

Trial advocates group installs new state, national leaders

By **Caroline Hart**
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The American Board of Trial Advocates and its California chapter, CAL-ABOTA, have installed new leadership for 2018 with an eye toward diversity and education.

Cynthia McGuinn, a partner at Rouda, Feder, Tietjen & McGuinn in San Francisco, is the second woman elected as the group's national president. Michael Maguire of Michael P. Maguire & Associates was chosen as president-elect of the national group, and Bill Smith of Abramson Smith Waldsmith LLP in San Francisco has been elected to the CAL-ABOTA presidency.

"When 90 percent of an organization are white males, and they vote you in, it tells you something about their vision and their willingness to bring the organization into the 21st century," McGuinn said.

McGuinn said that her goals in the coming year center around four initiatives: continued community education, partnerships with organizations such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, ongoing diversity efforts and the protection of judicial independence.

Nationally, the organization aims to elevate young attorneys and educate the public about the significance of the Seventh Amendment.

Smith was elected as president



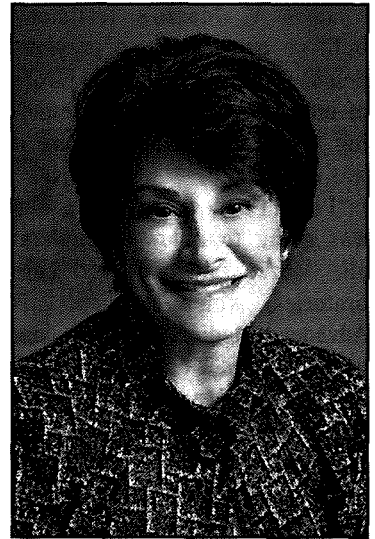
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of the California division by the CAL-ABOTA Board, which consists of 24 members from the state, and includes the organization's president, vice president and the past president. Each position's tenure began this month.

Smith recently started a civility mentoring program with Wilma Gray, secretary of the San Francisco chapter of CAL-ABOTA and an attorney at McNamara, Ney, Beatty, Slattery Borges & Ambacher LLP.

Maguire said he is excited about an initiative called "Save Our Juries," which utilizes social media, public service announcements and media outreach to remind the public of the importance of the right to a jury.

He added that he is also eager to



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continue efforts to protect judicial independence.

McGuinn said that since judges can't speak out on their own behalf, it is irresponsible for politicians to malign them unfairly, and that defamation can erode the proper separation of powers.

CAL-ABOTA launched a campaign in late September to oppose the recall of Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Aaron Persky, whose short sentence for former Stanford swimmer Brock Turner, convicted of three counts of felony sexual assault, sparked a recall campaign that put his fate on the June ballot.

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