CASA CORNELIA LAW CENTER

HUMAN RIGHTS ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

EDUCATE • INSPIRE • EMPOWER

DECEMBER 10, 2026
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
University of San Diego

Together, we build bridges, protect rights, and create pathways to justice.

Inaugural 2026 Symposium Theme: "Women-Led Advocacy for Change"

The Casa Cornelia Law Center Human Rights Annual Symposium is an annual convening focused on education, dialogue, collaboration, immigration law, and human rights. Each year, the symposium may explore a distinct issue or perspective while advancing a consistent commitment to human dignity, access to justice, quality legal support, and the development of current and future human rights leaders.

2026 Inaugural Symposium Focus

The inaugural 2026 symposium, "Women-Led Advocacy for Change," will intentionally center women's leadership, storytelling, gender-based human rights issues, and the experiences of women attorneys and advocates, establishing the Symposium's intent to address different human rights issues in future years.

Overview & Target Audience

The Casa Cornelia Law Center Human Rights Annual Symposium brings together legal professionals, scholars, students, nonprofit and community leaders, policymakers, faith leaders, and advocates for education, dialogue, and collaboration focused on immigration law and human rights.

The inaugural 2026 symposium, "Women-Led Advocacy for Change," will explore the role of women and other leaders who helped advance human rights, expand access to justice, and inspire future generations of advocates. Through personal stories, legal insight, and interactive conversations, Casa Cornelia attorneys, advocates, and community partners will reflect on the experiences that ties them to this work, the immigration legal landscape, and need to advocate for those who experienced human and civil rights violations.

Purpose

The purpose of the Human Rights Annual Symposium is to educate, inspire, and empower current and future human rights leaders by convening diverse voices, sharing legal insight and fostering collaboration to inspire and strengthen a growing movement for justice and human dignity.

Session Highlights

A Vision Rooted in Faith, Justice, and Service

Sister Ann M. Durst, SHCJ, Attorney and Founder of Casa Cornelia Law Center, will reflect on the vision that led to the creation of Casa Cornelia and the role of faith in beginning a journey dedicated to serving victims of human and civil rights violations in San Diego County.

Storytelling, Women's Leadership, and Advocacy for Change

Kristine Custodio-Suero, Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, will explore the power of storytelling to inspire change, strengthen connections, and elevate women's leadership. She will also share the significance of San Diego County's adoption of a local ordinance implementing the principles of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), an international framework for addressing gender-based discrimination and advancing equality.

Faith, Community, and Creating a Path Forward

Bishop Michael Pham of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego, in conversation with Support Services Coordinator Ismael Avilez, will discuss the importance of faith in ourselves and in one another as communities come together to support people who are suffering and help create pathways forward.

Women Attorneys and Advocates: Leadership, Lessons, and the Next Generation

Facilitated by Kristine Custodio-Suero, Casa Cornelia's women attorneys and advocates will share their professional journeys, lessons learned, challenges, and sources of inspiration. The conversation will offer guidance to students and emerging professionals—particularly young women considering careers in human rights law and advocacy—and will be followed by an audience Q&A.

A Shared Call to Leadership

Together, these reflective and interactive conversations will create space to share experiences and help current and future leaders find the courage to advance human dignity and access to justice.