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## **Law Library News**

*By Bob Podlech, Public Services Librarian,  
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The Sixth Annual Bernard E. Witkin Memorial Lecture, jointly sponsored by the Bernard E. Witkin Alameda County Law Library, the Witkin Institute and the Alameda County Bar Association, was held in October this year instead of May but judging by the comments received, it was worth the wait! This year's program featured Justice James T. Ward of the Circuit Court of Appeals, Fourth Appellate District. Justice Ward, Co-chair of the State's Task Force on Jury Instructions, spoke about his role and the role of the Task Force in creating California's new "Plain English" Civil Jury Instructions. With the same wit and charm of personality that surely helped him coordinate this mammoth project over a 9 year time span, Justice Ward began by briefly reviewing the history of juries and jury instructions up to the creation of the now familiar BAJI collection of instructions from the Committee on Standard Jury Instructions, Civil, of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, California. He then related how the newer movement for more informed citizen involvement in the jury process led to the creation of the Task Force and eventually the new "Plain English" civil instructions now referred to as "CACI". Through examples, Justice Ward showed how the new plain English version was developed thru committees with considerable input from both the plaintiff and defendant bars. Just how this monumental task came to fruition really gave the listeners an appreciation of the new instructions beyond their mere words.

Questions from many interested members of the bar followed the talk. It was noted that the process continues to edit and expand the Civil Instructions while work on the Criminal Instructions (CALJIC) has yet to begin. Of particular note was the status of the new instructions vs. BAJI. Justice Ward reiterated the words of the Judicial Counsel that "it is highly recommended" that the new instructions be used from this point forward.

Once again, the Bernard E. Witkin Memorial Lecture was able to present a timely and informative program for the legal community of Alameda County and the Bay Area. Watch for information in the coming months regarding the 7th Annual Bernard E. Witkin Memorial Lecture, tentatively planned for its normal presentation in May 2004. **More Law Library News.** In addition to our traditional reference services, the Bernard E. Witkin Alameda County Law Library in Oakland and Hayward has enhanced its online services significantly during 2003. Here is a summary of our current services: Continuing in-house access to our online catalog through **SydneyPlus** – watch for developments in making our catalog available over the internet (also available at Hayward); **Shepard's Citations** online – all Shepards titles as well as specialized support services are now available online via a special Lexis-Nexis connection; **WestlawPro** – free online access to all federal and state primary law materials; **LegalTrac** – online access to indexing for legal periodicals (this service is also available at Hayward); **Public Internet Access** – this continuing service is available to support legal research – ½ hour per day per person (also available at Hayward); **Domain Web** – one terminal is now dedicated to accessing Alameda County Court records via Domain Web (also available at Hayward); **Information Screen** – one terminal near the entrance at the Main Library is now dedicated to the latest news about the library and its services. Remember that the law library also has **Conference Rooms** for rent. Rates are from \$15 to \$30 per hour. The law library also provides a **Document Delivery** service. This

service costs \$10 plus a per page charge for mailing or faxing specified pages from cases, articles or treatises. Unfortunately, this service cannot be used as a research service. For details about Conference Room Rentals or Document Delivery services visit our Web Page at <http://alcowebd/law/index.htm>.

The Main law library is located at 125-12th Street in Oakland, California and can be reached at (510) 208-4800. The hours of operation at the Main library are 8:30 AM to 9:00 PM, Monday thru Thursday, Friday, 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM and Noon to 5:00 PM Saturday and Sunday. The South County Branch is located at 224 West Winton Ave, Hayward, California. Their phone number is (510) 670-5230. Their hours are 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday thru Friday. The Branch is closed on Saturday and Sunday.

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