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LITIGATION

## Humanitarian award for lawyer

*Munger Tolles litigator Brad D. Brian honored with Learned Hand award in Beverly Hills*

By Kylie Reynolds  
Daily Journal Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES — Some colleagues at Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP call litigation partner Brad D. Brian a “quarterback.” Others call him the “general.” He’s always prepared, he’s always diligent, and he throws himself into everything he does, they said — from running client meetings to leading the Joffrey Ballet through economic troubles.

Brian last week received the 33rd annual American Jewish Committee Los Angeles’ Learned Hand award. The honor is named after humanitarian and New York judge Learned Hand, who was known as much for his defense of civil liberties as his leadership of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The award is given annually to “people who are outstanding lawyers in every respect, in terms of their very high ethics, their terrific skills as a lawyer and their involvement in a meaningful, positive fashion in the legal community and our community at large,” said Morgan Chu, an Irell & Manella LLP partner and former Learned Hand recipient who serves on the award committee. “Brad Brian fits all of that to a T and more.”

Past years’ honorees include Munger Tolles name partner Ronald L. Olson, Warren Commission senior counsel Joseph A. Ball and Morrison & Foerster LLP senior of counsel Seth M. Hufstedler and Shirley M. Hufstedler. Brian described joining their ranks as “humbling.”

“That’s my first reaction, when I look at the list of people who have gotten it,” he said.



Courtesy Photo  
Brad D. Brian, a partner at Munger, Tolles & Olson, received the American Jewish Committee’s Learned Hand award.

“These are people I started practicing with. I idolized these people.”

Brian came to Munger in 1981, after three years as a federal prosecutor in Los Angeles. He has scored major jury verdicts while representing law firms, individuals and corporations — including Boeing Satellite Systems International Inc. and DoubleLine Capital LP. He is currently in the second phase of litigation representing Transocean Ltd. as lead counsel in matters brought in the aftermath of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling rig explosion.

“He is one of the best cross-examiners I’ve ever seen,” said Munger Tolles partner Bart H. Williams, who said he views Brian

as a mentor. “As far as a model for being an advocate for clients and a persuasive speaker with juries and judges, he is among the very best in the country.”

Brian said he always planned to marry his legal practice with community service. During his career, he has been involved with a variety of legal and non profit organizations.

“I managed to live the values that I think Ron Olson and others have preached, which is an obligation to give back,” Brian said.

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Over the years, he chaired the American Bar Association’s litigation section, where he helped create a program that trained Sudanese lawyers how to represent victims of human rights violations, and founded a federal panel in Los Angeles for self-represented litigants. A former Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles president, Brian has devoted much of his time in the past year to helping lead Legal Aid’s capital campaign to raise money for a new downtown L.A. headquarters.

At the pressing of his wife, Claire Spiegel, and his daughter Leslie Brian, he traveled to Niger in 2006 to live with nomadic tribes. His family has since provided support to the Nomad Foundation, which is working to build a boarding school and medical center for nomadic tribes in the Sahara desert.

“Brad is somebody who outside the courtroom and outside his law practice is a great humanitarian,” said AJC Los Angeles regional director Rabbi Mark Diamond. “If anyone is worthy [of the award], it’s Brad Brian.”