



June 2025
Report from District 14
Honorable Victoria Kolakowski and Honorable Renee Stackhouse

California and Nevada

NAWJ's mission is to promote the judicial role of protecting the rights of individuals under the rule of law through strong, committed, diverse judicial leadership; fairness and equality in the courts; and equal access to justice.

Welcome!

We welcome our newest members:

Hon. Heather Hocter (Los Angeles)

Cupcake Brown, Esq. (San Diego)

Whether you are a new, or returning, member, we (Co-District 14 Directors Hon. Victoria Kolakowski, Alameda and Hon. Renee Stackhouse, San Diego) are thrilled to be able to represent you this year. Please do not hesitate to reach out with suggestions or questions.

Worried your membership has lapsed? [Email us](#) to find out!

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of the California Judiciary, [appointed by California Governor Newsom](#) on June 18, 2025:

Hon. Sumako McCallum (Los Angeles)

Hon. Melanie Chavira (Los Angeles)

Hon. Ashley Albertoni Sausser (Merced)

Hon. Deborah Cumba (San Diego)

Hon. Dawn Payne (San Francisco)

Hon. Eunice Lee (Santa Clara County)

Congratulations to our new District 14 State Chairs!

Serving California

Uche Enenwali, Esq.

Attorney Enenwali was born in Lagos, Nigeria. She completed her legal studies in England and is licensed to practice law in California, New York, the District of Columbia, and Nevada (pro hac vice). Since 2006 she has served as Senior Counsel in the Enforcement Division at the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation (DFPI). Attorney Enenwali is an inaugural member of the DFPI's first Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Council and the Black Employee Resource Group. Outside her professional endeavors, Uche is passionate about volunteering with nonprofit organizations that respond to natural disasters and supporting faith-based initiatives for women, orphans, and victims of sex labor.

Serving Nevada

Hon. Kendra G. Bertschy

Kendra G. Bertschy serves as Justice of the Peace for Reno Justice Court, Department 2, having been elected in November 2022. She presides over criminal, civil, and specialty court dockets. In July 2024, with the support of the Reno Justice Court administration and civil team, Judge Bertschy established "Housing Court," a therapeutic eviction diversion court aimed at providing expedited rental assistance and therapeutic interventions to tenants in need. With expertise in both criminal and civil law, her legal career is rooted in a commitment to ensuring equal access to justice and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

Judge Bertschy graduated with Distinction from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, and earned an Honors and History degree from the University of Puget Sound. In 2024, she completed the Judicial Executive Leadership Program through Harvard Law School's Executive Education. Her dedication to public service extends beyond the courtroom, having previously served as Chair of the Note-Able Music Therapy Services, the Northern Nevada Women Lawyers Association, and the Washoe CASA Foundation.

She currently serves as the Education Chair of Nevada Judges of Limited Jurisdiction and was appointed to the Nevada Statewide Commission to Study Judicial Branch Security and the Nevada Committee to Study Evidenced-Based Pretrial Release. Judge Bertschy also teaches at the University of Nevada, Reno. In her free time, she enjoys skiing and hiking with her dog.



Get Involved

- Join an NAWJ Committee!
NAWJ Committees are listed [here](#) and Committee meetings are listed [here](#).
You are welcome to join and participate at your comfort level.
- Create programs in your area!



Do you want to get more involved in NAWJ but don't have an active group...yet? We can work with you to give you the help you need to start one of these programs in your area. Just reach out!

Upcoming Events

The NAWJ 2025 Annual Conference will be held in **Boston, MA** October 23-25, 2025. Click [here](#) for more information.

San Diego's [Success Inside & Out](#) program has been set for November 7, 2025. If you would like to join our meetings to see how we prepare, or help us brainstorm and prepare, we'd love to have you join! Please [reach out to us](#).

SAVE THE DATE for the NAWJ 2026 Midyear Meeting! The 2026 Midyear meeting will take place on an Alaska Cruise, Vancouver to Whittier/Anchorage May 17-24, 2026, on the Holland America Signature Class ship, Nieuw Amsterdam. This will be the 15th anniversary of our first NAWJ Alaska cruise in 2011. [Click here](#) for additional details on the cruise.

Past Events

The following webinars have recently aired. If you missed them the replays are now available on the [NAWJ website](#). You will need to log in to be able to watch. *Note: The webinars are in chronological order, please scroll to the bottom of the page to access the 2025 webinars.*

Threats Against Women Judges: Why the Risk is Greater and How to Protect Your Home and Family

Threats and attacks against judges have escalated rapidly in recent years. But within this general climate of judicial hostility, it's important to understand that some judges are at higher risk than others. Our research has found that women judges and minority judges are also targeted at a higher frequency. Threats received by a judge that is a woman of color are typically 40% higher than those directed at a white male judge. The webinar will provide strategies judges can begin employing right away to better protect themselves and their families.

Understanding and Addressing Caste Discrimination in U.S. Courts



This National Association of Women Judges discussion on caste discrimination, featuring leading scholars, advocates, and practitioners was held June 12, 2025. The panelists provide critical insights into recognizing, litigating, and adjudicating caste discrimination cases. The session highlights developments such as the Fresno Resolution and the ABA's stance on caste equity, offering practical guidance for both attorneys and judges.

Caste discrimination, while long recognized internationally, is an emerging frontier for U.S. courts, attorneys, and advocates. This panel, hosted by the National Association of Women Judges, equips legal professionals with the knowledge to recognize caste discrimination, frame claims effectively, and evaluate these complex cases from the bench.

Panelists explore the foundations of caste as a social and legal category, share real-world examples of caste bias in the U.S., and discuss practical strategies for litigating and adjudicating these claims. The discussion also highlights key developments, including the landmark Fresno City Resolution and the American Bar Association's resolution recognizing caste discrimination as a form of prohibited bias.

Through this session, judges and attorneys will gain practical tools for identifying and addressing caste-based harms, and judges will deepen their understanding of how to weigh and evaluate evidence of caste discrimination under existing legal frameworks.

Ethical Legal Research with Generative AI

This presentation is for legal professionals who want a better understanding of the intersection between generative AI and legal ethics. Beginning with a foundational overview of AI and its generative capabilities, participants will explore the ethical implications as outlined by the American Bar Association (ABA) model rules. Key topics include maintaining competency (Rule 1.1), ensuring confidentiality (Rule 1.6) and effective supervision (Rule 5.1) in the context of AI use.

The course will also address potential sanctions for unethical AI practices and provide insights into the application of AI in legal research tools, emphasizing ethical principles and considerations. Participants will engage in discussions on specific ethical issues such as AI hallucinations, supervisory concerns, and confidentiality challenges.

The course concludes with a review of ethical AI use policies within law firms and an open discussion to consolidate learning and address participant queries. This course is designed to equip legal professionals with the knowledge and tools necessary to ethically integrate AI into their practice.

Recognitions & Congratulations



Judge Laura Miller (San Diego, CA)

Judge Miller received the coveted American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML) Distinguished Jurist Award at the Annual Institute this year in San Diego. This award is given to a judge who has made significant contributions to the field of family law through their conduct, activities, exceptional expertise, and dedication to the practice of family law. Judge Miller is the Supervising Family Law Judge for San Diego County.



Judge Deborah Cumba (San Diego, CA)

Judge Cumba was appointed by Governor Newsom on June 18, 2025. She has served as a Commissioner since 2021 for the Superior Court of California, County of San Diego. Previously, she served as a Deputy Attorney at the California State Department of Transportation from 2011 to 2021. She was an Associate at Wilson Elser from 2003 to 2011 and an Associate Clerk at Clark Hill in 2005.

Have you, or a colleague, received a special recognition? Please let us know. We would love to help celebrate your accomplishments! Don't be shy! Email us [here](#).