

**Orange County Chapter  
Americans United for Separation of Church and State**

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**Gustavo Arellano: The Collision of Religion and Politics in Orange County**

**Saturday, July 18th at 2:00 pm  
Irvine Ranch Water District  
15600 Sand Canyon Ave, Irvine**

**Jul—Sep 2009  
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**Inside this issue:**

Katherine Darmer in September	2
Judge Sotomayor vs. Justice Souter	2
Shabbir Mansuri in August	3
Message from the President	3
Membership Form	4
Calendar	4



Gustavo Arellano will be our featured speaker at our July meeting where he will discuss the intersection of religion and politics in

Orange County. There are few reporters who cut to the heart of the issues of religion and society the way Gustavo does. In his book "Orange County – A Personal History" he covers Saddleback Church, Calvary Chapel and the Trinity Broadcasting Network. He doesn't leave out the sex-abuse scandal in the diocese. He also includes Islam, including both Imam Siddiqi who prayed with George W. Bush following 9/11 and the Muslim Student Union at UCI who did not. Even the Buddhist temple gets a mention. In his columns, Gustavo has covered all religions – the

good, the bad and the political.

He is a staff writer with OC Weekly, author of "¡Ask a Mexican!" and "Orange County – A Personal History." Gustavo has a radio show on Tuesdays at 4:00 on KPFK. He is a winner of the 2006 Association of Alternative Weeklies award for Best Column for "¡Ask a Mexican!". He was a finalist for the 2005 Maggie Award's Best Public Service Series for his work on the Catholic Diocese of Orange sex-abuse scandal, a topic for which he was the recipient of the Lilly Scholarship in Religion from the Religion Newswriters Association. He was also a finalist for the 2005 PEN USA Literary Awards for Journalism for his profile on a disabled Latino veteran of the Iraq War. He is a frequent contributor to the OC Weekly column "Gimme That OC Religion."

We hope you will join us for what promises to be a very interesting discussion! ###

Check out the new web site [www.pleaseblock.us](http://www.pleaseblock.us) from the Council for Secular Humanism. The site is a forum on censorship of free speech about religion. It currently has coverage of freedom of speech in Iran, the billboard in Montana that implies that if you don't believe in God then you're fair game to be shot, a roundup of atheist billboards from around the world and information about schools blocking atheism sites. This last one of course gives rise to the question, what else are schools blocking. ###

Wiley Drake—the Buena Park Pastor - is continuing his imprecatory prayers (defined as praying for evil or misfortune.) He has gone from praying for evil to befall Americans United's Executive Director Barry Lynn to President Obama. The Southern Baptist

Convention, to which Drake belongs, has denounced him. Richard Land, head of the Baptist Public Policy group says: "Wiley Drake is far out of the mainstream, in fact he's in a drainage ditch somewhere." ###

**Professor Katherine Darmer**  
**LGBT Rights and the Separation of Church & State**  
**Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm**  
**Irvine Ranch Water District**  
**15600 Sand Canyon Ave, Irvine**



Katherine Darmer is a Professor of Law at Chapman University School of Law. She previously served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of New York, specializing in public corruption, violent gang and narcotics prosecutions. In 1998, she served as lead

counsel in a three-month criminal RICO trial that resulted in the conviction of six Bronx-based gang members of crimes ranging from murder to narcotics distribution.

During her tenure as an Assistant US Attorney, she also argued seven cases in the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. Professor Darmer received her A.B. from Princeton University, with high honors, and her J.D. from Columbia University, where she was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar for two years and served as Articles Editor of the Columbia Journal of Environmental Law. She then clerked for the Hon. Kimba M. Wood in the Southern District of New York and the Hon. William H. Timbers on the Second Circuit Court of Ap-

peals.

Following her clerkships, and before joining the U.S. Attorney's Office, she worked for three years as a litigation associate at the Manhattan law firm Davis Polk & Wardwell. While at Davis Polk, she was a member of the trial team that successfully defended Delta Air Lines in a \$2.5 billion lawsuit brought by the Pan Am Corporation and the Pan Am Creditor's Committee.

In 2003, Professor Darmer was co-editor of the book "Civil Liberties vs. National Security in a Post-9/11 World," which is the text used in her Advanced Criminal Procedure seminar.

Katherine is deeply committed to separation of church and state. Her grandfather, Joseph Dawson, was an early proponent of church/state separation and a member of the group that became "Americans United."

Katherine will be speaking about the future of LGBT rights post Prop 8, including marriage equality and Don't Ask Don't Tell. ###

**Judge Sotomayor vs. Justice Souter—Steph Campbell**

We can't predict very much about how Judge Sotomayor might rule on church/state separation cases, but we do know a lot about Justice Souter. When he is gone we will have lost one of the strongest advocates that the court has had in a very long time.

Charles Haynes of the First Amendment Center describes his belief as based on "the conviction that government entanglement with religion has been a leading source of repression and conflict throughout history. Maintaining government neutrality toward religion, therefore, is not only a limitation on government—it's also an indispensable condition for full religious liberty." I doubt that Justice Souter could have put it any better and certainly he wouldn't disagree.

Justice Souter dissented from decisions allowing state

aid to religious schools and publicly funded vouchers. He voted with the majority striking down school-sponsored prayer and against courthouse displays of the Ten Commandments.

We in California are fortunate in having a Senator on the Judiciary Committee. It is important that we all take the time to contact her to request that she ask questions that will elicit information on where Judge Sotomayor stands on the religious clauses of the first amendment. Please ask her to work with Americans United, who is drafting a series of questions for consideration.

You can contact the Senator via her web mail at: <http://feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=ContactUs.EmailMe> ###

# **Institute on Religion and Civic Values Workshop Historical Shifts on Religion in School Curriculum Presented by Shabbir Mansuri**

**Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm  
Irvine Ranch Water District  
15600 Sand Canyon Ave, Irvine**



Shabbir Mansuri, founding director of the Institute on Religion and Civic Values will present a workshop on the historical shifts in K-12 education regarding religion in the curriculum.

The workshop will focus on the development of constitutionally-based guidelines for teaching about religion that now inform the production of textbooks and instructional materials, and how these civic guidelines reflect U.S. leadership with respect to advancing religious literacy.

The mission of the Institute is to strengthen civil society by exploring issues at the intersection of faith, citizenship, and pluralism and to serve as a catalyst to

align public policymaking with our nation's core values.

Shabbir Mansuri has had a lifelong interest in studying the American institutional apparatus and policy-making system that has helped position the U.S. as a beacon of freedom, democracy, and opportunity.

In 1990 Shabbir founded the Council on Islamic Education (CIE) as a non-advocacy vehicle and a scholar-based research institute dedicated to improving the coverage of world history and religions in the American education system. His experience with CIE has confirmed that Muslims, like other groups, have a place at the table and that the system accepts their contributions that strengthen and reinforce American core values.

Please join us for what should be an interesting and informative workshop. ###

## **Message from the President**

The religious right is now operating at very dangerous levels. The assassination of Dr. George Tiller, the Kansas abortion provider, is a stark reminder that they will go to any lengths to impose their theocratic views on the rest of us. Key spokesman, Randall Terry, said that he wants opponents of abortion to continue to employ confrontational tactics and highly charged rhetoric. Clearly his agenda is the elimination of women's reproductive rights.

Other extremists are saying this heinous act was long overdue. Those who dismiss Randall Terry and his ilk as people who do not need to be taken seriously need to rethink this opinion. These are dangerous people who will stop at nothing—including murder.

James W. von Brunn who murdered a security guard at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum was another extremist blaming the ills of the world on anyone not subscribing to the white supremacist philosophy. Here was a man who had been on the radar of organizations who monitor white supremacists for decades.

In the much maligned Homeland Security report on the dangers from the extreme right wing, it makes the assessment that right wing extremists will attempt to recruit and radicalize returning veterans in order to exploit their skills and knowledge derived from military training and combat. These skills and knowledge have the potential to boost the capabilities of extremists. Some white supremacist groups are encouraging their members to join the military to gather the skills they could use when they return. The military appears to be turning a blind eye.

Any pretense by extreme religious right organizations that these are lone actors over which they have no control must be challenged. The fight by Christian conservative leaders against hate crime legislation must be stopped.

We must continue our fight against the religious right and work to prevent further right wing insanities.

*—Steph Campbell*



We're on the web  
at [www.au-oc.org](http://www.au-oc.org)

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**3337 S. Bristol, #251**  
**Santa Ana, CA 92704**

***Keep Up To Date with Americans United-Orange County***

Along with our newsletter, we keep people informed with what's going on in the fight to preserve separation of church and state as well as our events through the web site at [www.au-oc.org](http://www.au-oc.org) and also through our Yahoo! Group. If you're not on the Yahoo! Group, send an email to us at: [au-oc-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:au-oc-subscribe@yahogroups.com). We meet monthly at the Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine on the 3rd Saturday at 2:00 pm.

*Irvine Ranch Water District neither supports nor endorses the cause nor activities of organizations which use the District's meeting rooms that are made available as a public service.*



**Jul 18— 2:00 pm Gustavo Arellano** of **OC Weekly** and author of "¡Ask a Mexican!" will be speaking on what happens when religion and politics collide in Orange County.

**Sep 19—2:00 pm Professor Katherine Darmer, Legal Chair of the Orange County Equality Coalition** will discuss LGBT Rights and the Separation of Church and State.

**Aug 15— 2:00 pm Shabbir Mansuri** of the **Institute on Religion and Civic Values** will present a workshop on the Historical Shifts on Religion in School Curriculums.

All AU-OC events are at The Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine. No charge for any of the events.

**The Steering Committee meets at 12:30 before the general meeting. All are invited.**

***Membership Form***

**Basic membership is \$25** and includes an annual subscription to Church & State magazine. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and donations beyond the \$18.00 value of the subscription to Church & State magazine are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Email any questions to [orangecountyau@yahoo.com](mailto:orangecountyau@yahoo.com).

Bring to the meeting OR mail to: 3337 S. Bristol, #251, Santa Ana, California 92704

**\$25 (new membership)**    **Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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