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Casey to receive lifetime achievement award, American Bar Association honor

By DOUG SHERWIN
The Daily Transcript

David S. Casey Jr.'s mantelpiece is about to get a little more crowded this fall.

The San Diego trial attorney received a lifetime achievement award from a statewide consumer advocacy group Saturday and will garner a top honor from the American Bar Association next month.

Casey joined actor Dennis Quaid and two others in receiving the Lifetime Legal Achievement Award from Consumer Watchdog at the group's annual Rage for Justice Award.

"David Casey's landmark cases against Exxon, big tobacco and the pharmaceu-

tical industry have forever changed the balance of powers for consumers in this country," said Jamie Court, president of Consumer Watchdog, a California education and advocacy organization. "He represents the highest ethical standards for lawyers in America, as well as achieving unprecedented results for his clients, and we are proud to honor him."

Casey, a senior partner at **Casey Gerry Schenk Francavilla Blatt & Penfield**, has helped recover approximately \$1 billion for the victims of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The 20-year legal battle is nearing a conclusion with the recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold a \$500 million punitive damage award in the case. Casey represented approximately 1,000 fishermen in the case.

He also helped recover \$25 billion from the tobacco industry for the state of California and played a key role in establishing the 9/11

Victim's Compensation Fund, the largest pro bono program in the history of American jurisprudence.

Quaid will be receiving the Phillip Burton Public Service Award for his pioneering efforts to improve patient safety after the near death of his infant twins.

Also set to be honored is attorney and former Public Citizen president Joan Claybrook, who will be inducted into the Consumer Advocates Hall of Fame, and the late Wally Marks Jr., a devoted philanthropist and human rights advocate who will be inducted posthumously into the hall of fame.

"To be honored on the same stage at Dennis Quaid and Joan Claybrook is pretty exciting," Casey said. "It was a surprise to me. It means a lot because it's a consumer group."

The ceremony was held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills.

On Oct. 8, the ABA tort trial and insurance practice section will honor Casey with its Pursuit of Justice

Award. It recognizes lawyers and judges who have shown outstanding merit and who excel in providing access to justice for all.

The award will be presented at the section's fall leadership meeting at the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego at 6:30 p.m.

Casey's late father, David S. Casey Sr., won the inaugural Pursuit of Justice Award a decade ago.

"It's very special to receive the same award from the ABA that my father received," he said. "To be recognized by your peers, and on a national level, it's very gratifying."

Casey appreciates the awards but he said it's not why he practices law.

"My approach to the legal profession is to take every step I can to protect the legal rights of individuals," he said. "It gives me greater joy in life to undertake the representation of clients that need help and being able to make a difference."

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