

## California's Racial Justice Act, Theory and Practice

Friday, October 18, 2024  
10:15 – 11:30 AM



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This session will address the issue of race in the law, in particular California's pioneering Racial Justice Act ("RJA"). Panelists will address the history of racial inequities in our criminal justice system as well as the background and intent of the RJA and the practical implications of its effective implementation. Our speakers include a college professor/practicing attorney who regularly teaches a course on Race in the Law, a practicing attorney who educates other attorneys throughout the state on the RJA, and a California Superior Court Judge who has been at the forefront of implementing the RJA.

At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Recognize ways in which racial inequities manifest themselves in our system of justice;
- Identify ways in which racial inequities may be effectively addressed through legislation;
- Evaluate shortfalls between the goals of any such legislation and in its implementation in practice;
- Engage the legal community in their respective states in a dialogue on how to combat racial inequity in their states' legal systems.

### **SPEAKERS:**



#### **Terrance Evans, Esq., Partner, Duane Morris LLP**

Terrance J. Evans is a Partner with Duane Morris LLP, where he serves as Co-Leader of the firm's [Banking and Financial Services](#) Practice and Co-Chairs the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. He counsels clients regarding racial justice, diversity, and inclusion issues and leads diversity trainings for members of the legal community. Mr. Evans is Past President of the Charles Houston Bar Association; Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the CLA Racial Justice Committee; Past Chair of the Litigation Section of the California Lawyers Association; Co-Chair of the American Bar Association ICLC Diversity & Inclusion Committee; Member of the Bar Association of San Francisco Judicial & Finance Committees; Director of Region IX of the National Bar Association; and the first Black man elected to serve as statewide representative on

the California Lawyers Association Board, where he also serves as Vice-Chair of the Board of Representatives. He has spoken at more than 180 diversity, equity, inclusion, and civil rights programs, in partnership with numerous law schools and other organizations.

Mr. Evans has received numerous honors and awards, including a 2016 award by the National Bar Association as one of the top African American attorneys under 40, and two awards by the L.A. Times for being one of the foremost leaders on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues in California. During his career, he raised more than \$500,000 for scholarships for underprivileged students, creating five annual scholarship that provide tens of thousands of dollars to underprivileged students in the Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, and LGBTQ Communities.



**Hon. Cynthia Freeland, Judge Superior Court of California, County of San Diego**

Cynthia Freeland is San Diego Superior Court Judge. Judge Freeland earned her B.A. in Psychology from the University of California, San Diego in 1992. She then continued her studies, eventually receiving her J.D. from the University of San Diego School of Law in 1995. Judge Freeland began her legal career as a law clerk for the Hon. A. Andrew Hauk in the United States District Court for the Central District of California. Upon completion of her clerkship, Judge Freeland joined Baker & McKenzie as an associate in the Labor and Employment group. Judge Freeland became a national partner with Baker & McKenzie in 2003, where she practiced until 2007, when she left the firm to form Schor & Freeland, LLP, a boutique employment law firm. Judge Freeland continued to work at Schor & Freeland, LLP until her judicial appointment by former Governor Jerry Brown in December 2016.



**Mattheus Stephens, Esq., Shareholder, Littler Mendelson, P.C.**

Mr. Stephens is a Shareholder at Littler Mendelson, P.C. where he focuses his practice on helping clients navigate the lifecycle of employment litigation with a focus on defending against claims of discrimination, particularly those relating to gender and disability. He also advises clients on wage and hour matters, conducts workplace investigations, and provides trainings on preventing discrimination and harassment, including gender and LGBTQ+ training. In addition, Mr. Stephens assists with trial-skill development and training for associates all while continuing service to the community handling pro bono matters and serving as a moot court judge.

Additionally, Mr. Stephens is committed to public speaking on inclusion, equity, and diversity as well as aiding organizations in navigating the new inclusion landscape. Mr. Stephens has been a continuing lecturer at University of California, San Diego since 1999 where he has taught aspiring lawyers in four constitutional law courses for upper-division undergraduates on topics such as race and racism, employment law (state and federal), gender equality, educational equality, Voting Rights Act, Civil Rights Acts, sexuality and the law, reproductive rights, equal protection, first amendment doctrine, and

substantive due process. Currently, Mr. Stephens serves as Community Advisor to Undergraduate Law Review, and he is a lecturer for the State Department's International Visitors Leadership Program through San Diego Diplomacy Council. Mr. Stephens has received a number of community service awards, and he has served as an attorney member of the State Bar of California Board of Trustees, having been appointed by Senator Toni Atkins in 2023.