

Sheppard Mullin's Ruben Escalante Among Founding Board Members to Form Hispanic Bar Association of the Inland Empire

Group Serves Local IE Community, Support New and Aspiring Hispanic Attorneys

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Sheppard Mullin partner Ruben Escalante, among other attorneys from the Inland Empire, including Joseph Ortiz of Best, Best & Krieger and Mario Alfaro of Stream Kim Hicks Wrage & Alfaro, have formed the first Hispanic Bar Association of the Inland Empire (HBAIE). The founding Board members all have connections to California's Inland Empire, a metropolitan area in Southern California, inland of and adjacent to Los Angeles.

Recognizing the importance of creating an environment within the Inland Empire to support one another, engage with the Hispanic community and mentor and recruit new attorneys to the profession, HBAIE was formed to help the legal community – and the Hispanic community at large. It's mission is to “uplift the Inland Empire's Hispanic legal community by fostering engagement with communities, businesses, and the Bar, while celebrating Hispanic culture. We are a family that cultivates and champions the education and recruitment of Hispanic attorneys, as well as their professional advancement through continued mentorship.”

The Inland Empire has a large Hispanic population. Hispanics account for 47 percent of Riverside County's population and 52 percent of San Bernardino's, according to the Pew Research Center. However, the number of Hispanic attorneys does not mirror that population – a trend seen throughout California. According to the State Bar of California, 35 percent of the State's adults are Hispanic, but only 7 percent of its more than 125,000 attorneys are Hispanic.

Early in Escalante's career, he recognized that there were few attorneys who shared his background, culture and experience of growing up in a large Latino family. He, along with the founding board members, saw an unmet need.

“This stems from wanting to provide a community within a community,” commented Escalante. “I want to do whatever we can to support, mentor and connect with the next generation. We're all in it together, so let's build it. And it starts with the next generation.”

Click [here](#) to read the HBAIE press release.