

UC Irvine School of Law launches civil justice institute

By Joshua Sebold

UC Irvine School of Law announced the launch of a new Civil Justice Research Institute Wednesday.

The organization will focus on academic and independent research aimed at making the civil justice system more accessible to the general public.

The law school received roughly \$1 million in support for the institute from outside contributions.

The largest donation, \$250,000, came from Richard K. Bridgford, founding partner of Bridgford, Gleason & Artinian.

Bridgford didn't attend the school himself, but he has strong connections to the university.

He serves on the board for the UC Irvine Foundation and on the UC Irvine School of Law Board of Visitors.

The institute will explore topics such as the proliferation of arbitration clauses, restrictions on class actions and punitive damages, and the funding levels for state and federal courts, which the university characterizes as "inadequate."

Bridgford said the need for change in the legal system is clear.

"The increasingly low access to the courts by normal citizens through the elimination of jury trials, class action waivers and arbitration agreements, all of this is undemocratic movement that leaves power vested in the hands of the few."

UC Irvine School of Law Dean Erwin Chemerisny will serve as founding chair of the institute.

The organization will also have a board of advisers chaired by Roman M. Silberfeld, the national trial chair at Robins Kaplan LLP.

"Access to the courts for the redress of grievances is a fundamental right and that right has been eroded over time," Silberfeld wrote in a press release.

"This Institute will ensure that leaders, legislators and courts have the factual research and data they need to set policy for generations to come, all with the goal of preserving our justice system which has been and remains the model for the world."

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Bar Associations

State Bar's embattled chief trial counsel resigns

Jayne Kim was at the center of multiple controversies engulfing the State Bar during her five-year tenure.

Government

House passes bill to allow federal lawsuits for trade secrets theft

Legislation that would allow civil trade secrets lawsuits to be brought in federal court sailed through a vote Wednesday by the U.S. House of Representatives, sending it to President Barack Obama.

Judges and Judiciary

Orange County town hall spotlights contested judicial races

A town hall on Thursday will include at least eight of the nine candidates.

Litigation

Jessica Alba's organic food company accused of mislabeling formula

The complaint is the latest in a string of lawsuits alleging misrepresentation.

Zeppelin plaintiffs offer \$1 settlement for writing credit

The writing credit would entitle the trust of Randy Craig Wolfe to future earnings on the song.

Furniture seller to pay \$15M in qui tam settlement

Gardena-based Z Gallerie LLC will pay \$15 million to settle a lawsuit accusing the upscale furniture seller of improperly filling out paperwork on Chinese imports to avoid paying antidumping duties.

Mergers & Acquisitions

Private equity continues search for add-on buyouts in soft credit market

Despite a lackluster start to the year for private equity funds, middle and lower market add-ons hit records for the industry.