

November 8- Personnel

Litigation Strategies for Defending Public Entities against ADA Access Claims

SPEAKERS:

Neil Okazaki is an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Riverside, California. Since joining the office in 2006, his practice area has involved litigation in federal and state courts. He has handled several cases involving the ADA, and has served the past six years as an attorney settlement officer for ADA cases in the Central District of California.

Neil received his B.A. from U.C. Riverside and his J.D. from Loyola Law School, where was an editor of the Loyola Law Review. Neil's published law review article was cited by the California Court of Appeal, the Texas Court of Appeals, American Law Reports (A.L.R.), and California Criminal Law (Witkin). Since being sworn in as an attorney, Neil has tried 18 cases (including 15 as sole trial counsel) and completed 9 binding arbitrations as sole trial counsel. Neil also served three years on the Board of Directors of the Riverside County Bar Association.

Michael Chilleen specializes in class action defense and disability access discrimination claims under both the Americans With Disabilities Act and California state accessibility standards. His experience includes representing Starbucks, Ralphs, Food 4 Less, Taco Bell, Home Depot, KFC, The Irvine Company, the City of Riverside, Covenant Care, Little Caesar's Pizza, Live Nation, Regal Entertainment Group, Regency Theatres, Dollar Tree, Michaels/Aaron Brothers Craft Stores, Adir/La Curacao Stores, In-N-Out Burgers, and Auto Club of Southern California, with respect to disability access claims.

Mr. Chilleen has extensive trial experience, having tried over 30 cases to verdict, including several class actions. He has defended statewide class actions against Caltrans, Starbucks, Ralphs Grocery Stores, Adir/La Curacao Store, Sport Chalet, Regency Theatres, Auto Club of Southern California, Taco Bell, The Irvine Company, and Dollar Tree.

Mr. Chilleen's practice focuses not only on all aspects of litigation, but includes consulting on disability access issues to prevent lawsuits, advising on landlord/tenant disputes regarding responsibility for common areas, implementing policies and procedures to train employees about accessibility laws, and interacting with state agencies to facilitate hardship waivers for accessibility remediations.

Mr. Chilleen's experience also includes significant appellate work, including landmark Ninth Circuit decisions on disability access issues, such as *Oliver v. Ralphs Grocery Stores* and *Lonberg v. City of Riverside*.

Roberta "Robin" Cross currently works as the Township Attorney for The Woodlands Township, Texas. She has over eighteen years' experience working for local governments and was recognized as an IMLA Fellow in 2013. She has also worked as in-house counsel for a police labor union and for the EEOC, as a trial attorney. She is licensed to practice in Texas and admitted all of its federal courts, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court. She has been Board-certified in Labor and Employment Law since 1992 by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. She was appointed as Vice-President of IMLA's Personnel Section in the fall of 2015. She enjoys employment law, among other things, because "you can't make this stuff up."