

Features

2011 California Lawyer Attorneys of the Year

We honor 45 lawyers for their extraordinary achievements in 2010

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by the editors of *California Lawyer*

In naming the California Lawyer Attorneys of the Year, we recognize lawyers throughout the state whose outstanding work had a significant impact in 2010. They include state and federal government attorneys, law professors, public-interest lawyers, and attorneys from large international law firms. Their practice areas range from antitrust law and civil rights to intellectual property and transactional law. Their victories include: winning an appellate court ruling to zone land for affordable housing, achieving the first successful court challenge to the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, and obtaining a \$1.3 billion jury award in a copyright infringement case. The awards identify 27 achievements in 23 areas of legal practice, reflecting the breadth and depth of the work performed by California lawyers. Congratulations to all the winners.



Civil Rights



Ronald Kaye

Kaye, McLane & Bednarski, Pasadena



David McLane

Kaye, McLane & Bednarski, Pasadena



Barrett S. Litt

Litt, Estuar & Kitson, Los Angeles

Thomas Goldstein spent 24 years in prison for a murder he did not commit, a victim of Los Angeles County's infamous jailhouse informant scandal of the 1980s. A grand jury report in 1990 found that law enforcement throughout the county had provided incriminating information to numerous informants who used it to create stories of jailhouse confessions. But Goldstein's 2004 release from prison only began a new legal battle. Kaye and McLane brought a civil rights action on his behalf against Los Angeles County and the city of Long Beach. Litt signed on in 2008, lending his considerable civil rights experience to help craft a legal strategy for the postexoneration civil suit that succeeded where so many others fail: In June the city agreed to pay Goldstein \$7.95 million, the largest pretrial settlement for wrongful imprisonment in state history. Along the way, the team persuaded a federal judge to give it unprecedented access to secret grand jury testimony to bolster Goldstein's case. The materials showed that the lone witness identifying Goldstein not only had recanted but also said that police pointed out Goldstein to him as the alleged murderer in a photo lineup. The attorneys are appealing Los Angeles County's dismissal from the matter.