

JUSTICE FOR ALL: The 72 Best Lawyers in the East Bay

Oakland

redefining

5 SENIOR SUPERSTARS:

Dennis Richmond
Maxine Hong Kingston
Ron Dellums
Alice Waters
Al Davis

MARCH/APRIL 2006

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Plus SENIOR SPECIAL:
Where to Live, What to Do,
Perks & Discounts

features

THE EAST BAY'S
5 Most Influential People
Over 60

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Senior Special: Where to Live,
What to Do, Perks & Discounts

*By Amanda Cherrin, Tyler Ribera and Jamie Andrade
Photographs by Pat Mazzera and Lane Hartwell*

Justice for All

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Lawyers Fight the Good
Fight in the East Bay

PLUS THE **72** BEST LAWYERS
IN THE OAKLAND METRO AREA

*By Robert Selna
Photography by Mitch Tobias*

**Master of
Minimalism**

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At Home in a Simple
Piedmont Craftsman

*By Alice Kaufman
Photography by Lisa Sze*

Justice for All

Lawyers Fighting the Good Fight

The East Bay's courts are a hotbed for high-impact litigation and nationally known lawyers. This is particularly true in Alameda County where nearly 5,600 attorneys force 80-plus judges to juggle complex questions of law and truth with their never-ending need to move a crowded court docket. The county is a magnet for plaintiffs who see its liberal-leaning jurors as the ticket to big money verdicts and a chance for social change. And, its criminal courts are a longstanding model for counties across the state, sending thousands of cases through the system each year while maintaining a solid reputation for truth and justice.

East Bay cases are as high profile as they come. A jury slammed retail giant Wal-Mart with \$115 million in punitive damages for denying 200,000 California workers meal breaks, and if the verdict withstands an expected appeal, it could affect 40 similar suits pending across the United States. The "Riders" case saw prosecutors fall twice in 20 months to convict Oakland police officers in the city's biggest-ever police corruption and civil

rights abuse case. And an upcoming stemcell trial in Hayward features plaintiffs aiming to stop the world's largest public payout (\$3 billion over 10 years) for the controversial experiments that scientists say may cure countless diseases.

The novelty of this high-profile litigation is what grabs headlines. But the cases often affect everyday people's lives and are taken to court by lawyers attracted less by the spotlight and

more by the intellectual challenge and opportunity to make a difference. We're highlighting three advocates whose passion, knowledge and dedication make them standouts in a crowded field of talented East Bay attorneys. Their profiles anchor the Woodward/White, Inc. list of the Best Lawyers in America, which has been excerpted to focus on lawyers from the Oakland metro area. In all, 72 lawyers make Woodward/White's cut.

▶▶ THE BEST LAWYERS IN THE EAST BAY



Attorneys Make the List

▶▶ ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

• **OAKLAND**
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▶▶ APPELLATE LAW

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THE BEST LAWYERS IN THE EAST BAY

FAMILY LAW

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IMMIGRATION LAW

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LABOR & EMPLOYMENT LAW

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Survey Methodology

This list is excerpted from the 2006 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*, the preeminent referral guide to the legal profession in the United States. Published since 1983, *Best Lawyers* lists attorneys in 52 specialties, representing all 50 states, who have been chosen through an exhaustive survey in which thousands of the nation's top lawyers confidentially evaluate their professional peers. The current edition of *Best Lawyers* is based on more than 1.5 million detailed evaluations of lawyers by other lawyers.

This marks the first annual publication of *Best Lawyers*, which has previously been published biennially. Changes in the legal marketplace, which grows bigger, more complex, and more fluid every year, have made this transition inevitable; while advances in technology, such as online voting, have made it possible.

Nevertheless, the method used to compile *Best Lawyers* has not changed since the first edition was compiled more than 20 years ago. Lawyers are chosen for inclusion based solely on a vote of their peers. Listings cannot be bought, and no purchase is required to be included. In this regard, *Best Lawyers* remains the gold standard of reliability and integrity in lawyer ratings.

The nomination pool for the 2006 edition consisted of all lawyers whose names appeared in the previous edition of *Best Lawyers*, lawyers who were nominated since the previous survey, and new nominees solicited from listed attorneys. In general, lawyers were asked to vote only on nominees in their own specialty in their own jurisdiction. Lawyers in closely related specialties were asked to vote across specialties, as were lawyers in smaller jurisdictions. Where specialties are national or international in nature, lawyers were asked to vote nationally as well as locally.

Voting lawyers were also given an opportunity to offer more detailed comments on nominees. Each year, half of the voting pool receives fax or e-mail ballots; the other half is polled by phone.

Voting lawyers were provided this general guideline for determining if a nominee should be listed among "the best": "If you had a close friend or relative who needed a real estate lawyer (for example), and you could not handle the case yourself, to whom would you refer them?" All votes and comments were solicited with a guarantee of confidentiality—a critical factor in the viability and validity of *Best Lawyers*® surveys. To ensure the rigor of the selection process, lawyers were urged to use only their highest standards when voting, and to evaluate each nominee based only on his or her individual merits. The additional comments were used to make more accurate comparisons between voting patterns and weight votes accordingly. *Best Lawyers* uses various methodological tools to identify and correct for anomalies in both the nomination and voting process.

Ultimately, of course, a lawyer's inclusion is based on the subjective judgments of his or her fellow attorneys. While it is true that the lists may at times disproportionately reward visibility or popularity, the breadth of the survey, the candor of the respondents, and the sophistication of the polling methodology largely correct for any biases.

For all these reasons, *Best Lawyers* lists continue to represent the most reliable, accurate and useful guide to the best lawyers in the United States available anywhere.

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List Source

These lists are excerpted from *The Best Lawyers in America*® 2006, which includes listings for over 20,000 lawyers in over 35 specialties, in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

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any other cause. All listed attorneys have been verified as being members in good standing with their respective state bar associations as of September 1, 2005, where that information is publicly available. Consumers should contact their state bar for verification and additional information prior to securing legal services of any attorney.