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DEFENSE COUNSEL

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025

INAUGURAL INSTALLATION  
& AWARDS GALA

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# Welcome!

## ASCDC Association of Southern California Defense Counsel

Welcome to the 2025 Inaugural Installation and Awards Dinner of the Association of Southern California Defense Counsel. We appreciate your participation in this inaugural event, particularly given the fires that have devastated our friends, families, and colleagues. We will rise above this and rebuild better and stronger than ever.

The ASCDC Executive Committee and Board, past, present, and soon-to-be inaugurated, are delighted you could attend. We are honored and privileged to host this event to recognize Robert C. Risbrough, Robert Yoakum, Steve Norris, Mark Kressel, John Sprangers, and John Brydon, our first Defense Win of the Year nominees.

We warmly recognize Steve Pasarow, Jeffrey Behar, and James Yukevich as our first finalists for Trial Attorney of the Year. These individuals have made a lasting mark on our profession with their tremendous efforts and contributions. Our defense practices and community have truly benefitted from their labors. Our thanks to every one of you for your attendance and your contributions. Please have a wonderful evening, and be safe.



**Eric Schwettmann**  
2024-2025 President

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# Defense Win of the Year Award

*Audish v. Macias*

## Robert C. Risbrough, Esq. Fitzgerald, Yap, Kreditor LLP



Robert Risbrough has over 30 years of experience practicing as a litigation attorney in California.

Mr. Risbrough grew up in the San Francisco bay area. He completed his undergraduate education at the University of Southern California where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from the Annenberg School of Communication in 1986. After working in television for a year in Spokane, Washington, Mr. Risbrough attended the Pepperdine University School of

Law where he took courses emphasizing trial work and mediation. He graduated in 1990 and passed the California State Bar later that same year.

Mr. Risbrough's achievement in the legal industry awarded him "California Lawyer Attorneys of the Year" (2004) in the area of Appellate Law. This award was given to those attorneys whose work has had a profound, far-reaching impact and whose achievements are expected to have such an impact in the coming years. The award recognizes the attorney's accomplishments and reflects the breadth and depth of sophistication in the work and honors work in changing the law, breaking new ground, and substantially influencing public policy.

Mr. Risbrough was recognized for over 3 years for his work on the groundbreaking case of *Rojas v. Superior Court*, 33 Cal. 4th 407; 93 P.3d 260; 15 Cal. Rptr. 3d 643; 2004 Cal. LEXIS 6281; 2004 Cal. Daily Op. Service 6189; 2004 Daily Journal DAR 8387, in protecting mediation confidentiality. In May 2005, Mr. Risbrough received his California Lawyer of the Year Award from Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, Ronald George.

Mr. Risbrough has handled over 25 cases before the California Court of Appeals with a 95% success rate.

In his spare time, Mr. Risbrough enjoys fishing, hiking, gardening, woodworking, and traveling with his wife and three daughters.

# Defense Win of the Year Award

*Audish v. Macias*

## Robert M. Yoakum, Esq. Law Offices of Carmin Shaffer



Bob is staff attorney in the Orange County office of Carmin Shaffer.

Bob has over 30 years of insurance defense experience, including staff counsel for USAA, CNA, and Kemper. He has held positions of senior trial attorney and assistant manager for both CNA and Kemper and has tried over 30 cases in his

career.

Bob is a graduate of Cal. State Dominguez Hills (1985) with a degree in Political Science and obtained his law degree from Western State College of Law (1988)

Bob is married to his wife Connie) and has 3 successful children. His daughter works for the VA in Tennessee, finding housing for homeless veterans. Is oldest son is in technology sales for Amazon. His youngest son is an award-winning chef in Dallas (Michelin Star recommend and currently a semifinalist for a James Beard award). In his spare time, he referees High School and Community College Football. He has been the referee of 2 Community College State Championship games. When he is not referring, you can find him in the garden.



# Trial Lawyer of the Year Award

## Stephen C. Pasarow, Esq. Knapp, Petersen & Clark



Steve Pasarow graduated from UCLA with a bachelor's degree in English and received his juris doctor degree from Southwestern Law School. He was admitted to the State Bar of California in 1980. He is a Director with the firm. Steve has specialized in civil litigation throughout his career, with an emphasis on the defense of automobile accident, commercial transportation, and premises liability cases.

He is an experienced trial lawyer who has tried more than 125 civil jury trials to verdict. He was recognized as the 1992 Defense Trial Lawyer of the Year by Verdictum Juris Publications.

Steve is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. The American College of Trial Lawyers is composed of the best of the trial bar from the United States and Canada and is widely considered to be the premier professional trial organization in America. Founded in 1950, the College is dedicated to maintaining and improving the standards of trial practice, the administration of justice, and the ethics of the profession. Fellowship is extended only by invitation, after careful investigation, to those experienced trial lawyers who have mastered the art of advocacy and whose professional careers have been marked by the highest standards of ethical conduct, professionalism, civility, and collegiality. Membership can never be more than one percent of the total lawyer population of any state or province.

Steve is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) with the rank of Diplomate. Less than three percent of the national ABOTA membership hold this rank, which is the highest attainable in ABOTA. Formed in 1957 to protect the right to jury trial and to advance trial advocacy skills, ABOTA is the foremost trial organization in the United States for both the plaintiff and the defense bars. Members must have a minimum of 10 civil jury trials taken to verdict. Steve has been a member since 1993. He served as 2015 president of the Los Angeles Chapter. He was co-chair of the Masters in Trial Seminar in 2010 and 2012 and was chair for the 2013 Seminar. Steve was the recipient of the prestigious Lee B. Wenzel Civility Award in 2012 presented by the Los Angeles Chapter.

Steve is a former member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Southern California Defense Counsel. He also belongs to the American Bar Association, the Transportation Lawyers Association, and the Litigation Counsel of America. He is rated AV Preeminent<sup>®</sup> by Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review Ratings.



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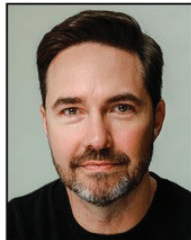
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for

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*and*

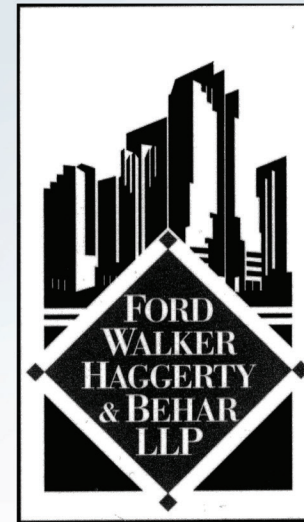
**Defense Win of the Year!**

*To the 2025 Board of Directors,  
and the Executive Committee:*

We extend a heartfelt congratulations  
to each of you on your 2025 term.

Thank you for your leadership, vision,  
and dedication to the Defense Bar and  
for making the practice of law fun!

We are excited to see what this year  
brings! Congrats!



*Congratulations*

*to Jeffrey S. Behar as a Finalist for  
the ASCDC Trial Lawyer of the  
Year Award.*







CONGRATULATIONS

to the 2025 ASCDC honorees and award winners!

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Best wishes for a  
successful and productive  
2025!





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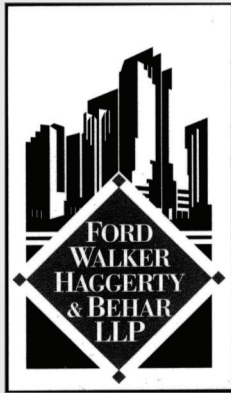
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*Congratulations  
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