

# Daily Journal

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## TOPWOMEN LAWYERS

The Daily Journal's Annual List of  
Leading Women Lawyers in California

### Guylyn R. Cummins

**Sheppard, Mullin, Richter  
& Hampton LLP**  
San Diego

**Practice Type:**  
Litigation

**Specialty:**  
Entertainment, media, technology,  
advertising, and appellate



Cummins, representing Forbes Inc., CNN Inc. and Clear Channel Communications Inc. won dismissals of claims by "birther" gadfly Orly Taitz and others who accused what they called the lapdog media of wrongly affirming the legitimacy of President Barack wObama's Hawaiian birth certificate.

"I was the lapdogs' lawyer," she said, noting that plaintiff Brent Bateman called her and colleagues "ambulance chasing pigs" who protected the "illegal alien, Kenyan born, murderous fraud named Barack Hussein Obama."

Taitz, an attorney, "is a very articulate individual who has her theories," Cummins said. "She tried to convince me I was focused on inconsequential small stuff in questioning whether her complaint had been properly served."

But procedure matters, and U.S. District Judge David O. Carter of Santa Ana dismissed the case in part because Taitz failed to file a written copy of the complaint as local rules require.

When a UCLA law professor and the First Amendment Coalition sought to extend California's Sunshine Act to include making State Bar admissions data public, Cummins was on the team that persuaded the state Supreme Court to agree.

"A problem was that the act [passed by voters in 2004 as Proposition 59] hadn't been interpreted in much case law," Cummins said. "We hoped to get a ruling based on Prop. 59, but the court didn't go that far."

Instead, the justices found by a unanimous vote that the public has a legitimate common law interest in the bar's admissions process and that the data, with names redacted, might be released. The court sent the case back for second trial phase to address additional privacy issues.

"The case shows how seriously courts must take common law freedom of information questions," Cummins said.

— John Roemer