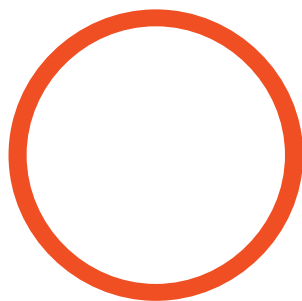


THINKER
TEACHER
LAWYER
FRIEND



Leslie A. Gordon



ne word sums up the legal career of David A. Carrillo: breadth. In the last two decades, he's worked as a deputy attorney general, a deputy city attorney, a deputy district attorney, and in private practice. Today, he's a

UC Berkeley School of Law academic and the founding director of Berkeley Law's California Constitution Center.

A Bay Area native, Carrillo graduated from UC Berkeley in 1991 with a degree in English and a minor in classics. After college, he took a year off and then enrolled at Berkeley Law, earning his J.D. in 1995. "Any career plans I had were quickly dashed by the legal job market at the time," Carrillo recalls. "It was the worst recession the legal profession had seen in decades." Fortunately, he'd interned at the Alameda and Contra Costa district attorney's offices as a student, and was hired as a prosecutor by Contra Costa after graduation.

"I did a bit of everything there, moving around departments every six months. I worked in misdemeanors, juvenile, welfare fraud, and felony trials," says Carrillo, who spent three years as a deputy district attorney before moving to private practice. "Big firm jobs had opened up by then."

At Seyfarth Shaw, he defended large corporate clients. His cases spanned insurance bad faith, product liability, and toxic tort suits. After three years in private practice, Carrillo joined the California Department of Justice. As

a deputy attorney general in the office's Oakland civil division, he handled employment and administrative law.

"David was a pleasure to work with because he was effective in taking the lead on issues and coming up with successful strategies for positive outcomes," says Michael Gowe, who worked with Carrillo there. "He's good at not only coming up with 'outside the box' ideas, but also implementing them. At the same time, he's easy to collaborate with and is supportive of ideas generated by others."

After two years at the California Department of Justice, Carrillo moved to the Public Protection Team at the San Francisco City Attorney's Office. There, he defended employment lawsuits and handled police officer discipline matters for the local police commission. After four years there, he returned to the California Attorney General's Office.

Around that time, Carrillo began pursuing his LL.M. at Berkeley Law, which he earned in 2007. "I went back to school because I wanted to become better at what I was doing," he explains. "I'd been practicing for ten years and felt like I wasn't learning anything new. I wanted to think about the law in a different way." After the LL.M. program, Carrillo stayed in Berkeley Law's advanced degree program and earned a J.S.D. in 2011.

Both his LL.M. thesis and J.S.D. dissertation focused on California constitutional law. He found the state's constitution fascinating, particularly the aspects of it that were different from the federal Constitution. He discovered that California constitutional law was an

PROFILE: DAVID CARRILLO

understudied area and so he began publishing articles and teaching classes on the topic. That academic work soon evolved from a sideline into a full-time job.

In 2012, Carrillo joined the Berkeley Law faculty full time as the executive director of the law school's California Constitution Center, which develops scholarship on the state constitution and the California Supreme Court. "Other than [UC Hastings College of the Law professor and former California Supreme Court justice] Joe Grodin's book (which is excellent) there's not a large body of source materials on the California constitution,"



Carrillo explains. "I wanted to study and teach this area. I thought—and the law school agreed—that it deserved its own research center." Carrillo sees the center as a nexus of bar, bench, and academy. "The hope was that moths would gather to the flame," Carrillo says of the center. "There's a small but committed crowd of people who care about the California constitution, and I wanted to give them a home."

Suzanne Miles, a Berkeley Law lecturer who has cotaught classes with Carrillo, calls him "incredibly hardworking and diligent." His practical experience meshes well with his "strong academic mind," she says. "It's an unusual, valuable combination. He's a very strong presence in the classroom. He puts so much of his time and heart into the material."

Carrillo also devotes time and heart to The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF). He's twice moderated BASF's Judicial Forum, has served on the board of the Justice & Diversity Center, and is now on BASF's Board of Directors.

"Everyone has their community. The legal community is mine," Carrillo says of his involvement in the bar association. "I believe in service. When I join a board, I consider the needs of the entity. I try not to arrive with an agenda. I'm just here to serve."

According to BASF President Michael Tubach, Carrillo's broad range of experience contributes to his insightfulness. "He's a true value-add board member, whatever the issue is. As president this year, that's exactly what I want in board members: independent and thoughtful thinkers." Tubach adds that when "high-profile, meaningful" issues arise, the BASF board is often asked to take a position. In those cases, "David is one of the voices we really want to hear."

Along with BASF/JDC Executive Director Yolanda Jackson, Carrillo also serves on the board of the

Foundation for Democracy and Justice, a partnership of state leaders and professionals working to promote principles of democracy and to increase public awareness of the roles played by the three branches of state government. In particular, the foundation focuses on educating the public about the need for a strong, independent, and adequately funded judiciary.

Carrillo and his wife Lisa Sardegna, an architectural conservator, split their time among San Francisco, Berkeley, and Rome. When he's not immersed in the California constitution and she's not restoring a church

fresco in Italy, they're dancing the Argentine tango. Carrillo is also a master scuba diver who loves diving Grand Cayman's reefs. "The day after the last class of the semester, I get down to a hundred feet below the surface as quickly as possible."

*A former lawyer, Leslie A. Gordon is a freelance journalist living in San Francisco. She is the author of *Cheer: A Novel* and *Heads or Tails*, both available on Amazon. She can be reached at leslie.gordon@stanfordalumni.org.*

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