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Nonprofit Organizations Committee

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2016 OUTSTANDING NONPROFIT LAWYER AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

The ABA Celebrates Outstanding Nonprofit Lawyers

WASHINGTON, D.C. – July 5, 2016: The legal nonprofit community today named the 2016 recipients of the annual “**Outstanding Nonprofit Lawyer Awards.**” This year the Nonprofit Organizations Committee of the American Bar Association, Business Law Section, recognizes accomplished and civic-minded nonprofit lawyers in the categories of Lawyer (Outside Counsel), In-House Counsel, and Young Lawyer. Additionally, the Committee bestows the Vanguard Award on a leading legal practitioner for his or her lifetime commitment to the nonprofit field. The 2016 recipients are:



Vanguard Award – for distinguished lifetime achievement in the nonprofit sector:

Thomas A. Troyer, Member, Exempt Organizations Group, Caplin & Drysdale, Chartered (retired)



Outstanding Lawyer Award – for distinguished service as outside counsel to nonprofit organizations:

Judith Andrews, Of Counsel, Apex Law Group LLP



Outstanding Lawyer Award – for distinguished service as outside counsel to nonprofit organizations:

Gene Takagi, Managing Attorney, NEO Law Group



Outstanding In-House Counsel Award – for distinguished service by a nonprofit in-house counsel:

Sherry Hibbert, General Counsel, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo



Outstanding Young Lawyer Award – for distinguished service by an attorney in the nonprofit sector who is under the age of 35 or has been in practice less than 10 years:

Brandon Dickerson, Partner, Likes Meyerson Hatch LLC

VANGUARD AWARD

One of the pillars of the modern nonprofit-law practice, Thomas A. Troyer was born in Omaha, Nebraska, and graduated from Harvard College (where he was elected to *Phi Beta Kappa*) and Michigan Law School (where he served as a senior officer of the *Michigan Law Review*). He began private law practice with a Denver firm in 1958. From there, he moved to the Tax Division of the Justice Department, where he served as Special Assistant to the Assistant Attorney in charge of the Tax Division, and then on to the Treasury Department, where he served as Associate Tax Legislative Counsel under famed tax scholar Stanley Surrey, then the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Tax Policy. While at the Treasury Department, Tom was deeply involved in laying the groundwork for the 1969 private foundation legislation.

In 1967, he joined the recently founded Washington, D.C. law firm of Caplin & Drysdale as a partner and remained there until his retirement in 2009, helping the firm's Exempt Organizations practice group for much of that time.

In his more than 40 years with Caplin & Drysdale, Tom specialized primarily in matters concerning private foundations and other exempt organizations. His public-service and bar activities in the exempt-organizations area included serving as a member of the IRS Commissioner's Advisory Group on Exempt Organizations, chairing the Exempt Organizations Committee of the American Bar Association's Tax Section, chairing the Foundation Lawyers' Group, chairing the annual American Law Institute-American Bar Association (ALI-ABA) Conference on Charitable Organizations, and serving as a member of the Treasury Department's Advisory Committee on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs. He also served on a number of boards of directors of philanthropic organizations, including the Carnegie Corporation of

New York, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Children’s Defense Fund, and the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region.

Over the course of his career, Tom trained many leading nonprofit-law practitioners, taught courses on tax-exempt organizations at several law schools, spoke extensively on a variety of legal subjects, and wrote many important works, including a frequently cited article on “The 1969 Private Foundation Law: Historical Perspective on Its Origins and Underpinnings,” published in the *Exempt Organization Tax Review* in 2000.

Tom was a model for all nonprofit lawyers—in his public service, his dedication to the bar, his deep knowledge and experience, his mentoring of junior attorneys, and his devotion to his clients and to the betterment of the nonprofit sector.

OUTSTANDING ATTORNEY AWARD CO-RECIPIENT

Judith Andrews’ practice focuses on nonprofit corporation law, tax-exempt organizations, and public finance. For more than 20 years, she has represented nonprofit organizations on corporate and tax exemption issues including incorporation and determination of tax-exempt status, legal obligations of directors, organizational structure and roles of board and staff, conversion, merger and affiliation issues, and federal tax-exemption issues. In addition, she has worked as bond counsel and underwriter’s counsel on many special fund revenue bond and nonrecourse revenue bond financings. Many of these bond issues have involved nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organizations.

In 1992, Judith spearheaded the writing, editing and publishing of the handbook “How to Form a Non-Profit Corporation in Washington State,” as chair of the Community Involvement Committee of the King County Bar Association Young Lawyers’ Division. She has served on the editorial committees of the second and third editions of the handbook.

She has also acted in a number of leadership positions related to the legal profession, including Executive Director of the Washington Women’s Law Center (now Legal Voice) and instructor in the Seattle University School of Law Nonprofit Legal Clinic for 10 years. Judith was appointed by the Washington State Secretary of State to serve on the Secretary of State’s Charities Advisory Council. She helped found and served as the first President of Washington Attorneys Assisting Community Organizations (now Wayfind). More recently, she has chaired a committee for the Washington State Bar Association charged with drafting a comprehensive revision of the Nonprofit Corporations Act in light of the American Bar Association’s *Model Nonprofit Corporation Act, Third Edition*.

Judith Andrews has contributed greatly to the nonprofit community through her legal work, her service to the bar, her service to the community, and through countless hours of pro bono time devoted to nonprofit organizations. A former partner had this to say “Her breadth of experience means that she possesses a variety of perspectives that always help her clients—whether pro bono or in her fee-based practice—get to their goals.”

OUTSTANDING ATTORNEY AWARD CO-RECIPIENT

After several decades of successful career ventures in various fields, Gene Takagi founded NEO Law Group, based in San Francisco, ten years ago to serve the legal needs of the nonprofit sector. NEO Law Group provides general corporate, charitable-trust, governance, and income-tax counsel exclusively to nonprofits and exempt organizations.

He has provided expert legal counsel and thoughtful advice to hundreds of nonprofit organizations throughout California and the country. Gene repeatedly exhibits professionalism, dedication, and thoughtfulness in his approach to each and every client, regardless of the scope of the matter or the size of the organization. He has intentionally structured his practice to make his services available to even the smallest of organizations, which may otherwise be unable to afford or access legal counsel, while simultaneously serving organizations with annual revenues in the tens of millions of dollars.

Gene approaches his role as legal counsel from the perspective of an educator and uses every opportunity to empower his clients by providing information and useful tools. He is particularly well known in the sector as the contributing publisher of the Nonprofit Law Blog and as a regular contributor to *Tony Martignetti Nonprofit Radio*.

OUTSTANDING IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARD RECIPIENT

As the general counsel of Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Inc. (HLSR), Sherry Hibbert “is the embodiment of the in-house counsel nonprofit lawyer,” remarked a colleague. Held in March each year with an annual attendance exceeding 2 million people, the 20-day Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo captures much of Sherry’s time and attention. The remainder of the year is spent handling some 400-500 contracts in advance of the next year’s Show, as well as the usual in-house legal responsibilities—overseeing real estate transactions, financing, personal injury litigation, insurance and corporate governance issues. Sherry also manages HLSR’s Human Resources and Purchasing departments and provides advice and guidance to its Executive Committee, 108 committees, 33,000 volunteers, and 109 fulltime staff members.

Her position is instrumental in the organization’s annual success. HLSR will provide more than \$25 million in scholarships, research, grants, and endowments this year and has committed more than \$400 million in educational support since 1932. In response to the question of what makes her work so satisfying, Sherry said, “Our work is literally life changing for thousands of Texas students and for the Houston community. This year, more than 40% of our scholarship recipients will be the first in their families to attend college, and more than 20% are the first in their families to graduate high school.”

As a native Houstonian, Sherry worked in-house at Pennzoil Company where she was the youngest and only female Vice President during the 1980s and 1990s. Her more recent professional experience includes serving as Vice President and General Counsel of Houston Baptist University. But she found her true calling in 2010 when she joined the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG ATTORNEY AWARD RECIPIENT

Brandon Dickerson has a broad transactional practice in the areas of corporate and securities transactions, health care and nonprofit law. In the nonprofit realm, Mr. Dickerson has assisted clients with a vast array of issues, including applications for tax exemptions, formation and dissolution, private inurement and excess benefit issues, gift management, charitable gaming and a variety of contract matters. His experience in the nonprofit sector includes serving as outside general counsel to local and national nonprofit organizations, including community hospitals, advising Board members and executives on general corporate governance, fiduciary duties, conflicts of interest, private benefit/inurement and excess benefit issues, lobbying activities, tax compliance and executive compensation; advising the Board of Directors of a large, international social club on compliance with private inurement issues; and advising

national professional associations on various tax compliance matters, including transactions with for-profit affiliates, excess benefit issues and general corporate governance.

Clients say Brandon “brings a great deal of interest and enthusiasm, as well as knowledge, to his work on behalf of nonprofit organizations” and “I can think of no one more deserving of this award.”

In law school, he received the Judge Donald P. Lay Law Review Student Prize, which recognizes outstanding achievement in and contributions to the *Creighton Law Review*. In 2015, Mr. Dickerson was selected by his peers for inclusion as a Super Lawyers "Rising Star" in the specialty of Mergers and Acquisitions.

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