

Member of the Month - Joshua Caplan



Joshua Caplan is an attorney in the Oakland firm of [Donahue Gallagher Woods LLP](#), where he practices in the areas of business, intellectual property, real estate, and immigration law. He dedicates several hours each month to the provision of pro bono legal services, including volunteering at the VLSC Immigration Clinic and the ACBA Lawyers in the Library Program. In 2009, the ACBA awarded him with a Wiley C. Manuel Pro Bono Service Award. He was admitted to the State Bar of California and the U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, in 2006. He received his J.D. from the University of California Hastings College of the Law and a B.A. from the University of California, San Diego.

When did you know you wanted to be a lawyer?

During the summer of 2001, while working as a summer camp counselor, one of my ten-year-old campers disclosed that for several years he had been sexually abused by his stepfather but was ashamed to tell his mother. It was at that moment that I decided to become a lawyer so that I could help people who may be unable to help themselves.

If you hadn't become a lawyer, what would you be doing instead?

I would be working with underserved communities empowering kids to prepare for, attend, and succeed in high school and college.

What do you know now that you wish you had known when you were first admitted to practice?

The importance of working with a mentor in the area of law in which you have an interest. Mentors have valuable experience and provide the support necessary to succeed as a lawyer.

What is the biggest challenge facing you as a lawyer today?

Continuing to refine my advocacy skills while focusing on the business generation component of a law practice.

What's your favorite part of being a lawyer?

My favorite part of being a lawyer is the ability to counsel people who cannot afford legal services. Working with pro bono clients is always a win-win situation. Even if we are not able to achieve particular results for the clients, we will have done everything in our power to make sure their voices are heard. I am fortunate enough to work at a law firm that truly values and encourages the provision of pro bono legal services.

What is your dream vacation?

Open-ended trip with my wife, eight-month-old daughter, and dog traveling across the United States in an RV, visiting every national park.

What are you reading right now?

Immigrant Stories: Ethnicity and Academics in Middle Children. There is currently limited research on immigrant children and families. This book provides valuable insight into the acculturation of immigrant children and is a fascinating read.

What's one thing people might be surprised to learn about you?

I enjoy building IKEA furniture and no, I am not kidding.

What person, living or dead, real or fictional, would you like to have dinner with?

Albert Einstein.

Why do you choose to be a member of the ACBA? What is the greatest benefit you have enjoyed as a member?

I wanted to be part of an organization that recognizes the needs of its community and provides services to fulfill those needs. Members of the ACBA have the ability and the drive to ensure that each resident of Alameda County has access to justice. The ACBA has enabled me to connect with other attorneys in Alameda County and has provided support and guidance in the provision of free legal services to those in need. It is truly an amazing organization with a rich history.

We'll profile one of our fascinating members every month. If you would like to nominate someone for Member of the Month, [please contact us!](#)

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