



Best LAWYERS

Local lawyers were asked for referrals of their peers by a national polling company. Here's who attorneys rank as best in their business.



From left: Victor A. Vilaplana, Ed Chapin (seated), William S. Lerach, Milton J. Silverman, Sandra J. Morris, Michael Pancer, Juanita R. Brooks

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARSHALL WILLIAMS

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PICKING THE BEST LAWYERS is like voting for Academy Award winners. There's subjectivity involved. It's not the same as picking the top hitter in Major League Baseball. Best lawyers don't just have the highest batting averages or the most home runs.

The following list is excerpted from *The Best Lawyers in America*® 2005-2006, which includes listings for more than 18,000 lawyers in virtually every major specialty of law in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The book is published by Woodward/White Inc. of Aiken, South Carolina.

Attorneys in San Diego were asked to vote on other listed lawyers in the area—as well as to nominate peers not listed. Criteria for judging legal expertise were not provided by Woodward/White. Rather, lawyers were asked: “If you had a close friend or relative who needed a lawyer, and you couldn't handle the case yourself—for reasons of conflict of interest or time—to whom would you refer them?”

The list may tend to reward visibility or popularity. Lawyers who speak publicly might get more attention from colleagues than attorneys who work quietly outside the public eye. Still, Woodward/White is confident the breadth of its survey and polling methodology results in a reliable, accurate and useful guide to the best lawyers in San Diego.