



San Diego City Attorney Jan I. Goldsmith

NEWS RELEASE

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Goldsmith Receives Lifetime Achievement Award *International lawyers group lauds his distinguished public service*

The International Municipal Lawyers Association awarded City Attorney Jan Goldsmith with its Distinguished Public Service Award on Friday at an annual convention attended by 750 city and county attorneys from across the United States and Canada.

Association executive director Chuck Thompson said the award honors a lifetime of achievement by Goldsmith, who in December will culminate a career in public service that spans more than 40 years.

In that time, Goldsmith has held four positions of public trust: Mayor of Poway, Member of the California State Assembly, Superior Court Judge for San Diego County and City Attorney of San Diego. His achievements as City Attorney have advanced the prominence and esteem of municipal lawyers, Thompson said.

“Jan is regarded as one of the best municipal lawyers in the country, and what he accomplished in San Diego is well known throughout our legal community,” said Thompson, who was a county attorney in Maryland for 30 years. **“The office was in disarray, the city was in disarray, when he stepped in and today San Diego is stable and a strong, vibrant community that is the envy of the country. Everyone should be quite proud. It’s obvious you are one of the best run cities in the country and that your municipal leaders -- and especially Jan -- are among the best.”**

In 2008, Mr. Goldsmith took over a City Attorney’s Office that had lost the confidence of the public and its clients. Staff turnover was about 90 percent, and the City’s institutional memory was quickly vanishing as veteran attorneys fled the office.

Mr. Goldsmith, who as a Superior Court Judge recognized the disastrous state of affairs, immediately set out to rebuild the Office.

Among his achievements during this period of reorganization and rebuilding:

- Implementing training and education programs for all deputy city attorneys, civil and criminal, to elevate the caliber of their work.
- Modernizing the office technologically with a computer program to manage its criminal files.
- Restoring relations with the San Diego County District Attorney and bringing in an on-loan Assistant District Attorney for one year to lead and reorganize the Criminal Division.

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- Increasing the Office’s levels of experience and institutional memory by recruiting experienced municipal attorneys and former deputy city attorneys who had left the Office.
- Helping to bring about a Charter Change that gave job protections to deputy city attorneys for the first time.
- Lifting the conviction rate in criminal trials (principally DUIs, domestic violence and sex crimes) to more than 90 percent.
- Instituting internal quality-control processes for all Memoranda of Law and Reports to the Mayor and City Council.
- Restoring the attorney-client relationship between the Office and the Mayor, City Council and City Departments by removing political considerations from and returning integrity and honesty to the Office’s legal advice.

In 2012, Goldsmith drew no opposition and was re-elected unanimously.

In his second term, Goldsmith recognized the new mayor, Bob Filner, as a threat to employees and a liability to the City, and he united City leaders behind a legal strategy that led the mayor to voluntarily resign from office after just nine months. This episode drew national attention to San Diego and to the City Attorney.

The City Attorney’s Office has similarly been featured in national media for its string of successes in defending the City’s pension reforms from legal attack.

Under Goldsmith’s leadership, the City has been able to proceed with reforms to pensions and retiree health care that are projected to ultimately save it billions of dollars.

“This is truly an honor, particularly as it comes from colleagues with whom we share common legal issues and challenges – though San Diego seems to encounter more than its share of ones that are especially challenging,” Goldsmith said.

“The lawyers in our office are among the best in the world, and I am honored that our colleagues see the quality of our professionalism and our record of success,” Goldsmith said.

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