



# BURNHAM BROWN: A DEEPLY-ROOTED OAKLAND LAW FIRM WITH A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

Burnham Brown has long been known as one of northern California's pre-eminent business counseling and litigation firms, offering clients leading-edge expertise and strategic guidance. Although the firm now provides legal services throughout northern California, it can trace its practice back to 1899, when it started in a stately Victorian home near the then-bustling West Oakland. During its 110 years of practice in Oakland, the office has moved throughout the city, from its humble beginnings to its downtown addresses and finally to its current home in the beautiful Lake Merritt area. As the firm has continued to develop and prosper, Burnham Brown has demonstrated that its strong commitment to the community continues to grow with the firm.

Burnham Brown attorneys are active participants in community and professional organizations in Oakland, and frequently hold leadership positions in organizations at the forefront of enhancing the practice of law and the administration of justice. Greg Brown, President-Elect of the Alameda County Bar Association, joins several other Burnham Brown attorneys who have served on the ACBA Board of Directors. Susana Garcia also serves as Deputy Regional President for Region XVII (Northern California) of the Hispanic National Bar Association, and partner Robert M. Bodzin is a member of the State Bar Litigation Section Executive Committee. Although all Burnham Brown attorneys are professionals dedicated to providing excellent legal service, they are also leaders in the Oakland community.



Indeed, the firm made a commitment to become an ACBA Leadership Firm and pay membership for all its attorneys because it wants all of its lawyers to enhance their skills through the ACBA's continuing education courses, network and socialize with other legal professionals, have a voice in the Alameda County legal community, and participate in pro bono activities to make a positive difference in the community. Because of the firm's commitment to support community organizations, increase diversity and inclusiveness in the legal profession, and provide legal services to those in need through the ACBA Volunteer Legal Services, the ACBA awarded Burnham Brown its Distinguished Service Award for a Law Firm for 2008.

Above: Burnham Brown attorneys Susan Firtch, John Verber, Ulla Pajula, and Robert Bodzin at the ACBA Installation event on January 15, 2009.

## BURNHAM BROWN QUICK FACTS

### Firm Timeline

- 1899: Christian G. Rode and his son, Walter, are listed as attorneys in the 1899 city directory
- 1907: Walter Rode forms a partnership with Roscoe Spalding Gray, who leads the firm for several years
- 1932: Walter Rode's son Howard joins the firm
- 1942: Walter Rode's son Lincoln joins the firm

From the 1940s forward, a number of firm name changes would incorporate additional partners: Henry (Cliff) Burnhill, Louis (Dewey) R. Weinmann, Louis (Hub) R. Moffitt, Arthur (Jack) Moore, Robert C. Clifford, Andrew P. Wolfe, David O. Larson and Herman A. Trutner.

- 1970: Current name partner Clark Burnham joins the firm after service in the military as a U.S. Army captain
- 1973: Current name partner Gregory Brown joins the firm as a summer clerk during law school.

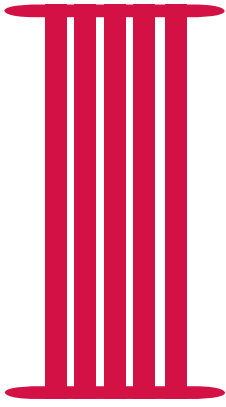
### Office

Currently located in the World Savings building at 1999 Harrison Street, in Oakland's Lake Merritt neighborhood.

### Practice groups

- Appellate
- Business & Commercial
- Construction
- Employment
- Environmental
- Government & Public Entity
- Health Care
- Insurance
- Litigation
- Product Liability
- Professional Liability
- Real Estate
- Transportation
- Trusts & Estates

To learn more about Burnham Brown, please visit [burnhambrown.com](http://burnhambrown.com).



Additionally, the firm has demonstrated its dedication to fostering diversity in the legal community by creating an annual social event designed to bring together members of the legal community from a wide variety of backgrounds for dialogue and networking opportunities.

Burnham Brown's attorneys and office belong to a diverse community and with that, Burnham Brown has an ongoing interest in fostering diversity. The annual diversity social has gained support from many identity bar associations, including the Asian American Bar Association, the Charles Houston Bar Association, the East Bay Association La Raza Lawyers, and the Filipino Bar Association of Northern California, and the second annual diversity social will be held at Burnham Brown on September 17, 2009.

In addition to being recognized for its dedication to diversity, Burnham Brown was also recently awarded "green" status by the American Bar Association-EPA, a certifying agency. Joining the ranks of hundreds of Bay Area green businesses, the firm implemented measures to lessen its environmental impact, including giving preference to energy-efficient appliances, using items with a high recycled content, and increasing the success of its recycling programs.

Burnham Brown also gives back to the community by partnering with numerous local organizations. Managing partner John Verber serves as the President of the Board of Directors at the Alameda County Food Bank, which educates community members about the causes of hunger, advocates for policies to reduce poverty and operates an emergency food program. Burnham Brown also provides Oakland Athletics tickets for the annual KQED online auction and law school auctions, where all proceeds go to charity. Every year, Burnham Brown also partners with Alice Street Learning Center, headed by partner Susan Firtch, to provide children with gifts for the holidays through the Adopt a Preschooler program and provide new books for children in the learning

center through the Preschool Book Drive. For its dedication to the program, Burnham Brown was an honored guest at the 2006 preschool graduation at the Center. Team Burnham Brown has also actively participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer race for the last two years to help heighten awareness of breast cancer and raise money for research, education, advocacy and patient services.

Without question, the firm's legacy will be one of professionals dedicated to providing excellent legal services, while at the same time occupying leadership positions in the community and in professional organizations at the forefront of enhancing the practice of law and the administration of justice.

This article was compiled by Kaysi Holman, with assistance from many attorneys at Burnham Brown.

Burnham Brown is one of the Founding Members of the ACBA Leadership Firms, those firms that have achieved 100% membership in the ACBA. We will profile our Leadership Firms in The Bulletin. Next issue: Filice Brown Eassa & McLeod LLP!

**BURNHAM BROWN PARTNER PROFILES:  
CLARK BURNHAM, GREGORY BROWN, AND JOHN VERBER**

**Gregory D. Brown** joined the firm in 1973 as a summer law clerk and is now one of the firm's preeminent trial attorneys, overseeing and handling complex cases. An accomplished litigator, he also serves as a settlement mediator, arbitrator, and neutral evaluator on matters pending in local, state, and federal courts. He holds a lifetime teaching credential in Law and Political Sciences from California Community College. He will serve as president of the Alameda County Bar Association in 2010.



**Clark J. Burnham** joined the firm in 1970 after serving as a captain in the United States Army, and now often acts as lead counsel in multi-party or complex litigation matters, including the Johns-Mansville personal injury litigation involved more than 4,000 claims. He is a frequent speaker on complex litigation management, insurance indemnity issues, and alternative dispute resolution. He was included in the 2009 list of Northern California's Top "Super Lawyers" in the Insurance Coverage section.

**John J. Verber** is Burnham Brown's managing partner, specializing in the areas of environmental regulatory compliance and complex litigation. He represents real property owners, lessees and industrial concerns at administrative hearings, government enforcement proceedings, and in negotiations with the EPA, Regional Water Quality Control Boards, the Bay Area Air Quality Management, and other agencies. A graduate of the University of San Francisco School of Law, he also holds a Masters of Public Health degree, and has worked in various aspects of the health care industry. He is currently president of the Board of Directors of the Alameda County Food Bank.

