



JOHN A. RUSSO, ESQ.



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MUNICIPAL EXPERIENCE

2000 - *City Attorney* CITY OF OAKLAND, CA

Oakland's first elected City Attorney. Reelected without opposition in 2004 and 2008.

- Restructured City Attorney's Office towards a greater emphasis on risk management, resulting in significant decreases in the number of claims, lawsuits, amount of total liability payouts, and outside counsel expenditures.
- Led the City through complex and controversial cases such as the Riders police scandal and the politically charged sexual harassment claims brought against the Mayor's closest aide.
- Created the nationally recognized Neighborhood Law Corps program which has closed over 70 drug hotspots, shut down or remediated over two dozen problem liquor outlets, forced the rehabilitation of hundreds of substandard housing units and successfully negotiated first-in-the-state agreements with Union Pacific and Caltrans regarding their rights-of-way in Oakland.
- Created the Open Government program with a dedicated staff person to ensure adherence to sunshine laws and public access to information and decision-making.
- Established a program to prosecute "hate crimes" by utilizing California's Civil Code.
- Successfully lobbied the State Insurance Commissioner to eliminate the practice of "zip code profiling" by the auto insurance companies.
- Defended Oakland's Anti-Predatory Lending law at the California Supreme Court.

2002-2003 *President* LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES

Spearheaded initiatives with bipartisan support to protect local tax revenues from state fiscal mismanagement (Proposition 1A) and to amend California's Constitution to ensure public access to government records and decision-making (Proposition 59).

1995-2000 *City Councilmember* CITY OF OAKLAND

Led the Council in advocating for government reform and fiscal accountability. Reformed the city budget from a one-year to a two-year budget. Implemented community policing, brought budget back into balance, and authored Oakland's open government ("sunshine") ordinance, one of the strongest municipal anti-pesticide ordinances in California, and an ordinance protecting city creeks.

LITIGATION EXPERIENCE

1996-2000 *Of Counsel* BELL, ROSENBERG & HUGHES, Personal injury and small business litigation for construction boutique firm. Crafted legal and political strategies for client dilemmas involving different levels of government.

1992-1995 *Partner / Litigator* ROTH AND RUSSO, Real estate and business litigation practice

1988-1991 *Associate* LARSON & BURNHAM, Large trials and arbitrations in professional malpractice defense.

1988 *Associate* KAZAN AND MCCLAIN, Law & motion calendar and depositions for toxic tort firm.

1985-1987 *Consumer Attorney* LEGAL SERVICES OF EASTERN MISSOURI, Home foreclosure defense and consumer fraud litigation.

EDUCATION

- 1985** **New York University School of Law**, Juris Doctor
Articles Editor, *Review of Law & Social Change*
Teaching Assistant, Tort Law (Professor Leebron)
- 1982** **Yale University**, B.A. *cum laude* - Economics & Political Science
Clarke Prize, Best Senior Thesis in Comparative Governmental Policy

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Oakland Rotary #3, member, 2007 – Present
National League of Cities, Advisory Board, 2005-Present
Colombo Club, member, 2002 – Present
Lake Merritt Breakfast Club, member, 1994 – Present
Friends of Oakland Parks & Recreation, Board of Directors, 1991-1994, President 1993
Environmental Affairs Commission, Commissioner, 1992-1994
East Bay League of Conservation Voters, Treasurer, 1992-1993

AWARDS & HONORS

- 2008 Distinguished Service to the Legal Profession, Italian American Bar Association
2008 Legal Service Award, Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom
2005-2008 Northern California Super Lawyer, *Law & Politics* Magazine
2007 Contribution to Local Government, League of California Cities
2006 Gold Award for Municipal Excellence, National League of Cities & CH2M Hill
2005 Helen Putnam Grand Prize Award for Excellence, League of California Cities
2004 California Lawyer of the Year – Government/Public Policy, *California Lawyer*
2004 Guy Rousaville, Jr. In-House Diversity Award, California Minority Counsel Program
2004 Champion of Local Democracy, League of California Cities
2004 Honorary Award, Latino Caucus, League of California Cities
2004 Honorable Mention, Best Law Firm Publication, The National Burton Award
2004 Award of Excellence for Publication, Legal Marketing Association
2003-2005 Board of Directors, National League of Cities
2003 Beacon Award, California First Amendment Coalition

SKILLS/INTERESTS

Working knowledge of Spanish & Italian; literature; history; all types of sports, including international soccer and golf; yoga