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.
2007
JACK BERMAN AWARD
OF ACHIEVEMENT

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.