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Allen Matkins attorney to be inducted into BIA Hall of Fame

By Mark Armao
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The Building Industry Association of San Diego County in January will induct local land-use attorney Jeff Chine into its Hall of Fame in recognition of his work as the organization's general counsel.

The Allen Matkins partner will become the first attorney to receive the distinction from the BIA's local chapter, where he has served as the in-house lawyer for the last 12 years.

In his ex-officio duties as general counsel, Chine advises BIA staff on a range of legal issues, from its legislative advocacy work to corporate governance and employment issues. Much of the BIA's policy work is focused on supporting legislative efforts to streamline housing production, while opposing measures that would increase building regulations.

"Jeff Chine is a gentleman, and I use that moniker quite deliberately," said Borre Winckel, president and CEO of BIA San Diego. "In our divided world, especially given our housing turmoil, his wise counsel allows us to overcome our challenges by building on trust, practicing patience, and being solution focused."

Chine began his tenure as general counsel in 2007, succeeding attorney Frank L. Asaro.

The land-use lawyer said he enjoys the variety of work he handles for the nonprofit organization, which includes "routine stuff," such as advising executives during board meetings and ensuring the organization complies with its bylaws. And while Chine enjoys facilitating the inner-workings of the BIA, the attorney finds the association's work on policy directives particularly rewarding, he said.

"What I really enjoy is advising the BIA on how to deal with state and local government, as well as the courts, on all of the issues that the organization is trying to advance," Chine said, adding that much of the chapter's recent legislative efforts have been aimed at getting local governments to adopt new state laws designed to boost housing production.

"The BIA has been telling everyone about the housing crisis for quite some time, but it's only gained traction" in the last several years, Chine said. "So we've been attempting to implement some of those state laws at the local level, and trying to educate some of our local elected officials about the challenges the development industry faces."

When the BIA is involved in litigation, Chine



Photo courtesy of Allen Matkins

Allen Matkins partner Jeff Chine will become the first attorney inducted into the Building Industry Association of San Diego County's Hall of Fame in January.

advises attorneys representing the organization, which often enlists attorneys from Allen Matkins, a California-based business law firm with a focus on real estate matters.

The BIA sued the city of Encinitas in 2017 for noncompliance with state-mandated requirements to adopt a plan to provide housing for residents of various income levels. Last year, a San Diego County Superior Court judge ordered that Encinitas adopt a so-called housing element.

"But for BIA's involvement in that, I don't think the city of Encinitas would have a housing element," Chine said, noting the BIA "doesn't want to sue anybody, but if local jurisdictions aren't following state law intended to promote housing and affordable housing, someone has to do it."

In his private practice, the longtime attorney represents property owners and developers as they navigate the legal and regulatory hurdles that arise over the course of a project. Chine has ample experience defending developers in litigation related to CEQA, zoning law, the Coastal Act and other areas.

Prior to joining Allen Matkins in 2008, the UCLA School of Law graduate was an attorney with San Diego-based Luce Forward, where he chaired the firm's real estate department.

Chine moved to San Diego as a child, and went on to attend Bonita Vista High School and then UC Santa Barbara. The 57-year-old is married and has two children, Olive and Jack.

The attorney will be inducted into the BIA Hall of Fame at the organization's installation dinner on Jan. 25. He will join a list of 35 other honorees, including local building-industry luminaries such as Corky McMillin and Mike Neal.

"The other folks in the Hall of Fame have a long list of accomplishments, so I'm honored to even be mentioned among that group," Chine said, adding, "Most people don't like lawyers very much so I was surprised they would ask me."

Joking aside, the attorney said he is grateful for the opportunity to have a leading voice in one of the region's most influential building-industry groups.

"It's been challenging and a lot of fun because the BIA is always on the cutting edge of whatever issues are facing the development industry," he said. "They are well-respected, and I think they're an actor for positive change, and it's really a privilege to be a part of that."

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