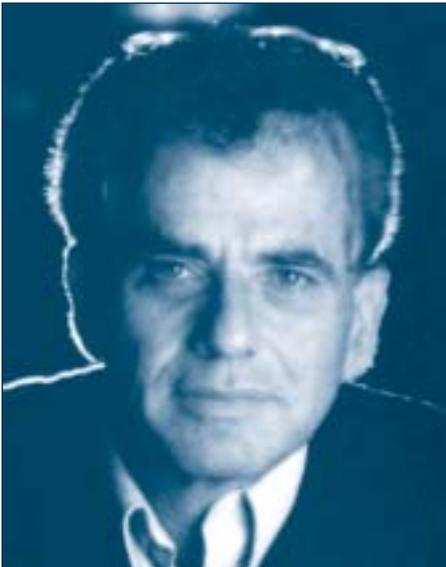


The State Bar of California presents

# Robert J. Cohen

2003 Loren Miller Legal Services Award Recipient



**Robert Cohen** has devoted his career for nearly thirty years to increasing access to justice for the poor. He is the Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County (LASOC), a position he has held since 1980. Prior to that, he worked for five years assisting elderly low-income seniors at the National Senior Citizens Law Center in Los Angeles after launching his career in 1974 as a staff attorney for Clark County Legal Services in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Robert is credited for his progressive and effective approach to expanding and increasing the delivery of legal services to self-represented litigants and improving court operations. Most notably, he is responsible for the creation of I-CAN! (the Interactive Community Assistance Network) a network of web-based interactive kiosks located in public libraries and courthouses that allow users to perform many legal tasks themselves which would otherwise require professional legal help. Modules are available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese and

are used in eight counties. I-CAN is now expanding to other states including Oklahoma and Massachusetts and is being reviewed for international application.

As Chairperson of the State Funding Committee of the former Legal Services Section of the State Bar of California from 1978-1981, he was one of the leading attorneys responsible for the passage of SB 713 that enacted the State Bar's Legal Services Trust Fund Program, generating interest on lawyers trust accounts to provide millions of dollars to legal services programs serving low-income Californians.

LASOC or whose problem cannot be handled by LASOC.

As a legal services director in 1996 when Legal Services Corporation funding was significantly cut, he developed and implemented an innovative three-tiered delivery system to better utilize funds, while increasing and improving intake for clients throughout Orange and Southeast Los Angeles Counties. The system includes an integrated hotline, self-help legal services, and in-depth legal services.

Mr. Cohen is an active member of the Pro Bono Committee and the Modest Means

**"Throughout his career, Bob has created ongoing legal services systems from cutting edge ideas. Whether it is IOLTA, LASOC's Hotline, or now I-CAN!, many thousands of people who would otherwise be shut out of our justice system are now receiving vital legal services and accessing the courts."**

*Crystal C. Sims, Director of Litigation, Legal Aid Society of Orange County*

In the 1980's when the City of Santa Ana began a campaign to drive homeless residents out of the city, Cohen was actively involved as one of the attorneys of record in a series of lawsuits challenging the City's actions against the homeless. He was also an attorney of record in an action filed in federal district court against the State of California to enjoin spraying of malathion (insecticide) until shelter was made available to the homeless residents of the area.

In 1981 he created a pro bono attorney program as part of LASOC that later became a separate organization known as the Public Law Center of Orange County. He also established a lawyer referral service at LASOC to serve clients not eligible for

Committee of the Orange County Bar Association. He serves frequently as a panelist at national conferences on the delivery of legal services. In 2001 the Anti-Defamation League honored him for his outstanding contributions to the legal profession and to the community through public service.

The Loren Miller Legal Services Award was created in 1977 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the State Bar of California. The Award is given annually and honors an attorney who has demonstrated long-term commitment to legal services and who has personally done significant work in extending legal services to the poor.