



## Thomas F. Coleman, J.D.

### *Curriculum Vitae*

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The career of Thomas F. Coleman as a civil rights advocate has spanned more than five decades. His ongoing quest for justice and equal rights for marginalized populations has involved a variety of methods – research, writing, education, and advocacy. He has sought to advance a wide range of causes – sexual civil liberties, LGBT rights, family diversity, singles' rights, freedom from violence and abuse, guardianship reform, and disability rights – through legal representation of individuals in court cases and administrative proceedings as well as class action advocacy seeking systemic change and policy reforms.

As the details in this document demonstrate, Coleman's efforts for justice and equality have been strategically directed to those who have the power to create change. Federal, state, and local government officials and agencies. Congress, legislatures, and city councils. Governors and mayors. State and federal courts. Most importantly, Coleman has worked with the media – television and radio producers and hosts, newspaper and magazine editors and journalists – to develop public support for the causes he has advanced. He has also attempted to empower self-advocates and their allies.

By convening and directing commissions, task forces, workgroups, and special projects throughout these many decades of his advocacy, Coleman has worked collaboratively with small groups of like-minded people who shared a common vision of eliminating discrimination and promoting justice for those who have needed a helping hand. Coleman's perseverance is due in large measure to the unwavering support of his life partner and husband, Michael A. Vasquez.\*

Some philosophies that underlie Coleman's professional activities are found below.

"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

– *Thomas Jefferson*

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

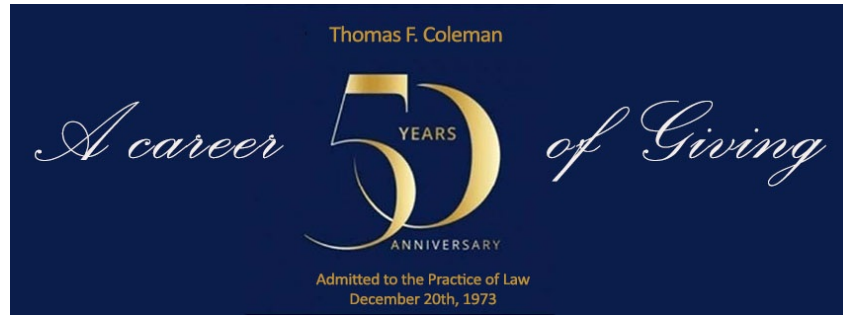
– *Margaret Mead*

"Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the government's purposes are beneficent. Men born to freedom are naturally alert to repel invasion of their liberty by evil-minded rulers.

The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding."

– *Justice Louis Brandeis*

\* Many thanks to those who played a special role during various phases of my career: Jay M. Kohorn, Arthur C. Warner, Paula A. Davis, Christopher McCauley, Lloyd E. Rigler, Diane Coleman Rogers, Richard W. Smith, Linda Demer, John DiPietro, Tina Baldwin, and Jennifer Hulme.



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## Books

*The Domino Effect: How Strategic Moves for Gay Rights, Singles Rights, and Family Diversity Have Touched the Lives of Millions.* (2009) ([Link](#)) Memoirs of Thomas F. Coleman chronicling his advocacy activities from 1972 to 2008. (314 pp.) [Book Release Reception](#).

*Outtake - Domino Effect* / “Becoming an Advocate: Challenges at home, school, and work bring out the advocate in me” ([link](#)) *Outtake - Domino Effect* / “The Streaker: A flamboyant client makes my first trial an ordeal to remember” ([link](#))

*Growing Up in Ferndale: A Baby Boomer’s Memories of Life in Mid-Century Suburban Detroit* (2016) ([Link](#))

*The Seventies: A Breakthrough Decade for LGBT Rights* (2022). ([Link](#)) A book honoring lawyers and law students who propelled the social and legal rights we enjoy today. (354 pp.)

*The Family Guide to Preventing Elder Abuse* (2017). Wrote two chapters in this book produced and edited by Thomas Lee Wright. Chapter 6: “If You Suspect Abuse: How to Report a Problem” Chapter 9: Pursuing Justice.

## Documentary Film

*Pursuit of Justice.* (A film by Grey Byers, 2016) This documentary film tracks Thomas F. Coleman and other colleagues as their advocacy activities attract a growing network of activists to become involved in this pursuit of justice for adults with mental and developmental disabilities who become entangled in guardianship and conservatorship proceedings. ([Link](#))

## Feature Stories

In July 2024, the Ferndale City Guide published an [article](#) about Thomas F. Coleman titled “Continuing to Fight Injustice.” In December, 2023, the Bay Area Reporter published a [feature story](#) on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Coleman being licensed to practice law. *NewsWest*, a gay paper in Los Angeles, published [feature story](#) on Coleman in 1975. The *Daily Journal*, a legal newspaper based in Los Angeles, did a front-page [profile](#) of him in 1981.

## Education

Juris Doctor                      Loyola University of Los Angeles, School of Law • [Cum Laude](#) • 1973  
Detroit College of Law • [top student](#) in first year class • 1970

Bachelor of Arts                Wayne State University • [Monteith College](#) • Detroit, Michigan • 1970

Diploma                            St. James High School • [Salutatorian](#) • Ferndale, Michigan • 1966  
Member: [National Honor Society](#) - [United Nations Club](#)

## Professional Experience

1973 -                      [Law Office of Thomas F. Coleman](#)

Providing [consulting services](#) and offering strategic advice to attorneys in trial and appellate litigation. Offer [speaker services](#) for conferences and university

classes, as well as trainings for lawyers and other professionals. Formerly represented defendants in more than 300 criminal cases and appeals. Lobbied administrative agencies to implement legal reforms. Provided consulting services for policy studies initiated by public officials in California. California [law license](#) since 1973. [Testimonials](#) are available. [Overview](#) of the law practice in 1980.

2022 - [\*\*Alternatives to Guardianship Project\*\*](#)

Legal consultant to a federally-funded project to explore and promote alternatives to adult guardianships, including supported decision-making, in Missouri.

2024 - [\*\*Missouri Medical Rights Workgroup\*\*](#)

Coordinator and principal consultant to this workgroup which was convened by the American Academy on Developmental Medicine and Dentistry, the Alternatives to Guardianship Project, and Spectrum Institute. The workgroup is working with self-advocates, their families, and health care providers to promote the medical decision-making rights of adults with developmental disabilities consistent with the legal and ethical duties of providers.

2024 - [\*\*American Academy on Developmental Medicine and Dentistry\*\*](#)

Member of the Policy and Advocacy Committee of this nonprofit which seeks to promote improved health care for individuals with developmental disabilities. Periodic contributor to [Helen Journal](#), the official publication of AADMD.

1987 - [\*\*Spectrum Institute\*\*](#)

Executive Director of this nonprofit. Supervised staff, interns, and volunteers on educational projects, policy studies, and court cases promoting respect for human diversity, including the projects noted below. [Testimonials](#) (1988 - 2000) From 1996 to 2006, many projects of Spectrum Institute were funded by the Lloyd E. Rigler and Lawrence E. Deutch Foundation ([LEDLER](#)).

2022 - 2024 [\*\*LGBT Legal History Project\*\*](#)

2024 *The Princeton Project* involves the digitization of the papers of Arthur C. Warner, a sexual civil liberties and gay rights advocate from 1950 to 2000. His archives are located at the Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University, consisting of about 50,000 pages in 43 boxes. The project has identified the most important of the papers which will be digitized and made available to researchers online. Coleman is directing the project.

2022 *Birds of a Feather Project* commemorates the contributions of more than 120 law students and lawyers who openly advocated for LGBT rights during the decade of the 1970s. Products include a Memory Book, Videos, and Webinars. Coleman edited the Memory Book, produced the videos, and produced the webinars.

2015 - 2022

**[Disability and Guardianship Project](#)**

Focuses on systemic reforms to guardianship proceedings, especially the right to access to justice under the Americans with Disabilities Act, including having a properly trained attorney who adheres to ADA-compliant performance standards. Legal director of this project.

1995 - 2020

**[Disability and Abuse Project](#)**

Focused on abuse of people with developmental or intellectual disabilities. Sought to reduce such abuse, improve system response, and seek justice for victims. Legal director of this project. A "[think tank](#)" conference was held in 1997.

2005 - 2006

**[Emancipation Project](#)**

Focused on protecting the rights of juveniles confined in private residential facilities. Promoted government regulation of businesses which abduct and transport minors and government regulation of so-called "therapeutic boarding schools," which purport to provide educational and therapeutic services. [Archives](#)

1999 - 2009

**[Unmarried America](#)**

Originally known as the American Association for Single People, the [organization](#) focused on the legal, political, and economic, needs of 100 million unmarried workers, consumers, and taxpayers. Sought to end marital status discrimination in the workplace, marketplace, and public policies. Editor of Unmarried America [Newsletter](#) from 1999 - 2003. Editor of Singles' Rights Lobby [Newsletter](#) from 1999 to 2000.

1987 - 1999

**[Family Diversity Project](#)**

Promoted corporate and government use of broad and inclusive definitions of family. Worked with media to in order to gain support for changes in public policies and corporate practices to end discrimination on the basis of marital status and family structure.

1986 - 1989

**[University of Southern California Law School](#)**

Adjunct professor teaching the first "Right of Domestic Partners" class at any law school in the nation. Students worked on research papers for the Family Diversity Task Force (1986 - 1988). [Part I](#), [Part II](#), [Part III](#), [Part IV](#), [Part V](#). Students also did [research papers](#) for the City Attorney's Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination (1989).

1985 - 1987

**[Domestic Partners Equity Fund](#)**

Under the auspices of the Institute for the Study of Human Resources (foundation of One. Inc.) and with funding from the Lloyd E. Rigler and Lawrence E. Deutch Foundation, Coleman directed the Domestic Partners Equity Fund which conducted research, education, and advocacy activities to promote equal rights of unmarried couples regardless of gender and to protect such relationships from marital status discrimination. The fund dissolved when Spectrum Institute was formed in 1987.

1972 - 2000 **[National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties](#)**

Member of this organization for three decades, first known as the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties from 1970 to 1981, then as the American Association for Personal Privacy from 1982 to 2000. The group, consisting of about two dozen gay men from various academic disciplines and professional fields, advocated for the rights of consenting adults, decriminalization of statutes penalizing consenting adult sex, and sought civil rights laws prohibiting marital status and sexual orientation discrimination. Co-chair from 1975 to 1981. Co-chair Arthur Warner delivered [remarks](#) at a reception in 1981 at which the group conferred the Mathew O. Tobriner Civil Liberties Award on Coleman.\

1975 - 1979 **[Sexual Law Reporter](#)**

Founding publisher, and editor of this national periodical that analyzed and reported on developments in sexuality and the law – administrative, legislative and judicial. Subscribers included lawyers, judges, libraries, and others.

1972 - 1973 **[Gay Law Students Association](#)**

Founding president of the first gay law student association in the nation, with members from several law schools in the Los Angeles area. Coordinator of [Arraignment Intervention Project](#). Co-author of an article in 1973 titled “Discriminatory Enforcement of the Law as a Defense to a Criminal Prosecution.” Co-author of investigative report in 1973 titled “[Enforcement of Section 647\(a\) of the California Penal Code by the Los Angeles Police Department](#).” The California Supreme Court cited the investigative report when it declared the lewd conduct statute unconstitutionally vague. ([Pryor v. Municipal Court](#) (1979) 25 Cal.3d 238 fn. 8) The defense was used more recently when a judge in Long Beach [dismissed](#) a lewd conduct charge in 2017 on the ground of discriminatory enforcement of the law against gay men by the police.

1972 - 1973 ***American Bar Association - [Law Student Division](#)***

Delegate from Loyola Law School. Author of resolution and report to the Law Student Division in 1973 titled “Unmarried Persons Bill of Rights.” The resolution was approved. It called on states to prohibit marital status discrimination. Author of resolution to the Law Student Division in 1973 titled “Good Moral Character as a Requirement for Admission to the Bar. The resolution declared that sexual orientation or private consensual conduct of an applicant to or member of the bar shall not be grounds for investigation, denial of admission or disciplinary action by bar association.

## **Abilities and Skills**

### *Government Affairs*

Lengthy track record of successfully working with administrative agencies, executive officials, and legislators at the federal, state, and local levels of government. Achieved goals and objectives through letters, memos, policy reports, private meetings, and public presentations.

### *Media Relations*

Have developed excellent skills in dealing with print and broadcast media to

reach intended audiences for the purpose of gaining support for specific goals. Planned, conducted, and participated in several press conferences. Have appeared on live national television programs and on many live radio shows. Have worked successfully with journalists and reporters, having been quoted in hundreds of magazine and newspaper stories.

#### *Writing and Editing*

Have decades of experience in using and developing my writing skills. Have written letters, memos, legal briefs, newspaper commentaries, law review articles, executive orders, proclamations, and public policy reports. Have written a weekly column for a website blog. Have been the publisher and editor of a legal periodical and the editor of an association's newsletter. Have also created, edited, and updated websites.

#### *Appellate Litigation*

Have represented clients in successful litigation in the United States Supreme Court and state supreme courts in Alaska, California, Georgia, Michigan, and New York. Have also represented dozens of clients in the California Court of Appeal.

#### *Volunteer Coordinator*

Coordinated the activities of dozens of volunteers in several projects. The Personal Privacy Commission involved 25 commissioners and 50 public hearing witnesses. The Family Diversity Task Force involved 37 members, 12 interns, and 40 witnesses. Some 20 members, seven interns, and 20 witnesses participated in the Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination.

#### *Nonprofit Sector*

Directed the staff and volunteers of Spectrum Institute and its projects from 1987 to the present. Have also worked closely and cooperatively with dozens of other nonprofit educational and advocacy organizations.

### **Special Projects**

- 2021 [\*ADA Judicial Compliance Project\*](#)  
This project had five phases involving outreach to the [judges](#) and [ADA coordinators](#) in the superior courts in all 58 counties in California. A webinar for judges was produced. A student intern wrote a paper on her findings regarding the level of compliance of the courts in following the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- 2015 - 2016 [\*Voting Rights Restoration Project\*](#)  
This project advocate that voting rights be restored to thousands of adults with disabilities who were wrongfully stripped of their right to vote in conservatorship proceedings. It was prompted by the case of David Rector. [Press Release](#). [Letter](#) to Los Angeles Superior Court.
- 2001 - 2003 [\*Unmarried and Single Americans Week\*](#)  
Promoted National Singles' Week in 2001 to call attention to the growing number of single people and unmarried couples in the United States and the need to protect them from discrimination as workers, consumers, and taxpayers. Convinced the Census Bureau to release a [radio spot](#) in 2001 recognizing National Singles Week and annual [press releases](#) since 2003 as part of their Facts for Features series, commemorating Unmarried and Single Americans Week. Held



events in Washington DC in 2003, including a congressional briefing and a reception. Had governors had mayors throughout the nation issue proclamations commemorating the week in 2001 and 2002.

2000 - 2001 [Stop the Stigma Campaign](#)

Directed the activities of this campaign sponsored by the American Association for Single People. The goal was to have legislators repeal laws that referred to children born to unmarried parents as “bastards” or “illegitimate children” and to have judges stop using similar terms. The project did outreach to judicial associations, attorneys general, and legislators. Laws were reformed in Delaware, Illinois, and Maine. The heads of various judges associations responded favorably and shared our information with their members.

1997 - 2002 [University of California Domestic Partner Project](#) ([Video - May 2002](#))

Advocated that the Regents authorize equal benefits for the same and opposite-sex domestic partners of university employees and retirees as are afforded to spouses. The goal was achieved for [surviving domestic partners](#) of active employees and retirees. A [comprehensive set](#) of other benefits is available.

1994 - 1999 [Hawaii Domestic Partner Project](#)

Advocated for the Hawaii Legislature to pass a comprehensive domestic partnership law to give same and opposite-sex unmarried couples living in committed relationships the same rights and benefits as married couples under state law. The Legislature was considering how to respond to a state Supreme Court decision questioning the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage. The Legislature adopted a [civil union law](#) in 2011 for all unmarried couples regardless of gender. Same-sex marriage became legal in Hawaii after a ruling by the United States Supreme Court in 2015. Essay: [“Civil Unions for All”](#)

1991 [Long Beach Family Diversity Project](#)

Principal advisor to a special project sponsored by the Long Beach Human Relations Commission, with funding from Kaiser Permanente, to study family diversity in Long Beach and to recommend ways the city could improve family life for its diverse residents.

1993 - 1994 [Insurance Commissioner's Anti-Discrimination Task Force](#)

Served as a member of this 30-member Task Force which was convened by the Insurance Commissioner of California. Chaired the Marital Status Discrimination Workgroup. Author of its Final Report

1989 - 1990 [Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination](#)

Served as Chairperson of this 12-member Task Force which was convened by the City Attorney of Los Angeles. Conducted hearings and issued a report recommending ways in which government and businesses could end marital status discrimination against unmarried consumers in housing, credit, discounts, and other business transactions. Author of its Final Report.

1987 - 1989 [Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family](#)

Served as a member of this 20-member Task Force which was convened by the California Legislature. Chaired the Couples Workgroup. Conducted hearings and issued a variety of reports recommending legislation to improve the quality



of life for California families, regardless of their structures or regardless of the marital status and sexual orientation of the adults who headed up the state's households. Author of the Report of the Couples Workgroup.

- 1986 - 1988 [Los Angeles City Task Force on Family Diversity](#)  
Served as Primary Consultant to this 38-member Task Force which was convened by the Los Angeles City Council. Conducted hearings and extensive research to determine how the city could improve the quality of life for the diverse and varied families of its constituents. Author of its Final Report.
- 1985 - 1989 [University of Southern California Law Center](#)  
Taught the first law school class in the nation focusing on the rights of domestic partners. Dozens of students took the class and also served as interns for the Task Force on Family Diversity, the Task Force on the Changing Family, and the Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination.
- 1983 - 1989 [Commission on Racial, Ethnic, Religious and Minority Violence](#)  
Served as a member of this 16-member Commission convened by the Attorney General of California. Conducted hearings and issued a variety of reports on how hate crimes and other forms of bias-related violence could be reduced.
- 1981 - 1982 [California Commission on Personal Privacy](#)  
Served as Executive Director of this 25-member Commission convened by the Governor of California. Conducted public hearings and issued a report recommending ways in which the state could better protect the personal privacy rights of its resident.
- 1978 - 1979 [Housing Discrimination](#)  
Successfully lobbied the administration of Gov. Jerry Brown to begin receiving and investigating complaints of housing discrimination based on the sexual orientation of tenants or applicants for rental housing under and existing statute that had been interpreted by the Supreme Court as prohibiting arbitrary discrimination by business establishments.
- 1975 - 1991 [Employment Discrimination](#)  
After advocacy with the [Fair Employment Practices Commission](#) to interpret "sex" in current law as including "sexual orientation" proved unsuccessful, and after years of lobbying for a legislative amendment to add sexual orientation to the fair employment act was successful, only to be vetoed by Gov. Pete Wilson, Coleman "trapped" the Wilson administration into ordering job protections for gays under an existing provision of the Labor Code, thus gaining statewide protection from such discrimination through executive branch action.
- 1975 - 1982 [Conditions of Probation](#)  
Successfully challenged conditions of probation imposed on defendants in misdemeanor lewd conduct cases who plea bargained to lesser offenses (trespass or disturbing the peace). The conditions ordered defendants not to associate with known homosexuals or frequent places where homosexuals congregated.
- 1975 [Gay Rights Summer Project – National Lawyers Guild](#)  
Mentor to four gay and lesbian law students who worked on various projects to advance LGBT rights. [Photo](#) of Coleman, students and other mentor.

## Honors and Awards

- 2017      *The Arc/United Cerebral Palsy California Collaboration*  
[Appreciation Award](#) given to me by these two disability organizations for outstanding contributions in the pursuit of justice for people with developmental disabilities.
- 2017      TASH  
Commendation given to me by TASH – an international disability rights organization promoting human rights for people with significant disabilities. I was recognized by the [president](#) and by the [board of directors](#) for promoting guardianship reform.
- 2016      *The Arc of Riverside*  
[Recognized](#) by this disability services nonprofit organization for being a national rights and justice advocate for people with disabilities entering conservatorships. [News story](#).
- 2005      *Alternatives to Marriage Project*  
[Lifetime Achievement Award](#) given to me by this national organization in appreciation of decades of leadership and vision regarding rights of single and unmarried Americans, advocacy for recognition of family diversity, and passionate, effective work for social justice.
- 1999      *Lawyers for Human Rights*  
[Certificate of Appreciation](#) given to me by this Los Angeles organization in recognition of my being a founding member of this gay and lesbian bar association when it was first organized in 1979.
- 1994      *Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg*  
[Commendation](#) from Los Angeles City Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg for invaluable assistance to her in securing health and dental benefits to same-sex partner of city employees.
- 1991      SOLPAC  
[Award](#) given jointly to three of us as a Special Honorees by this Long Beach political action committee in recognition for our work with the Family Diversity Project of the Long Beach Human Relations Commission.
- 1990      *American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California*  
Steven T. Kelber [Courageous Advocate Award](#) given to me by the ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project for my advocacy on behalf of the rights of lesbians and gay men.
- 1990      *Los Angeles City Attorney*  
[Commendation](#) given to me by the Los Angeles City Attorney in appreciation for my service as Chair of the Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination, work which helped expand consumer protection.
- 1989      *California Assembly*  
[Certificate of Recognition](#) given to me by the State Assembly for my

contribution to the health and stability of California's families as a member of the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family.

- 1988 *Los Angeles City Council*  
[Certificate of Commendation](#) from the City Council for outstanding public service to the people of Los Angeles for my work with the Los Angeles City Task Force on Family Diversity.
- 1988 *California Attorney General*  
[Certificate of Appreciation](#) in recognition of my service as a member of the Commission on Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Minority Violence.
- 1981 *National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties*  
[Mathew O. Tobriner Civil Liberties Award](#) given to me with permission of California Supreme Court Justice Tobriner in recognition of outstanding work and in evidence of high achievement in the areas of civil liberties and personal privacy.
- 1970 *Detroit College of Law*  
[Amy D. Boomer Memorial Award](#) given to that member of the first year class who achieved the highest record of scholastic proficiency.

## **Author of Disability Rights Publications (2013 - 2024)**

### ***Medical Rights***

- 2024 ["Health Care and Developmental Disabilities: Suggestions for Providers"](#) (1 p)
- 2024 ["Health Care and Developmental Disabilities: A Message to Patients"](#) (5 pp)
- 2024 ["Health Care and Developmental Disabilities: A Message to Families"](#) (4 pp)
- 2024 ["Health Care and Developmental Disabilities: A Message to Providers"](#) (8 pp)
- 2024 ["Health Care and Developmental Disabilities: References for Patients, Families, and Providers"](#) (17 pp)
- 2024 ["Sample Medical Authorization Forms for Adult Patients with Developmental Disabilities"](#) with links to forms online (1 p)
- 2024 ["Medical Decision-Making Rights Should be Part of IEP and ISP Transition Planning Efforts Should be Coordinated with Pediatricians and Nurses"](#) (9 pp)
- 2024 ["How Dentists are Prohibited from Disability Discrimination,"](#) Helen Journal. (6 pp)
- 2023 ["Basics of Medical Decision Making: demographics, ethics, law, process"](#) (9 pp)
- 2023 ["Medical Decision-Making by Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Guidance for Patients, Families, Providers, State Agencies and Professional Associations"](#) (40 pp)
- 2023 ["Medical Decision Making Options for Adults with Developmental Disabilities"](#) (21 pp)  
A Summary of Legal and Medical References for Health Care Providers, Patients and Families

- 2023 ["Medical Decision-Making Rights: What You Should Know,"](#) Helen Journal. (10 pp)
- 2023 ["Medical Decision-Making Rights: The Case of Peter Brumlik,"](#) Helen Journal. (3 pp)
- 2023 ["Disability Discrimination by Federally Funded Health Care Providers"](#) (17 pp)  
Excerpts from Proposed Rule 0945-AA15 of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – With Commentary on Health Care Services for Adult Patients with Developmental Disabilities
- 2023 ["Transitioning to Adulthood: Resources for Patients with Developmental Disabilities, Parents, and Health Care Providers"](#) (7 pp)
- 2023 ["Proposal: Health Care Proxies for Adults with Developmental Disabilities"](#) (3 pp)

### ***Social, Sexual, and Marriage Rights***

- 2023 ["Social Rights of Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Legal Protections"](#) (10 pp)
- 2023 ["Sexual Rights of Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Bibliography"](#) (47 pp)  
["Sexual Rights of Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Legal Authorities"](#) (11 pp)
- 2023 ["Marriage Rights of Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Legal Authorities and Current Practices"](#) (17 pp)
- 2014 ["With Liberty and Justice for All: The Sexual Rights of Adults with Developmental Disabilities"](#) (12 pp)

### ***Supported Decision-Making***

- 2023 ["Supported Decision-Making: Options for Missouri"](#) (40 pp)  
Includes a summary of supported decision-making laws in 21 states
- 2017 ["Supported Decision-Making: My Transformation from a Curious Skeptic to an Enthusiastic Advocate"](#) (12 pp)
- 2016 ["Supported Decision-Making: A Critical Analysis – What Public Officials, Professionals, Advocates, and Families Need to Know."](#) (7 pp)
- 2015 ["An Analysis of Nevada Assembly Bill 128: Bill's Passage Would Diminish the Rights of People with Intellectual Disabilities"](#) (7 pp)
- 2014 ["Framework for Model Legislation on Medical Supported Decision Making Agreements"](#) (2 pp)
- 2014 ["Principles of Supported Decision-Making Already Exist in California Law"](#) (2 pp)

### ***Adult Guardianships***

- 2022 ["The Perils of Judicial Control of Guardianship Legal Services in Missouri"](#) (3 pp)
- 2021 ["Dorothy Won't Surrender: Some Washington Judges Don't Care a Lot"](#) (4 pp)
- 2019 ["Accountability: The Key to Real Guardianship Reform – Methods to Achieve Accountability Through Effective Legal Advocacy"](#) (30 pp)

- 2017 [“Mandatory Attorneys for Guardianship Respondents: A Historical Moment in the Disability Rights Movement”](#) – Submitted to the WINGS advisory committee of the Washington Supreme Court (2 pp)
- 2016 [“The Justice Gap: The Judicial Branch Has a Duty to Appoint, Train, and Supervise Attorneys to Effectively Represent Respondents in Guardianship Cases – Report to the Washington Supreme Court”](#) (32 pp) [Related materials](#): executive summary and exhibits to report.

### ***Legal Capacity***

- 2020 [“Capacity Assessments in California Conservatorship Proceedings: Improving Clinical Practices and Judicial Procedures to Better Protect the Rights of Seniors and People with Disabilities”](#) (129 pp) [Related materials](#).
- 2020 [“Capacity to Consent to Sex: Legal Standards & Best Practices for Adult Protective Services”](#) (31 pp) Report [sent](#) to APS agencies in all 50 states.

### ***Americans with Disabilities Act***

- 2022 [“How the ADA Applies to Guardianship Proceedings: A Primer for Missouri’s Judges, Attorneys, and Guardians – An Annotated Bibliography”](#) (15 pp)
- 2021 [“ADA – Legal Right to a Support Person”](#)
- 2021 [“State Bar ADA Alert: Complaint System is Inaccessible to Probate Conservatees”](#) (85 pp)
- 2021 [“ADA Obligations May Not Be Contracted Away”](#) – A Reminder to County Governments that Provide or Fund Legal Services and to Administrators of Courts that Appoint Attorneys in Conservatorship Cases (7 PP)
- 2019 [“ADA Compliance: A Request to the California Judicial Council to Clarify the Sua Sponte Obligations of Courts to Ensure Access to Justice”](#) (38 pp)
- 2019 [“The ADA and Guardianship Courts: Excerpts from DOJ and HHS Joint Guidance to Courts in Child Welfare Proceedings, With Comments on Their Application to Adult Guardianship Proceedings”](#) (9 pp)
- 2019 [“The State Can Intervene When Counties Fund ADA-Noncompliant Legal Services Programs”](#) (1 p)
- 2019 [“ADA and Section 504: Meaningful Participation and Effective Communication by a Pro Per Respondent in a Conservatorship Case”](#) (1 p)
- 2019 [“What Access to Justice Would Look Like in Probate Conservatorship Proceedings if the ADA is Actually Implemented”](#) (8 pp)
- 2018 [“Compliance with the ADA Requires the Sacramento County Superior Court to Appoint Lawyers for All Proposed Conservatees”](#) (4 pp)
- 2018 [“ADA Title II Guidance from the U. S. Department of Justice is Instructive to Participants in the Limited Conservatorship System”](#) (3 pp)

- 2018 ["Compliance with the ADA Requires the Sacramento County Superior Court to Appoint Lawyers for All Proposed Conservatees"](#) (4 pp)
- 2017 ["The Supreme Court of Missouri Has a Duty to Ensure ADA Compliance in Guardianship Proceedings"](#) (6 pp)
- 2017 ["Washington State Recognizes the Appointment of an Advocate as a Necessary ADA"](#) (1 p)
- 2016 ["Access to Justice for Limited Conservatees: The Buck Stops with the California Supreme Court"](#) (2 pp)
- 2015 ["Concerns for Nevada Medical Providers: Use of AB 128 Form May Result in ADA Liability and Loss of Immunity"](#) (1 p)
- 2015 ["New Research Exposes ADA Violations in Legal Services Program"](#) (2 pp)
- 2015 ["Limited Conservatorships and the Denial of Access to Justice: Who is Responsible under the ADA?"](#) (6 pp)
- 2015 ["Due Process Plus: ADA Advocacy and Training Standards for Appointed Attorneys in Adult Guardianship Cases – White Paper to the United States Department of Justice"](#) (86 pp)
- 2015 ["Efficiency vs. Justice: The deliberate bypass of legal protections has denied many limited conservatees access to justice in violation of Title II of the ADA"](#) (91 pp)
- 2015 ["What a Difference a Year Makes: Progress in Securing Voting Rights for People with Developmental Disabilities"](#) (23 pp)

### ***California Conservatorships***

- 2021 ["Civil Rights Agencies MIA for Conservatees with Developmental Disabilities: A Report to the Governor"](#) (48 pp)
- 2021 ["Public Funding of Legal Services in Conservatorship Proceedings"](#) (133 pp)
- 2021 ["Fulfilling Duties and Reducing Risks: Zealous Advocacy Standards for Legal Service Providers in Conservatorships"](#) (47 pp)
- 2020 ["Jury Instructions for Probate Limited Conservatorship Cases: A Practice Guide for California Attorneys"](#) (38 pp)
- 2019 ["County Jurisdiction in Probate Conservatorship Proceedings"](#) (1 p)
- 2019 ["Access to Justice Through the Right to Counsel: A Bill to Amend Section 1471 of the California Probate Code"](#) (38 pp)
- 2019 ["Proposals to Use FEHC Authority to Protect the Civil Rights of People with Disabilities in Conservatorship Proceedings"](#) (6 pp)  
 Note: Regulation adopted in 2024 to clarify that judicial branch entities are covered by state laws prohibiting disability discrimination in programs and services.
- 2019 ["The Path Forward to Justice in Conservatorships: A Report to the Alameda County"](#)



[Board of Supervisors](#)” (26 pp)

- 2019 [“A Call to Action: A Call to Disability Rights California to Join the Emerging and Growing Conservatorship Reform Movement”](#) (9 pp)
- 2019 [“Probate Conservatorship Data: The Need to Improve Collection & Reporting”](#) (67 pp)
- 2018 [“The Domino Effect: Judicial Control of Legal Services – A Report to the California Supreme Court on the Code of Judicial Ethics”](#) (43 pp)
- 2018 [“Administrative Steps to Improve the California Conservatorship System – a Report to the Chief Justice”](#) (8 pp)
- 2018 [“Regional Center Conservatorship Assessments: The Need for Guidance and Oversight from the Department of Developmental Services”](#) (25 pp)
- 2017 [“Justice & Equality: Improving the Functions of the California Department of Developmental Services in Limited Conservatorship Proceedings”](#) (31 pp)
- 2016 [“Probate Judge’s Remarks Reveal Reasons for Judicial Resistance to Conservatorship Reform”](#) (4 pp)
- 2015 [“Proposals to Modify the California Rules of Court: Qualifications, Continuing Education Requirements and Performance Standards for Court-Appointed Attorneys in Limited Conservatorship Cases – Report to the Judicial Council”](#) (49 pp)
- 2015 [“Limited Conservatorships: Systematic Denial of Access to Justice – A Report to the Senate Judiciary Committee”](#) (12 pp)
- 2015 [“Gregory’s Law: A Bill to Reaffirm “Next Friend” Advocacy for People with Developmental Disabilities”](#) (48 pp)
- 2015 [“Elusive Justice/False Advocacy: A Case Study of Social Rights for Limited Conservatees Reveals a Larger Problem of Defective Legal Representation – Report Submitted to the United States Department of Justice”](#) (63 pp)
- 2015 [“Individual Program Plan \(IPP\) for Limited Conservatorships: An Essential Advocacy Tool for Court-Appointed Attorneys”](#) (3 pp)
- 2014 [“Strategic Guide for Court-Appointed Attorneys in Limited Conservatorship Cases: What You Don’t Know Can Hurt You – And Your Client Too”](#) (36 pp)
- 2014 [“Justice Denied: How California’s Limited Conservatorship System Is Failing to Protect the Rights of People with Developmental Disabilities”](#) (77 pp)
- 2014 [“Voting Rights of People with Developmental Disabilities: Correcting Flaws in the Limited Conservatorship System”](#) (7 pp)
- 2014 [“Ten Statewide Concerns About the Limited Conservatorship System”](#) – Report to the Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee of the Judicial Council” (2 pp)

### ***Disability and Abuse***

- 2020 [“Disability and Abuse: Shifting from Peripheral Vision to Central Focus”](#)

- 2020 "Disability and Abuse: A Bibliography on Trauma and Therapy." [Part One](#) lists and describes more than 60 books published in the past several years on these topics. (21 pp) [Part Two](#) references 45 journal articles and other resources. (17 pp)
- 2020 "[Clarifying Data on Disability and Crime Victimization](#)" (1 p)
- 2019 "[Disability and Abuse: Evidence-Based Data Should Drive the Narrative](#)" (7 pp)
- 2017 "[Disability and Abuse: Administering Trauma-Informed Justice in Missouri Guardianship Proceedings – An Annotated Bibliography with Strategic Commentary](#)" (12 pp) [Supplement](#): Facts, Findings, and Recommendations (11 pp)
- 2017 "[Disability, Abuse, Schools, and Risk Management: So you think children with disabilities are safe at school: think again.](#)" (4 pp)
- 2017 "[Elder Abuse Bills Are a Start: Reform at State and Federal Level Should Include All Vulnerable Adults](#)" (2 pp)
- 2017 "[A Review of the Association Between Childhood Disability and Maltreatment: Comments on a New Meta-Analysis](#)" (11 pp)
- 2107 "[Trauma-Informed Justice: A Necessary Paradigm Shift for the Limited Conservatorship System](#)" (4 pp)
- 2013 "[Abuse of People with Disabilities: Victims and Their Families Speak Out – A Report on the 2012 National Survey on Abuse of People with Disabilities](#)" (45 pp)

### ***Legal Education on Disability Rights***

- 2021 "[Disability and the Law: A Compendium of Commentaries – Educating California's lawyers, judges, and lawmakers through legal analysis and persuasion. Some 33 commentaries published in the Daily Journal legal newspaper from 2015 p 2021](#)" (59 pp)

### ***Autism***

- 2020 "[Autism and Conservatorships: Protecting Civil Rights and Providing Access to Justice](#)" – Presentation to UCLA Class on "Current Perspectives on the Autism Spectrum and Neurodiversity"

### ***Criminal Justice***

- 2009 "[Teen's 100 Year Sentence a Travesty of Justice Now, How to Undo the Damage of a Texas Triangle](#)" – [Update](#) on the case.

### **Guardianship Reform PowerPoints**

- 2021 **Judicial Education: Americans with Disabilities Act**  
This webinar and [PowerPoint](#) presentation explains how the ADA should be applied to judicial proceedings in California when a litigant in a proceeding has a mental,

developmental, or other disability.

2021 **Conservatorship Reform: From Complaints to Solutions**

This [PowerPoint](#) presentation was made at a Guardianship Symposium sponsored by the Americans Against Abusive Probate Guardianship.

2021 **Zealous Advocacy: How Attorneys Can Fulfill Their Duties Under AB 1194**

This [PowerPoint](#) explains the duties of court-appointed attorneys who represent conservatees and proposed conservatees in conservatorship proceedings in California, as well as the consequences to the courts that appoint them and the counties that fund them when they fail to fulfill those duties.

2021 **Probate Conservatorship: Flaws and Fixes**

This [PowerPoint](#) presentation at a webinar hosted by the [Long Beach Bar Association](#) identifies 11 specific problems with the probate conservatorship system in California along with a suggested solution for each one of them.

2019 **Accountability: The Key to Guardianship Reform**

This [PowerPoint](#) presentation at a conference in Tampa, Florida sponsored by Americans Against Abusive Probate Guardianship

2017 **Disability, Abuse, and Guardianship: Reducing Risk and Improving Response**

This [PowerPoint](#) presentation identifies how the guardianship system in Missouri could be strengthened to reduce the risk of abuse to adults living under an order of guardianship.

## **Guardianship Reform Videos**

2022 **Conservatorships in California: Abuses, Critiques, and Proposals for Reform**

This [video](#) presents a webinar hosted by the UCI School of Medicine at which Thomas F. Coleman presented criticisms of the conservatorship system in California and offered suggestions to reform it.

2022 **Interview with Barbara Buckley**

In this [video](#), Thomas F. Coleman interviews Barbara Buckley, executive director of the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada about the standards set for its staff attorneys and their zealous advocacy practices as they defend client who have been involuntarily drawn into adult guardianship proceedings and those who are trying to escape the clutches of guardianship.

2021 **Disability Discrimination by the California Judiciary in Conservatorships.**

This [video](#) explains how state and federal disability nondiscrimination laws apply to judicial proceedings and how judges and attorneys are ignoring them in California conservatorship proceedings. It urges the judiciary to bring state policies and practices into compliance with the ADA.

2021 **Zealous Advocacy: How Attorneys Can Fulfill the Requirements of AB 1194**

This 90-minute [video](#) explores the duties of attorneys as they fulfill the zealous advocacy requirements of AB 1194, a conservatorship reform law that took effect in California on January 1, 2022. Participants receive a rundown of 10 potential legal and professional dangers of neglecting the duty of care, as well as an analysis of such issues as third-party standing to file motions, complaints, appeals and civil

actions against attorneys who do not provide zealous advocacy to their clients and to the public entities that employ, appoint or fund them.

2021 **Fee for All: How Judges are Raiding Assets of Seniors & Lining Pockets of Conservatorship Attorneys**

In this [video](#) of a forum sponsored by the Commonwealth Club, Thomas F. Coleman and other presenters explain how the assets of seniors and people with disabilities are often drained in order to pay the fees of a variety of attorneys in probate conservatorship proceedings.

2021 **Town Hall: California Conservatorships**

In this video, victims of probate court injustices, family members, and community leaders will join with legal advocates to discuss ongoing and systemic problems with the probate conservatorship system. [Announcement](#). Coleman [discussed](#) injustices to people with developmental disabilities and offered [proposals](#) to reform the system.

## Author of Other Articles and Reports

### Newspapers and Magazines: (1973 - 2004)

- 2004 Fidelity Magazine / August  
Topic: [“The Power of One”](#) / singles managing financial challenges
- 2004 *Arizona Republic* / February 15 / Author: [“The Single Person’s Burden”](#)  
Topic: Discrimination against unmarried consumers and workers is unfair.
- 2003 *USA Today* / October 20 / Author: [“Marriage is No Cure-All”](#)  
Topic: Single people should not be pushed into marriage in order to secure equal rights.
- 2001 *San Diego Tribune* / March 15 / Author: “Unmarried Americans Need Tax Relief Too”  
Topic: Various tax laws favor married couples and penalize unmarried people.
- 1999 *Detroit News* / May 5 / Author: [“Marital Status Remains Irrelevant to Housing”](#)  
Topic: Commentary rebuts an editorial favoring religious exemption for landlords.
- 1999 *Los Angeles Daily Journal* / March 5 / Author: “Landlords Have Green Light to Reject Tenants Who Might be Inclined to Sin”  
Topic: Federal appellate court was wrong to give religious exemptions from housing laws.
- 1998 *Philadelphia Enquirer* / April 20 / Author: “Domestic Partners: Let’s Expand the Family”  
Topic: Philadelphia City Council should pass an inclusive domestic partner benefits law.
- 1997 *San Francisco Chronicle* / December 18 / Author: “Unequal Benefits for Many Oakland Couples”  
Author: Commentary criticizes a discriminatory benefits system in Oakland, California.
- 1996 *Self Insurer Magazine* / September Issue / Author: “Domestic Partner Benefits: Meeting the Needs of Unmarried Workers”  
Topic: As demographics change, employers should update their employee benefits plans.
- 1991 *Los Angeles Times* / December 8 / Author: [“Sword of Oppression”](#)  
Topic: Freedom of religion should be used as a shield, not as a sword to harm others.

- 1989 *Los Angeles Times* / July 26 / Author: "[The Family is Changing and We Should Admit It](#)"  
Topic: Commentary emphasizes the need for society to recognize the changing family.
- 1987 *Update* / July 22 / Author: "[Genocide Curriculum: Schools Anger Activists](#)"  
Topic: Report discusses a protest at a State Board of Education meeting.
- 1984 *Herald Examiner* / September 12 / Author: "[California Needs Stronger Laws Against Bigots Who Resort to Violence](#)"  
Topic: Commentary emphasizes the need for new hate crime legislation.
- 1984 *Advocate* / April 3 / Author: "[The Supreme Court Hears a Gay Appeal](#)"  
Topic: Commentary discusses implications of an impending ruling in *People v. Uplinger*.
- 1973 *Advocate* / August 29 / Author: "[Nation's Lawyers Call for Consent Laws](#)"  
Topic: Report discusses activities at the annual meeting of the American Bar Association.

#### Legal Journals:

- 1995 *Law and Sexuality Journal of Tulane University*  
Author: "[Hawaii Has Compelling Reasons to Enact a Domestic Partnership Law](#)"
- 1995 *National Journal of Sexual Orientation Law*  
Co-Author: "[Analysis of Attorney General's Opinion on Family Registration](#)"
- 1979 *New York University Review of Law and Social Change*  
Presenter: "[Procedure and Strategy in Gay Rights Litigation](#)"

#### Public Policy Reports:

- 2005 Project on Child Abuse in Utah Conducted for Spectrum Institute  
Author of [Executive Summary](#): "Majestic Ranch: A Living Nightmare for Kids"
- 1993 Anti-Discrimination Task Force / Convened by State Insurance Commissioner  
Author of Report: "[A Call to End Unfair Discrimination Against Unmarried Consumers](#)"
- 1993 Special Project on Consumer Discrimination for Spectrum Institute  
Author of Report: "[Credit Unions are Expanding Family Membership](#)"
- 1991 Special Family Diversity Project for Spectrum Institute  
Author of Report: "[Official Registration of Families with the Secretary of State: A Report on Legal, Economic, and Psychological Implications](#)"
- 1990 [Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination](#) / Convened by L A City Attorney  
Author of Report: "[Unmarried Adults: A New Majority Seeks Consumer Protection](#)"
- 1989 [Task Force on the Changing Family](#) / Convened by California State Legislature  
Author of [Report of the Workgroup on Couples](#)
- 1988 [Task Force on Family Diversity](#) / Convened by Los Angeles City Council  
Author of Report: "[Strengthening Families: A Model for Community Action](#)"

1982 [Commission on Personal Privacy](#) / Convened by Governor of California  
Author of Final Report

#### Newsletters:

- 2021 - 2023 [Spectrum Institute](#)  
Publisher and editor of periodic newsletter focusing on the activities, projects, and cases of the nonprofit.
- 1999 - 2003 [Unmarried America](#)  
Publisher and editor of quarterly newsletter of the American Association for Single People, focusing on issues affecting single and unmarried people
- 1999 - 2000 [Singles Rights Lobby](#)  
Publisher and editor of periodic newsletter of the lobbying arm of the American Association for Single People

#### Blogs:

- 2021 Spectrum E-News – Video Blog  
April 26 – Slides: [“Department of Justice Investigation of Alameda County Has Implications for Conservatorships”](#)
- 2005 - 2007 [Column One](#)  
Weekly column on website of Unmarried America focusing on legal, political, and economic issues and current events involving single people, unmarried couples, and nontraditional families

#### Podcasts

- 2024 *Oral History of Thomas F. Coleman – Streaming on Podbean*  
Thomas F. Coleman was interviewed by California State University Professor David A. Reichard about his early activism for LGBT rights in the 1970s  
[Part One](#) – [Part Two](#)
- 2021 [Freedom Files](#)  
Audio and video podcast focusing on issues involving freedom and justice.
- Freedom Files Essay: “[The Domino Effect: My Life as an Advocate](#)” (9 pp)*

### **Judicial Branch (Appellate Cases)**

#### United States Supreme Court

[Board of Education vs. National Gay Task Force](#) (1985) 470 U.S. 903  
Co-counsel for [amicus curiae](#) in a case where the goal was to convince the Supreme Court to affirm a decision invalidating a state statute adversely affecting the rights of gay teachers. The goal was achieved.

[People v. Uplinger](#) (1984) 467 U.S. 264  
Co-counsel for [respondent](#) in a case where the goal was to convince the Supreme Court not to overturn a decision of New York’s highest court invalidating a state loitering statute. The



goal was achieved.

#### United States Court of Appeals

[Gay Student Services v. Texas A & M University](#) (1984) 737 F.2d 1317

Co-counsel for amicus curiae in a case where the goal was to convince the court to rule that it was unconstitutional for the university to deny official status to a gay student group. The goal was achieved.

#### California Supreme Court

*Conservatorship of O.B.* (2020) 9 Cal.5th 989

An [amicus curiae brief](#) was submitted on behalf of Spectrum Institute and other advocacy organizations in a probate conservatorship appeal. The brief educated the court on the systemic deficiencies in policy and practice in probate conservatorship proceedings and the need for heightened scrutiny on appeal when the sufficiency of evidence is challenged. The court agreed with this argument, ruling that the appellate court must determine whether the record as a whole contains substantial evidence from which a reasonable fact-finder could have found it highly probable that the fact was true

*Conservatorship of Todd* (2019) No. #S259229

Counsel for amicus curiae which sent an [ex-parte notice](#) to the court regarding the need for appointment of counsel in the Court of Appeal as an ADA accommodation for Victoria Todd, a conservatee who was unrepresented in an appeal.

[Smith v. Fair Employment and Housing Commission](#) (1996) 12 Cal.4th 1143

Counsel for a tenant in a case where the goal was to convince the court to deny landlords a religious exemption from a statute prohibiting discrimination against unmarried couples. The goal was achieved.

[People v. Simon](#) (1995) 9 Cal.4th 493

Counsel for a defendant/appellant in a case where the goal was to convince the court to reverse the conviction because securities fraud could not be a strict liability crime. The goal was achieved.

[Pryor v. Municipal Court](#) (1979) 25 Cal.3d 238

Counsel for a defendant in a case where the goal was to convince the court to declare the lewd conduct law unconstitutional, protecting the right of adults to seek consent for private sex. The goal was achieved. [Follow up](#) was done on a number of cases, including cases in other states in which Pryor was cited as a precedent. [News stories](#) reported on the victory.

[Gay Law Student Association v. Pacific Tel & Tel Co.](#) (1979) 24 Cal.3d 458

Co-counsel for amicus curiae in a case where the goal was to convince the court to rule that discrimination against gay employees was illegal under various existing laws. The goal was achieved.

#### California Court of Appeal

[Conservatorship of Navarrete](#) (2020) 58 Cal.App.5th 1018

Counsel for amicus curiae which [petitioned](#) the court to certify its opinion for [publication](#) and on its own motion to delete the phrase "an incompetent person" from the caption of the opinion. The opinion affirmed the right of a conservatee to refuse visits from an unwanted

person. The court [ordered](#) the opinion published and deleted the phrase as requested.

[Conservatorship of O.B.](#) (2020) 2d Civil No. B290805

Counsel for amicus curiae which petitioned the California Supreme Court to order the opinion of the Court of Appeal in this case to be unpublished because "The opinion undermines the statutory requirement that less restrictive alternatives be explored and that an order of conservatorship should be entered only if such alternatives are not feasible." The petition was granted and the appellate opinion was removed from the official reports.

*Conservatorship of A.E.* (2019) No. B297092

Counsel for amicus curiae which sent an [ex parte notice](#) to the court's ADA coordinator regarding the need for appointment of counsel in the Court of Appeal as an ADA accommodation for a conservatee who was unrepresented in an appeal. In response, the court [appointed counsel](#). The case resulted in a [published opinion](#) reversing the order of conservatorship.

[Delaney v. Superior Fast Freight](#) (1993) 14 Cal. App. 4th 590

Co-counsel for an employee who [appealed a ruling](#) of the superior court that the Los Angeles city ordinance prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination in employment was invalid on the ground it was preempted by California Labor Code section 1101 which had been interpreted by the California Supreme Court and the Attorney General as including protection against such discrimination as a matter of state law.

[People v. Hill](#) (1980) 185 Cal.App.3d 831

Counsel for appellant challenging a conviction under a pandering statute. The conviction was reversed after the court interpreted the statute as not applying to payments of money to someone who merely posed in the nude and who did not engage in sexual activity.

Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Los Angeles – Appellate Division

[People v. Rytersdam](#) (1982) 130 Cal.App.3d Supp. 1 (Appellate Division)

Co-counsel for appellant in a case challenging the imposition of conditions of probation on a defendant convicted of misdemeanor lewd conduct in an adult bookstore. The appellate division held that it was unreasonable to require a defendant, while on probation, not to associate with known homosexuals or frequent places where homosexuals congregate.

[People v. Ripley](#), Appellate Division of the Superior Court of Los Angeles (1980) No. 16440

Counsel for appellant in a case which challenged the constitutionality of the mandatory registration as a sex offender for defendants convicted of misdemeanor lewd conduct. The appellate court held that the trial court denied defendant due process by refusing to hold an evidentiary hearing on the issue. This case was a precursor to *In re Reed* (1983) 33 Cal.3d 914 in which the California Supreme Court ruled that mandatory sex registration for such a minor offense was cruel and unusual punishment. The Reed case was handled in the Supreme Court by attorney Jay Kohorn. I represented Reed in the trial court and on appeal to the Appellate Department of the Los Angeles Superior Court before turning the case over to Jay when I left my law practice to become Executive Director of the Governor's Commission on Personal Privacy in 1981.

[Farnia v. Superior Court](#), (1980) No. C 334198

Co-counsel with attorney Jay Kohorn seeking a writ of mandate declaring the state's prostitution law unconstitutional as applied to private sex between consenting adults. An appeals court in Canada [ruled](#) in 2012 that laws prohibiting private acts of prostitution are unconstitutional.

### Alaska Supreme Court

*University of Alaska v. Tumeo* (1997) 933 P.2d 1147

Counsel for [amicus curiae](#) in a case challenging the denial of benefits to domestic partners as illegal marital status discrimination. The court agreed.

### Georgia Supreme Court

*City of Atlanta v. McKinney* (1995) 454 S.E.2d 517

Counsel for [amicus curiae](#) in a case where the goal was to convince the court that Atlanta had the authority to enact an ordinance creating a domestic partner registry in the city. The goal was achieved.

### Michigan Supreme Court

*McCready v. Hoffius* (1998) 586 N.W.2d 723

Co-counsel for [amicus curiae](#) in a case where the goal was to convince the court to rule that a marital status law protects unmarried couples from housing discrimination. The goal was achieved.

*People v. Lino and Brashier* (1994) 527 N.W.2d 434

Co-counsel for [amicus curiae](#) in a case where the goal was to convince the court to rule that it was unconstitutional to criminalize private sex between consenting adults. The goal was not achieved in this case, although the argument was accepted by the U. S. Supreme Court in another case in 2003.

### New Jersey Superior Court Appellate Division

*In Re Brumlik*, Appellate Division of the Superior Court of New Jersey, No. A-002734-22. (2023) Comment: This [brief](#), filed by [10 organizations](#), supported the challenge by a young man with autism of a court order restricting his rights in a guardianship proceeding despite the lack of a jury trial or a legitimate finding that he was incapacitated. The brief focused on Peter's constitutional right to self determination, including in the context of medical decisions, and due process of law.

### New York Court of Appeal

*Braschi v. Stahl Associates* (1989) 543 N.E.2d 49

Co-counsel for [amicus curiae](#) in a case where the goal was to convince the court to rule that the term "family" in a city housing law was broad enough to include unmarried couples. The goal was achieved.

### Washington Supreme Court

*O'Dell vs. Calhoun* (2021)

Co-counsel for [amicus curiae](#) in support of a petition for review. The case involved a constitutional challenge to the confiscation of assets of an elderly woman without due process of law in a guardianship case.

## **Judicial Branch (Administrative)**

## California

- 2021 - 2022 *Alameda County Grand Jury*  
[Memo](#) to the grand jury explaining how the probate conservatorship system works in Alameda County. This was a follow up to a [complaint](#) to the grand jury. It resulted in an investigation and [report](#) by the grand jury calling for reforms.
- 2021 - 2022 *Santa Clara County Grand Jury*  
A [complaint](#) to the grand jury in this county resulted in an investigation and [report](#) by the grand jury calling for reforms.
- 2021 *California Supreme Court*  
This [request](#) asked the court to convene a Workgroup on Conservatorship Right to Counsel Standards to address the pervasive violations of the right to counsel that occur on a regular basis throughout the state. [Press Release](#).
- 2021 *California State Bar*  
Sent a [letter](#) to the Board of Trustees urging them to focus on the lack of adequate legal services to seniors and people with disabilities entangled in probate conservatorship proceedings. Followed up with testimony at its meeting.
- 2020 *California State Bar*  
Sent a [letter](#) to the Board of Trustees urging them to support a bill strengthening the right to counsel in conservatorship proceedings and to make the attorney complaint system more accessible to people with developmental disabilities.
- 2019 *California State Bar*  
Submitted a [written statement](#) at a meeting of the Board of Trustees asking them to recognize that seniors and other adults with disabilities are not receiving the legal services to which they are entitled by due process, the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Rules of Professional Conduct.
- 2020 *California Supreme Court*  
This [request](#) asked the court to add a section on disability terminology to the California Style Manual which serves as a guide to judges and attorneys as they write legal briefs or judicial opinions. A [commentary](#) published in the Daily Journal legal newspaper on this topic was attached.
- 2020 *California Judicial Council*  
Made a [presentation](#) at its monthly meeting on "Crafting Better Ways to Manage Appointed Conservatorship Attorneys"
- 2019 *California Judicial Council*  
Made a [presentation](#) at its November meeting on the need for reforms to protect seniors and adults with disabilities in legal proceedings.
- 2019 *California Judicial Council*  
Made a [presentation](#) at its September meeting on the need for reforms to protect seniors and adults with disabilities in legal proceedings.
- 2019 *ADA Coordinator, California Supreme Court*  
Sent a [letter](#) to the coordinator alerting him that a litigant in an appeal pending before the Court of Appeal did not have an attorney. The litigant had cognitive disabilities which prevented her from representing herself. There was the need

for appointment of counsel as an ADA accommodation.

- 2019 *California State Bar*  
This [commentary](#) summarizes a conversation with the executive director of the state bar regarding steps the agency could take to improve legal services for people with mental and developmental disabilities
- 2014 - 2021 *California State Bar*  
[Letters](#) to the State Bar to bring to its attention deficiencies that impact the right to effective assistance of counsel, such as failure to appoint attorneys in probate conservatorship cases, deficient performance by attorneys when they are appointed, and the lack of accessibility to the State Bar complaint system for clients with mental and developmental disabilities
- 2018 *California Supreme Court*  
Sent a [request](#) to the court asking that it modify the code of judicial ethics to address the conflicts of interest occurring with judicial appoints of attorneys to represent proposed conservatees. The request was accompanied by a [report and exhibits](#).
- 2018 *Sacramento County Superior Court*  
Counsel for organizations filing an [administrative complaint](#) alleging the failure of the court to appoint counsel to represent conservatorship respondents violates state and federal disability laws.
- 2017 *California Supreme Court*  
[Letter](#) to the Supreme Court asking it to disapprove proposed rule 1.4 on communications with clients because it failed to address the issue of duties of lawyers under the ADA to ensure effective communication with clients who have disabilities. The court denied the request. However, it [rejected](#) proposed rule 1.14 which would have allowed attorneys to treat clients with diminished capacity differently than clients without disabilities.
- 2016 *Various Supreme Courts and State Bars*  
[Letters](#) to officials in California, Ohio, Indiana, Colorado, South Dakota, and Nevada regarding problems with ineffective representation of counsel in guardianship proceedings.
- 2014 - 2020 *Chief Justice*  
[Letters](#) sent to the Chief Justice promoting reforms in the way the judiciary processes probate conservatorship cases in order to have judicial practices conform to due process and mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- 2015 - 2018 *Justice Harry Hull*  
[Letters](#) sent to Court of Appeal Justice Harry Hull, chair of the rules committee of the Judicial Council requesting administrative changes in court policies and practices to improve access to justice for litigants with disabilities in conservatorship proceedings.
- 2014 - 2015 *Los Angeles County Judges*  
[Letters](#) sent to various judges of the Los Angeles County Superior Court seeking changes in judicial policies and practices to improve access to justice in probate conservatorship cases.

2018 *Sacramento County Superior Court*  
Administrative complaints that the failure of judges to appoint attorneys for all respondents in probate conservatorship proceedings constitutes disability discrimination under the state and federal laws. [Complaint #1](#) was filed on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities. [Complaint #2](#) was filed on behalf of seniors and other adults with mental disabilities. Both complaints included a set of [exhibits](#).

## **Maryland**

2018 *Maryland Court of Appeals*  
A [letter](#) was sent to the chief justice of the state's highest court regarding the omission of any reference to the Americans with Disabilities Act in the Rules order issued on October 10, 2017 regarding guardianship proceedings. [Commentary](#).

## **Missouri**

2017 *Missouri Supreme Court*  
Filed a [complaint](#) alleging that the state's guardianship system is not in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. [Related materials](#).

## **Texas**

2018 *Texas Supreme Court*  
The [complaint](#) asks the Supreme Court to investigate documented deficiencies in the guardianship system, to acknowledge that litigants with disabilities are not being provided access to justice as required by the ADA, and to make modifications to policies and practices in order to bring the state's guardianship system into compliance with these federal nondiscrimination laws. [Related materials](#).

## **Washington**

2017 *Washington Supreme Court*  
Filed a [complaint](#) alleging that the state's guardianship system is not in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. An informational copy was sent to the U.S. Department of Justice.

## **Executive Branch**

### Federal Government

2014 - 2018 *United States Department of Justice*  
[Letters and complaints](#) to various officials at the DOJ regarding the need for investigations into ADA violations by the California judiciary in probate conservatorship proceedings; the need for DOJ guidance to the states generally regarding ADA duties in guardianship and conservatorship proceedings.

2014 *United States Department of Justice*  
Complaints ([class](#) – [individual](#)) to the DOJ that the California judiciary was violating the rights of people with disabilities under the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act by routinely stripping them of the right to vote in



conservatorship proceedings. DOJ [opened an investigation](#), after which the California Legislature quickly passed a new law specifying that voting rights would be retained unless it could be proven by clear and convincing evidence that a proposed conservatee could not express a desire to vote. the law also established a process to review existing cases to determine if the right to vote should be restored. [Daily Journal](#) article. A legislative committee [analysis](#) of SB 589 credited the complaint to the DOJ for stimulating legislative reform. [Progress Report](#).

1980

[White House](#)

Met with staff at the White House to discuss what the administration of President Jimmy Carter could do to use the power of the federal government to combat discrimination against gays and lesbians.

### State Governments

2020 - 2021

*California Fair Employment and Housing Council*

Sent a [letter](#) to this agency, now called California Civil Rights Council, urging it to adopt regulations to clarify that Government Code Section 11135 prohibiting disability discrimination by state agencies applies to judicial proceedings. [Recommendations](#). [Additional recommendations](#).

2018

*California Fair Employment and Housing Council*

Sent a [letter](#) requesting an inquiry and formal hearing into civil rights violations occurring in the state's probate conservatorship system.

2018

*California Department of Fair Employment and Housing*

Filed a [pre-complaint inquiry](#) with the department asking that the director open an investigation under Gvt. Code [Section 11135](#) (disability discrimination by public entity) into the systematic failure of the Sacramento County Superior Court to appoint attorneys to represent litigants with mental and developmental disabilities in conservatorship proceedings.

2017

*California Lieutenant Governor*

[Letter](#) to Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom requesting a meeting to discuss how the state can better protect the civil rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

2017

*Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency*

[Letter](#) to acting secretary of this agency asking for a meeting to discuss how the state civil rights department can use its authority to investigate and correct disability discrimination by California courts in conservatorship proceedings.

2014 - 2018

*California DDS and HHS*

[Letters](#) to the Director of the California Department of Developmental Services and the Secretary of the Health and Human Services Agency regarding improvements to be made in oversight and management of regional centers in their role with conservatorship proceedings involving clients with developmental disabilities. [2018 HHS letter](#).

2016

*Utah Governor*

[Letter](#) to Governor of Utah urging him to veto a bill that would allow courts not to appoint an attorney to represent a respondent in a guardianship proceeding if the case was initiated by a parent of the respondent.

2002 - 2003

*Governors*

Convinced the Governors of 16 states to issue [proclamations](#) observing Unmarried and Single Americans Week during the third week of September.

- 2001 *Virginia, Department of Social Services*  
Submitted [letter brief](#) to this agency in opposition to its intention to deny Darlene Davis renewal of her child care license on the ground that she and an unmarried man were cohabiting outside of wedlock. Her license was renewed.
- 1998-1999 *California, Governor*  
[Lobbied](#) Gov. Gray Davis to broaden a domestic partnership bill, which was then limited to same-sex couples, to also include heterosexual seniors.
- 1993 *California, Insurance Commissioner*  
Convinced John Garamendi to support a report on marital status discrimination and to issue a press release and hold a press conference explaining his plans to implement recommendations to stop marital status discrimination by insurance companies. Wrote the [report](#) and participated in the press conference.
- 1991 *California, Labor Commissioner*  
Worked closely with the Los Angeles City Attorney Jim Hahn and San Francisco District Attorney Arlo Smith to successfully convince state [Labor Commissioner](#) Victoria Bradshaw to process complaints from private sector employees who believed they were victims of sexual orientation discrimination
- 1990 *California, Secretary of State*  
Convinced March Fong Eu to allow her agency to operate a de facto family [registration system](#) and to issue registration certificates to couples, with and without children, who registered with that agency. Further convinced her to defend the registration system against challenges made by the Legislative Counsel and the Attorney General.
- 1987 *California, Board of Education*  
Worked with other advocates to convince the Board of Education to revise a [Model Curriculum on Human Rights and Genocide](#) to include references to genocide and violence against gays and lesbians and people with disabilities.
- 1984 - 1990 *California, Attorney General*  
Served as a member of the [Commission on Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Minority Violence](#) which was convened by John Van De Kamp. Worked successfully to insure that violence against gays and lesbians, seniors, and people with disabilities, were included in the commission's work, including its reports and recommendations.
- 1984 *California, Governor*  
Worked with other advocates to convince George Deukmejian to sign the first [statewide law](#) that included "sexual orientation" – a law dealing with hate crimes.
- 1980 *California, Governor*  
Worked with a small group of colleagues to convince Jerry Brown to issue an executive order creating a [Commission on Personal Privacy](#) to study and make recommendations on how the government could better protect personal privacy rights of Californians, including steps to end sexual orientation discrimination.
- 1980 *California, State Personnel Board*  
Worked with a small group of colleagues to [assist this agency](#) in implementing

the Governor's executive order prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination in state government. Succeeded in having the agency create a special project for this purpose and to devote a full time staff member to head the project.

- 1979 *California, Governor*  
[Lobbied](#) California Gov. Jerry Brown for three years to sign an executive order prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination in state government. Was consulted by Tony Kline, the Governor's Legal Affairs Secretary, on the wording of an executive order prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination in state employment. Jerry Brown signed the order on April 4, 1979.
- 1979 *California, Department of Fair Employment and Housing*  
[Worked](#) with a small group of colleagues to convince Joanne Lewis, Director of the Department, to reverse a prior directive which precluded the agency from processing complaints of sexual orientation discrimination in housing. The agency then began to provide [protection to victims](#) of such discrimination.
- 1976 *California, Governor*  
Worked with a small group of colleagues to convince Carlotta Melon, the Governor's Appointments Secretary, to screen potential appointees for homophobia (anti-gay bias).
- 1976 *Pennsylvania, Governor*  
Asked Gov. Milton Shapp to contact California Gov. Jerry Brown to urge him to take executive action to advance the rights of gays and lesbians. Shapp wrote a [letter to Gov. Brown](#) to that effect.

#### Local Governments

- 2015 *Los Angeles County, Board of Supervisors*  
Filed a [complaint](#) with the county alleging that it was violating the ADA by funding a deficient legal services program that was providing thousands of proposed conservatees with inadequate legal representation in these liberty-encroaching proceedings.
- 2002 - 2003 *Mayors*  
Convinced the Mayors of 30 cities throughout the United States to issue proclamations observing Unmarried and Single Americans Week during the third week of September. [Proclamations](#).
- 1998 *Mayor of Santa Barbara*  
Wrote a [letter](#) to the mayor to advise her that a benefits program approved by the city council for domestic partners of city employees was illegal because it excluded opposite-sex partners.
- 1989 - 1990 *Los Angeles, City Attorney*  
Convinced Jim Hahn to convene a [Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination](#) to study how businesses were discriminating against consumers who were unmarried and to recommend ways to stop such discrimination. Was chairperson of the task force. Wrote the final report. Participated in a press conference when the report was released, which resulted in press coverage for "singles' rights" on national television and in national print media.
- 1988 - 1989 *Los Angeles, Mayor*  
Convinced Mayor Tom Bradley to issue a [directive to all city agencies](#) and

commissions to review the Final Report of the Los Angeles City Task Force on Family Diversity to develop ideas on how to implement recommendations which fell within the jurisdiction of those agencies.

- 1979      *Los Angeles, City Attorney*  
Sent a [letter and memo](#) to the city attorney arguing that the city can adopt an ordinance prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination by private employers.

## **Legislative Branch**

### Federal Government

- 2021      Rep. Jerry Nadler  
[Letter](#) to Congressman Nadler, chair of the House Judiciary Committee, urging the committee to hold hearings into deficiencies in state guardianship proceedings.
- 2021      *Senate*  
Submitted [proposals](#) to the Senate Judicial Committee on ways the federal government can propel conservatorship and guardianship reform in the states.
- 2021      *House of Representatives*  
Sent a [letter](#) to the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee requesting hearings into conservatorship abuses and federal intervention to curb them
- 2017      *Senator Chuck Grassley*  
[Letter](#) to Senator Grassley, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, asking him to amend S.178 – Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act – to explicitly apply to vulnerable adults with disabilities as well as seniors.
- 2017      *Senator Amy Klobuchar*  
[Letter](#) to Senator Klobuchar suggesting amendments to S.182 (*Court-Appointed Guardian Accountability and Senior Protection Act*) to include all vulnerable adults and to monitor performance of court-appointed attorneys
- 2005      *House of Representatives*  
Worked with the staff of the Committee on Education and the Workforce to develop a draft of the “Human Rights for Institutionalized Minors Act of [2005](#).” Under a different title, the bill passed the House of Representatives in [2008](#).
- 2004      *House of Representatives*  
Presented an Outstanding Unmarried American [Award](#) to Congresswoman Diane Watson (D-Los Angeles) on behalf of Unmarried America (formerly known as the American Association for Single People). The award recognized her efforts to promote equal rights for unmarried Americans.
- 2003      *House of Representatives and Senate*  
Conducted a Congressional Briefing in a conference room of the Rayburn House Office Building during Unmarried and Single Americans Week. The briefing was for legislators and their staff members about the need for federal laws to prohibit marital status discrimination in employment, housing, taxation, and various business transactions. Congressman Rahm Emanuel (now Chief of Staff to President Barack Obama) was one of the people attending the

briefing. [Invitation](#). [Briefing Paper](#).

- 2003 *House of Representatives and Senate*  
Presented Political Leadership [Awards](#) to Senator Gordon Smith (R-Oregon) and Congressman Jim McDermott (D-Washington) in Washington, D.C. for their efforts to end federal taxation of health benefits to domestic partners of employees. The awards were conferred by Unmarried America.
- 2002 *House of Representatives*  
Presented a Political Leadership [Award](#) to Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes in Washington D.C. on behalf of the American Association for Single People. The award recognized her efforts to implement a domestic partnership law in the District of Columbia and to overcome congressional objections to the law.
- 2001 *House of Representatives, Senate, White House, National Committees*  
Working with a small group of volunteers in May 2001, the American Association for Single People became the first singles' group in the nation to personally distribute literature to staff members in each of the 535 offices of members of Congress. During this trip, I met with staff members of five Representatives and seven Senators to discuss policy issues affecting single people. I also met with David From, a speech writer for the President, as well as staff members with the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee.

#### State Governments

- 2021 *California, Assembly Judiciary Committee*  
Sent a [letter](#) to the committee urging oversight hearings into the workings of the probate conservatorship system
- 2021 *California, Senate Judiciary Committee*  
Sent a [letter](#) to the committee urging passage of SB 724 to protect the right to counsel for seniors and adults with disabilities in conservatorship proceedings.
- 2020 *California, Senator Bob Weickowski*  
Sent a [letter](#) a letter to the senator asking him to amend a bill intended to strengthen the right to counsel for proposed conservatees.
- 2020 *California, Assembly Select Committee on I/DD*  
Sent a [letter](#) to the chair of the select committee requesting a meeting to discuss the denial of access to justice for adults with developmental disabilities in probate conservatorship proceedings
- 2020 *California, Law Revision Commission*  
Sent a [request](#) to the commission to study the dysfunctional probate conservatorship commission during its next term. A staff memorandum [addressed](#) the request at considerable length.
- 2014 - 2020 *California Senator Hanna Beth Jackson*  
[Letters](#) to Senator Jackson, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, asking that the committee conduct oversight hearings into the manner in which probate conservatorship proceedings are violating the rights of adults with mental

and developmental disabilities.

- 2005 *Utah, State Legislature*  
Held a [press conference](#) at the State Capitol about abuses occurring at a local "boarding school." Submitted a report to legislators, attorney general, and the governor asking for action to be taken against the school and for passage of stricter laws against such abuse. [News outlets](#) carried the story.
- 2000 *Vermont, House Judiciary Committee*  
Testified before the [House Judiciary Committee](#) at the invitation of its chairperson on the viability of enacting a comprehensive domestic partnership law in response to a Supreme Court ruling. A civil union law was enacted.
- 1999 *Michigan, House Constitutional Law and Ethics Committee*  
[Testified](#) before this Committee, at the request of Rep. Elizabeth Brater, to oppose HB 4258, a bill to repeal civil rights protections for unmarried couples. My testimony and supporting materials provided sufficient doubt about the soundness of the bill that the committee chair did not bring it up for a vote.
- 1999 *California, Senate Industrial Relations Committee*  
Testified before this Committee, at the request of [Senator Tom Hayden](#), in support of his bill to expand those eligible for family and medical leave to include domestic partners.
- 1999 *California, Senate Appropriations Committee*  
Testified before this Committee, at the request of Assemblyman [Wally Knox](#), in support of his bill to allow local governments that participate in the Public Employees Retirement System to give health benefits to the domestic partners of local employees.
- 1997 *California, Assembly Judiciary Committee*  
Testified before this Committee, at the request of Assemblyman [Kevin Murray](#), in support of his bill to create a domestic partnership registry with the office of the Secretary of State.
- 1997 *California, Assembly Judiciary Committee*  
Testified before this Committee, at the request of Assemblywoman Carole Migden, in support of her bill to mandate that insurers offer domestic partner health coverage if they offer spousal health coverage.
- 1997 *Hawaii, Senate Judiciary Committee*  
Responded to request of Co-chairpersons of this Committee, for information of expected cost increases if health benefits were extended to same-sex domestic partners of government and private-sector employees.
- 1996 *Hawaii, Senate Judiciary Committee*  
Testified before this Committee, at the request of committee chairperson Rey Graulty, to explain various options to the committee regarding a comprehensive domestic partnership act. Such a bill later was approved by the full Senate.
- 1996 *California, Assembly Judiciary Committee*



Testified before this Committee, at the request of Assemblywoman [Marguerite Archie Hudson](#), in opposition to ACA 28, a “Family Bill of Rights” that would have amended the California Constitution to prohibit state and local legislators from defining “family” in a manner that went beyond the traditional relationships based on blood, marriage, or adoption.

- 1988 *California, Senate Health and Human Services Committee*  
Testified about economic conditions facing diverse families in California.

#### Local Governments

- 1999 *Illinois, Cook County Board of Supervisors*  
Testified before the Board, at the request of [Supervisor William Moran](#) in support of his proposal to expand the proposed domestic partner benefits plan to include opposite-sex couples as well as same-sex couples.
- 1997 - 1998 *California, Oakland City Council*  
Spearheaded a six-month campaign which culminated in the City Council expanding its health benefits plan for same-sex domestic partners of city employees to also include opposite-sex partners of city employee. [Report to City Council](#). [Victory](#).
- 1997 *Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Council*  
Conducted an [informational briefing](#) for the City Council on the issue of domestic partnership rights and benefits, answering questions from council members about options and alternatives in Philadelphia.
- 1991 *California, Long Beach City Council*  
Testified in support of a proposal to create a domestic partnership registry and to grant benefits to domestic partners of city employees.
- 1989 *California, West Hollywood City Council*  
Testified before the City Council on ways in which the city’s domestic partnership ordinance could be improved.
- 1988 *California, Los Angeles City Council*  
Assisted in drafting a measure, adopted by the City Council, that the city would offer to include in union contracts a clause providing sick leave and bereavement leave to the domestic partners of city employees belonging to those unions.
- 1984 *California, San Francisco City Council*  
Presented a [memo](#) to the city council arguing that closure of the gay bath houses would violate constitutional protections and equitable principles. The city was considering such closures as a response to the AIDS epidemic.
- 1975 *California, Los Angeles City Council*  
Testified before council on "City Should Support Bill to Reform Sexual Law"
- 1975 *California, Los Angeles City Council, Intergovernmental Committee*  
Testified before the council on “City Should Support State Nondiscrimination Bill”

1975 California, *Los Angeles Police Commission*  
Testified before the commission on "Gays Are Qualified to Be Police Officers and Prosecutors"

### **Nonprofits and Universities**

2022 *College of the Desert*  
PowerPoint [presentation](#) and lecture during LGBT History Month on "Coming Out in the 1970s"

2022 *Arc of the United States*  
[Letter](#) to president of this organization in support of its effort to remove barriers to marriage for people with disabilities; sharing information on decades of work done by Coleman on this issue.

2019 *Stanford Law School*  
Presented a [lecture](#) at a law school class titled "California Probate Conservatorships: Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Reality"

2018 *World Congress on Adult Guardianship*  
[Presented](#) at a plenary session of the World Congress on Adult Guardianship attended by more than 400 delegates from five continents. Also conducted a [workshop](#) on supported decision-making.

2018 *Autism Conference – Matthew Reardon Center – Savannah, Georgia*  
[Presented](#) two workshops on guardianship and supported decision-making

2017 *4<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Summit of the Arc of Missouri – Columbia, Missouri*  
[Presented](#) at a plenary session on "Disability and Abuse: Administering Trauma Informed Justice in Adult Guardianship Proceedings"

2016 *American Judges Association*  
[Letter](#) to AJA offering to provide speakers and educational materials to judges on the application of the ADA to guardianship proceedings

2016 *American Judges Association*  
[Letter](#) to AJA offering to provide speakers and educational materials to judges on the application of the ADA to guardianship proceedings

2016 *National Center for State Courts*  
[Letter](#) to NCSC offering to provide educational materials to their staff on the application of the ADA to guardianship proceedings

2016 *Conference of Chief Justices*  
[Letter](#) to CCJ asking that at one of their meetings they consider the issue of the application of the ADA to guardianship proceedings

2016 *Uniform Law Commission*  
[Letter](#) to ULC requesting that the commission update the comment to Section 5-305 of the Uniform Probate Code (UPC) pertaining to the appointment of a lawyer to represent the respondent in an adult guardianship proceeding. The comment should be expanded to explain that mandatory appointment of

counsel may be required as a matter of federal due process

- 2005 *Prevent Child Abuse New York, Albany, New York*  
Co-presenter of workshop entitled "[Abduction and Reprogramming of American Teens: The Need to Regulate Businesses that Abuse, Torture, and Kill](#)"
- 2005 *Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute, San Diego, California*  
Co-presenter of workshop entitled "Rescuing Juveniles from Parent Funded Abuse in Private Residential Facilities"
- 2005 *Pride Planners – Conference – San Diego*  
[Presenter](#) at conference of lesbian and gay financial planners regarding financial planning for unmarried and single clients.
- 2004 *International Survivors Action Committee, San Diego, California*  
Assisted in conducting a [forum](#) at which teens and young adults testified about the abuse they experienced in so-called "behavior modification" programs and teen boot camps. Submitted an essay about an [individual case](#) in which I had intervened to rescue a teen from a facility in Montana.
- 2004 *Union Rescue Mission, Los Angeles, California*  
Obtained a challenge grant of \$80,000 to assist this Los Angeles nonprofit to successfully raise \$320,000 to reopen its [single women's shelter](#). [Video](#)
- 2001 ACLU of Southern California, Los Angeles, California  
Published [article](#) in Open Forum Newsletter announcing that the organization had signed on to the Stop the Stigma Campaign to remove pejorative language like "bastard" and "illegitimate" from statutes and judicial decisions regarding children born to unmarried parents.
- 1999 *The Policy Institute of NGLTF*  
Consulted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force for advice in creating a [Domestic Partnership Organizing Manual](#).
- 1999 *Equality Florida, Miami, Florida*  
Assisted this nonprofit organization in developing a domestic partnership bill which was introduced into the Florida Legislature.
- 1998 *International Association of Firefighters, Oakland, California*  
Assisted this organization in securing domestic partner benefits for its members in Oakland, California.
- 1998 *National Organization for Women, Washington, D.C.*  
Convinced the President of NOW to issue a letter supporting gender-neutral domestic partnership laws and benefits programs that included opposite-sex partners as well as same-sex partners. Submitted a [proposal](#) to NOW urging the organization to promote gender-neutral domestic partner laws.
- 1998 [American Civil Liberties Union](#)  
Submitted a proposal to the ACLU to support domestic partner rights and to vigorously protect unmarried individuals and couples from discrimination

- 1997      *Self Insurance Institute of America, Indianapolis, Indiana*  
Made two presentations on domestic partnership benefits at a national forum sponsored by this insurance industry organization.
- 1996      *Service Employees International Union, Local 535*  
Assisted this organization in securing domestic partner medical benefits for employees of the County of Los Angeles.
- 1996      *National Employee Benefits and Workers Compensation Institute, Atlanta*  
Conducted workshops for this group at an educational forum for its members.
- 1995      *Triangle Foundation, Detroit, Michigan*  
Conducted a workshop for the legal committee of this gay rights organization.
- 1995      *AARP, Washington D.C.*  
Participated in a 21 member workgroup as part of a mini-conference with the White House Conference on Aging. Developed materials later published by AARP in a report entitled "The Real Golden Girls" which addressed public policy and nontraditional family living arrangements among older adults.
- 1991      *Los Angeles Federal Credit Union*  
Assisted this group in obtaining approval to allow domestic partners of city employees to become credit union members on the same terms as spouses.
- 1990      *Los Angeles Lawyers for Human Rights*  
Presentation on "Family Diversity: Legal Strategies for the 90s"
- 1990      *South Bay Gay & Lesbian Organization, Torrance*  
Presentation on "Combating Discrimination Against Unmarried Couples"
- 1989      *NGLTF Creating Change Conference, Washington, D.C.*  
Panel Presentation on Rights of Domestic Partners at November conference.
- 1989      *Southwest College PACE Conference, Los Angeles*  
Presentation on "Making Way for Families of the Future" at November forum.
- 1989      *San Diego Democratic Club, San Diego*  
Presentation on "The Changing Family in California" at September meeting.
- 1989      *California State Bar Convention, San Diego*  
Speaker at September meeting. Topic was "Family Diversity and the Law."
- 1989      *Lawyers for Human Rights Conference, Los Angeles*  
Presenter on "Strategies for the '90s" during plenary panel at July meeting.
- 1989      *California Council of Churches, Los Angeles*  
Did an Issue Briefing on "The Changing Family" at April meeting.
- 1989      *Harvard Law School Conference, Cambridge, Massachusetts*  
Presenter on "Integrating Sexual Orientation Issues into Family Law Classes" at this April conference.

- 1989 *New York City Bar Association*  
Made a [presentation](#) to members on the work of the Los Angeles City Task Force on Family Diversity and encouraged them to develop family diversity proposals for the City of New York. Meeting was held in February.
- 1989 *Seminar for USC Faculty and Staff, Los Angeles*  
Presentation on "Employee Benefits and the Changing Family".
- 1989 *ACLU Singles Chapter*  
Presentation on "Rights and Responsibilities of Single People in Nontraditional Relationships" at November meeting.
- 1988 *Sacramento/Yolo Conference on Families, Sacramento*  
December presentation on "Strengthening Relationships of California Couples"
- 1988 *Education Commissions of Los Angeles Unified School District*  
November presentation on "Family Diversity: Recommendations for Schools"
- 1988 *Southern California Interfaith Coalition on Aging*  
September presentation on "Family Diversity: Helping Families with Seniors"
- 1988 *Community Relations Conference of Southern California*  
August presentation on "Ending Discrimination on the Basis of Family Status"
- 1988 *ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Chapter, Los Angeles*  
July presentation on "Findings of the Family Diversity Task Force"
- 1988 *Affirmation/Gay and Lesbian Mormons, Los Angeles*  
July presentation on "Family Diversity: Separation of Church and State"
- 1988 *Municipal Elections Committee of Los Angeles (MECLA)*  
June presentation on "Implementing Family Diversity Recommendations"
- 1988 *Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission*  
June presentation on "Recommendations to Help County Families"
- 1988 *National Lambda Lawyers Roundtable, Los Angeles*  
April presentation on "Family Diversity: A Focus for Civil Rights"
- 1987 *Business and Professional Women's Assn., Studio City*  
November presentation on "How the Changing Family Affects Businesses"
- 1987 *Stonewall Democratic Club, Los Angeles*  
October presentation on "Domestic Partnership Proposals for Los Angeles"
- 1987 *Regional Conference on Women and the Law, Los Angeles*  
October presentation on "Family Concerns of Gays and Lesbians"
- 1987 *ACLU Human Rights Award Dinner, Los Angeles*  
Presented Award to Attorney General John Van de Kamp at September meeting.

- 1987 *California Association of Gay/Lesbian Democratic Clubs, Los Angeles*  
May presentation on "Implementing Privacy Rights"
- 1987 *Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Los Angeles*  
March presentation on "Revising Public School Curricula and Programs"
- 1987 *Automobile Club of Southern California*  
Launched a campaign at the annual meeting of AAA members which eventually led to the Board of Directors expanding a spousal discount membership policy to include any unmarried adult in the primary member's household.
- 1986 *Orange County Business and Professional Association*  
October presentation on "Rights of Domestic Partners: Today and In the Future"
- 1986 *ACLU Gay/Lesbian Rights Chapter, West Hollywood*  
September presentation on "Family Diversity in Los Angeles"
- 1986 *Lutherans Concerned - National Conference, Los Angeles*  
July presentation on "Affirming Our Place in the Family"
- 1986 *Seminar Sponsored by GLCSC Lesbian Central, Los Angeles*  
June presentation on "Securing Rights for Domestic Partners"
- 1986 *One Institute's Monthly Lecture Series, Los Angeles*  
May lecture on "Privacy and the Supreme Court: Bowers vs. Hardwick"
- 1985 *Couples Los Angeles, West Hollywood*  
September talk on "Giving Momentum to the Domestic Partners Movement"
- 1985 *California State Employees Association, Los Angeles*  
August presentation on "Privacy, Domestic Partners, and Employee Rights"
- 1985 *Community Forum by Lambda Democratic Club, Long Beach*  
July presentation on "Should Long Beach Have a Gay Rights Ordinance?"
- 1985 *Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Los Angeles*  
June presentation on "Lets End Discrimination Against Gay Couples"
- 1984 *Public Hearing: L.A. County Human Relations Commission*  
June presentation on "Violence Against Lesbians and Gays in California"
- 1984 *One Institute Monthly Lecture Series, Los Angeles*  
April presentation on "Big Brother in the Bedroom: New York vs. Uplinger"
- 1984 *UCLA Gay/Lesbian Law Students d National Lawyers Guild*  
March presentation on "Legal Rights of Unmarried Couples"
- 1984 *GLCSC Seminar on Employment Discrimination, Los Angeles*  
January presentation on "Constitutional Rights in the Workplace"
- 1983 *Training Seminar: Sexuality and Disability, Los Angeles*

- October lecture on "Law, Sex, and Disability"
- 1983 *American Psychological Association, Anaheim*  
August lecture on "Legal Aspects of Surrogate Partner Sex Therapy"
- 1983 *University of California Board of Regents, Los Angeles*  
June testimony on "Legal Basis for Adopting a Nondiscrimination Policy"
- 1983 *American Association of Personal Privacy, San Francisco*  
May lecture on "Personal Privacy: Legal, Political, and Social Trends"
- 1983 *Golden Gate Business Association, San Francisco*  
May presentation on "Implementing Privacy Commission Recommendations"
- 1983 *Seminar for Disability Service Providers, Los Angeles*  
April presentation on "Privacy Protections in Delivery of Services"
- 1983 *Los Angeles Lawyers for Human Rights*  
February lecture on "Privacy Rights: A New Agenda for the Gay Movement"
- 1983 *Central California Business and Professional Association, Fresno*  
February lecture on "An Overview of Privacy Commission Recommendations"
- 1982 *ACLU Annual Legislative Conference, Los Angeles*  
October presentation on "Privacy and Personal Rights: A Legislative Agenda"
- 1982 *Annual Conference of Parents and Friends of Gays*  
August presentation on "Legislation Affecting the Gay and Lesbian Movement"
- 1982 *Law and the Fight for Lesbians and Gay Rights, Los Angeles*  
Opening Address: "The Role of Lawyers in the Movement" at May conference.
- 1982 *Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Los Angeles*  
April presentation on "Personal Privacy as a Legal and Political Strategy"
- 1982 *Association of Suburban People, Troy, Michigan*  
April presentation on "Importance of Privacy as a Strategy in the 1980s"
- 1982 *Office of Family Planning, Advisory Board, San Diego*  
March presentation on "Personal Privacy: Youth and Family Planning"
- 1981 *Seminar for Affirmative Action Officers, Atascadero*  
February lecture on "Sexual Orientation Discrimination in State Employment"
- 1980 *Arkansas Civil Liberties Union, Little Rock*  
October presentation on "Obtaining Sexual Civil Liberties in Arkansas"
- 1980 *Western Center for Independent Living, Los Angeles*  
October presentation on "Sexual Privacy and Equality for Disabled People"
- 1980 *Public Defenders Seminar, Los Angeles*  
June presentation on "Recent Developments in Prostitution Litigation"



- 1980 *National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties, Wash. DC*  
May presentation on "Re-Examining Government Regulation of Prostitution"
- 1980 *California Association of Process Servers, Los Angeles*  
February presentation on "Recent Developments in Sexual Law"
- 1979 *Michigan Organization for Human Rights, Southfield, Michigan*  
November presentation on "Consenting Adults: The Need for Law Reform"
- 1979 *Annual Conference of California State Bar, Los Angeles*  
September presentation on "Current Developments in Gay Rights Law Reform"
- 1979 *New York University Legal Symposium, New York*  
March lecture on "Securing Gay Rights Through Constitutional Litigation"
- 1978 *Los Angeles Free Clinic, Hotline Counselors Training*  
December presentation on "Giving Accurate Information on Sexual Law"
- 1978 *National Conference/Gay Academic Union, Los Angeles*  
November presentation on "Legal Aspects of Gay Relationships"
- 1977 *Constitutional Rights Foundation, Los Angeles*  
April presentation on "Teens' Sexual Rights and Responsibilities"
- 1977 *Annual Conference on Women and the Law, Madison, Wisconsin*  
March presentation on "Sexual Orientation as a Suspect Classification"
- 1975 *Conference: Gays and the Federal Government, Washington, D.C.*  
Panel on "Role of State and Federal Government in Penal Law Reform"

## **Media Relations**

### Press Conferences

- 2016 Spectrum Institute – San Diego, CA  
Planned and conducted a [press conference](#) in connection with the filing of a [complaint](#) with the United States Department of Justice against the San Diego County Superior Court for violating the voting rights of [David Rector](#), a former national Public Radio producer who had his voting rights taken away in a conservatorship proceeding. The event resulted in national print and broadcast media coverage. [KPBS TV reporting](#). [LA Times](#). [CBS News](#).
- 2015 Spectrum Institute – Los Angeles, CA  
Planned and conducted a press conference in connection with the filing of complaints with the United States Department of Justice against the Los Angeles County Superior Court for violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act in probate conservatorship proceedings. The event resulted in print and broadcast media coverage. [Press Release #1](#). [Press Release #2](#).
- 2014 Spectrum Institute – Los Angeles, CA  
Planned and conducted a press conference in connection with the filing of a complaint with the United States Department of Justice against the Los

Angeles County Superior Court for voting rights violations against people with disabilities in conservatorships. The event resulted in national coverage by print and broadcast media. [Press Release](#)

- 2005 *Emancipation Project – Salt Lake City, Utah*  
Planned and conducted a [press conference](#) inside the State Capitol Complex to “blow the whistle” on child abuse at a private residential facility for children in Utah. Prepared a media advisory and press release. Wrote the Executive Summary to the report released that day to the media and government officials. Was the lead speaker at the press conference. The event resulted in stories in both major newspapers and news coverage by local television stations.
- 2004 *Union Rescue Mission – Los Angeles, California*  
Participated as one of four [speakers](#) at a news conference to announce the reopening of the Single Women’s Shelter operated by the Union Rescue Mission in downtown Los Angeles. The event resulted in news coverage on local radio stations and appearances on a talk radio show. [Press Release](#).
- 1998 *Spectrum Institute – San Francisco, California*  
Planned and conducted a press conference in San Francisco to announce the filing of a complaint with the California Labor Commissioner by a firefighter employed by the City of Oakland. The complaint alleged that the city violated state law by refusing to provide health benefits to the female domestic partner of the male firefighter. Prepared a media advisory and press release. The event resulted in a news story in the San Francisco Chronicle and Oakland Tribune as well as news coverage on local television.
- 1998 *Foray v. Bell Atlantic – New York City*  
Planned and conducted a [press conference](#) in New York to announce the filing of a lawsuit in federal court challenging a domestic partner benefits program of Bell Atlantic as illegal sex discrimination because it excluded opposite-sex couples. The court [ruled](#) that against that claim.
- 1993 *California Insurance Commissioner – Los Angeles, California*  
Participated as a key speaker at a news conference called by Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi to release a report written by me for his office. The report contained 14 recommendations on how the Department of Insurance could combat marital status discrimination in the insurance industry. The event resulted in stories in the Los Angeles Times and Sacramento Bee, as well as Underwriter’s Report, a trade publication for the insurance industry.
- 1991 *San Francisco District Attorney – San Francisco, California*  
Planned and coordinated two press conferences held on the same day, one in the morning called by the Los Angeles City Attorney and the other in the afternoon called by the San Francisco District Attorney. The events were suggested by me as a way to pressure the State Labor Commissioner to protect private sector workers from sexual orientation discrimination. The prosecutors threatened to file criminal charges against offending employers unless the Labor Commissioner offered an administrative alternative. This resulted in the Labor Commissioner, two days later, agreeing to accept and process such complaints. [Press Conference Background Materials](#).

- 1990 *Family Diversity Project – Los Angeles, California*  
Planned and conducted a press conference at the State Office Building in Los Angeles to announce a new and innovative “family registry” available through the office of the Secretary of State. This was the first such registry for nontraditional families available in any state. The event resulted in television news coverage as well as news stories in the Los Angeles Times, New York Times, San Francisco Examiner, and other papers throughout the nation. [Press Packet](#).
- 1990 *Los Angeles City Attorney – Los Angeles, California*  
Participated as a key speaker at a news conference called by City Attorney James Hahn to release a report, written by me, documenting widespread discrimination by businesses against unmarried consumers. A story about the report appeared on the front page of the Los Angeles Times on the day of the press conference, which drew the broadcast media to the event. This resulted in news stories on all local television stations, CBS Evening News, and an appearance for me as a guest in New York on NBC’s Today Show. [LA Times](#).

#### Press Releases

- 2021 [Report Calls for Greater Accountability and More Consistency in Conservatorship Defense Services](#)
- 2021 [“Supreme Court Asked to Strengthen the Right to Counsel for Thousands of Conservatees”](#)
- 2021 [“California Conservatorship Reform Bill Sent to Governor”](#)
- 2021 [“Report Asks Governor Gavin Newsom to Protect the Civil Rights of Conservatees with Developmental Disabilities”](#)
- 2021 [“Abusive Guardianship Case Pending in Washington Supreme Court”](#)
- 2019 [“Private Film Screening & Panel Discussion: THE GUARDIANS Documentary”](#)
- 2018 [“Complaint Alleges Judges in Sacramento and Nearby Counties Are Violating State and Federal Disability Rights Laws”](#)
- 2018 [“New Study Reveals Rights of Texans Being Violated in Court Guardianships”](#)
- 2018 [“Texas Judicial Council Admits Widespread Non-Compliance by Guardians of Seniors and People with Disabilities”](#)
- 2018 [“New Film Exposes Nationwide Abuses of Seniors and People with Disabilities, Calls for Major Reforms in Guardianship Proceedings](#)
- 2016 [“Spectrum Institute to File a Class-Action Complaint with the DOJ to RESTORE the Voting Rights of Thousands with Disabilities in California”](#)
- 2015 [“Department of Justice Opens Voting Rights Investigation of California Judiciary”](#)
- 2015 [“The Power of Many: Class Action Complaint for People with Developmental](#)

## Disabilities Filed with the U. S. Department of Justice

- 2015 ["The Power of One: One by One, People with Developmental Disabilities are Stepping Forward to Assert Their Civil Rights"](#)
- 2015 ["Message to Presiding Judge: "Restore the Voting Rights of Thousands"](#)
- 2014 ["Voting Rights Complaint Filed with U.S. Department of Justice"](#)
- 2005 ["Representative Miller Introduces Legislation to Curb Child Abuse in Residential Treatment Programs"](#)
- 2005 ["Blowing the whistle on child abuse in Utah"](#)
- 1991 ["Appeal is Filed from Court Ruling Declaring Sexual Orientation Ordinance to be Invalid"](#)
- 1990 ["California First to Allow Families to Register with State"](#)
- 1987 ["Auto Club 'Spouse-Associate' Membership Policy to be Challenged by Same Sex Couples"](#)
- 1979 ["California Supreme Court renders landmark decision in sexual solicitation case"](#)
- 1979 ["Statewide Housing Protection Now Available to California Gays"](#)
- 1977 ["Municipal Court Judge Liberalizes Policy on Gays"](#)
- 1975 ["After Sodomy Reform – What Next?"](#)
- 1973 [Gay Community Center Announces Admission to the Bar by Gay Law Students](#)
- 1972 ["Gay Law Students Operate Arraignment Intervention Program with Gay Community Services Center"](#)

## **Media Relations**

### Television Appearances

- 2022 ABC10 TV Sacramento – [\*The Price of Care: Taken by the State\*](#)  
Interviewed in several segments of this docu-series by investigative reporter Andie Judson regarding California's probate conservatorship system.
- 2021 ABC10 TV Sacramento – [\*The Price of Care: Reforming Conservatorships\*](#)  
Appeared on this segment which focused on courts denying a proposed conservator the right to choose their own attorney to defend them
- 2016 Vice News – [\*The Right to be Counted\*](#)  
Appeared in this national television broadcast regarding the quest of David Rector to regain his right to vote – a right which was taken from him by a court in a conservatorship proceeding in California. Coleman and his Spectrum Institute successfully led the fight for the restoration of David's right to vote.

- 2016 *KPBS – San Diego – [Disabled San Diego Man Seeks to Have Voting Rights Restored](#)*  
 Appeared in this television report about the quest of David Rector to have his right to vote restored.
- 2016 *ABC10 News – San Diego – [Disabled San Diegan Wants to Get His Vote Back](#)*  
 Appeared in this television report about the quest of David Rector to have his right to vote restored.
- 2006 *[Montana PBS – Who’s Watching the Kids?](#)*  
 Interviewed on camera for this PBS documentary exposing abuses in “boot camps” and “behavior modification” facilities for troubled teenagers. My segment discussed how I spearheaded a campaign to rescue a teenage girl, herself a victim of child abuse at home, who was placed by parents who had her abducted and transported to a facility in Montana. Program aired on September 14.
- 2006 *[CNN – Anderson Cooper 360](#) (Click link to watch on YouTube)*  
 Interviewed for a segment about the movement for equal rights for unmarried Americans. Program aired on December 20. [Transcript](#) published on website.
- 2004 *KCET, a PBS station in Los Angeles – Life and Times*  
 Interviewed by reporter Toni Guinard on March 12 about equal rights for unmarried people. Program aired later in March.
- 2004 *CNN-fn A Financial Network – Your Money*  
 Interviewed for a segment about financial issues facing unmarried couples. Program aired on August 11.
- 2004 *WCCO-TV - Minneapolis*  
 Interviewed for a segment about the movement for equal benefits for singles. An [article](#) on that subject was published on the station’s website.
- 2004 *CNN-fn A Financial Network – The Flip Side*  
 Interviewed for a segment about the need for economic fairness for single people. Program aired on March 8.
- 2003 *BBC News*  
 Interviewed by reporter Paul Reaney for a segment about discrimination experienced by unmarried Americans. Program aired on March 13.
- 2003 *CNN – Anderson Cooper 360*  
 Interviewed for segment on equal rights for singles. Program aired on October 16.
- 2003 *CNN – Lou Dobbs*  
 Interviewed for segment about financial issues affecting single people. Program aired on October 10.
- 2000 *Fox News – Shepard Smith*  
 Interviewed for segment about equal rights for single people and unmarried couples. Program aired on October 25.
- 2000 *KCET - a PBS station in Los Angeles – Life and Times*  
 Interviewed by Val Zavalla and Warren Olney for segment entitled “Thinkers, Shakers, and Newsmakers” about employment discrimination against unmarried workers. Program aired on April 19.

- 1997 *Fox News*  
Interviewed for news segment airing in August on discrimination against singles.
- 1994 *KCAL – Channel 9 – Los Angeles - Crosstalk*  
Interviewed for a half hour show airing in October focusing on discrimination by religious landlords against unmarried couples.
- 1993 [KCAL – Channel 9 – Los Angeles – News](#)  
News segment on report written by Thomas F. Coleman for Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi calling for an end to marital status discrimination by insurance companies.
- 1991 *NBC – Today Show*  
Appeared as a guest on a segment airing in May about discrimination against unmarried couples.
- 1991 *ABC – World News Tonight*  
Interviewed for segment on national news program focusing on a case in the California Court of Appeal authorizing landlords to discriminate against unmarried couples if renting to them would violate the landlord's religious beliefs. Program aired on September 14.
- 1991 *KCET - PBS – [By the Year 2000 – We Are Family](#)*  
Interviewed for this documentary airing in April about changes in American family structures and how family diversity is now the societal norm. Consultant to the producer. A variety of family relationships were explored, including a same-sex couple, a step family, seniors sharing a home, and a single-parent guardianship family. [Promotional Brochure](#). A [poster](#) depicted family diversity in graphics, sign language, and braille.
- 1990 *NBC – Today Show*  
Went to New York and appeared on a live segment in which I was interviewed by Bryant Gumbel about the report released in Los Angeles the prior day focusing on discrimination against unmarried consumers. Program aired on March 30
- 1990 CBS Evening News with Dan Rather, National Broadcast  
Appeared in news segment on the "Findings of Task Force on Marital Status" Aired in March.
- 1989 [ABC – Nightline](#)  
Appeared as a guest on live television debating Gary Bauer of the right-wing Family Research Council about the decision of the New York Court of Appeal ruling that the term "family" is broad enough to include rights for unmarried couples. Program aired in July.
- 1989 [Fox News – Los Angeles](#)  
Interviewed on news segment on veto of Gov. Pete Wilson of bill passed by legislature to ban sexual orientation discrimination by private employers
- 1989 *KCBS-TV, Los Angeles*  
Interviewed on April show focusing on "Gay Bashing in Los Angeles."
- 1988 *KHJ-TV / Channel 9, Los Angeles*  
Appeared on "Community Feedback" to discuss "Family Diversity in Los

Angeles." Aired in September.

- 1984 *KCBS-TV, Los Angeles*  
Editorial Reply on Health Dept. Response to AIDS. Aired in November.
- 1983 *KNXT-TV, Channel 2, Los Angeles*  
Editorial Reply in January: "The Privacy Commission's Agenda"
- 1983 *CBS-TV, Channel 10, Sacramento*  
"The Law and You: A Look at Privacy in California." Aired in January.

## Media Relations

### Radio Appearances

- 2021 *KGMI – Washington State – The Morning News with Mike Davis*  
[Interviewed](#) by host regarding abuses in the guardianship system.
- 2016 *KPBS Radio – San Diego – Midday Edition*  
[Interviewed](#) for a segment airing on August 30 regarding the quest to restore the voting rights of David Rector which had been taken away from him in a conservatorship proceeding.
- 2016 *NPR Morning Edition*  
[Interviewed](#) for this national broadcast on September 4 titled "Disabled and Fighting for the Right to Vote"
- 2007 *KAHL – San Antonio, Texas – Eliza Sonneland Show*  
Interviewed on discrimination against singles. Program aired on January 18.
- 2006 *National Public Radio – Justice Talking*  
Debated Maggie Gallagher, President of the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, about the need for equal rights for single and unmarried Americans. Program aired on September 11.
- 2006 *KCSN – Northridge, California – Shrink Wrap*  
Interviewed by hosts Phyllis Chase and Jim Walton about discrimination against unmarried consumers, workers, and taxpayers. Program aired on January 10.
- 2005 *KTAR – Phoenix, Arizona – Ted Simons Show*  
Interviewed about workplace discrimination. Program aired on December 27.
- 2004 *KTAR – Phoenix, Arizona – Evening News with Katie Dozer*  
Interviewed about whether marriage is a cure-all for social and economic problems in society. Program aired on August 26.
- 2004 *WTVN – Columbus, Ohio – Sterling Show*  
Interviewed on issues affecting unmarried Americans. Program aired on July 30.
- 2004 *KEX – Portland, Oregon – Mark and Dave Show*  
Guest on a talk radio show to discuss issues affecting unmarried Americans. Program aired on July 20.
- 2004 *KFWB – Los Angeles, California*  
Interviewed by reporter Bill Polish about issues affecting unmarried Americans.



Program aired on June 26.

- 2004      *WBIX – Boston, Massachusetts – Early Exchange*  
Interviewed by hosts Dave Anthony and Bonnie Bleidt about economic concerns of unmarried Americans. Program aired on June 25.
- 2004      *WAMU – Washington, DC – Kojo Nnamdi Show*  
Interviewed on this American University Radio program about the need of employers to treat single workers fairly as they create "family friendly" workplace policies to help working parents. Program aired on May 10.
- 2004      *KGO – San Francisco, California – Afternoon News with Rosie and Greg*  
Interviewed about the need for more fairness for single people in a society which is focused heavily on marriage rights. Program aired on March 1.
- 2004      *WFMP – Minneapolis, Minnesota – Kevyn Burger Show*  
Guest on a talk radio show to discuss issues affecting unmarried Americans. Program aired on February 24.
- 2004      *WEZU – St. Paul, Minnesota – Ruth Koscielak Show*  
Guest on a talk radio show to discuss issues affecting unmarried Americans. Program aired on February 17.
- 2004      *KTAR – Phoenix, Arizona – Real Life with Dave Leibowitz*  
Guest on a talk radio show to discuss issues affecting unmarried Americans. Program aired on February 17.
- 2003      *KIRO – National Syndication – Dave Ross Show*  
Guest on a talk radio show to discuss equal rights for single people. Program aired on November 20.
- 2003      *Fox News Radio – National Syndication – Fox News Live with Alan Colmes*  
Debated Robert Rector, Senior Research Fellow with the Heritage Foundation, about equal rights for single people. Program aired on November 20.
- 2003      *KOMO – Seattle, Washington*  
Interviewed about tax reform for single people. Program aired on May 23.
- 2003      *WNPQ – Canton, Ohio – Mike Downey Singles Hour*  
Interviewed about Unmarried America's Singles Friendly Workplace Campaign. Program aired on May 17.
- 2002      *KFI – Los Angeles – John and Ken show*  
Interviewed about issues facing unmarried Americans in their daily life and at work. Program aired on September 24.
- 2001      *Minnesota Public Radio – Midmorning Show*  
Guest on a talk radio show to discuss a recent trip to Congress and unfair taxation of unmarried Americans. Program aired on May 9.
- 2001      *CBS Radio – National Syndication – "Living Single" Series*  
Interviewed in two segments of a 10-segment series of two minute spots about single people in America. Segments focused on solo singles, single moms, single dads, tv and singles, single seniors, singles as consumers, singles in the suburbs, and family diversity. Spots aired during the month of August.

- 2000 *KFWB – Los Angeles, California*  
Interviewed about the USA Today Advertising Campaign of the American Association for Single People calling attention to the fact that presidential candidates were ignoring single voters. Program aired on October 4.
- 1999 *APRN – Alaska Public Radio – Talk of Alaska*  
Interviewed about a federal appeals court ruling allowing landlords to use their religious beliefs as a legal excuse to discriminate against unmarried couples. Program aired on February 16.
- 1996 *KNX – Los Angeles, California – Gil Gross Show*  
Interviewed about a California Supreme Court ruling that religious landlords are not exempt from fair housing laws prohibiting discrimination against unmarried couples. Program aired on April 10.
- 1991 *KPPC – Public Radio – Pasadena, California*  
Interviewed about a new public registry for nontraditional families operated by the California Secretary of State. Program aired on December 13.
- 1991 *National Public Radio – National Syndication – Weekend Edition*  
Interviewed about a California Court of Appeal decision that religious landlords can cite their beliefs to obtain an exemption from fair housing laws prohibiting discrimination against unmarried couples. Program aired on December 1.
- 1990 *KPFK-FM, Cambridge Forum, Los Angeles*  
Interviewed about the findings of the City Attorney's Consumer Task Force. Aired in April.
- 1990 *KMPC Radio, Glen Gordon Show, Los Angeles*  
Interviewed about "Marital Status Discrimination Against Consumers." Aired in January.
- 1989 *KPPC, Larry Mantel Show, Pasadena, California*  
Guest on October show discussing marital status discrimination.
- 1989 *KQRS, Jack Hicks Show, Minneapolis, Minnesota*  
Guest on September show discussing "Housing Rights for Unmarried Couples."
- 1989 *KMOX – St. Louis, Missouri – Bob Hardy Show*  
Appeared on talk radio show focusing on the definition of "family" and the growing trend of employers to offer domestic partner benefits to unmarried partners of employees. Program aired on August 21.
- 1989 *ABC National Radio, Tom Snyder Show*  
Appeared to speak about "Family Diversity in America." Aired in August.
- 1989 *KNBC Radio, Kansas City*  
Appeared to speak about "Family Diversity in America." Aired in August.
- 1989 *KIRO Radio, Seattle, Washington*  
Appeared to speak about "Family Diversity in America." Aired in August.
- 1989 *WAMU – Washington, DC – Diane Rehm Show*

Appeared on talk radio show focusing on the definition of “family” and the growing trend of employers to offer domestic partner benefits to unmarried partners of employees. Program aired on June 12.

- 1989 *KKLA – Los Angeles, California – Christian Talk Radio*  
Appeared on talk radio show to discuss a ruling by New York’s highest court that the definition of “family” is not limited to relationships based on blood, marriage, and adoption, but can include unmarried couples too. Program aired on July 7.
- 1988 *KPFK Public Radio, Los Angeles*  
Appeared on “Cambridge Forum” to discuss Family Diversity in Los Angeles. Program aired in December.
- 1989 *KGIL Radio, Carol Hemmingway Show, Los Angeles*  
Guest on July show to discuss the “Definition of Family.”
- 1983 *KABC – Los Angeles, California – Billy Rose Show*  
Interviewed about the report of the California Commission on Personal Privacy. Program aired in January.
- 1982 *KFI-FM – , Los Angeles*  
December guest speaking on “One on One: The Privacy Commission's Report”
- 1982 *KQED-FM – San Francisco – Chuck Finney Show*  
Guest in December to discuss “Personal Privacy Today”
- 1980 *WIND-FM – Chicago*  
Guest on October show to discuss "Your Sexual Privacy Rights"
- 1980 *WDET-FM, Detroit*  
Guest in May to discuss "Status of Sexual Civil Liberties in Michigan"

## **Media Relations**

- Books (Coleman is Quoted)
- 2023 Diane Dimond, *We’re Here to Help: When Guardianship Goes Wrong* (Brandeis University Press)
- 2012 Leigh Ann Wheeler, *How Sex Became a Civil Liberty* (Oxford University Press)
- 2011 Bella DePaulo, *Singleism: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How to Stop It* (Doubledoor Books)
- 2008 Vern Bullough, Ph.D., *Before Stonewall: Activists for Gay and Lesbian Rights in Historical Context* (Routledge)
- 1992 Suzanne Sherman, *Lesbian and Gay Marriage: Private Commitments, Public Ceremonies* (Temple University Press)
- 1992 Diane Whitacre, *Will You Be Mine?*
- Magazines (Coleman is Quoted)

*International*

2003 *Mujer – Santiago, Chile – November 23*  
Beatrice Burgos, “La Batalla de los “no casados”

*National*

2020 *Mad in America / October 25*  
[“Voting While “Mentally Ill”: A Legacy of Discrimination”](#)

2005 *Bust – February-March*  
Diane Mapes, “Single Minded” - [Part I](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#), [Part 5](#), [Part 6](#)

2005 *Society for Human Resource Management – December 22*  
[“The Balancing Act: Ensure Equal Treatment for Parents and Non-Parents”](#)

2004 *Forbes – September 16*  
[“Unmarried Homeowners Face Higher Taxes”](#)

2003 *American Demographics – Cover Story – November*  
[“A Place for One”](#) / quoted in analysis portion of a series of stories on singles

2003 *BusinessWeek – Cover Story – October 20*  
Michelle Conlin, [“Unmarried America: It’s About to Constitute the New Majority”](#)

2002 *National Journal – Cover Story – April 13*  
Michael Steel, [“Singles in Search of Clout”](#)

2002 *Pentecostal Evangel – News Digest – February 27*  
[“Single-Minded Devotion: Unmarried ranks offer ministry opportunities”](#)

2000 *American Demographics – November/December*  
Rebecca Gardyn, [“Unmarried Bliss”](#)

1998 *National Journal – Issues & Ideas – September 19*  
Shawn Zeller, “All in the So-Called Family”

1995 *Human Rights – American Bar Association – Winter*  
Jerry Demuth, [“Not in My Apartment”](#)

1994 *Glamour – July*  
Timothy Gower, “Cracking Down on Shacking Up”

1992 *Parade – Sunday Magazine – November 22*  
Bernard Gavzer, [“What is a Family?”](#)

1990 *McCalls – May*  
Philip Gutis, [“Stepparents Need Legal Clout”](#)

1989 *Glamour – November*  
Editorial: [“Who is Your Family?”](#)

- 1989 *Time* – November 20  
Walter Isaacson, "[Should Gays Have Marriage Rights?](#)"
- 1989 *U.S. News and World Report* – April 21  
"[The Family: A New Kind of Spouse in the House](#)"
- 1981 *Chic* – September Issue  
"Sexual Minorities: Protecting Your Rights"

#### *State and Local*

- 2002 *Virginia Business* – October  
Jack Milligan, "[Employee Benefits: Unfair to Singles?](#)"
- 2000 *Los Angeles Times Magazine* – April 9  
Michael D'Antonia, "Unmarried Bliss"
- 1991 *Personal – Magazine of Sunday Times Union, Albany NY* – August 11  
Rick Karlin, "Feeling Single, Seeing Double"
- 1990 *Dollars and Sense* – Somerville, Massachusetts – June  
Patricia Horn, "To Love and To Cherish: Redefining the Family"

### **Media Relations**

Podcasts (Coleman is Quoted)

- 2021 *Unpacked – Nova Podcasts* – [The Conservatorship](#)  
Unpacked is an investigative podcast that "delves into the world's most curious and complex stories." In this episode, investigative reporter Edwina Stott unpacks the story of Britney Spears by examining how the media, her family and the general public have played a part in Britney being forced into a conservatorship. Coleman is interviewed on legal aspects.
- 2021 *Defiance – Everybody Loves Britney* – [Part III \(Toxic\)](#)  
Defiance News released several episodes of a podcast focusing on the abusive conservatorship of entertainer Britney Spears and several other cases involving civil rights violations by the conservatorship system against adults whose ages range from 30 to 80. [Coleman](#) appeared in Part III of the series.

### **Media Relations**

Newspapers (Coleman is Quoted)

#### *International*

- 2006 *The Star – Malaysia* – December 31  
Foo Yee Ping, "[The Art of Not Saying 'I Do'](#)"
- 2005 *La Nacion – Argentina* – June 12  
Celina Chatruc, "[Los Solteros Del Mundo Se Unen Para Reclamar Sus](#)

Derechos

2004 *Globe and Mail – Toronto, Ontario, Canada – July 3*  
Tralee Pearce, “One is not the Loneliest Number”

*National, Blogs, and Wire Services*

2023 *Bay Area Reporter – Dec. 6*  
John Ferrannini, “[Attorney reflects on his years of fighting for equality](#)”

2023 *Unmarried Equality – Sept. 23*  
Bella DePaulo, “[The Census Bureau Commemorates Singles Week Because of Thomas F. Coleman](#)”

2022 *Bay Area Reporter – Oct. 1*  
Eric Burkett, “[LGBTQ History Month: 'Memory Book' details history of 1970s-era LGBTQ attorneys in US](#)”

2013 *The Advocacy Monitor – Oct. 30*  
“[Disability and Abuse Project Report Finds Rampant Abuse, Flawed Response Systems](#)”

2016 *Reveal News – Center for Investigative Reporting – October 31*  
Shoshana Walter, “[Disabled and disenfranchised: Families fight to restore voting rights](#)”

2016 *Vice News – October 29*  
Caroline Modarressy-Tehrani, “[One disabled man's fight to restore his right to vote](#)”

2016 *Vice News – October 21*  
Caroline Modarressy-Tehrani, “[Thousands of Americans with mental disabilities may be improperly barred from voting](#)”

2016 *Associated Press – National Syndication – August 30*  
Guillermo Savilla, “[San Diego Judge Rejects Disabled Man's Petition To Vote — For Now](#)”

2014 *Disability Scoop – National Distribution – July 11*  
Shaun Heasley, “[Voters With Special Needs Allegedly Disenfranchised](#)”

2010 *Bella DePaulo Blog – Sept. 20*  
Thomas F. Coleman, “[How Did Singles' Week Happen?](#)”

2007 *Associated Press – National Syndication – March 20*  
Megan Scott, “[Books: Meet the Smug Single](#)”

2006 *Columbia News Service – National Syndication – 12-21-06 to 2-4-07*  
Liz Kim, “[Alone No More: Singles Fight for their Rights](#)”  
Published by papers in Orlando, Lakeland, Naples, St. Louis, Winston-Salem

2006 *USA Today – National Distribution – July 12*  
Sharon Jason, “[Society Switches Focus Away From Children](#)”

Also published by papers in Arizona, Michigan, Tennessee, and Delaware

- 2006 *Medill News Service – May 10*  
Kelly Riddel, "[Do employers take advantage of single workers?](#)"
- 2006 *Knight Ridder Newspapers – National Syndication – May 7*  
Lisa Miller, "[Satisfyingly Single](#)"
- 2006 *Gannett News Service – National Distribution – February 12*  
Jennifer Brooks, "[Singles Feel Singled Out on Valentines Day](#)"  
Published by papers in Oregon, New Jersey, and Montana
- 2005 *Knight Ridder Newspapers – National Syndication – October 18*  
Lisa Miller, "[The Singles Stigma](#)"
- 2005 *Associated Press – National Distribution – October 17*  
Paul Davenport, "[Domestic Partners Focus of Marriage Debate in Arizona](#)"
- 2005 *Bureau of National Affairs – September 26*  
Sue Darcey, "[When Employees Take Time Off for Parenting, Childless Co-Workers May Feel Resentment](#)"
- 2005 *Associated Press – National Distribution – September 2*  
David Caruso, "[More Americans Living Alone, Especially in Manhattan](#)"
- 2005 *Gannett News Service – February 4*  
Jennifer Brooks, "[Being happily single has a hitch: Lack of benefits married couples enjoy](#)"
- 2004 *Associated Press – National Distribution – December 2*  
Genaro Armas, "[I Do, I Do, Just Not Yet: More in America Putting Off Marriage](#)"  
Published in 150 newspapers throughout the nation.
- 2004 *Fox News Channel – August 13*  
"[Campaigns Consider Singles in 2004 Race](#)"
- 2004 *Wall Street Journal – National Distribution – June 24*  
Jeff Zazlow, "[The Singles Lobby: Unmarried People Seek Economic Perks](#)"
- 2004 *Wall Street Journal – National Distribution – June 15*  
"[Cities Launch Programs to Lure College Graduates](#)"  
Republished by local papers in Florida, Ohio, and Texas
- 2004 *USA Today – National Distribution – July 12*  
Rick Hampson and Karen S. Peterson, "[The State of Our Unions](#)"
- 2004 *Wall Street Journal – National Distribution – June 24*  
"[The Singles Lobby: Unmarried People Seek Economic Perks Enjoyed by Couples](#)"
- 2004 *Associated Press – National Distribution – June 18*  
"[Labor contract includes benefits for same-sex partners of state workers in](#)"



Illinois

- 2004      *USA Weekend – National Distribution – February 13-15*  
            [“Singles of the World Unite”](#)
- 2003      *USA Today – National Distribution – October 20*  
            Opposing View: [“Marriage is No Cure All”](#)
- 2003      *CNS News Service – National Distribution – September 23*  
            [“Singles’ Group Calls Marriage Benefits ‘Discrimination’”](#)
- 2003      *USA Today – National Distribution – January 9*  
            Sandra Block, “Bush Tax Cut Proposal: Families, the Rich Stand to Gain Most”
- 2002      *Associated Press – National Distribution – February 8*  
            Genaro Armas, “Most of Us Are the Marrying Kind, Census Says”  
            Published by papers in Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, and Maryland
- 2001      *Associated Press – National Distribution – November 26*  
            Eileen Alt Powell, [“Being Single Offers Unique Financial Challenges”](#)
- 2001      *Associated Press – National Distribution – May 26*  
            [“Singles Demand Some Political Clout”](#)  
            Published by papers in Michigan, New Jersey, Louisiana, and North Carolina
- 2001      *Associated Press – National Distribution – May 18*  
            Genaro Armas, [“Increase Seen in Single Father Homes”](#)  
            Published by papers in Florida, California, Kansas, and Texas
- 2001      *Associated Press – National Distribution – May 20*  
            Genaro Armas, [“Number of Unwed Couples Rises”](#)  
            Published by papers in California and Florida
- 2001      *Singles News – National Distribution – March*  
            [“Unmarried Americans Need Tax Relief Too”](#)
- 2000      *Associated Press – National Distribution – October 23*  
            Mike Schneider, [“Presidential Race Ignoring Singles”](#)  
            Published by papers in Alabama, Colorado, Ohio, Utah, and Washington D.C.
- 1992      *Parade Magazine – National Distribution – November 22*  
            [“What is a Family?”](#)
- 1992      *Wall Street Journal – National Distribution – June 12*  
            Gustav Niebuhr, “California Top Court to Wrestle with ‘Sin’ vs. Tenants’ Rights”
- 1992      *Wall Street Journal – National Distribution – June 12*  
            [“Law: Jobless Benefits Sometimes Can Go to Unmarried Partner, Court Says”](#)
- 1992      *The Advocate – National Distribution – January 14*  
            John Gallagher, “Los Angeles Case Further Confuses Job Bias Picture”

- 1991 *Wall Street Journal – National Distribution – February 5*  
Arthur Hayes, "[Singles' Rights Activists Target Corporations](#)"
- 1991 *Washington Post – Nov. 28*  
Henry Weinstein, "[Unmarried Couple Loses Rent Bias Case](#)"
- 1991 *Business Insurance – March 11*  
"[Few offer benefits to unwed couples](#)"
- 1989 *The Advocate – National Distribution – August 15*  
Peter Freiberg, "[Two Gays Can Be a Family, Court Says](#)"
- 1989 *The Advocate – National Distribution – August 1*  
Peter Freiberg, "[Wedding Bell Blues](#)"
- 1988 *The Advocate – National Distribution – July 5*  
Peter Freiberg, "[Family Matters](#)"
- 1989 *The Advocate – National Distribution – September 1*  
Peter Freiberg, "[Sex Education and the Gay Issue](#)"
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Bob de Carteret, "[Sexual Solicitation Statute Given New Interpretation](#)"
- 1977 *Los Angeles Times – Los Angeles, California – October 7*  
Claudia Luther, "[Probation Condition Barring ties with Gays Challenged](#)"
- 1975 *NewsWest – Los Angeles, California – December 12*  
Donald Warman, "[Gay Lawyer's Crusade: When Coleman Wins, We All Win](#)"
- 1975 *NewsWest – Los Angeles, California – September 19*  
"[Van Nuys Judge Voids Loitering Law](#)"
- 1975 *Daily Journal – Los Angeles, California – August 11*  
Judy Willmore, "[Council Members Split on Lewd Conduct Bill](#)"
- 1975 *NewsWest – Los Angeles, California – August 8*  
"[Brown Bill Contains Some No-Nos](#)"
- 1975 *NewsWest – Los Angeles, California – July 25*  
"[New Periodical Puts Emphasis on Sex Laws](#)"
- 1975 *NewsWest – Los Angeles, California – June 13*  
Douglass Sarff, "[Is Brown Bill Necessary?](#)"
- 1975 *NewsWest – Los Angeles, California – June 27*  
[Coleman: "What Gay Pride Means to Me"](#)
- 1975 *Daily Journal – Los Angeles, California – May 5*  
"[Homosexuals Again Dominate Session of City Commission](#)"
- 1975 *Daily Journal – Los Angeles, California – April 21*  
"[At Least Two Thomas Colemans are L.A. Attorneys](#)"
- 1975 *Daily Journal – Los Angeles, California – April 7*  
Judy Willmore, "[Attorney Challenges Davis' Remarks About Homosexuals](#)"
- 1975 *Daily Journal – Los Angeles, California*  
[Articles](#): Lower Court Ruling – Probation Reform
- 1975 *Entertainment West – Los Angeles, California – April*  
Mike Manning, "[Gays Zap L.A. Police Commission](#)"

- 1974 *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – December 18  
["Police creep, crawl, peep / arrest 15 men"](#)
- 1974 *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – September 25  
["Role for Gays in New Law School"](#)
- 1974 *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – July 31  
["A Small Breakthrough Opens Wider as Straight Lawyers Start Listening"](#)
- 1974 *Daily Journal* – Los Angeles, California – September 19  
["Muni Court 'Streaking' Trial Opens"](#)
- 1974 *Daily Journal* – Los Angeles, California – September 4  
 Roger Grace, ["Sheriff, Police Chief Subpoened in Gay Case"](#)
- 1974 *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – May 22  
["Gay Sex Abnormal: City Attorney"](#)
- 1974 *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – May 22  
["Injunction Sought to Halt Lewd Conduct Law"](#)
- 1974 *Daily Journal* – Los Angeles, California – May 8  
["Gay Community Asks Slash in Police Budget"](#)
- 1974 *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – July 31  
["L.A. Turns Thumbs Down on Nudity"](#)
- 1974 *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – July 3  
["Police can't keep hands off Gays"](#)
- 1974 *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – July 3  
["The Law and Prostitution: What Are Lewd Acts for Money?"](#)
- 1974 *Evening Outlook* – Santa Monica, California – June 27  
 Glenn Barr, ["Nude Bathing Ban OK'd"](#)
- 1974 *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – May 22  
["Injunction Sought to Halt Lewd Conduct Law"](#)
- 1974 *Daily Journal* – Los Angeles, California – May 8  
 Johanna Newman, ["Gay Community Asks Slash in Police Budget"](#)
- 1974 *Los Angeles Times* – Los Angeles, California – May 8  
[Short News Item about Coleman's Testimony in City Council](#)
- 1974 *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – April 24  
 Joel Tlumak, ["Bar's ID Policy is Under Attack"](#)
- 1974 *Los Angeles Times* – Los Angeles, California – March 25  
 Dave Smith, ["Gays Fight Discrimination, Uncertain Laws"](#)
- 1974 [News Stories](#) on Bob Opel – "The Streaker"  
 Coleman's first jury trial had mixed results

- 1972      *The Advocate* – Los Angeles, California – September 13  
             [“ABA Ducks Gay Rights Issue . . . For Now”](#)
- 1972      *Star-News* – Pasadena, California – September 10  
             [“Gay Law Students Offer Legal Help for Homosexuals, Other Minorities”](#)

## Media Relations

### Trade Publications      (Coleman is Quoted)

- 2005      *Landlord Tenant Law Bulletin* – March 2005  
             Heather Gordon, “Refusing to Rent to Unmarried Couples”
- 2004      *Employee Benefits Rules – Current Developments* – January  
             “Work/Life Benefits: Employers Face Backlash from Childless”
- 2002      *Workforce – HR Trends and Tools for Business Results* – October  
             Eilene Zimmerman, [“Awards for Being Singles Friendly”](#)
- 1998      *Pension and Benefits Reporter* – May 11  
             “Oakland to Extend Benefits to Heterosexual Partners”
- 1993      *Underwriter’s Report – Weekly Insurance News Magazine* – August 5  
             Heinz Pulverman, [“Garamendi Issues Anti-Discrimination Report”](#)
- 1991      [Business Insurance](#) – March 11  
             Joanne Wojic, “Few Offer Benefits to Unwed Couples”

## YouTube

- 2022      Birds of a Feather Project – Clip from UCLA Video  
             [Formation of First Gay Law Student Organization in 1972](#)
- 2021      Conservatorship Abuse Awareness – [Town Hall Meeting](#)  
             [Announcement](#) – [Feature Story](#)
- 2021      Zealous Advocacy – Duties of Attorneys in Conservatorships  
             [Announcement](#) – [Webinar](#)
- 2019      Alameda County Board of Supervisors – Presentation  
             [The Need for Conservatorship Reform](#)
- 2017      Arc of California – Presentation  
             [Supported Decision-Making](#)
- 2017      Arc of Riverside – Interview  
             [Disability and Guardianship Project](#)
- 2017      Al Jazeera – Interview  
             [Disability and the US Election](#)

- 2016 Let's Talk Autism – Interview  
[Disability and Abuse Project](#)
- 2016 Arc of Riverside  
[Disability and Guardianship Project](#)
- 2015 Thomas F. Coleman – Interview  
[Disability Rights, Voting Rights: Time for Change](#)
- 2014 Arise America International – Interview  
[Voting Rights for the Disabled](#)
- 2013 Presentation by Thomas F. Coleman and others  
[Reception commemorating 40 years of practicing law](#)
- 2010 Gay Culture Edu – Interview  
[Gay Law Historical Perspective](#)
- 2009 Spectrum Institute – Book Release  
[Meet the Author of "The Domino Effect"](#)

## Photo Gallery



**High School Senior - 1966**



**Senior Prom - 1966**



**Tom (left) HS Graduation - 1966**



**College Graduation - 1970**





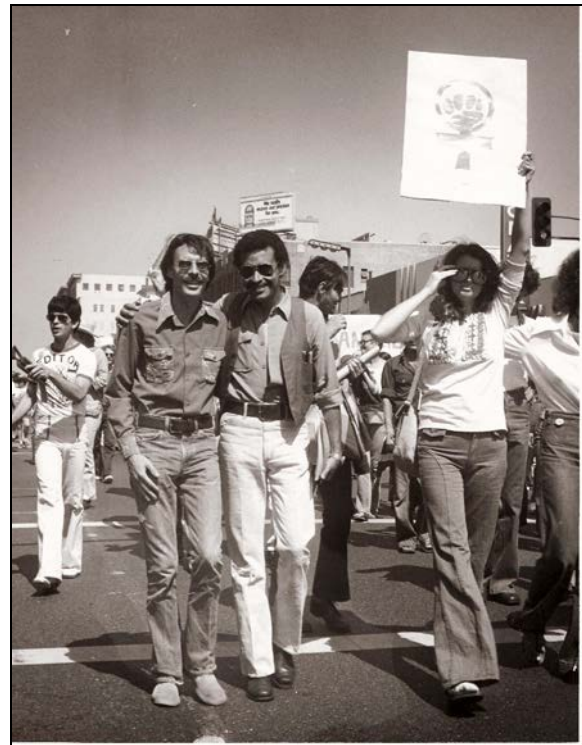
**Tom (center) in law school - 1973**



**First law office - Los Angeles - 1974**



**Bob Opel (right) - First Trial - 1974**  
**Opel "streaked" the LA City Council**

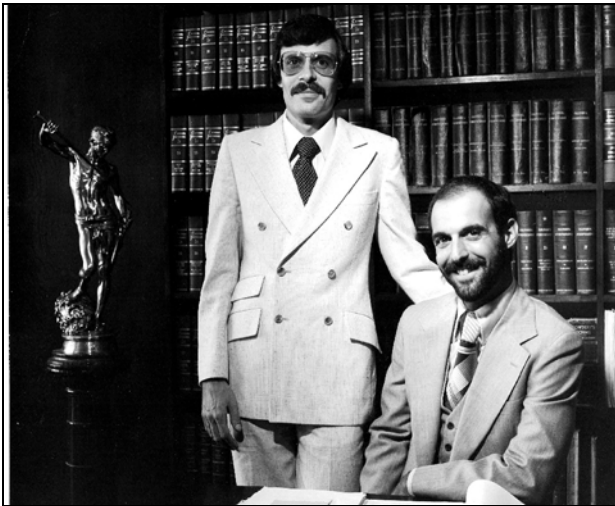


**Tom (left) at Hollywood Protest - 1975**

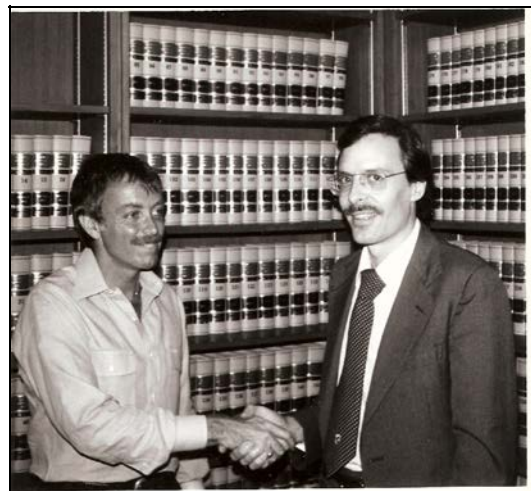




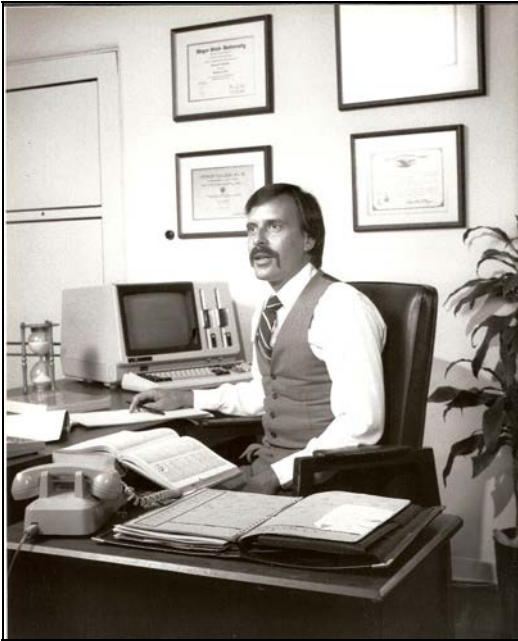
**Tom (editor) with a team of volunteers for the Sexual Law Reporter (1975 - 1979)**  
**From left: Wade Agurcia, Paula Davis, Don Gaudard, Tom Coleman, Susan Bonine,**  
**Tim Burns, Michael Wetherbee, and Dean Blake,**



**Tom (left) with law partner Steve Kelber - 1979**



**Steve Lachs (left) and Tom - 1979**  
**Steve was the first openly gay judge**



**Tom at his law office – 1984**



**Tom (right) with colleague Jay Kohorn - 1981**



**Tom (right) with Chris McCauley (left) and L. A. City Attorney Jim Hahn discussing the Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination - 1990**



**Tom (right) with Insurance Commission John Garamendi and members of the Marital Status Discrimination Workgroup. - 1994**





**Tom (center), Michael Vasquez (right) and staff of American Association for Single People at offices in Glendale, California – 2002**



**Tom and Michael at Unmarried America awards reception in Washington DC - 2003**

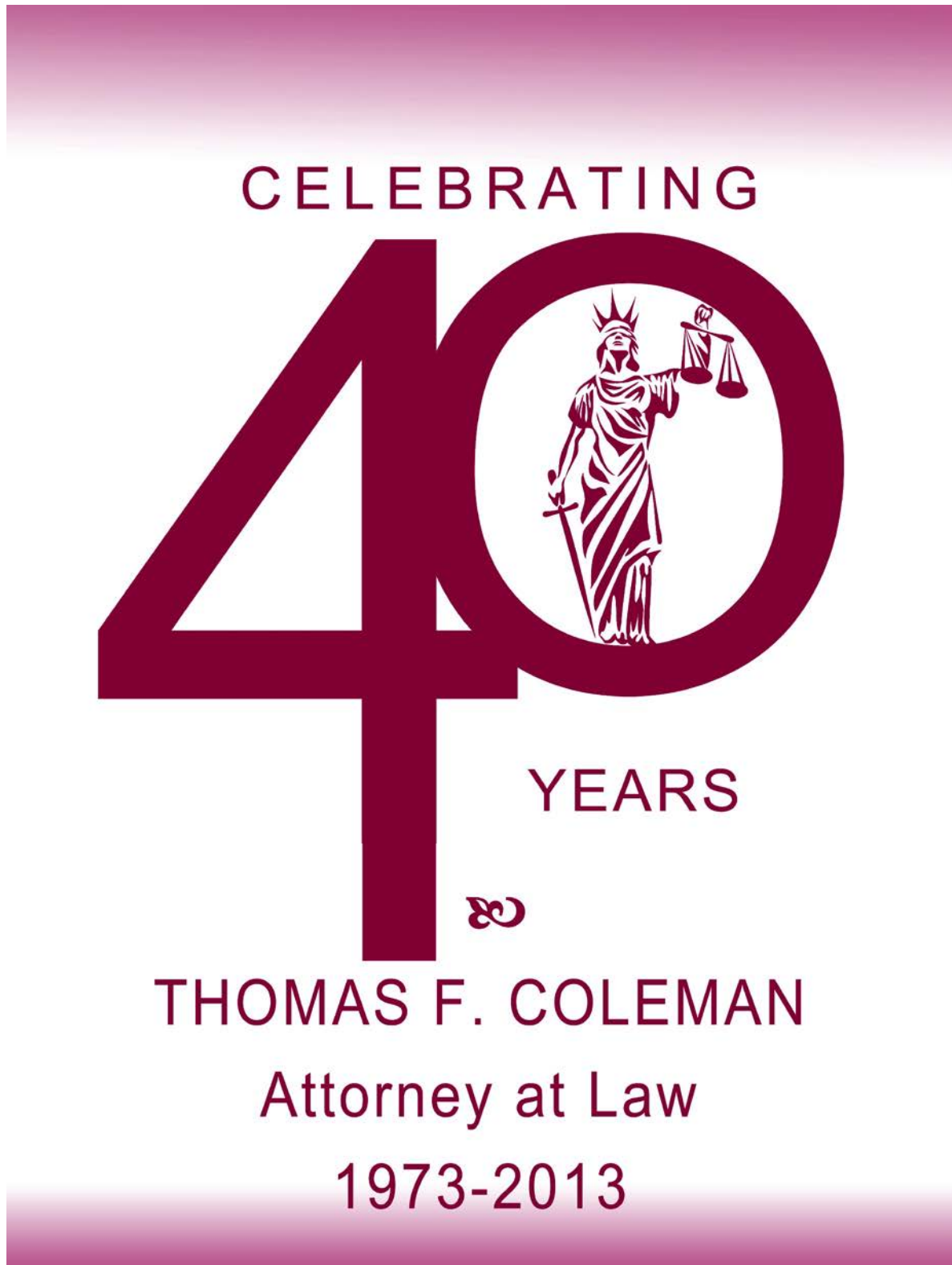


**Tom speaking to guests at reception for the release of “The Domino Effect: Memoirs of an Equal Rights Advocate” – Los Angeles – 2009**



**Each guest was publicly thanked by Tom for a role they played in his advocacy efforts from 1972 to 2009.**

**Story Boards Displayed at 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reception**



[Video](#) of Presentations at 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reception





Thomas F. Coleman  
1973

## Legal Career Launched in 1973



THE GAY COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER  
1614 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90017  
Phone: (213) 482-3062

10 November 1973

### Passed the State Bar Exam

Mr. Bob Cole, Mr. Doug Tariff, The Advocate:  
Dear Sirs:

Exciting news!! Three of our closest associates have passed their bar examinations, and hopefully will shortly be licensed to practice law. During the short time before their license runs along, they are "Advocates", and then by name of ethics cannot.

So this might be the making of a great story, which would give other students for professional rules, to have the courage to come out, to get involved, and take the important roles as free beings.

Good introduction, pioneer member of GSC/LA, one of those attending the second meeting, Vice in our group, (now Chairperson) (myself founded) of the Gay Liberation Front at GSC. Some time photograph of GSC/LA, always doing voluntary service, and important to the Center's work in many areas. With supportive of the gay liberation issues.

Harry Caplan, Director, Legal Services for the Center, attended third meeting of GSC/LA, presented alongside a most advanced position in connection with minority rights. Did much of the research on the new Census statistics, has counseled literally thousands of people here, and all of us. Important to the Gay Law Students Association, as are the other two.

Tom Coleman, did the famous research on selective and discriminatory enforcement of the GSC and LA. Published in the Advocate, first Director of our organization, intervention service. Been sitting as law clerk to a judge, done much investigative work for his, preparation of briefs, has actually intervened in Court are, under the umbrella.

All three are beautiful people and would make a handsome trio for a photograph. Interested? I have talked with all three and they could easily cooperate.

Peace, Love, Goodwill,  
A Non-Profit Social Welfare Agency  
GSC/LA, P.O. Box 1  
Berkeley, Calif.

1973

## ADVOCATE

Nation's lawyers call for consent laws

### Lobbying ABA on Privacy Rights

The American Bar Association (ABA) has been urged to support a national law that would protect the privacy of individuals from the disclosure of their sexual orientation. The law, known as the "Consent Law," would require that any disclosure of an individual's sexual orientation be based on their explicit consent. The ABA has been urged to support this law by a coalition of gay and lesbian rights groups, including the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The coalition argues that the law is necessary to protect the privacy of individuals and to prevent discrimination based on their sexual orientation. The ABA has been urged to support the law by a coalition of gay and lesbian rights groups, including the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The coalition argues that the law is necessary to protect the privacy of individuals and to prevent discrimination based on their sexual orientation.

1973



# 1970's Fighting Police Harassment & Judicial Abuse of Power

**Attorney Challenges Davis' Remarks About Homosexuals**

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — Attorney Thomas F. Coleman has filed a lawsuit to force the Los Angeles Police Department to stop making derogatory remarks about homosexuals.

Coleman, 31, said he was told by a police officer that homosexuals were "a plague on the city" and that they were "a threat to the community."

The lawsuit was filed in the Los Angeles Superior Court. Coleman said he was told these remarks by a police officer who was in charge of the police's "gay unit."

Coleman said he was told these remarks by a police officer who was in charge of the police's "gay unit."

**Injunction sought to halt lewd law**

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — Attorney Thomas F. Coleman has filed a lawsuit to force the Los Angeles Police Department to stop making derogatory remarks about homosexuals.

Coleman, 31, said he was told by a police officer that homosexuals were "a plague on the city" and that they were "a threat to the community."

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## Probation Condition Barring Ties With Gays Challenged

AT CLAUDIA LUTHERS

Persons who are sentenced to probation in Los Angeles County are barred from associating with homosexuals, according to a new probation condition.

The condition was adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. It states that persons on probation are prohibited from "associating with or having contact with any person who is known to be a homosexual."

Attorney Thomas F. Coleman said he was told by a police officer that homosexuals were "a plague on the city" and that they were "a threat to the community."

Coleman said he was told these remarks by a police officer who was in charge of the police's "gay unit."

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**Los Angeles attorney Thomas F. Coleman, 31, who successfully challenged 647(a), told B.A.R., "This decision should just about put the vice squad out of business." He added that it is one of the "most important cases to come down to protect Gay people in years."**

**ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY**

**GAYS ZAP**

**L.A. POLICE COMMISSION**

The Los Angeles Police Commission has voted to reject a proposal to bar police officers from associating with homosexuals.

The commission voted 10-4 to reject the proposal. The proposal was introduced by Police Commissioner James H. C. Carr.

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**GAY LAWYER'S CRUSADE**

**When Coleman Wins, We All Win**

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — Attorney Thomas F. Coleman has filed a lawsuit to force the Los Angeles Police Department to stop making derogatory remarks about homosexuals.

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The lawsuit was filed in the Los Angeles Superior Court. Coleman said he was told these remarks by a police officer who was in charge of the police's "gay unit."

Coleman said he was told these remarks by a police officer who was in charge of the police's "gay unit."

**Homosexuals Again Dominate Session of City Commission**

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — A session of the Los Angeles City Commission was dominated by homosexuals, according to a report.

The report said that homosexuals made up a large portion of the audience at the session. It also said that homosexuals were the main topic of discussion.

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Coleman said he was told these remarks by a police officer who was in charge of the police's "gay unit."

Coleman said he was told these remarks by a police officer who was in charge of the police's "gay unit."

**Gay Community Asks Slash in Police Budget**

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — The gay community in Los Angeles has asked for a slash in the police budget.

The community said that the police budget was too high and that it was a waste of money. They said that the police were not doing enough to protect the community.

Coleman said he was told by a police officer that homosexuals were "a plague on the city" and that they were "a threat to the community."

Coleman said he was told these remarks by a police officer who was in charge of the police's "gay unit."

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**GAY AND LESBIAN SEX SOLICITING LAW GOES DOWN**

**INFAMOUS 647(a) RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL**

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — A Los Angeles Superior Court judge has ruled that the city's infamous 647(a) law, which prohibited soliciting sex, is unconstitutional.

The judge said that the law violated the rights of homosexuals. He said that the law was "a violation of the rights of the people of Los Angeles."

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# "The Streaker"

## Tom's First Trial

1974



STREAKER JELLS OPPOSITION  
L.A. turns thumbs down on nudity

Los Angeles City Council members Tuesday night rejected a proposal to allow a nude man to appear in a television commercial for a local business.



Bob Opel streaked the Academy Awards tv show in April 1974

### Chronology

Opel streaks Academy Awards

Three months later ...  
Opel streaks the City Council

Opel asks Tom to defend him.

Opel shows up at the arraignment court dressed as "Uncle Sam" in a red-white-blue long tailed tux with top hat, shocking Tom and greatly upsetting the judge.

Opel shows up at trial dressed in a 1930's style Zoot Suit.

Tom subpoenas all council members and the chief of police to trial.

Opel is found not guilty of indecent exposure, but guilty of disturbing a public meeting.

Tom turns the tables on Opel, shocking Opel at his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday party. Tom walked into the party stark naked. Opel's jaw dropped. He then told the guests, "Everyone, this is my attorney."



Tom and Bob Opel waiting in the hallway while the jury deliberated.

### Streaker is striking in clothes

Tom Coleman, 35, of 1234 S. Main St., Tuesday night walked into the Los Angeles City Council chamber stark naked, shocking the council members and the chief of police.



Bob Opel's nephew made a movie about Bob's life.

### City Hall Streaking Case Defendant Subpoenas Councilmen as Witnesses

Los Angeles City Council members Tuesday night rejected a proposal to allow a nude man to appear in a television commercial for a local business.

### Muni Court 'Streaking' Trial Opens

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors Tuesday night rejected a proposal to allow a nude man to appear in a television commercial for a local business.



# 1973 - 1980 National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties



April 4, 1979

Thomas F. Coleman, Esq.  
Co-Chairman  
National Committee for Sexual  
Civil Liberties  
1800 North Highland Avenue, Suite 106  
Los Angeles, California 90028

Dear Tom:

Enclosed is a copy of the Executive Order we discussed  
on the phone this morning, which has been signed by  
the Governor. As you can see, we made the modification  
you requested.

I look forward to hearing from you later this month  
to arrange a meeting between appropriate representatives  
of the gay community and the State Personnel Board.

Very truly yours,

*Anthony K. Jones*  
Anthony K. Jones  
Legal Affairs Secretary

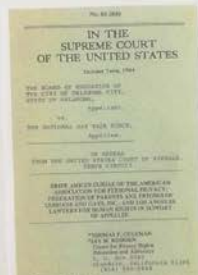
The National Committee  
was instrumental in the  
issuance and implementation  
of the Executive Order by  
Governor Brown in 1979  
prohibiting sexual orientation  
discrimination in state employment.



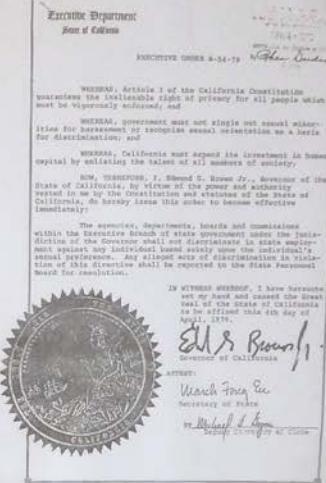
Anthony K. Jones and Tom F. Coleman at National Committee Annual Meeting in Detroit (June 1981).



Jay Kohorn presents Tom Coleman with the Mathew O. Tubenier Civil Liberties Award at the National Committee's annual meeting (1981).



The National Committee (then named the American  
Association for Protected Privacy) filed a brief in the  
Supreme Court challenging an anti-gay teacher  
licensure initiative in Oklahoma. The law was invalidated.



The National Committee filed Amicus Curiae briefs  
successfully challenging oppressive sexual laws in  
California, Oregon, Oklahoma, Ohio, Colorado, and New  
York, as well as protecting the rights of students in Texas,  
teachers in Oklahoma, and tenants in New York.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE  
FOR  
SEXUAL CIVIL LIBERTIES  
1800 North Highland Avenue, Suite 106  
Los Angeles, California 90028  
(213) 464-6666

October 1, 1979  
NEWS  
FOR EMPLOYERS SELECT

In a permanent setting move, the State of California, Division  
of Fair Employment Relations has agreed to investigate and remedy  
existing discrimination cases against gay persons. This is the  
first time that any agency in California will have a state agency  
to assist them in sexual orientation discrimination cases.  
This decision resulted from extensive negotiations with

- 1 NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
- 2 SEXUAL CIVIL LIBERTIES
- 3 1800 North Highland Avenue, Suite 106
- 4 Los Angeles, California 90028
- 5 (213) 464-6666
- 6 THOMAS F. COLEMAN
- 7 Co-counsel for Amicus Curiae
- 8 NANCY S. SALON & PECCY
- 9 2215 W. Lindsey, Suite 111
- 10 Norman, OK 73104
- 11 (405) 360-1301

IN THE OKLAHOMA COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

THE CITY OF FURAA, Appellant,  
vs.  
CARL LEROY CARRACK, et al., Appellees.  
Appellate No. M 79-08  
Municipal Court Numbers  
258161, 258162, 258163,  
258164, 258165, 258166,  
258167, 258168, 258169, 258170,  
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## 1975 - 1979 Sexual Law Reporter

There was no legal publication focusing on sexual civil rights, so Tom created one.



Sexual Law Reporter team in 1976 (left to right) Wade Aparicio, Paula Davis, Don Goodard, Tom Coleman, Susan Borison, Tim Sullivan, Michael Wetherbee, and Dean Blake. The SLR was distributed in attorneys, law schools, judges, and law reform advocates throughout the nation. It focused on all aspects of sexuality and the law. The all-volunteer effort ended when Tom Coleman shifted his attention to the Governor's Commission on Personal Privacy in 1980.

### SEXUAL LAW REPORTER

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Custom File Binders are available at \$3.00.

Back issues of volumes 196, 197, 198, and 199 (1975, '76, '77 and '78) are available at \$25.00 per volume.

### SEXUAL LAW REPORTER

March/April 1978

#### GOVERNOR'S LEADERSHIP ON EQUAL RIGHTS BRINGS GAINS TO GAYS IN PENNSYLVANIA

A series of legislative, judicial, and administrative actions by the Governor in Pennsylvania have resulted in significant gains for the gay community.

#### LEGISLATION... Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination Laws Passed in Recent State Sessions

Recent state legislative sessions in several states have resulted in the passage of anti-discrimination laws.

#### IN THE COURTS... Arizona court reverses findings on privacy

The Arizona Supreme Court has reversed its previous decision regarding privacy rights in the workplace.

### SEXUAL LAW REPORTER

Volume Three, Number 1

#### CONTRACT AND EQUITY PROTECTION EXTENDED TO UNMARRIED COUPLES

The 1978 model family law act has been adopted by several states, extending contract and equity protection to unmarried couples.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE RULINGS... Insurer's must end subsidies

California insurance policies and non-prohibited class members must end subsidies.

#### Law Review Articles of Special Interest

CONSTITUTION, ESTABLISHMENT, and other articles of special interest.

#### INSIDE

Administrative Decisions, Court Cases, and other inside information.



Ruth Morris (center) and others assemble the publication.



# Media Advocacy

1973 - 2011

## Shaping Public Opinion

Dozens of Radio Interviews

Hundreds of Newspaper Stories

Dozens of Television Appearances



Tom appeared on dozens of radio shows.



### Magazines

**BusinessWeek**  
Unmarried America - a New Majority

**American Demographics**  
Unmarried Bliss

**National Journal**  
All in the So-Called Family

**ABA - Human Rights**  
Not in My Apartment

**Parade - Sunday Magazine**  
What is a Family?

**McCall's**  
Stepparents Need Legal Rights

**Glamour**  
What is Your Family?

**Time**  
Should Gays Have Marriage Rights

**US News & World Report**  
A New Kind of Spouse in the House



Tom Coleman and Perry Hoeth present an award to CBS Radio at their office in Washington DC, in recognition of their series on "Living Single."

### Television Appearances

**ABC Nightline**  
on family diversity

**NBC Today Show**  
on unmarried couples

**CBS Evening News**  
on singles' rights

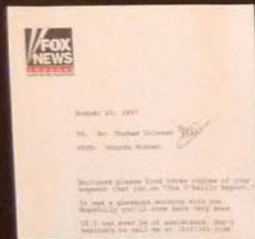
**ABC World News Tonight**  
on housing discrimination

**FBS**  
on abuse of troubled teens

**CNN - Anderson Cooper**  
on equal rights for singles

**Fox News - Shepard Smith**  
on singles' rights

**BBC News**  
on Unmarried America



### Radio Shows

**NPR - Justice Talking**  
debate about singles' rights

**KTAR - Phoenix**  
job discrimination against singles

**WAMU - Washington DC**  
singles' friendly workplaces

**KOMO - Seattle**  
tax reform for singles

**KFVR - Los Angeles**  
single voices being ignored

**Alaska Public Radio**  
housing bias against unmarried couples

**KPCC - Pasadena**  
respect for family diversity

**ABC National Radio - Tom Snyder Show**  
family diversity in America

**KKLA - Christian Talk Radio**  
the changing definition of family



# 1980 - 2013 Rights of People with Disabilities

## Adult Children with Disabilities Should Have the Right to Refuse Visits with a Parent *Court Ordered Visits are Unconstitutional*

by Thomas F. Coleman

The United States Constitution protects freedom of speech, freedom of association, and the right to privacy. The California Constitution safeguards the same constitutional rights.

to visit an adult child, but the adult child does have the right to avoid or decline visits with a parent.

I work with Dr. Nora J. Baladerian, a clinical psychologist who provides therapy for people with disabilities.

1 Thomas F. Coleman  
2 P.O. Box 11036  
3 Glendale, CA 91226  
4 (818) 482-4485  
5 State Bar # 56767  
6 Attorney for Amicus Curiae

Superior Court of the State of California  
for the County of Los Angeles

10 People of the State of California,

Plaintiff,

Case No. KA 99505

11 vs.

Application for Leave to File

14 Juan Fernandez Flores,

Defendant.

Amicus Curiae Brief Regarding  
Sentencing Options; Memorandum  
of Points and Authorities

17 TO THE COURT:

18 1. The Act of California hereby requests permission to file a brief, as Friend of the Court,  
19 to address sentencing options which the parties to the case are not likely to argue or otherwise  
20 suggest to the Court.

21 2. Defendant has entered plea of no contest to three felony counts. The charges involve  
22 serious sex crimes committed by the defendant against three women who have developmental  
23 disabilities.

24 3. The plea bargain attempts to limit sentencing options by requiring the Court to impose  
25 a sentence of eight years or less. In the accompanying brief, amicus curiae argues that the plea  
26 bargain should be rejected by the Court because such a sentence is not an adequate punishment of  
27 this defendant, is not a sufficient deterrent to others, and does not properly protect society.

## 30 Years of Involvement in Disability Issues

**1980 Western Center for Independent Living, Los Angeles**  
October presentation on "Sexual Privacy and Equality for Disabled People"

**1982 California Commission on Personal Privacy**  
Included privacy rights of people with disabilities in the scope of the commission's work, selected Dr. Nora Baladerian as a Commission member, and made recommendations concerning disability rights in the final report.

**1983 Seminar for Disability Service Providers in Los Angeles**  
April presentation on "Privacy Protections in Delivery of Services"

**1984 - 1990 California Attorney General**  
Served as a member of the Minority Violence Commission which was convened by John Van De Kamp. Worked successfully to insure that violence against gays and lesbians, seniors, and people with disabilities, were included in the commission's work. Was the proponent of legislation that added "age, disability, and sexual orientation, to a law imposing civil penalties on perpetrators for violence based on bias or special vulnerability."

**1987 California Board of Education**  
Worked with other advocates to convince the Board of Education to revise a Model Curriculum on Human Rights and Genocide to include references to genocide and violence perpetrated against gays and lesbians and people with disabilities (which had been omitted.)

**1988 Task Force on Family Diversity**  
Included people with disabilities in the focus of the Task Force and included a section on Families with Disabled Members in the final report.

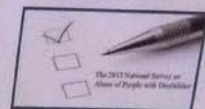
**1997 Think Tank on Disability and Abuse**  
Conceptualized the "think tank" approach to a conference of advocates and government agencies which focused on improving system responses to abuse of people with disabilities.

**2009 Texas v. Aaron Hart**  
Organize a protest against a 100 year sentence imposed on a 18 year-old defendant with developmental disabilities for sex play with a minor. Sentence was reduced to 10 years.

**2011 People's Flores**  
Filed an amicus curiae brief opposing a plea bargain that was too lenient in a case involving sexual assault on several victims with disabilities.

**2011 - Disability and Abuse Project**  
Legal Directors of Project focusing on physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of people with disabilities. Webmaster of the Project's website. Author of its National Survey Report.

## Abuse of People with Disabilities Victims and Their Families Speak



A Report on the 2012 National Survey  
on Abuse of People with Disabilities

© 2013 Spectrum Institute,  
Disability and Abuse Project  
www.disabilityandabuse.org

Nora J. Baladerian, Ph.D.  
Thomas F. Coleman  
Jim Stream



## Justice for Aaron Hart



Aaron Hart, an 18-year-old boy with mental retardation, was sentenced to 100 years in prison by a Texas judge. Aaron, who has a mental age of six, was convicted for engaging in five minutes of sex play with a six year old neighbor boy. Aaron's attorney had him plead guilty and he presented no mitigating evidence at sentencing. The judge said he sent Aaron to prison for the because Texas has no sentencing alternatives for defendants with mental retardation. Aaron was raped three times in county jail.

UPDATE: June 26, 2011 - I received an email from the appellate attorney. After the case was scheduled for a new trial and after a pay raise Aaron's attorney to shed the, the defense was presented and requested a plea bargain. Aaron was sentenced to 10 years in prison, with credit for time spent in prison. That's a far cry from the original sentence of 100 years. Although the 10 year sentence is still high, considering Aaron's limited intellectual abilities, it is nothing more than a slap on the wrist in the circumstances of the case and the offense.

UPDATE: April 20, 2012 - The conviction has been reversed and the case rescheduled to the trial court for further proceedings. The Court of Appeals said that Aaron's guilty plea was not voluntary since he was told by the defense attorney that if he pled guilty to rape and the sex to be sentenced to prison, he had the best deal. When changed in 2007 to prison probation in the type of case. So when the case is returned to the trial court, probation or community supervision is no longer an option. Aaron still has the prospect of leaving the jail of life in prison if the judge rules in his favor. Call today for a copy of the appeal of the Court of Appeals.

## DISABILITY, ABUSE AND PERSONAL RIGHTS

A Project of  
**SPECTRUM INSTITUTE**  
A Non-Profit Corporation Promoting Respect for Human Diversity  
Culver City P.O. Box 77, Culver City, CA 90231-0077 (310) 301-8432 FAX (310) 300-8084  
Headquarters: P.O. Box 8276, Los Angeles, CA 90088 (213) 338-8945 FAX (213) 338-8088  
Email: (7) abuse@spectrum.org (J) abuse@spectrum.org

## 8th Conference on Abuse of Persons with Disabilities: A Think Tank

June 11, 1997

## Disability & Abuse Project

When disability and abuse intersect, we take action.

### Our Focus

Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of people with developmental or intellectual disabilities

### Our Mission

To identify ways to reduce the risk of abuse, to prevent further acts of violence, and to seek justice for those who have been victimized

### Action Areas

Public awareness, education and training, policy development, law enforcement, and judicial advocacy

### Sponsoring Agency

The Disability and Abuse Project is a function of Spectrum Institute, a nonprofit educational corporation. The Project works with nonprofit organizations, media, government agencies, and individual advocates.

### Project Director

Nora J. Baladerian, Ph.D. Dr. Baladerian is a clinical psychologist with a private practice focusing on trauma and abuse. She conducts research and training for law enforcement, agency personnel, and service providers. Dr. Baladerian is also involved in advocacy regarding to litigation, both civil and criminal, for forensic evaluations and testimony related to cases involving disability and abuse. (2002)

## Project Directors



Thomas F. Coleman, Jim Stream,  
and Nora J. Baladerian, Ph.D.

## Disability & Abuse Project

When disability and abuse intersect, we take action.

### Help Us Save Mickey



Relatives of Mickey Panto have informed the Disability and Abuse Project that Mickey has been a victim of abuse and neglect for months, if not longer.

They supplied us with the following photos in which they documented that Mickey, who lives at home with his parents, has been kept naked and in handcuffs for days on end. In their most recent visit to the home, the relatives reported that Mickey took fall and appeared to be suffering from malnutrition.

Mickey, who is 36 years old, is a person with an intellectual disability. According to relatives, Mickey has been diagnosed with severe mental retardation.

This abuse was reported to the Los Angeles County Sheriff and to the Adult Protective Services. Neither agency conducted a proper investigation, nor did they remove Mickey from this abusive home.

The Disability and Abuse Project is spearheading an effort to seek justice for Mickey. This is what justice would look like: (1) immediate removal of Mickey from this home; (2) medical attention and proper nutrition for this victim; (3) appointment of a caring and responsible guardian, as the conservator; (4) placement of Mickey in a safe and nurturing home; (5) a criminal investigation of those who have abused him, with prosecution of the perpetrators of any such person; and (6) an investigation by the Board of Supervisors into why the Sheriff's Office and the Adult Protective Services failed to remove Mickey from this abusive environment when these atrocities were brought to their attention.

For more information, contact: Thomas F. Coleman, Legal Director, Disability and Abuse Project at: (818) 482-4485 or (818) 482-4485

UPDATE: Mickey was removed and removed from his abusive home on July 2, 2012. Officers from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department went to the home to interview Mickey and transport him to a hospital for medical evaluation and treatment. Many thanks to Anna Perlestein, Justice Deputy for



## 1980s Advocacy Commissions

### Privacy Commission

State Commission Will Examine Problems Faced by Members of 'Sexual Minority'



1980 - 1982

Panel to Study Issues Raised by 'Sexual Minority'

The California State Commission on Personal Privacy, established by Assembly Bill 1033, will study the issues raised by the 'sexual minority' and make recommendations to the Legislature. The commission will also study the impact of the 'sexual minority' on the state's economy and society. The commission will be headed by a panel of experts in the field of privacy and will include representatives from the state's major universities and research institutions. The commission's report will be submitted to the Legislature by the end of the year.

Among the many recommendations of the Privacy commission were proposals to:

- \* Amend hate crime laws to add "age, disability, and sexual orientation"
- \* Prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in employment
- \* End marriage penalties for seniors and people with disabilities
- \* Protect the sexual privacy rights of people living in nursing homes and state institutions

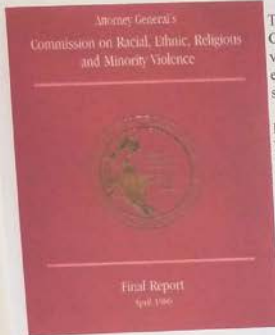


Leaders of the Family Diversity Task Force: (left to right) Tom Coleman, Nora Baladerian, Mike Woo, Lynn Sheppard, and Christopher McCauley. The Task Force was the primary impetus for the first domestic partnership ordinance in the City of Los Angeles in 1988. Recommendations also focused on the needs of children, seniors, and people with disabilities.





## 1980s Advocacy Commissions



The Attorney General's Commission focused on violence against racial, ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities.

It recommended legislation and educational programs to reduce such violence and to respond more effectively when it occurs.

Tom Coleman served as a commissioner from 1984 to 1990.



Tom Coleman (right of center) with Attorney General John Van De Kamp and other members of the Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Minority Violence Commission (1985).

California Legislature  
Senate Rules Committee  
DAVID ROBERTS  
Chairman

November 4, 1987

Re: Thomas F. Coleman  
Center for Personal Rights Advocacy  
P.O. Box 63734  
San Francisco, California 94163

Dear Mr. Coleman:

I am pleased to announce that the Senate Rules Committee has appointed you to serve as a member of the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family. Your term is at the pleasure of the Rules Committee and compensation will be expenses.

As our appointee to this Task Force, you are required to take an oath of office prescribed by the California Constitution. The oath may be taken before any person authorized by law to administer and certify oaths. Please return the completed oath to the Senate Rules Committee in Room 100, State Capitol, at your earliest convenience so that it may be filed with the appropriate authority.

I appreciate your willingness to serve on this Task Force. If I can be of assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
DAVID ROBERTS

Director  
Senate  
cc: Governor's Office  
Legislative Counsel  
Secretary of State

Controller's Office  
Speaker's Office  
Joint Select Task Force on  
the Changing Family

### CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family

FOR RELEASE ON:  
June 9, 1989

COWLEY PERIOD  
Thomas F. Coleman  
(313) 304-6411

#### LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE RECOGNIZES DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIPS AS PART OF THE CHANGING FAMILY ADDRESS IN CALIFORNIA

*Proposes Family as Building Blocks, Defines Core Values,  
Presents Recommendations, and Rights of Residents*

A report just published by a state task force urges California lawmakers to recognize domestic partnerships as family relationships.

The report of the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family also includes several recommendations to eliminate discrimination against the nearly 1.4 million adults who live in unmarried-couple households in California. The domestic partnership proposals recommend that:

- **Public policies** should respond to the changing needs of today's families, while respecting their privacy, integrity, and diversity. (See Report, page 11)
- **Domestic partnerships** should be recognized as family relationships. (See Report, page 18)
- **Employee benefits** plans should define family broadly enough to encompass the diversity of today's families, regardless of family structure. (See Report, page 27)
- **Public agencies** should expand services to promote recognition of family diversity by providing assistance with current information on changing family structures. (See Report, page 76)
- **Outstanding services**, whether publicly funded or provided through private health plans, should serve not just individuals, but all families regardless of their structure, including unmarried couples. (See Report, page 84)
- **Insurance practices**, such as rate discrimination against unmarried couples, should be prohibited. (See Report, pages 100-101)
- **Marriage** should be reserved to allow adult dependents to receive changes when a domestic partner is killed by a criminal, drunk driver, or by other negligent or negligent conduct of a wrongdoer. (See Report, pages 100-101)

This release was prepared by Thomas F. Coleman, a member of the Task Force.

### Report Addresses Changing Needs of Families

By ROBERTA BRYANT, Press Staff Writer

By all in the family—unmarried couples, single parents, and others—have been struggling to survive in a world of change. The report of the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family, which was released today, offers a blueprint for the future of the family in California.

The report, which was prepared by the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family, is the first of a series of reports that will be released over the next several months. The report is the result of a year-long study by the task force, which was created by the Legislature in 1984.

The report is a comprehensive study of the family in California, and it offers a blueprint for the future of the family in the state. The report is the result of a year-long study by the task force, which was created by the Legislature in 1984.

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# 1989 - 2011 Marital Status Discrimination



Christopher McCauley, City Attorney Jim Hahn, and Tom Coleman at the launch of the Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination in 1989. The Final Report, issued in 1990, gained national media attention and put "singles' rights" on the political map.

## Bias Against Single People Is Targeted

By JON FRITZ  
Los Angeles Times

City council members about "single" business practices. City Atty. James K. Hahn announced Monday the formation of a task force to study discrimination against single people and unmarried couples.

The task force will have a number of public hearings focusing on consumer problems and on discrimination by landlords, insurance companies and even within the government.

"I've married and I get a lot of benefits from being married," Hahn said. "Most of us aren't living in traditional America. We're gay, we're lesbian, we're single, and the rights and privileges extended to a few should be extended to everyone."

Only 25% of the households in Los Angeles are "so-called traditional family units" composed of men, women and kids, Hahn said.

The task force will hold public hearings to determine the nature and extent of "marital status" discrimination, Hahn said, and will review the adequacy of existing anti-discrimination laws.



Office of the City Attorney  
Los Angeles, California

## CONSUMER TASK FORCE ON MARITAL STATUS DISCRIMINATION

### FINAL REPORT

"Unmarried Adults: A New Majority"  
Susan Conway, Executive

## Los Angeles Times

### Report Finds Widespread Bias Against Unmarrieds

By JON FRITZ  
Los Angeles Times

A report concluding that discrimination against unmarried people is widespread in Los Angeles was issued Monday by a task force set up by the city attorney.

The report, titled "Unmarried Adults: A New Majority," found that discrimination against unmarried people is widespread in Los Angeles. It found that discrimination against unmarried people is widespread in Los Angeles.

"Most of these people are not in California," said James K. Hahn, city attorney. "They are in other parts of the country, such as New York, where they are treated as a second-class citizen."

Hahn said the report found that discrimination against unmarried people is widespread in Los Angeles. It found that discrimination against unmarried people is widespread in Los Angeles.

Thomas F. Coleman  
Chairperson

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20543

September 12, 1997

Mr. Thomas F. Coleman  
P.O. Box 65756  
Los Angeles, CA 90065

Re: Evelyn Smith  
v. Fair Employment and Housing Commission, et al.  
No. 96-31

Dear Mr. Coleman:

The Court today entered the following order in the above entitled case:

The petition for rehearing is denied.

Sincerely,  
William K. Suter  
William K. Suter, Clerk

## NATION

September 12, 1997

### High Court Rejects Landlady's Appeal

She refused to rent to unwed couple

By Martin Glick  
Associate Legal Editor

The U.S. Supreme Court left in place Monday a landmark ruling that a landlord who refused to rent to an unwed couple was liable for discrimination under the Fair Housing Act.

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

September 12, 1997

### LAW

By Martin Glick  
Associate Legal Editor

#### Single's Rights Activists Target Discrimination

By Martin Glick  
Associate Legal Editor

The U.S. Supreme Court left in place Monday a landmark ruling that a landlord who refused to rent to an unwed couple was liable for discrimination under the Fair Housing Act.

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## Los Angeles Times

July 26, 1995

### Garamendi Urged to Fight Bias on Marital Status

By DONNA K. H. WALTERS  
Times Staff Writer

A state Insurance Department task force is urging California Insurance Commissioner Garamendi to get tough with insurers who discriminate against gays and lesbians, according to a report in the "Los Angeles Times."

Garamendi already has ordered many of the recommendations of the group's report, which he will officially accept at a press conference in Los Angeles today. He is calling it a "final blueprint" to end discrimination against the gay community.

Regulation proposed by Garamendi would prohibit auto insurers from using marital status as a basis for setting rates.

However, one of the report's central themes, that married and unmarried couples be treated the same, is unlikely to get the regulatory process and funding hoped for by its authors and proponents.

Most of the state's larger insurance companies have already raised opposition to the recommendations, which have been circulating in draft form for the past six months.

Please see INSURANCE, B1

## STANDING UP FOR 'SINGLES' RIGHTS

By JON FRITZ  
Los Angeles Times

Some who fight the "gay rights" movement say that the movement's goal of equal rights for homosexuals is a threat to the rights of straight couples.

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San Francisco Chronicle  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.  
OCT. 15, 1990

### High Rates of Divorce

By JON FRITZ  
Los Angeles Times

High rates of divorce are spreading the stigma over marriage, according to U.S. Census Bureau.

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# 1999 - 2009 Unmarried America / AASP



American Association for Single People was formed in 1999 to promote equal rights for unmarried Americans, whether they are solo singles, unmarried couples, or single parents.

## Singles Rights Advocate

Newsletter of the Singles Rights Lobby for Unmarried Adults and Domestic Partners

Vol. 1, No. 1 Fall Quarter Sept. - Nov. 1999

### Our Civil Rights Agenda

Ending Marital Status Discrimination in the New Millennium

## Unmarried voters feel neglected by Gore, Bush

By Tom Coleman  
The 2000 election, in which voters cast their ballots on Tuesday, Nov. 7, has been a landmark event for many reasons. It was the first time that a presidential election was held on a Tuesday. It was also the first time that a presidential election was held in a year when the economy was in a recession. And it was the first time that a presidential election was held in a year when the country was divided into two camps: those who supported the incumbent, Vice President Al Gore, and those who supported the challenger, Texas Governor George W. Bush. But for many unmarried Americans, the election was also a time when they felt neglected by both candidates. Gore and Bush both made promises to support the rights of all Americans, but they both failed to mention the rights of unmarried Americans. Gore's campaign focused on the rights of the poor, the elderly, and the disabled, but he did not mention the rights of unmarried Americans. Bush's campaign focused on the rights of the military, the police, and the firefighters, but he did not mention the rights of unmarried Americans. This neglect was a reflection of the fact that unmarried Americans are often treated as second-class citizens in our society. They are not allowed to marry, and therefore they are not allowed to enjoy the same rights and benefits as married couples. This is a fundamental violation of their civil rights, and it is time that we stand up for them.



Unmarried voters feel neglected by Gore, Bush

## 82,000,000 AMERICANS



82,000,000 AMERICANS

AASP caught staffers by surprise when it visited each congressional office to lobby for singles' rights.

As part of its campaign, it gave each single and unmarried member of Congress a greeting card for National Singles Week.

Over the years, educational literature was distributed to all 535 offices on several occasions.



Tom made a major media breakthrough when he landed a cover story in BusinessWeek in 2003. This story alerted politicians and corporate executives that unmarried Americans were about to become a household majority.



At its peak in 2002, AASP had an office in Glendale, and Tom had two full time staffers and several part-time student interns. This singles' rights adventure was funded by Lloyd E. Rigler.



**National USA Week: September 15-21, 02**  
National USA Week is a time to celebrate the diversity and unity of our nation. It is a time when we come together to appreciate the many different cultures, languages, and traditions that make up our great country. This year, National USA Week is being celebrated from September 15-21, 2002. It is a time when we can all join together to celebrate the many different ways in which we live and work. It is a time when we can all come together to support the rights of all Americans, regardless of their marital status. This is a time when we can all stand up for the rights of the 82 million unmarried Americans who live in this country. It is a time when we can all come together to support the rights of the 82 million unmarried Americans who live in this country. It is a time when we can all stand up for the rights of the 82 million unmarried Americans who live in this country.

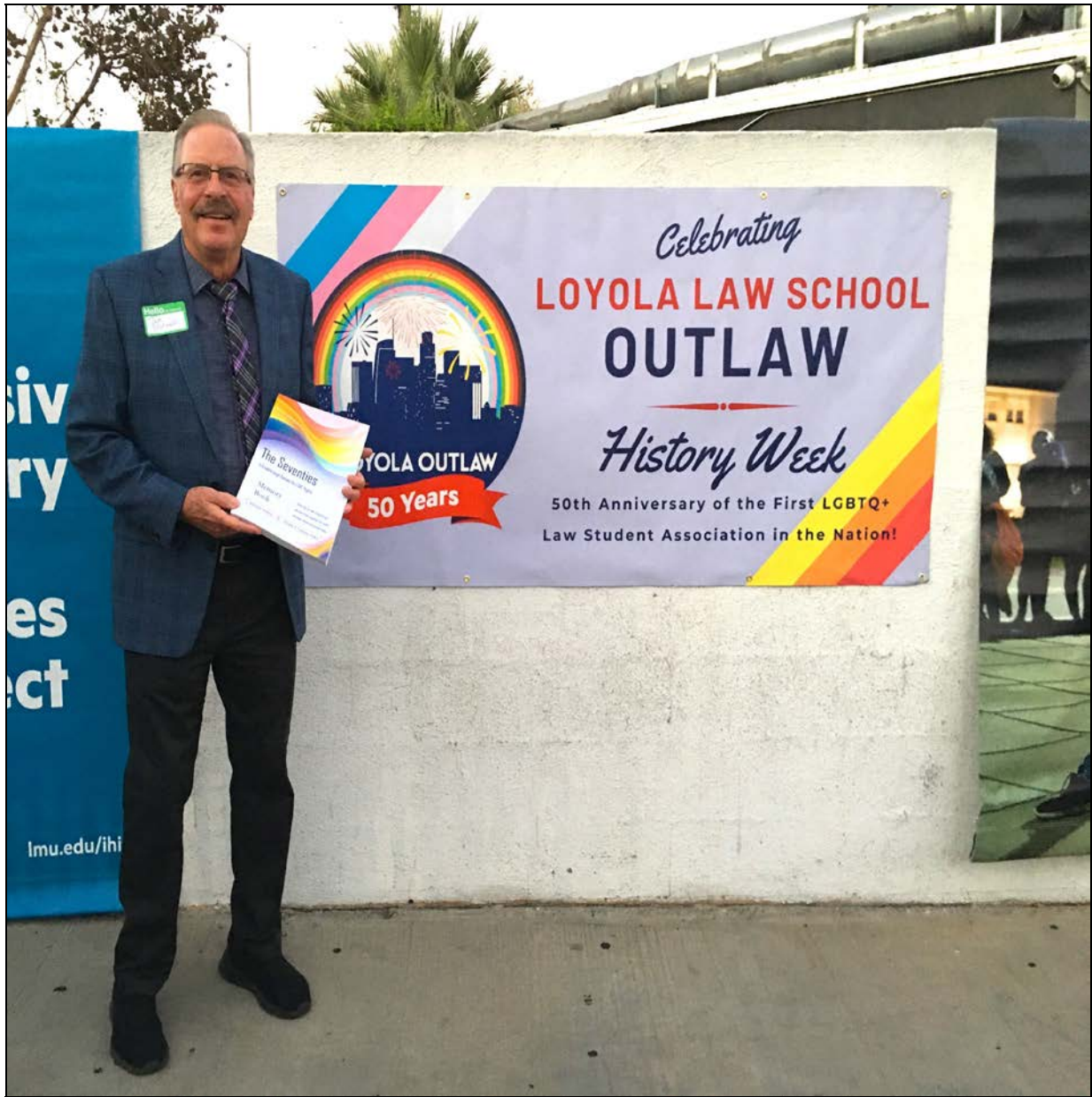


Mayors, City Councils, and Governors in many states issued proclamations to recognize Unmarried and single Americans Week. Formerly called National Singles Week, this obscure commemorative occasion was activated by Unmarried America as a way to call the nation's attention to the growing number of unmarried people - voters, consumers, taxpayers, and employees. Tom was instrumental in having the Census Bureau issue a media release to recognize Unmarried and Single Americans Week in 2002. It has continued to do so each year ever since.





## More Photo Gallery



Reception for students and faculty at Loyola Law School to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the first gay law student association in the nation. Tom, founding president, made a presentation at the gathering. - Oct. 2022





Facebook page for Pursuit of Justice Podcast - 2021

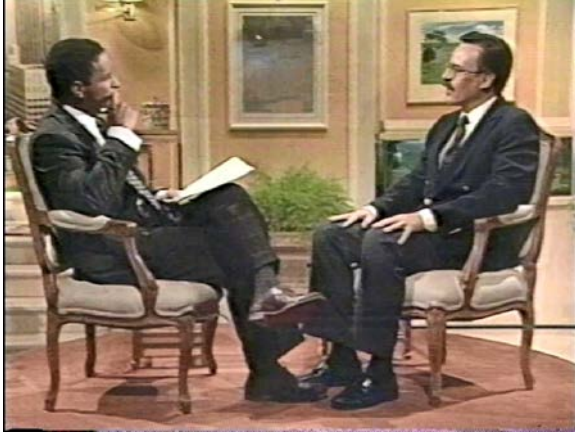


Professional website of Thomas F. Coleman <https://tomcoleman.us/> – 2024

## Addendum: Additional Videos

### Screenshots

#### Equal Rights Advocacy on TV (1989 - 2001)



Coleman on Today Show with Bryant Gumbel



Coleman on Fox News with Shepard Smith



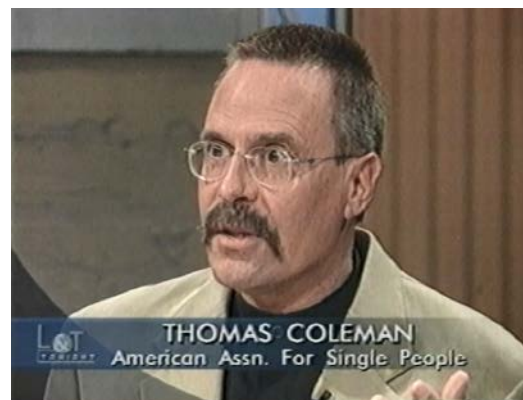
Coleman on ABC Nightline



Coleman on Today Show with Katie Couric



Coleman on CNN Anderson Cooper 360



Coleman on KCET in Los Angeles

# Videos of TV Broadcasts

## *Equal Rights Advocacy in the News*

- 2006 [\*\*CNN / Unmarried-America\*\*](#)  
Television segment on unmarried Americans rising up to complaint about discrimination in employee benefits, insurance rates, and other consumer transactions. Thomas F. Coleman is interviewed in the segment which aired on December 20, 2006.
- 2004 [\*\*CNN Financial Network – The Flip Side\*\*](#)  
In this segment, Thomas F. Coleman was interviewed about the need for economic fairness for single people. Program aired on March 8.
- 2004 [\*\*KCET – Life and Times – Equal Rights for Unmarried People\*\*](#)  
Thomas F. Coleman was interviewed by reporter Toni Guinard about equal rights for unmarried people. The program aired on March 17. KCET is a *PBS station in Los Angeles*.
- 2003 [\*\*Fox News - Heartland - Singles Rights\*\*](#)  
Thomas F. Coleman was interviewed by Heartland host John Kasich about singles' rights. Kasich challenged Coleman on many fronts, but Coleman held his ground. The segment aired in 2003.
- 2001 [\*\*CTV - National Singles Week in Washington DC\*\*](#)  
This Canadian television station produced a segment about single people during National Singles Week in September 2001. The American Association for Single People commemorated the week with events in Washington DC. AASP member Perry Heath recites a poem he wrote about single people. Thomas F. Coleman appeared in the segment.
- 2001 [\*\*Federal News Service – Channel 8 – Washington DC - Unfair Taxation\*\*](#)  
FNS interviewed Thomas F. Coleman about unfair taxation of unmarried Americans. Coleman answered questions from the co-hosts as well as viewers who called in to the show.
- 2000 [\*\*CNN - Anderson Cooper 360 - Single Voters\*\*](#)  
In this news segment, Anderson Cooper discusses census data showing the rising number of single people who live alone. He notes that political candidates cater to families and usually ignore singles. Thomas F. Coleman is interviewed and the American Association for Single People is mentioned.
- 2000 [\*\*CNN - World View - Single Voters\*\*](#)  
Thomas F. Coleman is interviewed in this segment focusing on single voters.
- 2000 [\*\*Singles' Right in the News -- 2000\*\*](#)  
In the first part of this video, KTVU in San Francisco reports on how presidential candidates in the 2000 election are ignoring single voters. In the second part, Val Zavala at KCET public television in Los Angeles focuses on discrimination against single people. Thomas F. Coleman is interviewed in both segments.

- 1998 [\*\*New York TV News -- Job Benefits Discrimination\*\*](#)  
Several New York television stations carried news stories about the filing of a federal lawsuit against Bell Atlantic for offering job benefits to employees with same-sex partners but denying benefits to unmarried workers with opposite-sex partners. Thomas F. Coleman was a consultant on the case involving Paul Foray and his long time female partner. The case alleged the practice was sex discrimination in violation of the Equal Pay Act.
- 1997 [\*\*Fox - O'Reilly Report - Singled Out\*\*](#)  
In this episode of the O'Reilly Report, Thomas F. Coleman is interviewed about a growing movement to protect unmarried individuals and couples from discrimination. The segment aired in August 1997.
- 1992 [\*\*Los Angeles Channel 9 - Crosscheck / Rental Discrimination\*\*](#)  
Thomas F. Coleman is interviewed on this program about a court ruling in California allowing a landlord to refuse to rent to an unmarried couple for religious reasons. Prospective tenant Verna Terry is also interviewed. Segment aired on Jan. 18, 1992.
- 1991 [\*\*Media Blitz - Unmarried Renter Rights Violated\*\*](#)  
A decision by the [California Court of Appeal](#) granting a religious exemption to a landlord which allows her to reject unmarried couples as tenants caused a stir in the media. Thomas F. Coleman intervened to represent the tenant to overturn the decision. He was supported by a coalition of civil rights groups including the ACLU. Other news segments focused on insurance discrimination. News also focused on a bill in the legislature to create a domestic partnership registry for unmarried couples. The California Supreme Court granted review of the case at the urging of Coleman and a [coalition of civil rights organizations](#), but later dismissed the case without a decision. A few years later, the Supreme Court took up another case [in which it ruled](#) that landlords in the business of renting cannot use their religious beliefs to discriminate against unmarried couples.
- 1991 [\*\*Today Show - CNN News - NBC - Rights for Unmarried Couples\*\*](#)  
Census data showing the rising number of unmarried couples caught the attention of national media. With growing numbers, should unmarried couples have rights? Should discrimination against them be outlawed. Thomas F. Coleman was among those interviewed for these news segments in May 1991. Coleman was flown to New York to appear on the Today show.
- 1990 [\*\*KCAL-TV / Insurance Discrimination Against Unmarried Consumers\*\*](#)  
A television station in Los Angeles ran a news segment to highlight a report released by California Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi calling for an end to marital status discrimination by insurance companies. Thomas F. Coleman headed up the study and wrote the report.
- 1990 [\*\*ABC - CBS - NBC / Discrimination Against Single People\*\*](#)  
The release of the final report of the Los Angeles City Attorney's Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination in 1990 got national media attention. Singles' Rights was on the local and national news. Thomas F. Coleman wrote the report. Task Force co-chair Christopher McCauley was interviewed in one of the news broadcasts.

1989 [ABC-Nightline / Redefining Family](#)

In this episode of ABC's Nightline, Thomas F. Coleman debates Gary Bauer from the Family Research Council. The debate was prompted by a decision of New York's highest court holding that unmarried couples can be considered a family under New York law. The episode aired in July 1989.

1989 [Fox News Los Angeles - Governor Vetoes Gay Job Protection Bill](#)

Airing in July 1989, this news segment covered the veto of by Gov. Pete Wilson of a job protection bill for gays and lesbians which resulted in rioting in the streets of Los Angeles and San Francisco. Thomas F. Coleman was interviewed.



# TESTIMONIALS

## **Jennifer Hulme - on Research, Writing, and Consulting Services**

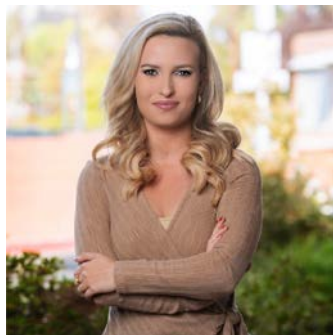


Since June 2022, Tom Coleman’s involvement with Missouri’s Alternatives to Guardianship Project has been nothing short of transformative. As the founder of the Spectrum Institute in California, Tom has generously devoted his time and expertise to our project. His guidance has been a beacon for me as the project director and has profoundly impacted the broader field. His effective engagement with a diverse array of stakeholders has led to a significant advancement in our collaborative efforts to improve state practices and processes, particularly concerning guardianship alternatives for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Tom’s commitment is exemplified by his thorough approach to research. He has spent countless hours interviewing key figures such as probate court judges, public administrators, and representatives from government organizations. This exhaustive research has provided essential insights, guiding our state’s focus and efforts towards adhering to our statutes and advocating for the least restrictive oversight methods. Tom Coleman’s contributions to our project have been invaluable, setting a high standard in our pursuit of meaningful and lasting change.

*Jennifer Hulme is the founder and director of Hulme Resources Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, including case management, life coaching, transition planning, and benefits planning.*

## **Andie Judson - on Consulting Services**



For over three years, ABC10’s investigation “The Price of Care” has been digging into California’s conservatorship system. Tom Coleman’s expertise was a main contributor and invaluable voice to our reporting. A court-appointed tool to help those who cannot care for themselves, conservatorships are legally complex – resulting in a lack of oversight and media coverage. Coleman’s ability to break down and explain not only the system’s intricacies, but its incompetence and brokenness, allowed our reporting to shine a light on how abuse and harm is being allowed to happen under a multi-billion-dollar state agency. His advocacy, passion and in-depth knowledge of a system so few understand, or have even heard of, was crucial in our reporting that led to the passage of new state laws, changes in policies and a federal call for oversight.

*Andie Judson is an investigative reporter with ABC-10 television in Sacramento, California. She has been honored with a Peabody nomination, National Investigative Reporter & Editors Award and several regional Edward R. Murrow and Emmy Awards.*

### **Rosalind Alexander-Kasparik - on Legal Advocacy**



Tom Coleman saved my heart David Rector's humanity by pivotally restoring his voting rights. David suffered an aortic dissection that left him unable to move purposefully or speak. As was typical at the time, the judge took David's right to vote after the court-appointed guardian ad litem had taken David's life savings along with mine. They all then exited leaving us broken and broke. Civically inclined, David resented the taking of his voting rights perhaps more than any of the other indignities to which he was subjected after he fell ill. In 2016, Tom Coleman was pivotal in the passage of a California law that allowed people with disabilities whose voting rights had been taken away, to regain them by simply saying, "I want to vote." Since David was unable to speak, he placed his mark on a letter to the judge and marched it to the court (eye-tracking device powered-up on his wheelchair)—all under the steady guidance and legal counsel of Tom Coleman and the Spectrum Institute. I was frightened of the court taking David from me as it had taken everything else from us. I called 52 attorneys when David fell ill, and none would represent me. Tom Coleman remains the only attorney I know of who understands the probate guardianship morass from every perspective. Most importantly, he knows how to fix it—compassionately and for the good of the differently-abled and the people they love.

*Rosalind Alexander-Kasparik and David Rector were engaged to be married when David became seriously ill. They were living together in San Diego at the time. David and Roz had moved there from Washington D.C. where David had been a producer for many years with National Public Radio. After his illness, David and Roz had a terrible experience with the probate conservatorship system in California. Their quest to restore David's right to vote is depicted in a segment of the documentary film Pursuit of Justice.*

### **Charles Brumlik, JD, PhD - on Legal Advocacy & Consulting Services**



In the last 25 years of my being an attorney, I have never met a more effective expert, attorney, or advocate than Tom Coleman. Tom almost single-handedly saved my son Peter from an unwanted guardianship which would have resulted in a wholesale loss of civil rights. Without Tom's consultation on my son's case, today Peter would have no say in determining his own future.

Why I believe Tom Coleman dramatically improves the odds of preserving civil rights of high functioning young adults: not only is Tom a master strategist and tactician, but he is tenacious and generous; instead of getting bogged down in all the emotion and red herrings, Tom clearly sees and articulates the underlying issues; with a lifetime as a civil rights attorney, Tom brings a holistic



approach to completely turn around cases such as my son's.

Tom affects real change in a world where everyone has an opinion or wants to make money from families, but no one dares to challenge the system's excesses and judicial abuses.

*Charles Brumlik is a chemist and corporate attorney. Peter Brumlik is a college student starting his career in advocating for high functioning autistic adults who are automatically assumed to be second rate citizens. Peter's goal is to emulate Tom Coleman's example. (Photo: Charles and Peter Brumlik)*

### **Diane Dimond - on Consulting Services**



Tom Coleman is a frontline warrior in the fight to uphold the constitutional and civil rights of individuals living with disabilities. As I set out years ago to write a book about the nationwide problem of exploitative court ordered guardianships and conservatorships, I was lucky enough to benefit from the wise consultation and seemingly endless research Tom has conducted on the subject. He employs a razor sharp focus and a steel trap recollection of cases—even those from many years past—to inform his legal opinions and to fight for the vulnerable.

As an investigative reporter with experience in the crime and justice space, I was delighted to be introduced to Tom, and in turn to be graciously introduced by him to others who provided invaluable contributions to my book. Tom's voluminous writings, his online moderation of fascinating events like, "Fee for All: How Judges Are Raiding Assets of Seniors & Lining the Pockets of Conservatorship Attorneys," (Commonwealthclub.org) are a testament to his decades of honest and meaningful representation for those whose voices are often dismissed by the legal system.

*Diane Dimond is an investigative journalist and author of four books including, *We're Here to Help – When Guardianship Goes Wrong*. (Brandeis University Press 2023)*

### **Susan Sindelar - on Consulting Services**



"Tom Coleman has a wealth of knowledge on disability rights. This wealth is also in his strategic advice and procedural suggestions, both of which helped ensure the appointment of counsel on appeal for the first time for a probate conservatee. He also helped me lay the best legal foundation for objections under state and federal disability law, thus creating a more complete record for appeal. Tom is a leader in the community who is respected among disability rights organizations, which allows him to connect with the best resources to help you do your job effectively at the trial court level and all the way up to the California Supreme Court, which is where my case eventually landed."

Susan Sindelar was a deputy public defender in Santa Barbara County. She represented scores of seniors and people with disabilities in probate conservatorship cases. One of those cases was the Conservatorship of O.B., in which she filed an appeal for her young autistic client. Such appeals are a rarity in California -- so rare that the Court of Appeal had no established policy to appoint counsel for an indigent appellant in such a case. Tom Coleman successfully advocated for an appellate attorney to be appointed.

### **Brook Changala - on Consulting Services**



"We first contacted Tom Coleman to help with a challenging case involving a proposed conservatee's rights. Tom was able to guide us through the complicated legal issues in the probate conservatorship system with a refined hand. I do not think my client would have been able to retain her civil rights without Tom's knowledge of the relevant substantive law and his strategic advice on the case."

*Brook Changala is a civil law attorney with experience in probate litigation. Brook has represented Spectrum Institute before the California Supreme Court in important probate and conservatorship litigation. He is the treasurer and a board member of the LGBT Attorneys and Allies Section of the Long Beach Bar Association.*

### **Sandra L. Slaton - on Consulting Services**



"I am a lawyer who has had the privilege and pleasure of being able to work with Tom Coleman on one of the most challenging probate matters of my career. He was creative, brilliant, and courageous in his "out-of-the-box" approach to our strategy in litigating within the probate court. Tom is relentless in advocating for individuals who find themselves victims of a court system that, at times, is not sensitive to the application of due process for all who come before judges expecting to be treated in a fair and impartial manner. Tom is not afraid to fight for individuals who are not always able to fight for themselves. He contributed immensely to our legal team and to our persistent pursuit of justice. I highly recommend his legal consulting services."

*Sandra Slaton is the founding shareholder of Horne Slaton, PLLC. She was admitted to the bar in Arizona in 1980. Ms. Slaton began her law career as an assistant federal public defender and then moved into private practice where she has remained for over three decades. Her experience covers a variety of areas, including high profile criminal, constitutional and civil matters against firms as large as the United States Justice Department. She has tried extraordinarily complex cases involving criminal matters, family law, federal discrimination/harassment, construction claims, malpractice and a broad range of other issues.*

## Thomas Lee Wright - on Legal Advocacy, Writing, and Speaking Services



"Thomas Coleman is a tireless advocate, an outstanding attorney and a true voice for the voiceless in our society. He is as movingly eloquent as he is superbly knowledgeable regarding the rights of those with disabilities. He has an unparalleled track record of courageously confronting systemic oppression and has been successful throughout his life-long career as a champion for the disadvantaged in the fight for social justice and judicial equity. Tom is an inspiring speaker and insightful writer. I've had the distinct pleasure of working with him as he authored two chapters in a book about elder abuse that I edited. I personally observed the professional presentation of a documentary film about his guardianship reform advocacy at the World Congress on

Adult Guardianship in Seoul, South Korea which was enthusiastically received by the diverse audience in attendance. His work is always excellent - the product of a keen mind, impeccable honesty, persuasive demeanor and sterling character."

*Thomas Lee Wright is an Academy Award and Emmy-nominated filmmaker and non-fiction author whose book 'The Family Guide to Preventing Elder Abuse' is available online and in bookstores everywhere. Edith + Eddie, the Oscar-nominated documentary film he produced with director Laura Checkoway, is a love story about an inter-racial couple in their nineties who were victims of guardianship abuse.*

## Linda Demer, M.D., Ph.D. - on Speaking Services



"Tom Coleman has served as a guest speaker on several occasions for the UCLA upper level course on neurodiversity and the autism spectrum, addressing the topic of legal considerations facing people with disabilities. His presentations have been compelling, enlightening, comprehensive, and engaging. The students gave his talks superb evaluations. He has tremendous expertise and experience in the field of disability rights, especially in the context of the autism spectrum."

*Dr. Linda Demer is a Professor of Medicine, Physiology, and Bioengineering at UCLA. She is the author of "The Autism Spectrum: Human Rights Perspectives," Pediatrics, Vol. 141, No. s4, April 2018 (American Academy of Pediatrics). Dr. Demer has been teaching a psychology class titled "Perspectives on Autism and Neurodiversity" since 2014. She has served on the board of directors of the Autism Society of Los Angeles and is a member of the human rights committee of the international disability rights organization known as TASH.*

### **Sam Sugar, M.D. - on Speaking Services**



"Attorney Tom Coleman is a renowned expert in the field of probate and guardianship law. As the legal director of the Spectrum Institute in California, he has accumulated a wealth of knowledge and both theoretical and hands-on experience advocating for the less fortunate in our society. Tom's speaking and educational skills were on full display in a stunning presentation on guardianship accountability in Tampa, Florida at the AAPG Florida 2019 Summit on abusive guardianship. His remarkable ability to clearly convey his sophisticated and erudite message to advocates from around the country was the highlight of the event and left the audience in awe of his skills and passion."

*Sam J. Sugar, M.D. is a board-certified specialist in internal medicine residing in Hollywood, Florida. He is the founder and director of Americans Against Abuse Probate Guardianship. Dr. Sugar has been extensively published and quoted in the media on his activism against probate guardianship elder abuse and has been instrumental in developing and passing guardianship reform laws in Florida. Dr. Sugar is the author of Guardianship and the Elderly: The Perfect Crime. (2018)*

### **Evan Craig Nelson - on Consulting Services**



"Tom Coleman is a sincere and zealous advocate for the rights of persons who are unable to speak for themselves. He provides attorneys with key strategic input and timely updates on the current laws and arguments being developed to challenge the existing policies and procedures that create difficult battles for all who attempt to protect, preserve, strengthen and reinstate fundamental rights to those with disabilities who have been placed, sometimes forced against their will, into our judicial system."

*Evan Nelson is a civil litigator in Walnut Creek, California. He is of counsel to the Law Office of Jonathan McDougall. He is also a senior litigation associate at De La Houyase & Associates, a law corporation. Even represented family members as objectors in a conservatorship case the Alameda County Superior Court and as appellants in the California Court of Appeal.*

### **Joseph Reyes - on Consulting Services**



"Mr. Coleman is phenomenally knowledgeable and helpful in the area of conservatorships. His advice has been invaluable in protecting the rights of my conservatorship clients. Recently, Mr. Coleman assisted me in a complicated conservatorship case that required my constant attention. With his help, I was able to better advocate for my client's rights. I fully expect to utilize his knowledge for all my future cases that have complications or that may need to go to trial. I would not hesitate to recommend him to any attorney needing assistance in the area of conservatorship defense."



*Joseph Reyes is a deputy public defender in Solano County. He graduated from Hastings College of Law in San Francisco and was admitted to the State Bar of California on December 1, 2017.*

### **Lanny Jesse Davis - on Legal Advocacy**



"I want to remind everyone in the world about the victims of our probate courts – a division of the judicial branch that is filled with professional conservators, guardians, and lawyers who feed off the estates of the helpless and the defenseless, and especially, those who can't defend themselves from false assertions of disabilities – that Tom Coleman is a genuine hero. He fights for the victims, he fights for the truth, and he does so with the passion of someone who knows that too many players in the probate court system in this country are out for themselves and prey upon the defenseless – the elderly, the young, and those who can't afford their own attorneys to fight back. Thank you, Tom, for fighting the good fight – by insisting on more transparency and accountability in our badly broken probate courts."

*Lanny Davis is currently representing Bradford Lund, grandson of the late Walt Disney, as co-counsel in a federal lawsuit alleging discrimination against Lund by a judge in the probate division of the Los Angeles Superior Court. In a related matter, Spectrum Institute supported Lund's petition for review in the California Supreme Court. During the tenure of President Bill Clinton, Davis served as Special Counsel to the President. He was an appointee of President George W. Bush to the federal Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. Lanny has an office in Washington D.C.*

### **Cheryl Mitchell - on Research and Writing**



"Thomas F. Coleman has done a masterful job of researching and writing Capacity Assessments in California Conservatorship Proceedings. This report is replete with citations to legal authorities, as well as actual examples of conservatorship cases gone awry. Its recommendations establish a clear and concise path that can be used to significantly improve the current conservatorship system. This report is a must-read for anyone who wants to have a better understanding of why the current conservatorship system is broken and the steps that must be taken to improve it."

*Cheryl Mitchell, an elder law attorney in Spokane, Washington, has been in practice for thirty-five years. Cheryl and her husband, Ferd H. Mitchell, are partners and authors of seven volumes of Washington Practice—a series of books on Washington State law for attorneys. They are authors of four volumes of Methods of Practice, two volumes on elder law and one volume on Washington probate and practice. Washington Practice is published by Thomson Reuters WestLaw, the largest publisher of legal books in the nation.*



## Kevin Bigelow - on Research and Writing



"I've just finished reading your paper on the Capacity to Consent to Sex, and I am very impressed! I think that it is a very thorough and significant piece. You have done, in my opinion, what most trainers, writers of trainings, policy makers, and other professionals in the Adult Protective Services and related fields would like to do; but have neither the time nor expertise to pursue. That is to address the question of capacity to consent to sex from various state perspectives, as well as from a rather human perspective. One note as a trainer and writer/interpreter for training materials; your paper is very well researched and documented as it should be. And, I can't resist adding, for something written by an attorney, is very understandable for we mere mortals who are not attorneys. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to read your paper. It is terrific, and much needed information."

*Kevin Bigelow was a trainer and consultant specializing in the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable populations and disaster preparedness for elderly persons and persons with physical or mental challenges. Working for Orange County CA government for 25 years, Kevin was an APS worker and supervisor, and later served as the Adult Services Training Coordinator and Emergency Management Coordinator for O.C. Social Services.*

## Paul Greenwood - on Research and Writing



"I am in agreement with Kevin Bigelow as to his comments about your paper. You have taken a very delicate topic and provided a fascinating overview. It is clear that you took considerable time to research the concept of consent. So I have no problem in attaching my name to any "endorsement" of this specific work.

*Paul Greenwood worked for many years as a deputy district attorney in San Diego here he created an elder abuse prosecution unit. He has prosecuted over 600 felony cases of elder or dependent adult abuse.*

## Bella De Paulo -- on Legal Advocacy



"Those of us who are interested in fairness for single people have a wonderful role model in Thomas F. Coleman, who spent decades advocating for unmarried equality. What Tom has accomplished in the years he spent advocating for unmarried and single people is truly impressive. I have seen some of his talents first-hand, when I had the great good fortune of working with him when I was the Chair of the Academic Advisory Board of the American Association for Single People/"

*Bella DePaulo, PhD, is the leading expert on single life and has been described by The Atlantic as "America's foremost thinker and writer on the single experience."*

## Jay M. Kohorn - on Legal Advocacy



"Thomas F. Coleman is a conceptual visionary. When I first met Tom in the 1970s, he was already ahead of his time, using his extraordinary legal, political and educational skills along with his amazing perception of how the world should and could be, to help change the way people perceived 'sexual minorities.' He was an early advocate of a multi-disciplinary approach that included law, education, psychology, medicine and politics.

"Tom established and was the engine that propelled the California Commission on Personal Privacy under Gov. Jerry Brown in the 1980s. On that commission, he inspired the participation and hard work of some of the best minds in California, from a large range of professions and communities.

When I say 'inspired,' I mean that he lit fires in the hearts of virtually everyone with whom he came in contact. He believed in the power of coalitions and taught that empathy toward and inclusion of others, especially under-represented minorities (from people of color to people with disabilities), was the key to establishing mutual respect among those communities and the support of the community at large. He advocated a holistic approach long before it was popular to do so.

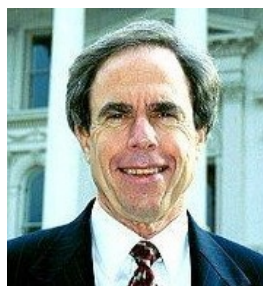
"As a practicing lawyer, especially in the constitutional appellate arena, Tom was also a visionary. He often said that all three branches of government were underutilized in the movement for equal rights, and he engaged them all.

"In a nutshell, Tom has engaged government – all three branches – and challenged communities to fashion practical solutions to problems of discrimination of many kinds, including those against families and relationships of diverse definitions, using dialogue and education rather than a stick. The objective was also to bring the law into focus with the reality of people's lives, beyond ideology, to fulfill the promise of the U. S. Constitution and the constitutions of the states.

"This is just a smattering of what can be said about Thomas F. Coleman, his integrity, courage, coalition-building and history-making vision."

*Jay M. Kohorn is the Assistant Director of the Los Angeles office of the California Appellate Project.*

## Burt Pines - on Research and Writing



"We all owe the greatest debt of gratitude to the Executive Director of the Governor's Commission on Personal Privacy, Thomas F. Coleman. His participation in the project stems back several years to work in this and other states on many related issues, not only as an attorney, but as an educator and noted legal scholar. He personally wrote the first draft of the executive order establishing the Commission and assisted the staff of Governor Jerry Brown in all aspects of the project, from obtaining funding to choosing personnel.

"As Executive Director, Mr. Coleman brought together, tapped the resources of, and inspired the

participation of other scholars and professionals throughout the country and the state. The sheer volume of research and breadth of coverage of the report were possible only through his indefatigable energy, his superb research and writing skills, and his selfless devotion to the tasks of the Commission. In truth, Mr. Coleman was the guiding light of the Commission from its inception to the publication of its report."

These remarks were made in connection with the release of the report of the Governor's Commission on Personal Privacy in December 1982.

*Burt Pines served as the City Attorney of Los Angeles from 1974 to 1981. He was chairperson of the Governor Jerry Brown's Commission on Personal Privacy from 1980 to 1982. He later served as the judicial appointments secretary to Governor Gray Davis. He later was appointed and then elected as a judge of the Los Angeles County Superior Court. He is now retired.*

### **Arthur C. Warner, Ph.D., LL.B. - on Advocacy**



"This should be viewed as a small token of recognition for your continuing work to elevate the movement for gay civil liberties into a cause worthy of inclusion in the roster of crusades for social justice. It has mattered not whether the objects of your concern were transgendered persons, the handicapped, the elderly, homosexuals or heterosexuals, your labors in the vineyard of ethics have always served as a paragon for humanity.

"In your own life you transformed your narrow, parochial schooling into a personal credo of inclusivity, thereby enlarging everyone's vision of morality. And you continue to pursue your goal of righteousness under the framework of the American constitutional system, now become the avatar of morality within the mansion-house of human conscience.

"Time will ultimately redress the imbalance which continues to deny you your due."

*These comments are taken from a letter written in 1998 by Arthur C. Warner (1918 - 2007). Warner, a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School, was the founder and co-chair of the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties (1970 - 1982) later known as the American Association for Personal Privacy (1982 - 2000).*

### **Paula Ettelbrick – on Advocacy**



"I have known, loved and worked with Tom Coleman for over two decades, particularly during my years as staff attorney/legal director of Lambda Legal, and director of public policy for the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

"In my view, Tom's work and analysis of relationship recognition stands as an important, and often ignored, bridge between the women's rights/feminist movement and the emerging LGBT movement. He believed, as many of us did, that all relationships/families have value, and that our job as lawyers

representing the LGBT "outsiders" must be dedicated to ensuring that the rights, privileges and respect for families extend not solely to those who are married - whether same-sex or opposite sex - but to all who take on the love and commitment of another person. He contributed to our structuring and understanding of emerging concepts of domestic partnership.

“He, in his eloquent and determined way, encouraged us to look at broader social justice goals in crafting hospital visitation policies, workplace benefits, and the full range of policies impacting on families so that the LGBT community's contribution to our social and legal understanding of family structures not be limited to protecting the rights only of those who are married, whether gay or straight.

“In an era in which the fight for marriage has become all consuming, it is important to note that regardless of where the marriage movement leads us, there will always be the need to ensure that those LGBT couples who choose not to marry not be left behind.”

*Paula Ettelbrick's 25 years as an advocate for LGBT rights began in 1986 at Lambda Legal as a staff lawyer, before advancing to become its legal director. She held directorships in a number of major lesbian and gay organizations, including the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the Empire State Pride Agenda, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.*

#### **David Link – on Advocacy**



“I have had the great privilege and pleasure of working with Tom Coleman since the mid 1980s when domestic partnership was still only a theory. I have argued in print that his amazing and prescient work in California to establish domestic partnership in major cities such as Los Angeles and Long Beach, as well as his dedicated work on cases in the California courts laid the political groundwork that is paying off today across the country and in other parts of the world.”

*David Link has been an attorney in California for more than three decades. In the 1980s, he was the author of a family diversity report for the Long Beach Human Relations Commission.*

# Update

## **New Jersey Advocacy**

Traveled to New Jersey in June 2024 to help a young self-advocate lobby against a bad bill that would make it easier to put people into guardianship and harder to get out. Produced a [memo](#) highlighting the many flaws of the bill. Had meetings with governor's office, legislators, and the author of the bill. Offered [amendments](#) to the bill. Produced a [report](#) with suggestions for a new statute with comprehensive provisions on supported decision-making. Wrote an [article](#) titled "NJ Adults with Cognitive Disabilities: Some Need Guardianships, Most Don't"

## **Missouri Project**

Wrote the [final report](#) of the Missouri Medical Rights Workgroup and an announcement of its release on September 10, 2024. Produced an [annotated bibliography](#) of 26 reports, commentaries, brochures, and PowerPoints prepared for the workgroup.

## **Department of Justice**

Prepared and submitted a list of [proposals](#) to the United States Department of Justice in June 2024 for inclusion in its negotiations with the State of Missouri to remedy ongoing violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **Alliance for Disability in Health Care Education**

Made a PowerPoint [presentation](#) at the annual meeting of this coalition in June 2024 about the Missouri Medical Rights Workgroup and how it could be replicated in other states as a way to advance the decision-making rights of patients with developmental disabilities.

## **Video on New Federal Rules on Disability Discrimination**

Produced a [video](#) of a PowerPoint presentation in June 2024 explaining details about new federal rules prohibiting disability discrimination by health care providers that receive federal funds, with emphasis on how they protect adult patients with developmental disabilities.

## **Missouri Presentation**

Presenter at the conference of the Missouri Association of County Developmental Disability Services on October 10, 2024 in Columbia, Missouri. Topic: "Empowering Transition-Age Youth and Beyond: Navigating Medical Decision-Making." To access the presentation slides, [click here](#).

## **New Jersey Appellate Victory**

After more than two years of collaborating and providing consulting services to a young autistic student and his attorneys in the unwanted guardianship case, and after filing an [amicus curiae brief](#) for several organizations in his appeal, Peter won his case. The appeals court [ruled](#) that his rights were violated and ordered the guardianship proceeding dismissed.



## Archives

This section of the curriculum vitae contains links to materials pertaining to the research, writing, and advocacy of Thomas F. Coleman as a law student (1972 - 1973) and as a young lawyer (1974 - 1982). Although Coleman's personal archives were burned in a fire at a storage facility in the late 1980s, he had sent copies of many documents to Arthur Warner, a colleague with the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties. Warner kept the documents and prior to his death in 2006, donated all his papers to Princeton University. Paper copies of tens of thousands of pages of documents are housed in the Mudd Manuscript Library at the university. In 2024, Coleman visited the collection and identified documents that were most worthy of being digitized so that they would be available to students, scholars, historians, and advocates around the world. Warner was an advocate for homosexual rights, decriminalization of consenting adult sex, and sexual civil liberties during the 1950s through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of Coleman's intervention and advocacy with the university, most of Warner's papers are now [available online](#). What is listed here are documents in the collection that pertain to Coleman.

### **1972 ABA – Law Student Division – [Resolution](#) – Unmarried Person's Bill of Rights**

Coleman was the representative from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles to the American Bar Association Law Student Division in 1972 and 1973. More than 100 accredited law schools had a representative in the Law Student Division. During his tenure as a representative from Loyola, Coleman introduced three resolutions for adoption by the Law Student Division. One was titled "Unmarried Person's Bill of Rights." It called on the ABA to support the passage of legislation to protect unmarried adults from discrimination due to their marital status in employment, housing, credit, and insurance and to support the repeal of provisions of the income tax code that imposed higher taxes on unmarried people than married people. A report documenting the extent of such discrimination accompanied the resolution. It was adopted by the Law Student Division and transmitted to the House of Delegates of the ABA for consideration. Leadership in the Law Student Division [made this resolution a priority](#).

### **1972 National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties – Membership**

In December 1972, Coleman [accepted an invitation](#) to become a member of the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties. At that time, [members and consultants](#) consisted of prominent lawyers and scholars from various academic fields. Coleman was the second law student to become a member, the first being [Craig Patton](#) who was [admitted to the bar](#) in Ohio after a year of [investigations](#) and a hearing to decide whether his admitted homosexual status rendered him unfit. The [purpose of the committee](#) was to promote the decriminalization of consenting adult sex and to secure equal rights for homosexuals. It was formed in 1971 as an outgrowth of the legal committee of the Mattachine Society of New York – perhaps the first gay rights organization in the nation. Arthur Warner was chair of the legal committee of the Mattachine Society. He founded the National Committee and served as its co-chair until it changed its name in 1982 to the American Association for Personal Privacy. Coleman served as co-chair of the National Committee from 1975 to 1981.

### **1973 ABA – Law Student Division – [Resolution](#) – Admission to the Bar**

Coleman [drafted](#) and introduced a resolution to the American Bar Association Law Student Division that asked the association to adopt a policy statement that the sexual orientation or private sexual conduct of a student or lawyer would not be grounds for investigation, denial of admission to the bar or discipline so long as the sexual conduct was with someone above the legal age of consent. Coleman also submitted the resolution to the ABA [Section on Individual Rights](#). After it was [adopted](#) by that section, it was submitted to the Section on Legal Education. At Coleman's [suggestion](#), the resolution was later [submitted by Professor Walter Barnett](#), co-chair of the National Committee at the time, to the governing body of the American Association of Law Schools. Barnett, Coleman, Craig Patton, and Carry Boggan [worked together](#) to move the resolution through the ABA and supported Barnett's efforts to gain support from the American Association of Law Schools.

### **1973 Gay Law Students Association – [Legal Memo](#) – Discriminatory Enforcement Defense**

Coleman and Rick Angel, both openly gay students at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, prepared a legal memo on discriminatory enforcement of the law as a legal defense to a criminal prosecution. The memo was intended for use in connection with the "Black Pipe 21" case pending in the Los Angeles Municipal Court. The case involved 21 men who were being prosecuted for lewd conduct after they were arrested during a police raid on a gay bar at an event sponsored by a gay organization known as H.E.L.P. (Homophile Enforcement of Legal Protection) which was raising funds to assist gay men who were or would be entrapped and arrested by the police for conversations about sex or for consenting adult sex. If a facial constitutional challenge to the lewd conduct law itself were unsuccessful, then the defense attorneys would seek a dismissal based on discriminatory enforcement of the law. The legal memo was bolstered by a [statistical study](#) of discriminatory enforcement practices by the Los Angeles Police Department by Coleman and University of Southern California gay law student Barry Copilow. The Gay Law Student Association issued a [press release](#) when the legal memo and [statistical analysis](#) were published. The statistical analysis was updated in 1974 by a [study of police practices](#) in West Los Angeles conducted by student Chet Toy under Coleman's supervision.

### **1973 Prostitution and the Police – [Research Paper](#) – Law Enforcement Practices**

Coleman, Loyola Law School student Susan Wendt, and UCLA Law School graduate Rand Schrader, wrote a report documenting the practices of the Los Angeles Police Department enforcing a statute (Penal Code Section 647(b)) prohibiting soliciting or engaging in acts of prostitution.

### **1974 - 1980 Sexual Law Reporter – [Legal Publication](#)**

Prior to the advent of the Internet, legal research was very time consuming and cumbersome. While there were special publications to assist lawyers and judges find and understand legislation, statutes, and judicial precedents in the general areas of criminal, civil, and constitutional law, information relevant to gay rights and other aspects of human sexuality was difficult to find. To fill the research gap, Coleman [proposed](#) establishing a Sexual Law Reporter. When he was unable to gain

funding for the project, Coleman himself created a California [corporation](#) known as the Sexual Law Reporter. It became an all-volunteer effort that operated out of his home with the assistance of law students and others. It began publishing in 1975 and ceased operations at the end of 1979. Subscribers included lawyers, law libraries, judges, scholars, and advocates for gay rights and sexual civil liberties. The publication received [positive reviews](#) from librarians, legislators, and organizations such as the ACLU, National Organization for Women, and the *Student Lawyer* (a publication of the American Bar Association Law Student Division). It also received [publicity](#) in the gay press. One volunteer wrote a [short story](#) about the formation and early days of the publication.

## **1975 - 1980    Executive Branch Advocacy**

When the California Legislature passed a bill to decriminalize private sex between consenting adults, Coleman turned his attention to the executive branch as a source for securing civil rights protections for gays. Most advocates for gay rights had been focusing their attention on the legislative and judicial branches of government, mostly ignoring the executive branch as a source for securing gay rights. Stimulated by progress made with the executive branch in Pennsylvania, Coleman wrote a [manifesto](#) titled “After Sodomy Reform – What Next” which was [publicized](#) by the gay press. Among his first actions with the executive branch was [lobbying](#) California Gov. Jerry Brown to appoint persons to the Fair Employment Practices Commission who would be inclined to interpret the word “sex” in the current statute to broadly include “sexual orientation” as a protected classification. He [contacted](#) Pennsylvania Gov. Milton Shapp urging him to write to Gov. Brown suggesting that he take executive action to protect gays and lesbians from discrimination. Shapp did send a [letter](#) to Brown. Coleman later wrote an [essay](#) titled “The Executive Branch: An Untapped Source of Power for Gay Rights.” In 1979, Coleman was [successful](#) in convincing the an agency in the executive branch in California to rule that sexual orientation discrimination in housing is illegal. Convinced that the timing was right, Coleman [wrote](#) to Gov. Brown in 1979, urging him to immediately issue an executive order prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination in state employment. Brown [issued the order](#) on April 4, 1979. Coleman issued a [press release](#) a few days later. A [paper](#) on the efforts that led to this executive order was written by a university student later that year.

## **1979 - 1980    Constitutional Challenge to California’s Prostitution Statute**

In 1979, Coleman initiated a challenge to a statute in California prohibiting soliciting or engaging in an act of prostitution. Coleman filed a [demurrer](#) on privacy and free speech grounds in the Municipal Court case of *People v. Farnia*. He and attorney Jay Kohorn then filed a 138-page [legal brief](#) to explain and argue the grounds for the constitutional challenge to the statute. Several other lawyers joined on a [supplemental brief](#) filed by Coleman and Kohorn. Coleman also wrote a [letter](#) to the Los Angeles City Attorney explaining the rationale for and scope of the constitutional challenge. When the challenge was rejected by the Municipal Court, the attorneys filed a [petition](#) and [exhibits](#) with the Superior Court seeking an order to restrain the lower court from proceeding with the prosecution, arguing that the statute was unconstitutional and therefore the Municipal Court lacked jurisdiction to proceed. The constitutional challenge was rejected by the Superior Court.

## **1981   Litigation Docket**

By 1981, Coleman and his colleagues with the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties, were involved numerous cases around the country challenging laws criminalizing consenting adult sex. This included cases pending in the United States Supreme Court, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals, and the Oregon Court of Appeals, as well as a variety of cases pending before appellate courts in California.

## **1981   Mathew O. Tobriner Civil Liberties Award**

With the [approval](#) of Justice Tobriner, Coleman received an [award](#) for his advocacy activities at annual meeting of the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties in Detroit in 1981. A [testimonial](#) to Coleman was delivered by Arthur C. Warner, co-chair of the National Committee.

## **Other Archive Materials**

<https://tomcoleman.us/legalarchives/1977-press-release-conditions-probation-lifted.pdf>

<https://tomcoleman.us/legalarchives/1978-coleman-article-humanist-magazine.pdf>

<https://tomcoleman.us/legalarchives/1978-coleman-letter-lambda-decline-board-position.pdf>

<https://tomcoleman.us/legalarchives/1978-coleman-publication-opinions-proposal.pdf>