



ANNUAL
INSTALLATION
AND
AWARDS
DINNER

2010

THE FAIRMONT
SAN FRANCISCO

CELEBRATING ATTORNEYS
WHO PROTECT CONSUMER RIGHTS

CAOC DISTINGUISHED HONOREE

Chief Justice Ronald M. George

CAOC AWARD RECIPIENTS

Senator Alex Padilla • Legislator of the Year
Michael Heuser • Legislative Advocate of the Year
Debbie Allen • Consumer Advocate of the Year
Thomas T. Anderson • Lifetime Achievement
Craig Needham • Robert E. Cartwright, Sr. Award
Christine D. Spagnoli • Marvin E. Lewis Award
Frank M. Pitre • Edward I. Pollock Award

STREET FIGHTER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

Michael Cohen and Heather McKeon
Anna Dubrovsky and George V. Choulos
Matthew K. Edling
Theo J. Emison III
Gregory L. Johnson
M. Lawrence Lallande, Sr.
Lisa Maki and Christina Coleman
Timothy McMahon
Dennis A. Schoville and Louis G. Arnell
Jill P. Telfer

CONSUMER ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

Robert A. Buccola and Steven M. Campora
Roger Dreyer and Harvey Levine
John M. Feder and Miles B. Cooper
Brian Kabateck and Richard Kellner
Michael A. Kelly
David R. Lira, Thomas V. Girardi, Christopher T. Aumais,
James W. Vitito, Michael Killackey and Stephen Rishoff
Robert J. Nelson, Nancy G. Krop, Cliff Palefsky and Michael P. Rubin
Jeremy Pasternak, Joshua Konecky and Todd Schneider

STREET FIGHTER OF THE YEAR
2010

AWARD CRITERIA

The Consumer Attorneys of California is proud to present its Street Fighter of the Year Award. We wish to recognize great lawyers around the state who, by representing their clients on a daily basis, are truly making a difference in the lives of Californians.

This CAOC award honors a plaintiff's lawyer who achieved a significant result in a case finally resolved in 2010 that exemplifies the everyday struggles of the small practitioner in California.

Consumer Attorneys of California salutes this year's award winner(s) and finalists and thanks you for highlighting everything that is good and just about our profession and the civil justice system.

STREET FIGHTER OF THE YEAR FINALIST



Lisa L. Maki

LISA MAKI
CHRISTINA COLEMAN
LAW OFFICES OF LISA MAKI



Christina Coleman

Gerritsen v. City of Los Angeles

OVERCOMING RED TAPE FOR A SURVIVING PARTNER

Los Angeles Police Department Officer Spree DeSha was one of 25 people killed in a 2008 commuter train crash in the Chatsworth district of the city. Surviving DeSha was her domestic partner, LAPD Officer Laura Gerritsen. The two had never formally registered as domestic partners with the state, fearing that could lead to discrimination within the police department if it were to become public. However, DeSha had filled out partnership benefit forms to submit to the city, but they were on her desk when she died. Gerritsen was then denied survivorship pension benefits because the city administrative code required paperwork to be filed during the lifetime of the person whose benefits are at issue, a requirement it does not make for other classes of people entitled to survivorship benefits. Attorneys Lisa Maki and Christina Coleman argued Gerritsen had never been informed the paperwork had to be filed prior to the death of a partner, and after a two-day bench trial a judge ruled Gerritsen was entitled to receive DeSha's pension.