

Kahn named State Bar 'Trial Lawyer Hall of Fame' winner

By Lyle Moran
Daily Journal Staff Writer

Michael A. Kahn, a San Francisco-based senior counsel at Crowell & Moring LLP, was named the 2015 winner of the State Bar's "Trial Lawyer Hall of Fame" award.

The honor is given annually by the State Bar's litigation section to trial attorneys whose careers are marked by professional achievements and strong values.

Kahn is part of his firm's commercial litigation practice group, and has a success rate eclipsing 90 percent in the dozens of cases he has tried to verdict nationwide.

"In his 40-year career as a trial attorney, Mike has handled thousands of cases with a nearly perfect track record," Angela B. Styles, chair of Crowell & Moring, said in a statement. "Many of his landmark litigation victories changed the business landscape of California and the country."

One of the signature cases Kahn litigated was *U.S. v. Stringfellow*, CV 83-2501 JMI(C.D. Cal., 1987), a matter in which he served as lead trial counsel for more than 150 generator defendants in Superfund litigation that started in the 1980s.



Courtesy of the State Bar

Reuben Ginsburg, left, chair of the litigation of section of the State Bar, and state Supreme Court Justice Carol A. Corrigan, right, with honoree Michael Kahn, of Crowell & Moring LLP.

The federal government and the state of California sued to have more than \$500 million in cleanup costs at the Stringfellow Superfund site covered by private parties.

The litigation and two subsequent trials resulted in the state government being deemed responsible for the cleanup.

Kahn also served as lead counsel representing 14 Cal-

ifornia cities and agencies in claims against Merrill Lynch arising out of the Orange County bankruptcy.

The public entities received a favorable appellate ruling and eventually settled for \$32.5 million, enabling them to recover more than their actual damages in the *City of Atascadero et al. v. Merrill Lynch*, 80 Cal.Rptr.2d 329 (Cal.App. 1 Dist. 1998).

Kahn said he was flattered to receive the honor from the State Bar and attributed his success to the hundreds of other accomplished lawyers he has worked with in his career.

"It is really a recognition of the good work we were able to do as a team," he said.

Kahn was honored Saturday during a ceremony at the Four Seasons Hotel in San Francisco.