

**JUDGE JAMES L. WALTZ AND TWO OTHER
JUDGES HONORED BY AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
MATRIMONIAL LAWYERS
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER AS “FAMILY
LAW JURISTS OF THE YEAR” AT GALA ON
JANUARY 15, 2011**

Dinner Was Cornerstone of Organization’s 18th Annual Family Law Institute

The Southern California Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML), a national organization dedicated to improving the practice of law and the administration of justice in the area of divorce and family law, honored esteemed Judge James L. Waltz, of the Orange County Superior Court; Judge Scott M. Gordon, of the Los Angeles Superior Court; and Justice Joan K. Irion, of the Fourth District Court of Appeal, Division One, as “Family Law Judicial Officers of the Year” at a black-tie awards dinner on Saturday, January 15, at Casa Del Mar Hotel in Santa Monica.

The dinner was the cornerstone of the AAML’s 18th Annual Trial Advocacy Institute, entitled, “All that Family Law Jazz,” a three-day symposium that ran January 15-17. Designed for family law specialists and practitioners, the Institute featured a range of legal experts who covered cutting-edge topics in family law, such as the effective utilization of electronic evidence at trial and parentage and non-parent custody rights in the age of modern technology.

“We are proud to honor three pillars of matrimonial law: Superior Court Judge James L. Waltz, who was named Orange County’s Family Law Jurist of the Year; Superior Court Judge Scott M. Gordon, who was honored as Los Angeles County’s Family Law Jurist of the Year; and Justice Joan K. Irion, Associate Justice of the 4th District Court of Appeals, who received accolades as San Diego Family Law Jurist of the Year,” said event Chair Emily Edelman, of Emily Shappell Edelman Law Office, who is also a Board member of the AAML Southern California Chapter.

Judge James L. Waltz received his J.D. from Whittier Law School and was admitted to the Bar in 1979. In January 1980, he entered active duty with the United States Army as a Captain, serving in the Judge Advocate General’s Corps and assigned to duty in Stuttgart, Germany, and earning two Army Commendation Citations. After leaving active duty, he remained an Army Reserve Officer until 1988. He also served as a Federal

Prosecutor and was assigned to the United States Attorney's Office and its Strike Force Team, prosecuting organized crime cases. After leaving government service, he went into private practice. In 2002, he was appointed Superior Court Commissioner and assigned to the court's family law panel. In 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger appointed him Superior Court Judge in Orange County. Judge Waltz has served twice on the Court's Executive Committee, the court's highest policy making committee, and currently serves as a Master Benchler with the Ferguson Inn of Court, of which he is also a past board member.

Judge Scott M. Gordon has served on the Los Angeles County Superior Court since 2002. Currently assigned to the Family Law Department, he has presided over several high profile cases garnering international media attention, including the divorce case involving Los Angeles Dodgers owners Frank and Jamie McCourt. He previously served for 16 years with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, where he was a founding member of the Stalking and Threat Assessment Team and was responsible for policy and legislative issues relating to child abuse, domestic violence and sex crimes. In 1997, Judge Gordon was one of three U.S. prosecutors selected to serve as a Legal Specialist for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague, Netherlands.

Justice Joan K. Irion was appointed to the Fourth District Court of Appeal, Division One, in September 2003. Prior to her appointment, Justice Irion served on the San Diego Superior Court, where her assignments included a two-year term in a family law department. While on the Court of Appeal, the justice has authored several opinions in the family law area, including *In re Marriage of Feldman* (2007) 153 Cal.App.4th 1470. She is a frequent speaker at judicial education seminars, and has made presentations on the topic of family law at the Family Law Institute and conferences sponsored by the AAML and the San Diego Certified Family Law Specialists. She was a member of the Judicial Council's Elkins Family Law Task Force. Prior to her judicial appointment, Justice Irion was a litigator with Heller Ehrman White and McAuliffe and served as manager of the firm's San Diego office from 1988 until her judicial appointment.

The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers was founded in 1962 by a group of nationally-known matrimonial lawyers to help humanize and dignify the most traumatic area of family relations, and to improve the practice of family law and the administration of justice in the area of divorce and family law. Today, the Academy is recognized as the pre-eminent family law association in America with more than 1,500 Fellows. Fellowship in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers represents both a recognition of achievements in family law and a commitment to the highest standards of

practice in the field.

Event sponsors included Cohen, Miskei & Mowrey, LLP; Hargrave & Hargrave; Mayer Hoffman McCann, P.C.; The Nixon Law Firm; Robert A. Simon, Ph.D.; The SWAIM390 Companies, Inc.; and White, Zuckerman, Warsawsky, Luna, Wolf & Hunt, LLP.

For information on the American Association of Matrimonial Lawyers, please call 310-201-7580 or visit www.aamlsocial.com.

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