



Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office Asian American & Pacific Islander Advisory Board

Mia Frances Yamamoto (Formerly Michael Francis Yamamoto)

Board Member

Born in Poston Relocation Camp, Arizona, 1943, Graduated Cal State University Los Angeles, B.S. Government 1966. U.S. Army 1966-68, 4th Infantry Division, USARV, awarded National Defense Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal. UCLA School of Law, co-founded Asian Pacific Islander Law Student Association, J.D. 1971. Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles 1971-74; Deputy L.A. County Public Defender and California State Public Defender 1974-84. Private Practice 1984 – present.

Past President California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, a statewide organization of 2,500 private and public defenders; co-founder and past chair of the Multi-Cultural Bar Alliance (coalition of minority, women's and LGBT bar associations of Los Angeles); and past president, Japanese American Bar Association and past president of the Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance. Served on the California Judicial Council State Task Forces on Jury Improvement and Access to Justice.

Co-founder of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Southern California, founding board member, International Bridges to Justice (a human rights group providing Due Process education and advocating against investigative torture for the judicial systems of China, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa), having previously served on the boards of the L.A. County Bar Association, Korean American Bar Association, and ACLU of Southern California. Other organizations include Life Member - Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, National Lawyers Guild, Life Member - Philippine American Bar Association, and several others.

Classroom lectures, demonstrations and panel discussions include the panel on "Race and Criminal Justice", George Washington University, for President Clinton's Initiative on Race 1999; "Cultural Defenses, Pro and Con" and "Community Law Practice" for the ABA 1999 Atlanta; "Miles to Go" ABA 2000 New York City; "Cultural Defenses" and "Lawyers in the Media" for the 1999 NAPABA Convention Los Angeles; "Elimination of Bias" Consumer Attorneys of California, SF 2008 and Los Angeles County Bar Association 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2013.

She is a frequent media commentator on issues relating to criminal law and a variety of related issues for: (print) LA Times, LA Daily Journal; (radio) KPFK, KPCC; (television) KCAL, Fox, NBC, KCET, MSNBC, CNN, Court TV and other cable and foreign media.



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Past Honors include awards from the Criminal Courts Bar Association, Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, and National Lawyers Guild. She was named "Criminal Defense Attorney of the Year" by the LA County Bar Association 2002; named one of the "100 Most Influential Lawyers in California" by the California Daily Journal 2002; "Criminal Defense Attorney of the Year" Century City Bar Association 2006; and voted "Southern California Super Lawyer" by her peers, LA Magazine 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. She was awarded an ABA's "Spirit of Excellence" award 2007 and NAPABA "Trailblazers" Award 2008.

She is a recipient of the Rainbow Key Award from the City of West Hollywood (2011); "Sisters Standing Up For Love" API-Equality 2012, The Harvey Milk Legacy Award, LA Pride and Christopher Street West 2012; and the Liberty Award LAMBDA Legal 2012. She served on the ABA's Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. She was one of three recipients of the inaugural Stonewall Award from the ABA on February 9th, 2013. She received the Good Neighbor Award from Equality California on September 20, 2014. She was a featured speaker in Trafalgar Square for "Pride in London", June 27, 2015, as well as for the "Interlaw Diversity Panel", June 29, 2015, London, England.