



2025 Q4 CCAL Board of Governors President's Message

Dear Fellows and Community Association Law Counsel,

It is my pleasure to provide the fourth quarter 2025 update on behalf of the board of governors of CAI's College of Community Association Lawyers: Brendan Bunn, Augustus Shaw, Elina Gilbert, Scott Weiss, Amy Tinetti, and Kevin Hirzel.

Since this is my last message as president, I want to emphasize an issue I have spoken about several times over the years—the value of a CCAL fellow or community association lawyer. Judges throughout the United States at times reduce our requested attorney fees for various reasons, including something like they are above market rate. Of course, the market is never well-defined. I intend to help. The market, from my viewpoint, is another attorney who devotes a significant amount of her or his practice to community association law.

In truth, this is a very specialized field, far more specialized than, for example, the mediators that many judges require or “suggest” we use to settle cases at \$400-\$500 per hour. I consider community association attorneys similar to attorneys who specialize in family law, tax, mergers and acquisitions, environmental or real estate law. In your state, what are the top lawyers in those fields charging? There is no reason your rate should be less for litigation work than it is for non-litigation work. Don't undersell yourself. We are a specialized field and well worth every penny we charge.

2026 CCAL Board of Governors. It is my pleasure to announce that Scott Weiss was re-elected to the CCAL Board of Governors, and Harmony Taylor was elected to serve on the board of governors. Please join me in congratulating both and thanking all who ran. Beginning in January, the CCAL Board of Governors will consist of President Augustus Shaw, President-Elect Amy Tinetti, Immediate Past-President Daniel Miske, and governors Elina Gilbert, Scott Weiss, Kevin Hirzel, and Harmony Taylor.

Congratulations, New CCAL fellows. The board of governors welcomed three truly outstanding CCAL fellows from the fall 2025 class of applicants to the college. Join us in congratulating Sipra Boyd of Robert Markel Winberg Butler Hailey PC in Texas, Matthew Heron of Hirzel Law PLC in Michigan, and Sean O'Conner of Clarkson McAlonis and O'Connor in South Carolina. These are outstanding lawyers. Find a CCAL fellow in your state via [CAI's CCAL Directory](#).

[2026 Community Association Law Seminar](#). We already have reached record-breaking registration for the 2026 Law Seminar, and excitement is building to see our CAI colleagues Jan. 14-16 in San Diego at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront Hotel. The Community Association Law Seminar is the premier continuing legal education conference exploring trends and best practices in community association law annually. Keeping it fresh is easy in our constantly evolving practice area.

After attending CAI's Law Seminar, you will:

- Be better prepared to deal with the pressing issues facing condominium and homeowners' associations.
- Know how to plan for the next five years in the practice of association law.
- Have a valuable, supportive network of colleagues across the country.
- Receive a copy of the law seminar proceedings and materials.



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We encourage all community association attorneys, insurance professionals, CEOs, and industry leaders to join me and your peers in California for this one-of-a-kind event. [Register Today!](#)

Congratulations to Julie Howard, the 2026 Don Buck Lifetime Award Recipient. The CCAL Board of Governors is pleased to honor Julie Howard of NowackHoward in Atlanta with the Don Buck Lifetime Contribution Award. This award recognizes an outstanding attorney for sustained and positive work with community associations. Work includes significant drafting, lecturing, and scholarly contributions to the community association industry; service in local, regional, and/or national organizations working with common interest developments; a demonstrated commitment to the local community; and exhibiting a strong mentoring spirit.

Howard exemplifies each of these qualities and characteristics. She is a most worthy recipient of CCAL's highest distinction to honor the memory of Gurdon "Don" Buck, a community association law leader, mentor, friend, and innovator. We look forward to sharing Howard's achievements and contributions on behalf of the community association industry when we present her with the award at the 2026 Community Association Law Seminar.

[CAI's Developing Emerging Community Association Lawyers Network.](#) Are you a community association lawyer within the first eight years of your practice? Is your law firm a CAI member? If so, you are invited to join CAI's Developing Emerging Community Association Lawyers Network. CAI's DECAL Network is home to the next generation of community association attorneys and provides opportunities to expand your network and resources to grow your legal skills. [Join today and share with associates in your office!](#)

[CAI's Amicus Curiae Program.](#) CAI files amicus curiae briefs for cases of significant importance in community association law. CAI's amicus efforts enable CAI to share advocacy and expertise to educate a court about the legal issues in a case from a policy perspective. If an association you represent is faced with a poorly formulated legal opinion, consider completing an amicus brief submission request. Click [here](#) for more information on submission procedures or contact Phoebe Neseth at pneseth@caionline.org.

[CCAL Mentorship Opportunity.](#) I encourage everyone to participate in the CCAL mentor program. The program helps lawyers new to the industry develop skills unique to the practice of community association law. It also provides networking opportunities and guides lawyers toward completing their application to become a CCAL fellow. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Phoebe Neseth at pneseth@caionline.org.

[CAI Lawyers' Exchange.](#) CAI developed an online community for all community association lawyers. Please contact Phoebe Neseth at pneseth@caionline.org to be added to this exchange group.

Stay informed of CCAL updates by following us on [Facebook](#) and [X](#).

What's on your mind? The CCAL Board of Governors and I want to know your thoughts, comments, and ideas. Please reach out to me at dmiske@kamancus.com with any suggestions to improve CCAL, law seminar, or increase our visibility.



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My best wishes for a safe, healthy winter season.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Daniel Miske".

Daniel Miske, Esq., CCAL
President, College of Community Association Lawyers