

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**CONTACT:**

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SAN DIEGO (November 21, 2022) — Worker rights attorney and United States Air Force veteran Melissa Johnson has been elected President of the San Diego County Bar Association for 2023.

Johnson is a partner at Johnson Heeder LLP, where she represents workers in employment-related matters including executive compensation, wage and hour claims, employment contract disputes, work-related gender, race, age, color and national origin discrimination, sexual harassment, disability discrimination and failure to accommodate, State Personnel Board proceedings, Skelly hearings, and federal employee MSPB and EEO hearings. Prior to joining Johnson Heeder LLP, she was a partner at a general business firm where she handled a variety of business-related matters, employment litigation, and wage and hour litigation.

Prior to being elected President of the SDCBA, Johnson served as the organization's President-elect, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. She has also previously chaired the association's Labor and Employment Executive Committee.

"I have lived with injustice, and those experiences have shaped and motivated me," Johnson said. "I became a plaintiffs attorney to give a voice to the marginalized and to fight for equality, and the San Diego County Bar Association has been an invaluable resource to me as I've built my practice. It has been an honor to serve on the Board of Directors for the past 4 years, and I look forward with great pride, gratitude and humility to the privilege of leading this incredible organization in 2023, its 124th year. This will be a year of evolution for the SDCBA, and I am thrilled to work alongside a stellar team of Directors, volunteers and staff."

In addition to her service to the SDCBA, Johnson serves on the Executive Board of the California Employment Lawyer's Association (CELA), the pre-eminent bar association for California plaintiffs employment attorneys. She has participated in its Lobby Day, which travels to Sacramento to meet with California legislators and staff to advocate for changes in the law that will provide working Californians with stronger legal protections. Johnson was appointed to the County of San Diego's Civil Service Commission in 2020 and serves as its Vice President.

Johnson holds an undergraduate degree from the University of California, San Diego and her law degree from Thomas Jefferson School of Law. She frequently lectures on employment law topics before state and local bar associations, disability rights agencies, professional associations, and community groups, addressing audiences on wage and hour laws; LGBTQ protections; disability discrimination; ADA compliance; and leaves of absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the California Family Rights Act (CFRA). A longtime San Diego resident, Johnson enjoys golf and travel with her wife Brenna, gardening, and her dogs Chuck (RIP), Bentley, and Enzo.

Stacey A. Kartchner has been elected to succeed Johnson as President in 2024 and will serve as President-Elect in 2023. Kartchner is the principal of the Law Offices of Stacey A. Kartchner and represents criminal defendants in state and federal court. She also represents material witnesses in federal court. Kartchner served as the SDCBA's Secretary in 2022. She is a past president of both the Criminal Defense Lawyers Club (2020) and Criminal Defense Bar Association (2013). Currently, she serves as the Chairperson of the Criminal Justice Memorial Committee and as the Chairperson of the Material Witness Defense Advisory Committee for the United States District Court, Southern District of California. Finally, she serves as the Secretary and as a member of the Board of Directors of *Accessity*, a nonprofit organization that gives microcredit loans primarily to entrepreneurs of color, women, and veterans.

Current SDCBA President **David Majchrzak** will serve as Immediate Past President in 2023.

Fanny Yu will serve as the 2023 Treasurer and **Robert M. Shaughnessy** will serve as the 2023 Secretary.

Additionally, **Jason Evans, Nicole Heeder, Cynthia L. Stratton, Timothy G. Williams and Michael Crowley** have been elected by the SDCBA's membership to serve three-year terms on the Board. **Brenda Lopez, Angela Medrano, Michelle Gastil, Brandon Kimura, Tatiana Kline, Spencer Scott and Leslie Abrigo** will continue their service on the Board in 2023. The Chair of the Association's New Lawyer Division **Stephanie Pengilley** will also serve a one-year term on the Board.

The 2023 SDCBA Board of Directors will take part in an installation ceremony at its annual [Stepping Up to the Bar](#), the Association's annual holiday reception for the San Diego legal community, on December 9 at 6 p.m. This year's event will be held at the US Grant Presidential Ballroom, 326 Broadway, San Diego, CA 92101.

The San Diego County Bar Association, founded in 1899, is the region's largest law-related organization. Its mission is to connect lawyers and support their success and fulfillment.

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