

2007 AWARDS

CALIFORNIA YOUNG
LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA

2007

JACK BERMAN AWARD OF ACHIEVEMENT



JORGE AGUILAR II

Staff Attorney

Eviction Defense Center



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JORGE AGUILAR II'S sense of duty has driven all of the special things he has accomplished as a new attorney. In 2006, Mr. Aguilar conducted five jury trials, trained other young lawyers to do jury trials, provided pro bono service in a large affirmative lawsuit, worked with a local bar association preparing commentary on landlord-tenant CACI instructions for Judicial Council, and conducted tenants rights clinics.

Mr. Aguilar joined the Eviction Defense Center ("EDC") in January of 2004 as a law clerk. He became a Staff Attorney in November of 2005, after being sworn in. In recommending Mr. Aguilar, Anne Tamiko Omura, Executive Director of EDC, stated, "In three short years, Mr. Aguilar has become the backbone of our organization. His work ethic, compassion for our clients, litigation skills both behind a desk and before a jury, and motivation to achieve are unparalleled." The EDC is a Nonprofit Law Corporation that defends indigent tenants who are being evicted from their homes, with a focus on single mothers, veterans, the disabled, and the elderly. The EDC serves over 1,200 clients and completes approximately 10 to 15 jury trials a year, with a near perfect record of success.

In his first year of practice, Mr. Aguilar conducted five jury trials for EDC, prevailing in four of them. One of the verdicts resulted in a monolingual Spanish-speaking immigrant family avoiding homelessness with two young children. In addition, the family received a substantial reduction in their monthly rent due to the substandard living conditions. Mr. Aguilar has also successfully petitioned the appellate courts for extraordinary relief on behalf of tenants and prepared writs of mandate to protect the fundamental rights of indigent tenants.

Mr. Aguilar stepped outside of his role as EDC Staff Attorney donating over 100 pro bono hours to a complex litigation case against well-known "slumlords" in Oakland. He worked on a very large lawsuit brought by private attorneys representing more than 60 tenants at multiple buildings owned by the same landlord. The City of Oakland previously litigated with this landlord for maintaining blighted, "nuisance" properties. In two of these cases, he played leading roles at the mediations, resulting in one settlement for \$1.1 million and another for \$750,000.

As a bilingual attorney and son of immigrants, Mr. Aguilar has devoted countless hours on weekends and evenings organizing Latino and Southeast Asian immigrants in the poorest sections of Oakland. He visited tenants in their apartment complexes to explain their rights and help them get much-needed repairs. He taught several voluntary clinics, in English and Spanish, for these tenants.

Before Mr. Aguilar had completed even one full year as a lawyer, he proved to be an accomplished trial attorney and helped train other young attorneys from top tier-law firms. He provided instruction on how to prepare for jury trial and then had the attorneys assist him in trying a case to a jury, and ultimately to verdict.

Finally, in 2006 Mr. Aguilar provided the Judicial Council with the East Bay Tenants Bar Association's ("EBTBA") commentary to the proposed landlord-tenant CACI instructions. Mr. Aguilar took a leadership role in analyzing, researching and drafting proposed jury instructions for the EBTBA's submission to the Judicial Council. Until Mr. Aguilar's submission to the Judicial Council, only the property-owner bar had provided comments regarding the proposed CACI instructions.

Mr. Aguilar received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science in July 1997 at Dominican College in San Rafael, California and his Juris Doctor in May 2000 at Washington & Lee University School of Law in Lexington, Virginia. He is a member of The State Bar of California, Alameda County Bar Association and East Bay Tenants Bar Association.

Jorge Aguilar II is a shining example of service and what a young lawyer can achieve. The California Young Lawyers Association and The State Bar of California salute Jorge Aguilar II for his outstanding contribution to the legal profession and to the public.



IN 1992 CALIFORNIA YOUNG LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
ESTABLISHED THE AWARD OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION AND THE PUBLIC
TO RECOGNIZE THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF A NEW OR YOUNG
LAWYER. IN 1994, CYLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS RENAMED THE
AWARD IN MEMORY OF JACK BERMAN, WHO DEMONSTRATED
OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION AND THE PUBLIC
BY PROVIDING SUBSTANTIAL PRO BONO LEGAL ASSISTANCE.
MR. BERMAN DIED TRAGICALLY IN THE 101 CALIFORNIA STREET
SHOOTING IN SAN FRANCISCO ON JULY 1, 1993.



*The State Bar
of California*

Office of Legal Services,
Access & Fairness Programs

California Young Lawyers Association

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