



ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS TRIAL LAWYERS  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

May 20, 2005

c/o Michele Bowen  
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ABTL REPORT:

Benjamin K. Riley, Editor  
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Fellow ABTL Members and Friends of the Chapter:

I write to ask you to mark your calendars for an important dinner meeting coming up June 7 at The Palace Hotel, S.F., and to announce a new state-wide ABTL initiative that our Chapter will be spearheading.

This year, our ABTL Chapter has launched a new initiative called **ABTL for the Courts**. As the kick-off event launching **ABTL for the Courts**, our June 7 dinner program will address the critical issue of court funding. We are honored to have Chief Justice George on the panel, who will be joined by William Vickrey, Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, Senator Joe Dunn, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Peter Siggins, Legal Affairs Advisor to the Governor. The panel will be moderated by First District Court of Appeal Justice and Judicial Council Member, Laurence Kay. For more details, please see the attached flyer.

Immediately preceding our upcoming dinner meeting, the first meeting of **ABTL for the Courts** Committee will be held at 3:00 p.m. on June 7 at the Palace Hotel. Please email me at [jbs@kvn.com](mailto:jbs@kvn.com) if you are interested in participating, by phone or in person. Given the stature and depth of experience represented on the June 7 panel, the dinner program that evening presents a unique opportunity to learn about the critical issue of court funding, the reform efforts that are currently underway to address the issue, and what each of us can do to assist with those efforts. I encourage you to make every effort to attend. In addition, for those of you who have the time and interest to participate in **ABTL for the Courts**, please join me for the inaugural meeting of this new initiative.

At the recent Joint Board Retreat in Las Vegas, I outlined the **ABTL for the Courts** initiative to fellow board members from the other ABTL Chapters around the state. **ABTL for the Courts** will be a state-wide standing committee with representatives from all Chapters. Broadly, the mission of ABTL for the Courts will be to address threats to judicial independence. Through **ABTL for the Courts**, I hope to tap the depth of experience we have within our ranks for purposes of developing model programs for all Chapters, public outreach materials designed for the media, and non-partisan position-papers. The topics that we address will vary from year to year, as new issues arise. Given the startlingly low level of public understanding of the role of courts when judges come under fire in the political arena -- as we are now seeing, today more than ever -- the general idea for this group will be to give our members tools that they can use to serve as advocates for the integrity of the courts.

**ABTL for the Courts** will begin this year by focusing on the issue of court funding. Both the state and federal judiciary are currently under unprecedented fiscal pressure. As trial lawyers, we see first-hand the effects of funding cutbacks, when courts go sometimes dark, judges do not have basic supplies necessary to do their jobs, and staff lay-offs make it difficult to process cases in an efficient manner. This issue impacts our clients -- because it implicates access to justice at a basic level -- but it also presents a threat to judicial independence. Within the state court system, Chief Justice George has been working hard with the Executive and Legislative branches to develop mechanisms designed to ensure a stable source of funding for the courts that is not subject to year-to-year vagaries of the appropriations process. This effort has culminated in a set of proposed amendments to Article VI of the State Constitution.

I hope to see you on June 7!

Jon B. Streeter, President  
ABTL-N. California Chapter



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**Re: ABTL Dinner Program Summary – June 7, 2005**

**"From Dire Straits to Hard Times:  
Financial Pressures Threatening Our California Trial Courts."**

The Northern California Chapter of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers is proud to present an important educational program that will be critical to all California civil trial lawyers. Over the last decade, the California Courts have been in extreme, and at certain points, in crisis conditions because of sharp budgetary cuts. The impact of these cuts is far-reaching, and has affected, and threatens to continue to affect, the neutrality of our judiciary and the proper operation of the administration of civil justice. Although recent legislation may have provided a temporary fix, troubling issues remain regarding the extent to which continued or worsening financial pressures can seriously impact the state of civil justice in California.

The ABTL has assembled a most impressive panel of judicial, administrative and legislative experts regarding the financial state of the California Courts. The panel will be addressing the financial and related economic problems currently facing the California Courts, including a discussion of the politics behind the scenes, how the court's financial limitations threaten to impact our system of civil justice — including the day-to-day activities of business trial lawyers and their clients - - proposed solutions to these persistent financial challenges, and what ABTL members can do - - and should do - - to maintain the independence of our judiciary.

Moderator: Hon. Presiding Justice Laurence D. Kay, California Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Div. 4.

Panelists: Hon. Chief Justice Ronald M. George, California Supreme Court  
Hon. Peter Siggins, Legal Affairs Secretary and Counsel to Governor Schwarzenegger  
Hon. Senator Joseph Dunn, Democrat, California Senate  
William C. Vickrey, Administrative Director of the Courts, Judicial Council of California

**Times:**

3:00 p.m. First meeting of **ABTL for the Courts** Committee - Palace Hotel (Pacific Heights Room)

6:00 p.m. Cocktail Reception - Palace Hotel, Grand Ballroom

7:00 p.m. Dinner at the Palace Hotel, Grand Ballroom

7:45 p.m. CLE Program at the Palace Hotel, Grand Ballroom

**MCLE:** 1.0 hours General MCLE

**REGISTRATION:** ALL registrations are handled online at [www.acteva.com/go/abtl](http://www.acteva.com/go/abtl)

**REGISTRATION FEES:** \$75 for ABTL members; \$90 for non-members (early registration before June 1); + \$20 after June 1. Tables of 10: \$750 for members, \$900 for non-members. Public Sector Attorneys: \$50; Judges: Complimentary.

**QUESTIONS:** Contact Michele Bowen, Executive Director at (925) 447-7900 or email at [abtl-ncal@comcast.net](mailto:abtl-ncal@comcast.net).



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**How to register for ABTL events online using Acteva.com**

1. Go to ***www.acteva.com/go/abtl***
2. On the first page, click on the “***Book It***” icon for the event you’d like to attend
3. On the next page:
  - a) enter the type and quantity of ticket(s) you’d like to purchase **AND**
  - b) **answer the question at the bottom of the page if required.**  
At times, the question will be optional. Additional answers are available by clicking on the ^ or v arrows. The system will not allow you to proceed to the next page until a required question is answered.
  - c) Then hit <CONTINUE>

***Please Note: If you are asked for a password or user ID, hit <CONTINUE> You are NOT required to have a password, ABTL membership # or ID to use this registration system.***

4. On the ***Participant Information*** page, complete at a minimum the fields in **red**, verify the number of tickets you’re purchasing and hit <CONTINUE>
5. On the ***Review Your Order*** page, verify that all information is correct. If you are paying by credit card, submit your payment information at the bottom of this page and hit <CONFIRM RESERVATION>

If the information is not correct, click <BACK> at the top of the page. You can go back to change the ticket option you’ve selected but, if you go <BACK> past the ***Participant Information*** page, you will be required to re-enter your information.

6. If you’re purchasing tickets for more than one person, you will enter their contact information on the next page.
7. The final step is you’ll receive a confirmation page. Print this page for your records. You can also use this as a receipt if you paid by credit card. Also, you will receive an email within minutes confirming your order.

If you have questions, contact Michele Bowen, ABTL Executive Director  
at ***abtl-ncal@comcast.net*** or **(925) 447-7900**