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■ CALIFORNIA
LEADERS IN LAW

'Accidental Lawyer' Honored as Outstanding Construction Attorney for 2015

Castro & Associates

Joel wasn't sure he wanted to be a lawyer. He questioned whether lawyers made a contribution to society. But for a quirk of fate, Joel could have followed a different path and received an 'Oscar.'" (Kent Richland, renowned appellate attorney presenting Joel Castro with the 2015 Outstanding Construction Attorney Award for Los Angeles County)

This year, Joel Castro was honored with the Los Angeles County Bar Association's "Robert B. Flaig Outstanding Construction Attorney Award." Castro was bestowed the honor of being voted the Outstanding Construction Attorney for 2015. Ironically, the UCLA graduate and film student who only applied to law school because he lost a bet went on to become one of the most successful trial attorneys on the West Coast. In his first legal position, he worked with Kent Richland at the Attorney General's office writing criminal appeals. By 1976, Castro had opened his own firm, Castro & Associates, and began litigating homeowners' claims against builders.

Outstanding Trial Attorneys in:

- Construction Defect/Design Litigation
- Construction Injury/Death Litigation
- Construction Failure Analysis

Castro & Associates is a highly successful boutique construction litigation firm comprised of trial attorneys specializing in complex multiparty cases including commercial, industrial and residential projects. The firm is known for its success in litigating structural/seismic failures and collapses, steel high-rise projects, soils, grading and



Joel Castro

compaction failures, concrete failures, unreinforced masonry, soft story structures and water intrusion.

As managing partner, Castro has tried and won some of the most iconic trials in his field such as a \$23 million jury verdict litigating the deepest LA County landfill (100+ feet) in a record 10-month jury trial. He has also successfully litigated construction-related death and injury cases. As lead counsel, he won a multimillion-dollar recovery following the collapse of the Northridge Meadows complex, in which 16 were killed in the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

He also won the first California collapse case of an unreinforced masonry (URM) building that killed two women during the 2003 San Simeon earthquake. In 2011, the California Supreme Court affirmed that multimillion-dollar jury award imposing liability for an unrepaired URM building. "A 100-year-old building not built to today's strict building codes is not illegal, per se," says

Castro. "But this case sent a message to building owners that just because it's not illegal doesn't mean you won't be held responsible if someone is hurt. The case set important public policy that will likely save lives."

Key to the firm's success is its "hands-on" investigative approach, insightful failure analysis and compelling courtroom presentations. Rather than relying solely on experts, Castro & Associates attorneys view the evidence for themselves, then use photos, videos and sophisticated computer graphics to explain complex construction issues in a way judges and jurors can understand.

Castro continues to be honored as a "Super Lawyer," "Best Lawyer," "Million Dollar and Multi-Million Dollar Advocate," and continuously receives the "top" Martindale-Hubbell® AV rating as a "preeminent legal and ethical attorney." He has been featured in *National Geographic Journal*, the *LA Times*, the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, and National Geographic Channel's award-winning "Anatomy of an Earthquake."



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