, Barristers get to do cool stuff in the law. This is all not to say that being a lawyer isn't a tough, demanding profession. But if you want to be great, to enjoy the work, and to thrive professionally, there are countless examples out there to emulate. In the Bay Area, they are called Barristers.

John Hamasaki, 2019 Barristers Club president, is a trial attorney at Hamasaki Law, and a San Francisco Police Commissioner. His practice focuses on complex criminal matters involving constitutional protections and civil liberties. He can be reached at john@hamasakilaw.com and is always happy to speak to any Barristers or prospective Barristers about the organization.

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE BARRISTERS CLUB OPEN HOUSE

**Thursday, April 11
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

The Bar Association of San Francisco
301 Battery Street, Third Floor, San Francisco

Attend the Open House, and

- Learn about club benefits
- Meet the chairs and vice chairs of the 23 Barristers committees and sections
- Find out how to get involved

Sponsorship Opportunities are available.

Please contact Barristers Director
Angella Coleman-Levy
at acolemanlevy@sfbar.org.

WWW.SFBAR.ORG/OPEN-HOUSE