

Introduction of David Tsai

BALIF Foundation Launch of David Tsai Scholarship Fund

Rob James, June 3, 2025

Welcome to Four Embarcadero Center and the offices of Pillsbury on a beautiful San Francisco evening!

We're here to recognize the work of and show our love for the Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom and the BALIF Foundation. It's my pleasure to introduce my partner and friend and recognize him for his leadership of BALIF and the Foundation, and his contributions in talent, time and treasure for them and the causes they champion.

He is a graduate of Harvard, Stanford, and Santa Clara, who before law school worked both in life sciences research and in the development of online communication platforms. He's a distinguished first-chair international intellectual property lawyer with a vast array of representations in litigation and arbitration, before the Patent Office, and seated at the negotiating table. He deftly handles a similarly large range of technology applications across multiple industries.

All that could be true, and is true, but that isn't all that this conscientious lawyer does. He's a longtime board member or volunteer representative for universities, California Rural Legal Assistance, the Bar Association of San Francisco, and the Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area, of which he is past president.

In 2016, he was recognized by the California State legislature for his work on civil rights. His record includes longtime service on the AIDS Legal Referral Panel, Lambda Legal, and many other civil rights and advocacy organizations. He was the co-chair of BALIF itself, and more to the point of tonight's event, he is the founding chair and longtime director of the board of this very Foundation.

All that could be true, and is true, but that isn't all that this conscientious lawyer does. I asked the younger lawyers who work in his orbit about him, and this is some of what they said.

- He is committed to being not only a mentor but a sponsor to so many attorneys in various stages of their career. As a first-generation lawyer, he has been instrumental in my professional development, seeking out opportunities for me to get early hands-on experience and equipping me with all the tools necessary to succeed. For example, if there's a hearing or a deposition he's traveling for, he will always invite a junior associate to accompany him, often times even offering to pick up the associate in his brand new, family-friendly BMW!
- He interviewed me when I was a law student applying for a summer associate position at Pillsbury, and his enthusiasm and genuine interest in my development was one of the main reasons I chose to join the firm. Since then, he has been an exceptional mentor. I'm grateful for all the guidance I've received.
- He is the epitome of someone you want on your side. As a litigator, he zealously advocates on behalf of his clients. Similarly, as a mentor, he will advocate for your development and growth and be genuinely invested in you. It is no surprise at all that he has started a scholarship through the BALIF Foundation; *uplifting others is at the core of who he is.*

I give you, truly, a lawyer with a conscience, David Tsai.







