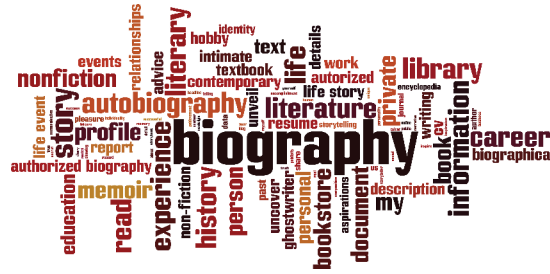


Thomas F. Coleman



Curriculum Vitae

Thomas F. Coleman has been practicing law for 47 years. For the past seven years, the focus of his attention has been the probate conservatorship system in California and the adult guardianship systems in other states. Coleman provides consultations and strategic advice to attorneys representing clients in such litigation at both the trial court and appellate levels.

These consulting services draw upon years of research by Coleman into the legal policies that govern conservatorship and guardianship proceedings as well as the practices of the judges and attorneys involved in these cases. He has written extensively on how these policies and practices deprive seniors and people with disabilities of access to justice. Coleman has submitted reports calling for necessary reforms to various officials in California, including the Supreme Court, Judicial Council, State Bar, Department of Developmental Services, Fair Employment and Housing Council and the Senate Judiciary Committee. He has also communicated about guardianship reform with the supreme courts in a dozen other states. Coleman's advocacy work in this area of the law is the focus of a documentary by filmmaker Greg Byers titled [Pursuit of Justice](#).

Coleman's current work involving conservatorship and guardianship reform is built on decades of experience in civil rights advocacy for other causes. This includes research, education, and advocacy involving sexual orientation and marital status discrimination, hate crimes, family diversity, personal privacy, and abuse of people with disabilities. This work is chronicled in his professional memoirs, [The Domino Effect](#), which were published in 2009. ([Book Release Slide Show](#))

Coleman has extensive experience in appellate litigation. He was co-counsel in a winning case before the United States Supreme Court and won the three cases he had before the California Supreme Court. He has filed *amicus curiae* briefs in appeals in California, Oregon, Oklahoma, Michigan, and New York. Over the span of 15 years, Coleman served as a court-appointed attorney in dozens of criminal appeals before the California Court of Appeal.

Coleman has devoted much of his professional life to research, education, and advocacy through Spectrum Institute, the nonprofit organization which he founded in and for which continues to serve as executive director.

The second oldest of nine children, Coleman was raised in Ferndale, Michigan – a suburb of Detroit. He attended St. James High School where he graduated as salutatorian of his graduating class in 1966. He then enrolled in Monteith College at Wayne State University where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1970. During his first year of law school, Coleman attended Detroit College of Law, ranking first in his class. He transferred in his second year to Loyola Law School in Los Angeles where he graduated with honors in 1973.

Thomas F. Coleman is married to Michael A. Vasquez. The two exchanged vows on a ship in international waters in 1981 – an era when same-sex marriage was not recognized by any nation in the world. Coleman and Vasquez remarried in 2008 when the California Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality. Coleman and Vasquez live in Palm Springs.