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## **JOHN D. O'CONNOR**

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## ***CURRICULUM VITAE***

### **Education**

University of Michigan Law School, *cum laude* – Juris Doctorate, 1972

- Member, Michigan Law Review (1970-1972), Associate Editor (1971-1972)
- Member, *Order of the Coif* (1971-72)
- Winner of three AmJur awards as the most outstanding student in a subject.

University of Notre Dame, *magna cum laude* – A.B., 1968

### **Work Experience**

Associate, Belli, Ashe & Choulos – 1972-1973

- Dealt with assessing and negotiating “splits” with other attorneys of contingency fees; pursued complex tort and class action litigation; significant trial experience

U.S. Attorney’s Office, Criminal and Civil Divisions – 1974-1979

- Dealt with attorney fees, “fee-shifting” civil rights cases; assessed, negotiated, and litigated attorney fees in both individual cases and class action cases; litigated Saunders v. NARF in the Northern District of California and the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit; significant trial experience

Senior Associate, Brobeck, Phleger and Harrison – 1980-1981

- Working for prestigious litigation firm, learned staffing and billing procedures and protocols for large commercial and insurance cases

Managing Partner, Tarkington, O’Connor and O’Neill – 1982-2000

- Managing partner responsible for all firm billings
- Supervised billing seminars for newly graduated and recently hired lawyers within firm
- Kept current both with hourly fees charged in the community and billing protocols for various firms and cases throughout the area

- Subscribed to various periodicals such as Partners Report and Altman Weil annual reports
- Consulted with insurance executives regarding billing procedures for their companies
- Consulted with insurance claims executives regarding CUMIS issues including billing rates for various types of litigation throughout the Bay Area
- Worked with various government agencies, such as FDIC, FLIC, NCUA, and RTC regarding appropriate billing protocols, and discussed bills with government officials regarding compliance; Dealt with governmental auditors regarding same
- Consulted with insurance executives regarding CUMIS issues; was resource for those executives negotiating CUMIS fees with independent counsel
- Represented numerous entities including governmental entities, in attorney fees litigation (e.g. in the Sonoma County jail class action litigation, litigated the fees of Heller Ehrman in a fee-shifting civil rights context)
- Defended legal malpractice cases and examined legal malpractice and other professional liability cases for clients, including the conservators and receivers of failed and failing financial institutions
- Interacted with legal counsel and claims executives for governmental and insurance clients in review and analysis of firm billings
- Kept current on hourly rates charged in various litigation sectors in both Northern and Southern California; per assignments, in selected areas of the country
- Dealt with Brandt fee issues both as a plaintiff and defendant in insurance coverage cases
- Reviewed bills of firms in underlying cases while representing insurers, reinsurers and access carriers
- Significant work regarding legal fee auditing and litigation regarding legal fees and legal fee auditing, detailed below

#### Director (Partner) and Special Counsel, Howard Rice – 2001-2006

- Regularly apprised of market rates of competing law firms, as firm annually reset its rates
- Acquired knowledge of total fees charged on various complex cases, both by the Howard Rice firm, now merged with Arnold and Porter, and others
- Named arbitrator on 3-arbitrator JAMS panel regarding over \$2,000,000 of asbestos billings; heard and evaluated testimony of competing fee experts and auditors

#### Principal, O'Connor and Associates – 2006-Present

- Expert witness and consultant, legal fees and litigation management
- Member, National Associations of Legal Fee Analysis
- Lecturer on Attorney Fees on nationwide webinars, NALFA and other organizations
- Named as the “Nation’s Top Attorney Fee Expert” by NALFA for the years 2017 through 2024
- Accepted as an expert witness in over 300 cases throughout California and the country
- Continues a litigation career with over 80 trials in federal and state courts throughout the country, enabling fee opinions based on experience

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## **Overview of Services**

John D. O'Connor offers expert consultant services in a variety of attorney fee and litigation management contexts. He is regularly employed as both an expert and litigator in attorney fee disputes, and as a confidential fee consultant. His services often involve an analysis of the skill and efficiency of attorneys in litigation and litigation management.

## **Background and Qualifications**

John O'Connor has over 50 years of experience in a wide variety of litigation matters, ranging from personal injury to civil rights and employment to complex business cases. A significant part of that experience is the trial of over 80 cases in both state and federal Courts throughout the country, and the preparation for and settlement of many more, as well as a substantial number of arbitrations. Additionally, for 20 years, O'Connor functioned as managing partner of a substantial litigation firm. His law firm experience includes partnerships in small boutique firms, a substantial mid- sized firm, and larger nationally known firms.

A significant portion of his work for over 40 years has been the evaluation, litigation and resolution of attorney fee issues. First as an Assistant United States Attorney, and later representing county and municipal governments, O'Connor has represented potential fee payors under "fee shifting" statutes. He, as well, has worked extensively for fee petitioners.

As a private lawyer for federal government agencies during the financial institutions crises of the 1980's and 90's, and as well working with a variety of insurers and self-insurers, O'Connor has worked to develop with the client, and implement on behalf of his law firm, sophisticated billing guidelines. O'Connor has worked with many clients in mutually cooperative fashion to examine firm billings, assure compliance and rectify shortcomings.

Since the advent in the late 1980's of adversarial legal auditing, O'Connor has served extensively as both an expert and litigator analyzing audit criticisms, applying community standards, and construing applicable case law. In this context, O'Connor has consulted on hundreds of adversarial legal fee disputes over three decades. He has as well served as JAMS mediator, a litigator representing both law firms and fee payors on fee issues, and an expert witness both through written Declaration and oral testimony.

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